

Inside this issue...

- Campaign for Immigrant Rights page 5
- Elections: Ireland, Britain, France pages 8-9
- Interview with Detroit Strikers pages 6-7
- Service Employees Union page 4

July-August 1997
Solidarity price \$1

LABOR MILITANT



FOR LABOR & YOUTH · WORKING CLASS UNITY & SOCIALISM

Issue 51

WHY YOU SHOULD JOIN THE SOCIALISTS

Labor Militant is a socialist organization of workers and young people—employed and unemployed, union and non-union. Since our paper was founded 11 years ago, we have been active at the labor movement and the struggle for social justice. We have been active builders of the Labor Party in several cities across the country.

We fight for jobs for all, free national health care, childcare and education, a \$12.50/hour minimum wage or a \$500/week guaranteed income, a 30-hour workweek without loss of pay, an end to racism, sexism, homophobia and all forms of discrimination that divide worker against worker, defense of public jobs & services, an end to pollution and the development of safe, cheap, renewable energy sources.

We defend workers' rights internationally. We are in political solidarity with the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) which is bringing workers together in over 35 countries in the struggle against the dictatorship of big business.

We support democratic socialism: Public ownership of the major corporations, banks and industries under democratic workers' control and management and democratic planning of the economy by working-class people as a solution to the crisis, racism, poverty, war, hunger and exploitation of capitalism. We believe what existed in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe was a perversion of what socialism is really about.

As capitalism moves deeper into crisis, a new generation of workers needs to once again bring forward the ideas of international workers' solidarity and genuine socialism as the most effective way to fight back.

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 — I want more information
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 E-mail: fightback@netax.com

CLINTON-CONGRESS: Balancing the Budget

ON OUR BACKS!

Clinton lectures us on the virtues of volunteerism, working for free, while he slips tax cuts worth billions to the wealthiest of the wealthy in his richly balanced, bipartisan, budget. They'll get all the tax cuts (98% of the capital gains and 99% of the inheritance tax cuts according to the Citizens for Tax Justice) and we'll get the cuts in education, highways, public transit and job training. The military budget remains at Cold War levels. The rich want out of every financial commitment to the rest of society: they don't want to pay to educate anyone else's kid, pave anyone else's road, feed anyone else's grandmother. We get the sermons on creating "the era of big citizenship," Nancy Reagan telling us that when it comes to helping a child, "just say yes" and they get off scot free.

Corporate Greed

The government and the bosses may cry poor, but money is not the problem. There's plenty of it, it's just that we haven't seen any in a while. The bosses are hoarding money for themselves that used to go to us in the form of wages and benefits. Then to the government, in the form of our taxes. In the first quarter of this year, the share of the national income that went to workers' wages and benefits fell again, as it did in 1996 and 1995, while the share that went to profits increased, again. If we had kept the same percentage of national wealth that we got in just 1995, we'd have \$20 billion more in our pockets since then!

Broken Record

Profits are at record levels, \$301 billion last year. Rates of profit hit record levels, 11.39% in 1996. *Business Week* was com-



plaining that many corporations are sitting on huge hoards of cash and they do not know what to do with it. The stock market breaks records every other day. The decimal points and the number of zeros in all these millions and billions numb the mind. But our bodies feel the real effects of corporate greed. The corporations increased profits 23.3% on just a 8.3% increase in sales and a 2.1% increase in jobs. That means fewer of us doing more for less. It means more nurses with bad backs, more clerical workers with carpal tunnel, more workers out on strikes that never end, more UPS workers out on disability and more people out of work altogether.

Re-Balance the Budget

The ten top paid CEO's made a collective \$752.2 millions last year, but The Federal Reserve and Wall Street get all anxious if working people manage to claw even a tiny wage increase. Prison inmates are working for 4 cents an hour in Louisiana and welfare recipients for \$1.50 in New York City, while Lawrence Coss,

CEO of the insurance company Green Tree Financial, pulled down \$102,449,000.

Corporate America needs a reality check. Let's organize to get this monkey off our backs and re-balance the budget. Tax the rich. Rebuild America at a living wage with decent jobs and decent services. Join Labor Militant and fight for:

- Adequate public services! No cuts, no lay-offs, no workfare!
- Jobs at a living wage! A 30-hour workweek with no cut in pay, \$12.50/hour minimum wage or \$500/week guaranteed income.
- Free, quality public health- and childcare systems! Free education at all levels.
- An end to discrimination! No racism, no sexism, no homophobia, no immigrant-bashing.
- A \$500 billion public works program paid for by the rich and from the military budget! Rebuild the country, restore the environment!

MARTY HARRISON
Philadelphia

BREAK WITH THE DEMOCRATS - BUILD THE LABOR PARTY!

WHAT WE STAND FOR

FIGHTBACK

- Mass pickets and workplace occupations to stop union busting, plant closures and layoffs; organize the unorganized
- A \$5 per hour wage increase and a full uncapped cost of living increase
- A 30-hour work week with no loss in pay
- Guaranteed real, full-time jobs for all; a \$12.50 per hour minimum wage and a \$500 per week minimum income

DEFEND SOCIAL SERVICES

- Cancel the national debt with no repayment to the rich investors. Use the money to rebuild the inner cities and the infrastructure, under union conditions and wages
- No cuts in public services; full funding for all community needs
- Free higher education for all high school graduates
- End pollution and environmental destruction by big business
- Free socialized medicine

WORKING CLASS UNITY

- End all forms of racism, sexism, discrimination and division within the working class. Equal pay for equal work
- End attacks on immigrants
- End police brutality and harassment through labor-community committees to control all aspects of public safety

LABOR PARTY

- The union leaders to break with the big business Democratic Party and build a mass Labor Party
- All union and Labor Party officials to be paid the same as the average worker they represent

SOCIALISM

- Public ownership of the top 500 corporations and a socialist plan of production under the democratic management and control of the workers themselves. For a society based on the needs of the majority, not the profits of a tiny, unelected minority
- For a democratic socialist world to end hunger, war and environmental destruction

S. FRANCISCO SPECIAL ELECTIONS: Razor-Thin Stadium Victory for the Establishment

On June 3rd, a special election was held in San Francisco. No candidates were on the ballot, just propositions. Among them, one called the attention of the voters: the proposal to give the multi-millionaire De Bartolo Family, owners of the San Francisco 49ers, 100 million dollars, plus interest, 200 acres of precious City land and \$350 million worth of services (communications, fire, extra police services, roads, etc) to build a new stadium and a luxury mall. According to all analysis, De Bartolo would receive up to \$500 million from the City in order to increase his fortune of gambling and sport interests already valued at couple billion dollars.

The proposition counted on the support of every single elected local politician—almost the entire Board of Supervisors, two US Senators, the Mayor, State Assembly representatives, School Board officials—the Central Committees of both the Democratic and Republican Parties and the labor bureaucracy. The mainstream media, led by the two daily newspapers—the *Chronicle* and *Examiner*—all radio and TV stations, embraced the electoral cause (and \$5 million campaign war chest) of the rich.

A small opposition to the proposal emerged headed by three alternative newspapers: the weekly *Bay Guardian*, the left-wing monthly *SF Frontlines*—all radio and the Spanish-language bi-weekly *"Nuevo Horizonte"*. This opposition centered on the corporate welfare nature of the proposal and the needs of communities for services and jobs which can use the money that Mayor Willie Brown was proposing to give away to a corporation notable for supporting Reagan and other Republican candidates.



The local political machine lined up every single wing of the Democratic Party—most notably its "left wing" headed by Roberta Achenberg and liberal former Supervisor Angela Alioto—to support their plans and most of the left—exception made of the Green Party, Labor Militant and the Immigrant Rights Movement (MDI)—either abstained on the issue or supported the machine.

Contrary to all predictions, close to a 45% of registered voters, or roughly 180,000 voters, turned out to vote—special elections have never attracted more than 30% of the electorate in this City. The measure passed by a razor-thin margin of 50.9% in favor and 49.1% against. On election night, Propositions D & F—related to stadium and mall—were losing throughout the night. At the last moment, it was announced that they had passed by an slim margin.

These events precipitated accusations of voting fraud that are presently under investigation. In at least one instance it was proven that supporters of the Stadium

voted twice. City employees and employees of big downtown corporation were pressured to turnout and vote and work for the "Yes on D&F" campaign. Yellow Cab, the main taxicab company in the City transported supporters of the measure to the voting polls for free and the week before the election, the entire mainstream media subjected the electorate to a barrage of threats—"the 49ers are leaving, there is too much to lose."

Paternalistic slogans and pressure were used. The campaign in favor of the measures launched a systematic disinformation roller-coaster promising 10,000 jobs—that is not guaranteed by the

developers at any rate—in the Black community in order to buy its support and blackmail progressive white, Latino and Asian votes.

Everything to no avail. 70% of all blacks in the City either opposed the measures or didn't bother to turn out—the voter turnout in the Black community allegedly benefiting from the project was the second lowest in the City. The majority of Latino voters and gays and lesbians, the traditional left neighborhoods and the working class areas and half of the Asian voters voted against the measure.

When the entire political establishment of San Francisco almost loses an election against a ragtag opposition with neither money nor resources, the establishment is in big trouble. For many in San Francisco, the conditions appear ripe to build an independent, working class opposition to the local Democratic political machine.

SIMON MORALES
San Francisco

Gagged Science

Sixty people crammed into the seminar room at the Harvard School of Public Health. Normally the topic is a scientific paper or a biostatistical problem. This time, however, the speaker, David Kern, spoke with some anger: "This is hard to believe... I cannot just leave... a legal suit is not the answer... my current legal advice is to burn all bridges and speak without restraint..." Over a year ago he observed an unusual kind of lung inflammation in some workers of a Microfiber textile company in Rhode Island. He obtained permission by the firm to investigate other plants of the company, where he diagnosed workers with the same illness. It had almost killed one worker and had made two others dependent on supplemental oxygen for life. He then wanted to present these cases at a meeting of the American Thoracic Society.

Getting the Boot

The textile firm, however, threatened him with legal action, if he were to do so and contacted his employers at Memorial Hospital and Brown University. The hospital ordered Kern to cancel his scientific presentation and closed down his occupational health program and clinic. Brown University notified him that it will not renew his contract, and if he left the university immediately, it would pay his salary and benefits to his new employer (whoever that would be) for two years. Microfibres Inc.

based its action on an agreement Kern signed 15 months earlier, when he visited the plant with some medical students. On that occasion he had to sign a paper stating that he would not reveal any trade secrets of the firm. Thus, the firm argued, he was not allowed to discuss the workers' illness without the company's consent. One should mention at this point that it is unusual to treat a crippling lung disease as a trade secret.

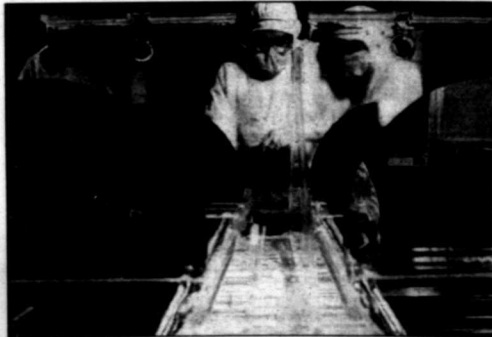
The hospital's physician-in-chief and university associate dean says: "He (Kern) got himself and everybody else in this pickle by his failure to be sensitive to these issues." And to prove its sensitive approach the hospital pocketed the \$100,000 consulting fee from Kern's investigations at Microfibres, since he was then still a hospital employee.

The Science Bottom Line

Over 1500 occupational health workers have expressed their support for his stand in the meantime. However big business holds a tight reign throughout science. Two weeks ago a California-based company claims it made the most important discovery in asthma research of this century; they found the asthma gene. But they would not divulge any more information for the time being until they fully secured their financial interests. Such delay in the application of scientific findings undoubtedly means that lives that could be saved will be lost.

Similarly, 20% of scientists delay publication of their research by more than half a year, and the Massachusetts General Hospital team that investigated this problem, suspects, that financial interests are the reason in many cases. This might be less surprising when one takes a glance at the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, where the article appeared, or other major medical periodicals. The first 30 or so pages of the journal consist of pure advertising. This does not only hint at the journal's priorities, but might just create a subtle financial dependence.

DIETER AFFELN
Boston



WHY WE NEED A

LABOR PARTY

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Why We Need a Labor Party

In the Beginning...

...there was work, no rights...only work. Then came the unions. Fought for and won over 100 years of terrible struggle by working people. We have been shot at, clubbed, pepper gassed and ambushed on the picket lines and in our homes. Our blood is on the soil, in the mines, on the streets and factory floors. At every one of our victories the bosses howled as if we were operating without anesthetic. At every concession they handed across the bargaining table they screamed it would be the death of them. And we fought and bled and came back for more. Working people fought because there was no choice. Our children were hungry, our lives were a drudgery of work, disease, bad food, no education and no sanitation. We lived in the ghettos of New York, Boston and Philadelphia, in the textile towns of New England, in the mining camps of the west, in the hollows of the Appalachian coal country, in the company towns of the Midwest. "Don't morn, organize!" was the battle cry, and we did. The Molly Maguires, the National Labor Union, the Knights of Labor, the American Railway Union, the Wobblies, The Mine Workers, The Auto Workers, the Teamsters, the Steel Workers, and more. We took on the bosses, their thugs, the scabs, Henry Ford, General Motors, US Steel, FDR and the National Guard. And we won. We won the highest living standards in the world. We won the 8-hour day, the 40-hour week, decent wages and conditions; health, safety, and environmental regulations; vacations and medical benefits.

A New Way to Fight Back Needed

Things seem so different today, the unions don't seem to be able to defend the gains we won at such a high price. The give backs of the past 20 years, globalization, world economies, information ages, service sector jobs and 'knowledge workers' seem like new challenges, new problems. We have waged the industrial struggle, won the right to organize, fought back against the demands of the bosses, but now it seems the old ways do not work. 'Replacement workers', injunctions and plant closures stand in our way. Even when we win these days and organize a plant or office, 16% of work-



Can you tell who is who?

places are closed before a second contract is reached. Despite occasional victories, on the whole the past 2 decades have been a story of defeats for working people. From PATCO to the Detroit News, it would seem our old weapon, the strike, has failed us. Our wages have fallen from the highest in the world to 13th. Drugs and crime infect our neighborhoods. Welfare recipients are put to work doing jobs that used to be done by union labor. At a time of increasing economic uncertainty, the social safety net is being cut to nothing. In the workplaces and schools, in the factories and the classrooms, we hear people talk under their breath. The stress and insecurity takes it's toll. There is a strong mood of anger and a desire to resist coupled with a sense of hopelessness and frustration at not being able to change things. We need a new way of fighting back. A new way of defending the gains we have won. We need an independent political voice for working people, we need a political party we can vote for without holding our nose. We need a Labor Party.

A labor party would be a political party that would be beholden to us, not reliant on the bosses dollars. It would be a party founded on the principles of working class democracy, based in the unions, funded through its members, with a fighting program that addresses the needs of working people. A year ago in Cleveland, the first steps were taken in this direction. At the founding convention of the Labor Party, delegates from 9 international unions, hundreds of

locals, community groups, and Labor Party Advocates chapters met and hammered out a program and a constitution for the fledgling Labor Party.

Broaden the Struggle

Labor has always been strongest when we the generalized the struggle-when we became a movement. Over the past 100 years, hand in hand with the great strikes of the past, we have flirted again and again with taking independent political action. The great strike victories of the 30's and 40's were linked strongly with political and social struggles. The same radical activists who worked together to build the unions also fought for and won public education, libraries, sanitation and health clinics. Along with the battle cry "don't morn, organize!" was the cry for "bread and roses", the struggle for a decent life outside of work, for culture and education. In the 1934 Toledo Autolite Strike, the sit-down strike that showed the way ahead, they won because they had organized the unemployed around them, they fought not just for their jobs but for jobs in general, reached out to the community, and generalized their struggle.

An independent political party of the working class will build on these traditions. The Labor Party has the potential to bring together the organized and unorganized, employed and unemployed, and reinforce the idea of our common interest against the employers and big business. Union and non-

union workers could meet and discuss the problems facing us today, exchange our experiences and set an agenda for change. It can provide a forum for working people to discuss political ideas not in the abstract way so common to the big business politicians, but in a concrete way, in the language of jobs, food, housing, education and health care.

The Labor Party will have to address these problems in new ways. We don't want to hear that there is no money. We know the money is there, \$1.6 trillion of it was transferred from working people to the rich over the past 15 years through concessions, cuts, and tax breaks, it is just a question of who is going to pay, us or big business. With political power in our hands we could directly address issues like plant closings by passing laws to outlaw moving plants out of the country and raising the question of public ownership. When a community is dependent on a factory for its existence, who's property is it anyway? The bosses'? or the community's? Socialists believe that the top 500 corporations that control the vast majority of the wealth should come under democratic workers' control and management.

Time to Speak for Ourselves as a Class

We are in a process of re-examining our methods of struggle. The development of the Labor Party can help us in this task by serving as a repository of experience in a stronger way than the unions have, because it would take in the experience of working people as a whole, organized and unorganized, as well as through the living exchange of ideas and experience of struggle.

It is time to pick up the gauntlet. Supporters and readers of this newspaper have been at the cutting edge of the struggle to build the Labor Party. It is time to take up the challenge of the 21st century and build an independent, radical political force for working people. It is time to end our reliance on the bosses' parties, the Democrats and Republicans, and speak for ourselves, through our own workers' candidates and a mass Labor Party.

Justin Harrison
Member CWA Local 13000

Join the Labor Party: PO Box 53177,
Washington DC 20009

FAST FACTS

The Price of "Democracy."

Think we live in a democracy? Consider what some corporate big shots have to say:

- In reference to campaign contributions, Daniel Rappaport, chairman of the New York Mercantile Exchange was recently quoted as saying, "If everyone else is giving and we don't, our voice won't be heard." (*Business Week*, March 31, 1997)

Read: *The 99% of Americans who don't have millions of dollars lying around to give to politicians don't have a voice!*

- "Given the degree to which Federal Express is regulated, it's absolutely necessary for us to participate in the [election] process," says a spokesman for FedEx, which gave \$959,000 in soft money to the two parties in 1996.

Unfortunately for our "poor" CEO's, the money required to have real influence over politicians is becoming so outrageous that even they are beginning to complain! Do they want to democratize politics? No! The recent clamor among the mainstream media for "campaign-finance reform" is a reflection of the dissatisfaction in the upper echelons of business who are arguing that they should be able to have even more control over politicians for more reasonable rates.

Corporations and executives generated 93% of the Republican's and 74% of the Democrat's soft-money donations. "Our" political system has nothing to do with regular people. It is run for and by a small elite. Working people and youth have no input, influence, access or control over the process from start to finish.



How can normal people compete with millions of dollars? Build a political party of their own. A party that they run, finance and control. Join us in Labor Militant, in the fight for working class politics and culture in order to wrestle control over our society from the parasites and into the hands of the vast majority.

Philip Locker,
Ohio

Stern's Turn: End of 'Justice for Janitors'

Building Bridges with..Real Estate Companies Instead

"Boldly into the future" is a thing of the past. "New Voices" sound like the same old tune. "It's time for bold action... a bold program... and bold leadership." These are the forgotten words of a speech given just over one year ago. The newly-elected President of SEIU, Andrew Stern, has decided to build bridges with real estate companies rather than block bridges to defend workers.

Janitors from Silicon Valley to the Windy City have won better wages, better working conditions, health coverage, master contracts, protection against sexual harassment and other discrimination, and better benefits over the past few years. This was accomplished by in-your-face tactics like the blocking of the 14th Street bridge leading into Washington, DC during morning rush-hour traffic. Noisy demonstrations outside non-union office buildings and disruptions of government and corporate meetings were other tactics used. In California, successes stemmed from month-long rolling strikes and civil disobedience highlighting the fact that no worker should live in poverty. The wage increases of 4.0-5.5% surpassed the 2.5% national average for 1995. Also, the stage was set for region wide bargaining when Western Management Alliance agreed to master contract collective bargaining.

October 1995. In Chicago, 11 cleaning contractors in the western suburbs agreed to a master agreement granting the largest wage increases in 20 years to 700 suburban office building janitors. This organizing drive was launched on June 15, 1995 -- "Justice



Workers face a vicious attack on all fronts: Public services, jobs, wages, conditions.

for Janitors Day."

Even as recently as December 1996, SEIU Local 82 in DC won a victory. The New York State Common Retirement Fund ended its contract with P&R Enterprises due to its anti-worker stance - minimum wages, no benefits, unfair labor practices.

Stern's proposal is to "cease strikes, picketing and demonstrations in the city" of Washington and to "work with the real estate industry in an effort to reform the city's tax assessment process." Stern's decision was made after "meeting with a number of real estate executives" over the past few months. In a *Washington Post* phone

interview, Stern said, "it's just hard to talk when everyone's shouting." and added he "hoped the action would demonstrate that the SEIU was a multidimensional organization." Since these meetings with the owners of commercial buildings, the union may shift its position on the property tax assessment to favor businesses.

Relying on the kindness of big business and their politicians is a mistake that the members of SEIU cannot afford to tolerate. Because real estate owners save money on taxes does not mean the money will go into workers' pockets. The UAW found that out when they took concessions from Chrysler, now considered a cash cow by Wall Street analysts, and have yet to see any return on their investment.

We must reverse this outrageous sell out to big business and redouble our efforts to make the commercial property owners and their cleaning contractors pay decent wages. Stern should use the tactics that have worked in the past: build solidarity with other unions, community groups, the Labor Party and others and shut down Washington until there is justice for janitors.

Martha Root
SEIU Local 285

DEMOCRATIC OPPOSITION WINS THREE POSTS IN SEIU LOCAL 790 ELECTIONS

An earthquake just took place in San Francisco. It measured three on the Rank and File Richter scale. Paul Varacalli, an international vice president of SEIU and unelected "Executive Director" of SEIU Local 790, felt it on the 11th floor of the Fox Plaza building in downtown San Francisco.

Members for a Democratic Union (MDU) candidates Ray Quan, Roxanne Sanchez and Rex Spray won three of eleven posts on the local Executive Board. The slate ran on a platform advocating membership control of union resources and policy, staff accountability to membership, membership control of bargaining to gain better contracts and democratic restructuring of the local to insure membership representation. More specifically Quan and Sanchez called for direct election of business agents and union staff, no two tier or "second class citizenship" workfare proposals, an end to committees that rubber stamp union staff decisions, support for the formation of a

labor party and several other "rank and file control" reforms. (See issue #50 of Labor Militant for more details).

MDU came within 100 votes of winning a majority of 6 seats on the Executive Board. Drew Johnese, MDU candidate for local president and a virtual unknown, almost succeeded in beating 12 year incumbent Marshall Walker, save for 59 votes. Quan and Sanchez were the top vote getters in their races and Rex Spray was the 2nd of 3 in his.

Quan defeated long time East Bay vice president John Maher, a blow to the Varacalli regime. Maher represents the local in 2 different labor councils and sits on several local COPE committees (which control local 790, SEIU, and labor council endorsement of candidates). Maher is also a vice president of the BART chapter. Each agency represented by the local has its own elected staff. Maher sits on the chapter negotiating committee, but rumors persist that he will face a recall after negotiations.

Under local by-laws, the election is conducted by a secret, double envelope, mail ballot. It is supervised by an appointed committee, who remain neutral in the campaigning. Initially, ballots were sent out without the 2nd blank "secrecy" envelope. The election committee sent out blank envelopes, but people had already begun returning their ballots. The executive staff then came up with the idea of having the local League of Women Voters count the ballots. No where in the local by-laws is this mentioned.

MDU poll watchers challenged the ballot counting. They raised several concerns including that the "substitute ballot" pro-

We need militant and democratic unions that are able to defend jobs and improve conditions.



cess may have been used as a way for local staff (who are not permitted to participate in local elections) to solicit votes. Provisions of local by-laws allow for a member to go to the union hall and sign for a "substitute" ballot. Batches of ballots counted as "substitutes", were swayed heavily toward the incumbents. And with more than 133 ballots in dispute the election may take yet another turn.

The leadership change in 790 does not take place in a vacuum. Rumors persist of another pro-democracy slate mounting a campaign in SEIU Local 1000, a state-wide local representing clerical and other work-

ers employed by the State of California. United Educators of San Francisco, a combined NEA and AFT local, changed leadership at the end of May. Treasurer Kent Mitchell beat out two-term president Joan-Marie Shelley. Shelley is a scion of a local Democratic Party power family. Her father, was a local union leader and former Mayor of San Francisco and her brother, Kevin, is a former City Supervisor and a current State Assembly member. Joan-Marie tied the union closely to the Democratic political machine of Mayor Willie Brown.

Gene Pepi
Bay Area

Join Labor Militant's Fight for Democratic Socialism!

Name

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Successful Meeting of the Papers for All Campaign in Boston



Immigrant workers face low wages, police brutality and savage exploitation

The Boston Branch of Labor Militant recently helped kick off the *Papers for All Campaign* in Eastern Massachusetts by sponsoring a well-attended public meeting on immigrant rights. The featured speakers were Carlos Petroni, a leader of the Immigrant Rights Movement/Movimiento por los Derechos de los Inmigrantes (MDI) and a member of Labor Militant, and Seamus Whelan, an Irish activist, also a member of Labor Militant.

Addressing an excellent turnout of 54 immigrant workers and grassroots community organizers, they spoke out against the scapegoating of immigrants and attacks on the living standards of all workers. The speakers also made a direct invitation to take action and to develop concrete strategies to mobilize the campaign to achieve an immediate amnesty for all immigrants.

As Carlos Petroni said, "After the passage of anti-immigrant legislation, the repeal of welfare and the anti-terrorist law, immigrants are left with none of the elementary democratic rights: no rights to services,

no right to work, subjected to deportation and imprisonment... A campaign for an immediate amnesty will allow millions to work and organize to fight for full rights."

The audience, recognizing this was not more of the same old politics as usual, responded by enthusiastically contributing to the discussion and speaking of their own concrete experiences. Their statements, along with the remarks of the speakers, showed that immigrant workers are not taking the outrageous attacks on their basic human rights lying down. "If there were enough jobs for all, good salaries and the right to be organized in unions... in other words if the economy would be organized to serve the needs of everyone, we would not have any rationale for discrimination and racism. Discrimination and racism are the weapons utilized by the ruling class to convince one sector of the working class that another sector of the working class is responsible for the state of the economy instead of themselves. That's why, in times of economic upturns, discrimination generally subsides and re-emerges at times in which

the economy is in a downturn. We need to educate the working class in the idea that there are not "foreigners" who take their jobs, there are capitalists that rob them of their rights, including the right to have decent jobs and wages.

The *Papers for All Campaign*, begun several months ago in San Francisco by the MDI, shows a new militancy in the immigrant community, which has spread rapidly bringing along with it the endorsement and support of thousands of individuals and organizations in the U.S. and around the world. Labor Militant is one of these organizations and we see the *Papers for All Campaign* as an important part of the struggle for workers' rights and socialism.

Millions of men, women and children living in the United States did not qualify for the 1986 immigration amnesty. These workers and their extended families contribute hundreds of millions of dollars to the economy in industrial productivity, income taxes, and community support, but because they are undocumented they fall under a very real threat of deportation. Immigrant

workers are often coerced into laboring long hours for low wages and in sweatshop conditions. The bosses' crimes against these vulnerable workers are designed to set worker against worker (divide and rule), and drive down wages and living standards for all working people. A reign of fear, insecurity and discrimination - a virtual system of American apartheid - has made just staying alive the order of the day for millions of immigrant workers and their families.

As Carlos and Seamus pointed out, the *Papers for All Campaign* will succeed best if it is led by immigrant activists themselves and works together in a united front with grassroots immigrant rights organizations, labor unions and the newly-formed Labor Party. Carlos Petroni emphasized that "there is no question that the fight for rights for immigrants should be led by immigrants themselves. The strategy of Democrats and Republicans is to divide us and make us believe that this is an individual issue, that each of us has to fight for his/her individual rights to live and work in this country. This is false: we won't have rights unless we overcome the divisions and we fight together."

Labor Militant and supporters of the *Papers for All Campaign* in Eastern Massachusetts will continue to speak out, petition, make contact with concerned people in the community, hold public meetings, support MDI and keep a vigilant eye on the Immigration and Naturalization Service. Carlos ended the meeting by promising that "the *Papers for All Campaign* has the intention of building a national and an international movement to obtain full rights for immigrants and their families, and to defeat racism and discrimination. The amnesty is just the first step, the rest will follow by the logic of the struggle and the movement we will be able to build."

We urge you to contact Labor Militant to get involved in the *Papers for All Campaign* and the struggle for a world without repressive borders and for a world with justice and prosperity for all, regardless of their country of origin."

Tom Potter & Jeff Booth
Members, AFSCME 3650

International Campaign for Immigrant Rights in San Francisco

A rally and Music Festival will mark the official launching of the *Papers for All Campaign* in the San Francisco-Bay Area. Organized by the Immigrant Rights Movement (MDI), the local Spanish-language bi-weekly "Nuevo Horizonte", the San Francisco *Frontlines* newspaper and many other organizations, including the local branch of Labor Militant, the rally and Music Festival will take place on Saturday, June 28th at the Cesar Chavez Elementary School.

Situated at the heart of the local Latino Community, the Mission District, the school is being prepared as a meeting place with capacity for up to two thousand participants who are expected to come from as far as San Jose, Oakland and other Bay Area cities.

Thousands of leaflets will be distributed in preparation of the meeting in the last week before the event and activists are exercising pressure on local TV and radio stations and community newspapers to announce the event.



The "Papers for All Campaign," the demand for an immediate and unconditional amnesty for all undocumented immigrants, could potentially benefit more than 10 million people in the US, 1/3 of whom live in California. Already the campaign has been endorsed by more than 10,000 organizations and prominent personalities in the US and around the world. The campaign counts on an enormous outpouring of support from the immigrant communities as

demonstrated by the 30,000 calls from around the country, received in the offices of the MDI after a popular national TV show in the Spanish network Telemundo announced its formation.

A delegation from the MDI and the "Papers for All" campaign were among the more than 500 representatives of immigrant organizations in the US and political and labor organizations in Mexico, who met during the weekend of 6-7 of June to launch

a continental struggle for the rights of immigrants in the US and elsewhere. These delegates presented a number of motions that were well-received by the participants. The Mexican media interviewed the delegates and articles were published in the most important newspapers of the country. The Conference issued a document of agreement that includes a call to unions and labor organizations to fight for the right of immigrants on both sides of the border and called for different actions such as the "Week of the Immigrants" in the first part of October, culminating in mass actions such as a demonstration in Washington D.C. on October 12, 1997 and other local, coordinated actions.

Simon Morales
San Francisco

Contact the MDI and the *Papers for All Campaign* at 3311 Mission Street, Suite 135, San Francisco, CA 94110 Telephone/Fax (415) 648-5257

HOW MANY DEFEATS...?



How many defeats must labor suffer before we learn some lessons? How many PATCOs, how many Staleys, how many Hornels, are necessary for the leadership of the union movement to understand what most rank and filers already know: **WE NEED A DIFFERENT STRATEGY!**

We have all seen the process: A local union calls a strike to defend themselves against the attacks of big business and then, they are left defenseless by the AFL-CIO bureaucracy and the International unions.

When a union calls a strike and the workers believe the militant speeches of their leaders, they lay it all on the line: the job, the house, the children's college money. Everything is on the line to defend their union. But at the top of the unions, the cynicism is shocking. As the strikes become prolonged, and more desperate, the tendency of the international leadership is to walk away from the struggles, and the workers are left out on a limb.

If the mood of the workers on strike is to fight to the end, and use militant tactics, often those local unions are put into receivership and a more compliant, conciliatory leadership is installed. In the case of the Hormel P-9 strike, the workers who scabbed and crossed the picket line were recognized as the official union.

The trend of using legal maneuvers is a crude attempt to imitate the tactics of corporate America. Increasingly, big business relies on the courts, using injunctions and other anti-labor legislation passed by their pals in the White House and Congress, to do their dirty work. The labor leadership is using similar strategies to tame fighting locals and force them to toe the line.

Why would the union movement use such strategies against their own locals when this leads to defeats of struggles and strikes? Solidarity isn't just a word we use on Labor Day and then forget. The workers in France have taught us that, if nothing else. The present leadership of the AFL-CIO and the unions is under the illusion that some sort of "partnership" with big business and the bosses is possible. What we need is a union leadership that is prepared to challenge unjust laws and an unjust system and seriously organize to fight.

The most important aspects of this fightback today are the need for a militant action program, and the need to draw political conclusions from the hammering American workers have taken at the hands of the bosses' political machine. A majority of voters already reject the two-headed-single-party system. What is important is to build a political party we do want. We can't fight effectively if we re-elect the parties that brought us NAFTA, workfare, reduced living standards, lower wages, downsizing and more job insecurity. This is not the 1950s and '60s. We will not win battles in the workplace unless we are prepared to fight politically as well as industrially.

The Labor Party is a new organization with a program that defends workers, the unemployed, women, young people, minorities and immigrants. The Labor Party has its base in a number of unions. Join the Labor Party and help fight to build an alternative to this money-corrupted, capitalist system and to build a different kind of politics—one which defends the interests of working class people not the millionaires for a change!

MARGARET COLLINS
Delegate, 1199 Hospital Workers Union

INTERVIEW WITH I

"The Corporation it a crime to hav

GCIU member Rick Farquharson, is a 9-year employee of the Detroit Free Press and CWA member Gary Rusnell, a 27-year employee of the paper. They are members of ACOSS, the Action Coalition of Strikers and Supporters in Detroit. Rick and Gary spoke to MARTY HARRISON during their recent trip in Philadelphia, New York and New Jersey speaking at workers' and Labor Party meetings about the Detroit strike. Having worked and travelled extensively together, since the beginning of the strike, they tend to complete each other's sentences, making it impossible to identify the speaker of a single thought.

"ACOSS is the Action Coalition of Strikers and Supporters. We've been fighting to keep this struggle against Gannett and Knight-Ridder, really, the struggle against corporate greed, alive. This has always been a rank and file initiative and remains so today. We fought to get the AFL-CIO to endorse this June mobilization: we sent people to Los Angeles for their Executive Committee meeting, we got everyone we could to send them messages demanding a national labor march on Detroit. We have internet contacts in Tokyo, Bulgaria, Russia and we know that they and hundreds of others did just that. The AFL got so much mail about it, they had to deliver it to us in a truck!

After the AFL-CIO endorsed the June mobilization, we watched what was going on and saw no movement at the international level. I get the CWA paper, and even though the CWA is one of the unions locked-out in Detroit, there was no mention of Action Motown in the paper. Last time I checked, the AFL-CIO hadn't up-dated its web site in almost three months, so USA Today wasn't on their boycott list. When you see this stuff, you get frustrated with your own leadership and realize you have to make it happen. We agreed that ACOSS had to develop its own headquarters to get the word out.



Union Busting

"Now we're back on the road, building support for Action Motown 97! We don't want a token turnout in Detroit. We need a massive show of labor strength. We want follow up actions taking place in every city, like organizing your own day of action against these corporations. We need to use this mobilization as a spring board to take it to a larger scale. Right now, Detroit only accounts for 4% of Gannett's profits. We need to be effecting a larger portion of your budget. That's why we're targeting USA Today, which represents

31% of Gannett's bottom line. I'll tell you, if I lived in a city like Philadelphia and I heard that they had increased the price of my paper by 15 cents to offset the losses from Detroit, I'd be angry and want to do something about it. So, you can take the trip to Detroit and



DETROIT STRIKERS

ns want to make
e a decent job..."



"We see it as a domino effect, just a matter of time before they take us all down, not just the newspaper industry, but manufacturing plants, any industry you can name, they're out to break the unions."

the unions. Chrysler, GM and Ford are all watching carefully what happens to us. They're supporting the DNA (Detroit Newspaper Association) and want it to succeed. They see it as a stepping stone to getting what they want in their plants.

Twenty years ago, companies, corporations made 3, 4, 5% profit and they were happy. Now, if they make 10%, they want 15%; if they make 15%, they want 20%. They're forcing strikes. They want everyone in poverty so they can have complete control. When the CEO's get a 52% increase in their salary packages and average workers get 2%, something is wrong. It's up to the 80%

who work for a living to go out there and make their voice heard.

Struggle for the Future

"We're fighting for meaningful jobs for our kids and grandkids. The corporations are creating a hostile environment. They want to make it a crime to have a decent job. They want you to have three jobs. That's tearing the whole moral fabric of the country apart. Kids out there never see their parents. It tears down the whole fabric of the system built on taxes. If we don't get paid, then there's no money for local government, the city cuts services and you're in a vicious spiral to the bottom. The corporations have to take a certain amount of blame for that. You can't have it both ways—if you take away the decent jobs, you get crime, kids out of control, the cities in decay."

"The corporations are creating a hostile environment. They want to make it a crime to have a decent job. They want you to have three jobs...."

stop union busting here, or you can go home and fight it there, because it is coming. We've talked to a whole lot of people since this thing started out and we're letting people know the signals, how to recognize the prelude to union busting. What to watch out for is any two-tier system like UAW agreed to big time.

That second tier is your replacement workers, if they're part-time and not getting benefits. If the union wants to strike, then the second tier will get their jobs with benefits. They're your ready-made scabs.

Also, management working with the workforce, like quality circles and teams. Those programs are really there to eliminate jobs. They say, "Show us how to save money, we'll be more competitive and your job will be safer." If we do that, we're doing their job. They get these high salaries and we're telling them how to cut our jobs. All these labor/management workshops come to the same conclusion: eliminate jobs.

Corporate Greed

"As we go around warning people about the signals that union busting is coming, we see a lot of people nodding their heads, 'yes, that's what's happening here.' When we talk about corporate greed, we see them agreeing. 'Yes, that's right.'"

"We see it as a domino effect, just a matter of time before they take us all down, not just the newspaper industry, but manufacturing plants, any industry you can name, they're out to break

WHAT WE THINK

Why We Need a Radical Change in Leadership

Labor Militant argues for a radical change in the policy of the unions. The reason is simple: The tactics of the unions have not worked. Add the Detroit newspaper workers strike to the list of those that have been allowed to linger on without the unions taking the decisive and militant action necessary to win.

Faced with a determined, deep-pocketed opponent, the six local unions that represent the 2,000 strikers at the Detroit News and the Detroit Free Press, after two years of picketing were unable to find a way to win. Under the direction of the international unions and the leadership of the AFL-CIO, they ended up with the disastrous strategy of dissolving the strike in order to get the workers re-hired—without consulting with the membership.

The policies of the current leadership of the labor movement are bankrupt when it comes to dealing with the kind of challenges workers face in the workplace and in strikes today. Their first instinct is usually to lay down and play dead, try to appease the bosses and when all else fails try make some token gestures, organize religious services and memorial rallies.

It is not as if local rank and file members did not try to change these policies in Detroit. They have been consistently ignored. Rank and file members and union activists were prepared and willing to defy the injunctions against effective picketing. They were ignored by a leadership determined to lead this strike to another defeat after Staley. Of course, leading a militant struggle in Detroit would have interfered with the brilliant plans of AFL-CIO president John Sweeney to pour millions of dollars in the coffers of Democrat politicians rather than send a thousand organizers to Detroit. The AFL-CIO even refused to organize a mass rally on Labor Day in 1996 for fear of embarrassing their Democrat "friends" before the elections...

The June 20-21 solidarity action is not organized to bring Detroit to a standstill. It is not a show of power and determination to defend union rights. The determined and heroic rank and file union militants who criss-crossed the country organizing solidarity have learned a bitter lesson about the nature of the leadership of the AFL-CIO.

A defeat in one of the most unionized cities in the country should be a fire alarm for every union worker. It is a sign that we must get involved to change the direction of the union movement—to build democratic and militant unions, and a mass Labor Party to represent all working people.

Confessions of a Union Buster

A recent issue of the IAM Journal published some revealing quotes. They went undercover to a seminar on how to break unions, hosted by the big law firm Jackson, Lewis, Schnitzler & Krupman. Here was some of their super-expensive advice:

- "Be good parents" to your workers. "A three-year-old isn't logical. A three-year-old sees a pretty, red stove top, and she wants to touch it, and you have to tell her how it will sizzle her fingers and be terribly painful. The use of fear is just as appropriate with your employees as it is with your three-year-old."
- "You have to shift the focus away from your company and your profits and make the employees focus on the dangers of getting involved in a union. Collect news clips about strikes or union plants closing down to show to your employees. You can't come out and say, 'if the union gets in we'll close the plant,' but there are other ways to deliver the same message."
- "Under the laws there is no obligation to tell the truth. I hope you do tell the truth [said with a smile], but if you don't it's perfectly all right."

INTERNATIONAL

Labour's landslide victory is unprecedented in post-war British politics. Primarily a Tory wipe-out rather than a massive Labour advance, exit polls indicated that 20% of voters consciously voted against a party rather than for a party. Turnout was the lowest since 1945, only 71%. That's great compared to US turnouts—49% voted in the 1996 presidential election, the lowest percentage since 1924!

The anti-Tory tide was devastating. Conservative's share of the vote went down from 43% to 31%, coming very close to the hapless Duke of Wellington's 29% showing in 1832.

Support for Labour among men and women was more or less equal in this election, though the number of women Members of Parliament (MP's) shot up to 120.

The sun shone in Britain on Friday, May 2 and everyone seemed to be in a carnival mood. Parliamentary election results were in and the ruling Conservative Party, usually referred to as the Tories, had lost by an overwhelming margin. The Labour Party triumphed and its leader, Tony Blair, became Prime Minister of the first Labour government in almost two decades. Last year, the party that now calls itself "New Labour" deleted the call for public ownership of Britain's top 25 corporations from its program. No longer a socialist party, or even very different from the Conservatives, New Labour has won a tremendous victory for capitalism in Britain.

People voted against the Tories, rather than for the lackluster Labour program. The pollsters had predicted a Labour victory, but no one knew just how deep the resentment against 18 years of Tory rule ran until the ballots were counted. Taking only 31% of the vote and just 165 seats out of a total of 659, the Tories suffered a shattering defeat in the House of Commons. Their worst electoral rout since 1906, the Tories have lost whole regions of England. Scotland and Wales are now Tory-free zones.

Blair's Labour Party used the same formula that worked for Bill Clinton in 1996. By promising to "end welfare as we know it," Clinton appealed to big business which depends on a permanent army of the unemployed to keep wages low for everybody. He also appealed to "middle class" voters by adopting the Republican program of spending cuts and privatization. Many of the same people who happily voted for Reagan in '84 voted for Clinton in '96 because they heard a very similar message.

Tony Blair succeeded by offering pretty much the same program that gave Margaret Thatcher her landslide victory in 1983. He actually campaigned on a promise to keep to the Tory budget limits. It was only when the self-destructive Tories tried to outdo him and threatened to destroy the British National Health Service that Labour sounded good by comparison. Just like Bill Clinton, Blair kept the campaign "in the middle of the road." This forced the Tories to go far to the right...and then off the road and into a ditch.

British big business wants to advance the process of integrating the British economy into the European Union. The "Euro-phobic" Tories have always insisted on some kind of British independence from the rest of Europe and used nationalistic arguments to augur support for their cause. Capital will no longer tolerate nostalgic nationalism when it stands in the way of profit. In fact, the index of the London stock exchange went up, not down, the day after the Labour victory.

Will the Tories recover? Not likely any time soon. They're still divided down the middle between Euro-phobes on the one side and pragmatic big business types on the other. Their two camps reflect the split in the Republican Party here, where "moderate" pro-business boosters like Jack Kemp struggle with further-right religious zealots like Jesse Helms.

Even though Labour promised almost nothing, the size of Blair's victory has released pent-up demand for radical change. The *Financial Times* reported on opinion polls showing "more than 60% favour 'tax

BRITISH ELECTIONS

Clinton-Clone Blair Wins As Voters' Resentment Turns Against Conservatives



and spend' and only 5% support the reduction of taxes." Most people are more concerned with reducing unemployment than with bringing down inflation. Yet Blair, led by a hand-picked crowd of supporters waving British flags: "This is not a mandate for dogma or doctrine, or for a return to the past...this new government will govern in the interest of all our people." In other words, Labour is now a big-business party that represents the capitalists and not the working class.

Americans may believe that Labour's victory in the UK could help labor in the US.

The Labor Party here has yet to run its first candidate and is a long way from winning an overwhelming majority in Congress. It does have one thing the British Labour Party doesn't: a program of social justice and working class solidarity.

The tasks of socialists in Britain is to give a political voice to the movement of the opposition. Workers, young people, women, and oppressed minorities will demand ideas and policies to arm their struggle for real change. The Socialist Party will be at the forefront of that struggle.

Report from *Socialism Today*

FRENCH ELECTIONS

Program of Austerity, Cuts Rejected by French Workers

The French assembly (congressional) elections were a disaster for the right-wing parties that had held power. Seven government ministers did not even get re-elected to their Assembly seats. The new prime minister, Socialist Lionel Jospin will form a government with the support of the Communist Party.

Conservative President Chirac made the political mistake of his life when he called for elections a year early, expecting victory and a mandate for a massive attack on the rights of working people and social welfare in France. The right wing severely miscalculated the mood of the working class even after recent powerful movements of airline workers, truck drivers, public sector worker and others. Rolling strikes, rallies and demonstrations had brought the country to a standstill several times since 1995.

Following the example of the "New Labour" Party leader Tony Blair, the new Prime Minister told his supporters "not to expect anything" and that any changes will "take time." Jospin's government is going to continue to try to implement the program and agenda of the right, only a little more cautiously.

In order to get elected, the Socialist Jospin promised to create 700,000 new jobs by decreasing the work week to 35 hours with no loss of pay and by expanding the public sector. The CGT, the union federation led by the Communists, says that workers should not rely on the government to do things for them and called on workers to put pressure on now for better wages and conditions. While the policies of the right were soundly rejected by the majority of French people, the new government will not challenge the bosses' capitalist system and will be forced to try to carry out the austerity measures that the bosses are demanding.

How Socialist Candidates Fared

There were three socialist parties in the running: the Scottish Socialist Alliance (SSA), the Socialist Labour Party (SLP) and the Socialist Party (formerly Militant Labour). Tommy Sheridan, a candidate of the SSA, got over 11% of the votes in Glasgow Pollak. Second best was the showing of Dave Nellist, the Socialist Party candidate in Coventry South, who polled 6.5% of the votes.

Altogether Socialist Party candidates, running in 19 races in England and Wales, received nearly 10,000 votes. The SSA polled virtually the same number in Scotland. The SLP, formed by Miners Union president Arthur Scargill, won over 40,000 votes in the 63 races it contested.



The militant struggle of French workers and young people delivered a blow to the right-wing government of Juppe.

Socialists and independent left candidates got 262 seats in the new assembly. The outgoing government of the RPR/UDF got 242 seats. The Communist Party got 10% in the first round, and 37 seats. The Greens made a breakthrough gaining 7 seats.

The far-right, racist National Front (FN) got 15% of the vote in the first round, their best vote ever, but got only one seat because of the way the electoral system works. The liberal capitalist press and the socialist and left politicians write politically correct articles about the nasty National Front, yet offer no alternative to its racist poison. In this situation, there is an urgent need for left and communist organizations to unite around a fighting program that can attract militant, class-conscious workers and young people and lay the foundation for a new working class party that truly represents the interests of working class people in France.

INTERNATIONAL

IRISH ELECTIONS

SOCIALIST PARTY CANDIDATE ELECTED IN PARLIAMENT

Joe Higgins, a candidate for the newly-formed Socialist Party, Labor Militant's sister organization in Ireland, was elected in the national elections and got the most votes in his constituency, Dublin West.

The Socialist Party won support for the ideas of socialism through its record of fighting for the interests of working people in local and national campaigns. They led a successful national campaign against the much-hated water charges, fought against the re-zoning of green areas in Dublin by land speculators and for greater resources to be given to deal with problems such as high unemployment and drug addiction. In 1995, Joe ran in a parliamentary by-election, as the official candidate of the Anti-Water Charges Federation, and came within a whisker of winning the seat. This near victory forced the Labour Party-supported coalition government to spend around \$100 million to abolish the tax and to try and save their coalition and wipe Joe off the political map. Their efforts, however, were in vain, as it was the Labour Party that saw its seats fall from 31 to 17 as a result of their policy of supporting the parties of big business.

In 1989, Joe Higgins along with other socialists and activists were witch-hunted out of the Labour Party after some 15 years of membership. For these and other betrayals of working people while in right-wing coalitions, the Labour Party saw its vote cut in half. Rubbing salt into their wounds was the fact that Joe's victory meant the loss of a Labour Government Ministers' seat in Dublin West who had voted for his expulsion from the Party.

The Socialist Party declared itself a new party standing for a different type of politics. The five Socialist candidates promised that when elected to the Dail, they



Joe Higgins won in Dublin West

The Irish election resulted in a hung parliament, a situation where no party wins a majority. Two main blocks were fighting: the outgoing "Rainbow Coalition" of the right-wing Fine Gael, the Irish Labour Party and the Democratic Left. The opposition -also right-wing-were Fianna Fail and the Progressive Democrats. Neither block won a majority. The big losers were Labour and the Progressive Democrats who both saw the numbers of their seats in Parliament halved.

The new government is likely to be a minority coalition made up of Fianna Fail, the progressive Democrats and right-wing independents. The Labour Party had a big surge in the 1992 elections but lost votes among working class people because of the attacks of the coalition government of which it was a part.

would only accept the wage of an average skilled worker in order to stay in touch with and understand the problems of those they represent. The remaining money will be used to build the Party and its different campaigns and no donations will be asked for or accepted from big business sources. The excellent support received by the four other Socialist Party candidates in these elections lays a solid basis for winning a number of city council seats in the next local elections.

The Irish electorate was told that socialist ideas are dead and no longer relevant and Ireland was now a "booming Celtic tiger economy." The majority of people in the country though did not benefit in any way from the recent economic upturn and when socialist ideas were connected to their real day-to-day concerns they found an echo. The election of Joe Higgins to the Irish parliament is an important step in rebuilding the organizations of the working class into vehicles for fundamental change in society, and an important victory for the ideas of genuine socialism internationally.

Seamus Behan
Boston

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SOUTH AFRICA

General Strike Demands Improvement In Employment Conditions

Over two million South African workers went on a general strike in early June. The strike was called by the COSATU, the South African trade union federation, to demand better employment conditions and for a new Employment Standards Act which includes the 40-hour week, six-month maternity leave and a ban on child labor.

This is the third time that COSATU has mobilized its members against attempts by the bosses to stymie the implementation of democratic reform. The Employment Standards Act is seen as a significant step forward for South African workers and it is fiercely resisted by the employers because it "encroaches" on their "perogative" to determine industrial relations.

But the strike also represented an important test in the relationship between the ruling African National Congress (ANC) and the trade unions. Increasingly, it is becoming clear that any reforms that can be won will not come from Parliament or the government but the mobilization of the workers themselves. On the issue of privatization of public services, COSATU may to come

into direct conflict with the government of Nelson Mandela and the ANC who are supporting policies of austerity, cutbacks and privatization all of which are against the interests of the vast majority of the workers.

Conflict with Government

However, the COSATU leadership themselves do not want an open confrontation with the ANC government, and by remaining in an alliance with the ANC, they continue to give credibility to the governments' right-wing program.

The African National Congress, no longer represents the interests of the poor majority in South Africa, and it has increasingly been transformed into a capitalist organization.

COSATU, as the main workers' organization in the country, should break its alliance with ANC and begin the process of building a mass workers' party that truly represents the interests of the majority of working class and poor people in the country.

By our correspondent in
Johannesburg



South African workers need a mass workers' party to defend their rights. In the picture, members of Labor Militant's sister organization in South Africa, "Congress Militant," on the picket lines.

OBITUARY

For Rich Kraft, 37 Comrade, Fighter and a Great Human Being

Our movement lost a warrior last February. If there was a struggle in the Seattle area, Rich could be found agitating to take it forward. He always fought for the underdog.

Whether it was casual drivers at the *Seattle Times* who were being treated as second class citizens, or it was youth in Everett who were being attacked by the City Council for skateboarding downtown.

I first met him through the struggles to reform the Teamsters Union. He was one of the key activists who publicized the struggle for reform in the Teamsters. In this struggle he brought his comrade-in-arms Doug into the struggle. Since then, they were inseparable as fighters and friends.

Struggle for Democracy

Rich grew up in a working class family in New York. His father, a Teamster, was a fighter in the union. Rich moved to the West Coast in the 1980s. He soon took up the struggle for reform of the union through the Teamsters for a Democratic Union. Rich was unjustly fired by Yellow Freight for his activism, after the Old Guard local stripped him of his position as shop steward. When Doug was also wrongly fired from the same barn in Yellow, they threw themselves into entering, by hook or by crook, Teamster workplaces and talking to members and posting reform literature on the walls of breakrooms.

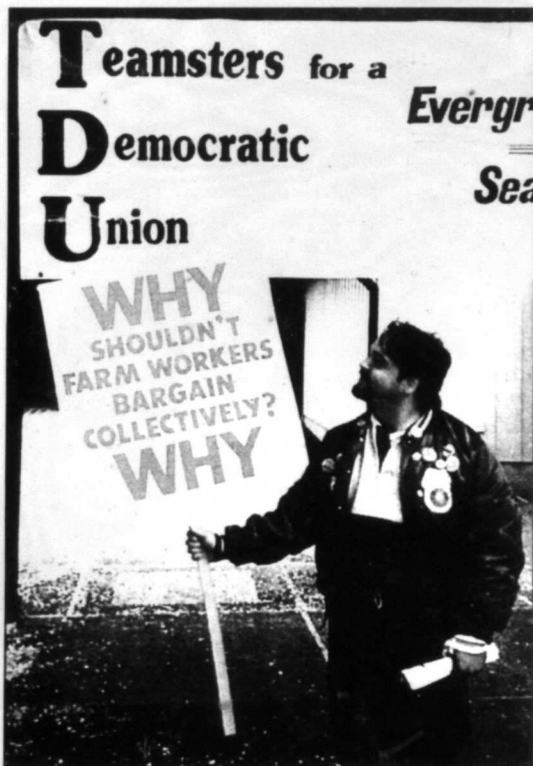
Fighting the Old Guard

Rich and Doug were elected as reform delegate and alternate delegate to the 1991 International Teamsters convention. They then played a key role in defeating the Old Guard in electing reformers to the leadership of their local, Local 174. They also played a key role in getting Ron Carey elected in 1991, and defeating the Old Guard at the top of the Teamsters Union.

There are stories of Rich driving up to a Teamster picket line, stopping and opening the trunk of his car to help feed the workers. On one occasion he had 300 sandwiches he had made for the workers on strike. On one Super Bowl Sunday, he brought food, drink and also his TV so workers on the picket line could watch the game.

Joined Labor Militant

It was at this time that we met Doug, and then Rich. With the reformers failing to carry through with their principles, especially in Seattle, Rich took the struggles of the 1934 Minneapolis Teamsters as the correct method of struggle, and saw Labor Militant as fighting to preserve those traditions, and joined us very soon after Doug. As the reformers



Rich Kraft

retreated, Rich and Doug stuck by their principles and kept fighting for the needs of the members against an increasingly hostile TDU leadership who looked to protect the Local 174 leadership from criticism. Rich threw himself into the struggles of other workers and youth.

He keenly felt the exploitation of low-paid workers. In particular, when Everett City Council decided to pass legislation to create a curfew for youth in downtown Everett, he threw himself into the struggle. He was the first caller to speak on a radio show to debate the issue. He worked with us to organize a picket outside City Hall, and then spoke at the meeting comparing the privileges of the City Councillors and the rich to what was available for youth in the city. On the Labor Party, he fought for Local 174 to support a labor party.

Labor Party

He found out how the LPA in Seattle

more privileged full-time workers, "real" Teamsters, over the part-time casuals, failed to fight his firing. After a year without work he was finally reinstated, but was unjustly fired again a couple of months later. Despite our picketing the place, along with other striking ACME Teamsters who Rich had supported day in day out for the previous period and who now joined him on his picket line, he never got reinstated. During the last year and more of being unemployed he worked as a casual on the docks. He was one step away from qualifying as a longshoremen's union member.

Fighter to the End

It was during this time that Rich was hit by Wegener's disease, a very rare and dangerous disease. Its early appearance was of a severe flu. Over time it attacked his blood system and his major organs. In the second half of 1996 he was fighting for his life. But the disease was too strong for him.

Despite the doctors saying this was the worst case of Wegener's they had ever seen, he fought it to the last. On Thursday, February 27th, surrounded by family and friends, he passed away at 12:59 p.m. when his heart failed.

Rich is survived by his wife Gayle and teenage daughter from a previous relationship, Jen. All our thoughts and concerns go with them.

Sense of Humor

Rich will never be forgotten. His infectious sense of humor, his distinctive cackling laugh which cracked us up, and his boundless energy touched many workers and activists. His sharp political instincts have helped workers in many struggles.

Members in the Local would often say, "We don't agree with what you say, but we appreciate the fact that you have brought it up." His other passions were yard sales and collecting. On yard sales he was a maestro at collecting what was seemingly junk and proving during yard sales that these objects were of great value to someone.

Rich Inspired us All

This helped enormously in our finance campaigns. Equally sharp was his instinct for spotting dealers who would visit our yard sales, for whom he would double the price and refuse to budge.

Rich inspired us all. His struggles will not be forgotten. The efforts he put into building Labor Militant will be with us always. The sound of his laughter still rings in my ears. We will continue our fight alongside his efforts. His laughter and sense of right and wrong will always be with us.

Tony Wildon

Victimization

As a result of this and other activities, management moved to fire him on trumped up charges, and the business agent in the local, who defended the

SOUNDS OF THE REVOLUTION PART III

HIP-HOP AND THE '90S

The popularity and commercialization of Rap grew through the late 70's into 80's, developing the art form from its early beginnings to a cultural force and bringing the voices of oppressed youth into every American home. As the struggles of youth in the ghettos continued to mount, from drugs to permanent unemployment, the anger was expressed through the music. Thus posing a major question to these young revolutionaries of music: How to answer the attacks of Corporate American during an ebb in the class struggle?



The 90's Bring us Hip-Hop

As the 90's began, the music of a few artists like Arrested Development carried a positive message of upliftment and self-determination. The popularity of Gangsta Rap raged on—the horror stories of shoot outs, police beatings and gang violence continued to be told to the world. With the violence in the community escalating, the influx of violence, gang affiliations and drugs within Hip-Hop grew. The so-called East vs West coast feud and the deaths of Tupac Amaru Shakur and Christopher Wallace aka Notorious B.I.G. now has the Hip-Hop generation calling for peace and understanding.

The struggle hold that Big Business has on Hip-Hop means that its values and divide & conquer policy are also reflected in the music. World Capitalism expands

and profits while the wars rage in Rwanda and Bosnia, and human life is destroyed. Big business and the music industry makes millions from Hip-Hop off the backs of its artists, global appeal and mainly its various message of violence, money, sex and drugs. All created from the effects of Capitalism in the communities of the working class and poor, the birthplace of Rap and Hip-Hop.

Hip-Hop to the left

Hip-Hop artists with left ideas are bringing back the old sound and message of the 60's and 70's with a 90's flavor. They're playing live instruments and the role of reality check for the Hip-Hop nation and their big business backers.

The music of Gil Scott Heron, the Last Poets, Public Enemy and KRS One has opened the door for the new left artists in the music of the 90's. The Fugees, a refer-

ence to refugees and the diminished status that poor emigrants from countries like Mexico and Haiti face in the US, exploded onto the world stage with their Grammy award winning album *The Score*. Songs like "Fu-Gee-La," and remakes of Roberta Flack's "Killing Me Softly" and Bob Marley's "No Women, No Cry" brought an international flavor to Hip-Hop, a sound made for all people to groove and think to at the same time. In addition to the Fugees, Roots, Rage Against the Machine, Speech, Wu-Tang Clan, A Tribe Called Quest, Erykah Badu, Nas and Gang Star's Guru are at the forefront of Hip-Hop-Soul-Rock. They can play a major role in educating young people about the past-present struggles and what the future has in store for the masses.

Without the context of the mass movements of the early 50's to early 70's, the struggle to continue to create music that

reflects the interest of working people and poor people becomes important for Hip-Hop if it is to survive into the next century. Hip-Hop cannot replace a movement based among working class and poor people, but it can help overcome the alienation, and fragmentation of our society, to move people under one groove towards new ideas, reality and liberation from Capitalism.

ELJEER HAWKINS
New York

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VIDEO REVIEW

RUMBLE IN THE JUNGLE

BY JOHN REID

This film focuses on the life and career of Muhammad Ali and in particular his 1974 fight against George Foreman in Zaire. Formerly known as Cassius Clay, Ali won a gold medal at the 1960 Olympics in Rome. When he returned home, he was told he could not eat in restaurants because "Negros are not served." Ali responded by throwing his medal in the river.

In 1964, Ali won the world heavyweight championship with his uncanny ability and the speed of a lightweight.

The film shows how Ali became more political, outraged by the treatment of black people in this country and how he joined the Nation of Islam. The establishment always hated him for this, since they prefer the highly visible champions to be subservient and non-political.

But the turning point for Ali came when he refused the draft to fight in the Vietnam war. If he had gone, he would have been used by the establishment for propaganda. But Ali said: "Ain't got no quarrel with the Vietcong" and "no Vietnamese has ever called me a nigger." Ali refused to fight on religious grounds, but it was his stand as a black activist that annoyed the establishment. In his own words: "I made a stand



all people, not just black people, should have thought about making, because it was not just black people being drafted. The government had a system where the rich man's son went to college and the poor man's son went to war..."

"I am expected to go overseas to help free people in South Vietnam, and at the same time my people are being brutalized and mistreated, and this is really the same thing that's happening in Vietnam." Ali became one of the most recognized faces on the planet—a symbol of resistance against war and oppression.

As a result, Ali was stripped of his pas-

port and his titles. After three and a half years out of the ring, he made a comeback, and after two losses, regained his title in Zaire. The director, Leon Gast went to film the fight together with a black music festival featuring BB King, James Brown, and the Detroit Spinners.

Gast shows briefly in the film the struggle against imperialism in Zaire and how the now deposed Mobutu won the civil war against the left wing forces. The brutality and corruption of the regime is shown as in the build up for the Foreman-Ali bout, thousands of trouble-makers are arrested, held in a stadium and at least 100 were shot.

The film shows highlights from the fight against Foreman as well as clips of Ali's greatest fights. Ali fought another 22 times after the bout with Foreman and won 19 of those, but he suffered terrible punishment, which has led to his present medical condition. Ali was pushed into fights when doctors advised him to retire. He made millions but he lost his health. Promoters like Don King and television magnets made millions without ever having to take a blow on the head.

Even if you detest boxing see this video. Ali, the greatest, was more than a boxer—he is one of the true heroes of the century.

Congratulations

to

Dino & Michele

on the arrival
of their baby

Juliana Barbara

Born March 9, 1997

Labor Militant

FOR LABOR & YOUTH • WORKING CLASS UNITY & SOCIALISM

JULY - AUGUST 1997

Labor Militant 11 YEARS OF STRUGGLE

MONTHLY JUSTICE STARTS PUBLICATION IN SEPTEMBER

Labor Militant was first published in May 1986 by a handful of dedicated activists and young people to provide a conscious socialist alternative to the working class and the youth in the United States. American big business is in crisis and is attempting to off-load this crisis onto the backs of American workers and workers and peasants internationally." (LM issue #1)

We wanted to answer the lies of big business, and arm workers with the facts and figures necessary for their struggles. Furthermore, we said "we will campaign for organizing the unorganized and for the unions to build a labor party as an alternative to the parties of big business..." and to patiently explain the necessity of socialist ideas and a socialist program in the broader labor movement.

In its 11 years of publication, the *Labor Militant* reported and argued the socialist case on every major strike, struggle and event that took place. We covered the string of defeats that the labor movement suffered in the 1980s and '90s arguing for an alternative policy to mobilize the working class against the concessions, givebacks and union-busting of big business. We challenged the arguments of the union leadership that there was no "alternative" and called for militant policies, a break with the Democrats and to build a Labor Party.

Labor Militant exposed the vicious racist oppression and police brutality of minorities, as well as the oppression of women, gays and immigrants arguing for the need of a united working class struggle to overcome division. Over the years we had several articles popularizing the idea of a 32-hour work week without loss of pay and a \$10/hour minimum wage to fight low pay and unemployment. *Labor Militant* exposed the viciousness, corruption and environmental disaster inherent in the capitalist system.

Labor Militant maintained an intransigent policy against the military interventions of US imperialism in Iraq, Bosnia, Haiti, Nicaragua and other countries. We opposed NAFTA arguing that it was and is a vicious attack on the living standards of workers and poor people in Mexico, Canada and the US. Understanding the necessity to organize internationally, *Labor Militant* covered the heroic movements, general strikes and struggles of workers across the globe as part of the Committee for a Workers' International (CWI) which is active in over 33 countries.

In the late 1980s and early '90s we witnessed the collapse of the stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe and Russia and the failure of the initial movements to overthrow the bankrupt bureaucracy and establish healthy workers' democracy. Instead, capitalism was restored, and a new period opened up in which the ideas of socialism were thrown back and international capitalism launched a massive new offensive against working people across the globe with mass unemployment, poverty wages, exploitation and starvation.

Labor Militant defended the ideas of solidarity, struggle, internationalism and socialism and pointed out that there will be increased movements of organized working class resistance internationally. We saw these ideas confirmed with the Zapatista uprising, the magnificent struggles of the French, Italian and Korean workers and the countless other militant struggles that are taking place across the globe.

Labor Militant did more than just publish articles. *Labor Militant* argued for a concrete, fighting program to confront the crisis workers face. Members and branches of *Labor Militant* actively participated in the day-to-day struggles of workers

and young people. Members of *Labor Militant* and other socialists played a pivotal role in the development of the newly-formed Labor Party in several cities. Members of *Labor Militant* played crucial roles in their unions fighting for democracy and against the do-nothing policies of the bureaucracy. Over the past 11 years, supporters of *Labor Militant* were involved in the struggles to defend immigrants; in the fight against racism, sexism, and homophobia; in the struggle to defend public education, healthcare and standing up against domestic violence. We organized solidarity campaigns for prisoners in the US and internationally and tours for political activists visiting this country.

One of the things that keeps *Labor Militant* grounded in the working class is that the funding for its production comes completely from sales and the regular monthly donations of its supporters. We can only thank the hundreds of people who have generously given to support this working class newspaper. *Labor Militant* is sold on the streets, at demonstrations and rallies, at factory gates, in picket lines and in working class neighborhoods in several cities.

But it is now time for a change. *Labor Militant* will be incorporated into the new, monthly publication *Justice* (For Solidarity, Struggle and Socialism) which will be ready for Labor Day this September. The monthly *Justice* will be able to provide more timely reports, analysis and answers to the problems workers and young people face. We will try to make the new journal more accessible to the newer generation of activists and build new links with the struggles that develop. *Justice* will continue to defend and popularize the ideas of genuine socialism and internationalism, for strong, militant and democratic unions, for workers' candidates against the Republicans and Democrats and a mass and electoral Labor Party.

As always, we will rely on the generosity, determination and commitment of our supporters and readers to spread the message and ideas of democratic socialism. We are confident that *Justice* will be able to surpass the successes of *Labor Militant* in educating and bringing new activists into the struggle and will help build an effective movement against capitalism.

We would like you to join us! We need your articles, pictures, and reports. Send in a generous contribution! Take a collection at your workplace or among your friends. Order a bundle of papers to distribute and get in touch with other *Labor Militant* organizers in your area. We have a world to win!

The Editors



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