



Workers of the World, Unite!

The MICHIGAN

socialist

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**Fight privatization!
Water is a right!**

The *Michigan Socialist* is the voice of the Socialist Party of Michigan (SPMI), affiliate of the Socialist Party USA. Party address: P.O. Box 3285, Kalamazoo, MI 49009-3285; e-mail: editor@mi-socialists.org; WWW: <http://news.mi-socialists.org>.

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Socialist Party USA: Outline of Principles

THE SOCIALIST PARTY strives to establish a radical democracy that places people's lives under their own control: where working people own and control the means of production and distribution, through democratically-controlled committees and assemblies; where full employment is realized for everyone who wants to work; where workers have the right to form unions freely, and to strike and engage in other forms of job actions; and where the production of society is used for the benefit of all humanity, not for the private profit of a few. We believe socialism and democracy are one and indivisible.

The Socialist Party fights for progressive changes compatible with a socialist future. We support union and electoral actions — independent of the capitalist-controlled two-party system — to present socialist alternatives. We strive for democratic revolutions — radical and fundamental changes in the structure and nature of economic, political and social relations — to abolish the power now exercised by the few who control the economy and the government.

The Socialist Party is a democratic, multi-tendency organization, with structure and practices visible and accessible to all members.

commentary Class struggle in the paint

OK, I ADMIT IT. I was one of those people who thought the Detroit Pistons should have won, but did not think they could.

I fell for the propaganda.

As much as I wanted the fellas to go to work and send the Lakers back to La-La Land on the redeye flight west, I didn't think it was going to happen.

I was glad to be proven wrong.

But, having had moments during the NBA Finals to sit and think about what I was seeing — think about exactly how thoroughly I was being proven wrong — I thought long and hard about that word I used above: *propaganda*.

The propaganda machine had been in full force throughout most of the 2003-04 NBA season.

For most sports commentators, this year's finals amounted to "the Lakers and them" — the "them" being whoever was to be unlucky enough to face Los Angeles and get spanked in the series.

The Lakers were the darlings of the NBA — the biggest superstar team since the days when Michael Jordan, Scottie Pippen and Dennis Rodman made teams fear coming into the Windy City.

The Los Angeles lineup looked like some future NBA Hall of Fame induction ceremony: Shaquille O'Neal; Kobe Bryant; Karl Malone; Luke Walton (son of NBA Hall of Famer Bill Walton); Phil Jackson (former coach of the NBA champion Chicago Bulls); etc.

The Lakers had punished their opponents throughout the regular season and playoffs, and were expected to do the same to whomever they faced in the Finals.

So, what happened?

It may sound funny, but I think it ended up being a class question.

You read that right.

What we saw during the NBA Finals was, in my opinion, the closest to class struggle on a basketball court that many of us have ever seen.

Los Angeles was the embodiment of "middle class" superstardom. Not only were the guys in the paint as famous off the court as they were on it, but so were many of those who regularly attended Lakers games.

It was Hollywood — fame, fortune and



MARTIN
SCHREADER

drama. It was the media-contrived "American Dream" on hardwood.

And then there was Detroit.

The Pistons were everything the Lakers were not. The Lakers were superstars in their own right; the Pistons were relative unknowns.

The Lakers played that kind of "superstar" basketball that Michael Jordan, Allen Iverson and, yes, Shaquille O'Neal made the trend of the 1990s.

The Pistons, on the other hand, played like a team — a close-knit, we-all-need-each-other kind of team.

This clash of styles reflected the outlooks that each team had of themselves.

THE LAKERS WERE "Showtime" — individualist stars seeking fame and glory for themselves first (even though, at times, the fame was not exactly what they wanted, as in the current rape trial of Bryant).

The Pistons, on the other hand, saw themselves in the shadow of industrial Detroit.

"Let's go to work," was the slogan; the factory steam whistle was their call to arms.

The Lakers identified with their entertainment patrons and "middle class" fame-seekers. The Pistons were united with their working brothers and sisters.

Could the differences have been any clearer?

If not, the media certainly did its best to point them out ... and show how the Lakers' individualism would wash over the Pistons.

The Pistons were "uppity" in the eyes of the media.

They were "brash;" they played "ugly" basketball; they were "out of their league."

But after the Pistons beat the Lakers in Game One at L.A.'s Staples Center, you could already begin to see the media get unnerved.

Game Two may have given them some

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lead article

Fight capitalist privatization!

Water is a human right!

By MATT ERARD

The Michigan Socialist

IN THE PAST few years we have witnessed an increase in the privatization and commodification of water at an exceptional pace.

For decades, water privatization has been a hallmark of structural adjustment programs (SAPs) imposed on poor countries by the International Monetary Fund and World Bank, as a condition for loans.

It was this routine policy that forced the citizens of Cochabamba, Bolivia, to shut-down their city for a week in early 2000 and endure brutally violent retaliation from their government after IMF-imposed privatization policies cut off access to water for many and caused water rates to double across the board.

In South Africa, the only country in the world in which the citizens' right to water is in the constitution, over 10 million citizens have had their water shut off since the imposition of the World Bank's "cost recovery program," in which the availability of water is contingent upon the water company's ability to cover its cost plus profit.

One result has been over 100,000 people in South Africa's province of Kwazulu-Natal becoming infected with cholera after water sanitation services were shut-off because of non-payment.

Last March, police opened fire on the Gauteng Anti-Privatization Forum (APF) in Johannesburg, South Africa.

Fifty-two members of APF were arrested, including six children, for violating the Gatherings Act, an apartheid-era law granting police broad powers to obstruct and ban protest activity.

Similar conditions have existed in the Middle East for decades, where water, for the most part, is far more valuable than oil as a commodity.

As first revealed in detail in *Mechiro shel Ihud*, a comprehensive book of Israeli cabinet records between 1967 and 1977, water remains one of the pivotal reasons for the

continuance of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, where Israel gets roughly one-third of its water supply.

As a result, Palestinians in the West Bank are forbidden from digging deep wells, preventing Palestinian farmers from using more water per day for farming than Israeli city dwellers are allotted for drinking.

Likewise, privatization and control of the Tigris River will also likely be one of the final results of the U.S. invasion of Iraq as the Mount Hermon watershed and Litani River was for the Israeli invasion of Lebanon.

For the United States, the control of citizens' access to water is not only an end for invasions, but also a tactic for when they begin.

From the U.S. invasion of North Korea to the 2003 invasion of Iraq, the systematic singling out of water treatment facilities, sewage systems and dykes as "soft targets" for bombing has become a standard operating procedure for the U.S. military.

Clearly the commoditization of water and the use of water deprivation as a weapon of war is nothing new for the United States ruling class or any of its international fronts.

What has expanded in recent years is the centrality of water as a focus for these ends.

WITHIN THE BORDERS of the United States, this augmented focus has hit Michigan the hardest.

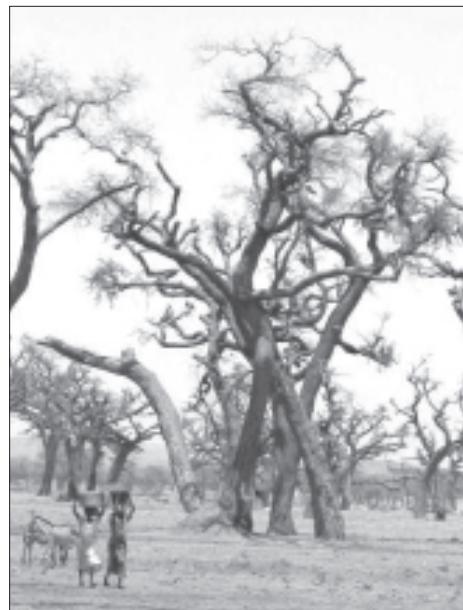
The number of homes in Detroit and Highland Park that have had their water shut off due to non-payment is now over 100,000, resulting from a crackdown by Detroit Water and Sewage Department chief, and former Thames Water and United Water Companies executive, Victor Mercado.

Meanwhile, city corporations that account for three-fourths of the overdue money face no threat of shut-offs.

The Nestlé Corporation, through its subsidiary Ice Mountain, continues to pump 200 million gallons of Michigan's water per



Above: A Vietnamese farmer pours water over his head to cool off. Below: Women carry water in Kenya. Both sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia are becoming targets of water privatization schemes orchestrated by the IMF and World Bank.





Members of the Highland Park Human Rights Coalition protest outside of a stage-managed "Day of Dialogue" organized by Governor Jennifer Granholm.

year to bottle and sell back to Michigan citizens and others around the Midwest for profit, without paying a cent for the water it takes.

Last November, Judge Lawrence Root ordered Nestlé to halt operations at its Mecosta County bottling plant after a suit was brought against them by Michigan Citizens for Water Conservation.

Before the December deadline to end operations, however, Nestlé was granted an emergency stay by the Michigan Court of Appeals under pressure from Governor Jennifer Granholm.

While attorney general, Granholm referred to Nestlé's theft as "export and diversion" of Michigan Water, and campaigned on removing Ice Mountain.

Since her election as governor, however, she has remained even cozier with the company than former Republican Governor John Engler.

After warnings that the economic crisis in Highland Park, in which 38.3 percent of the population are below the poverty line, could likely cause a second Benton Harbor if something wasn't done, Granholm again chose the option most beneficial the capitalist class without any regard for the long-term interest of the city's working people.

Granholm, through the city's state-appointed Emergency Financial Manager Ramona Henderson-Pearson, proposed a plan to the Highland Park city council to privatize the Highland Park Water Department under the control of private management

firm, Rothchild-Wright Group LLC, an uncannily secretive company that provides no information on its history or background even to its potential clients.

The contract would allow the company to keep the vast majority of the profits from the water system and require the city to pay back all of the company's investment within a specified period of time or be foreclosed upon by the company.

Citizens of Highland Park packed the City Council meeting on May 24, along with members of the Highland Park Human Rights Coalition and the Socialist Party of Michigan, to demand that the council vote no on the proposed contract.

Joseph M. Wright, representing the company, dodged every question that came from city councilors and citizens, urged the council to ignore the "streetcorner revolutionaries" from the Socialist Party and vote in favor of the proposal.

By a vote of 4-1, the City Council voted down the proposed contract resulting in cheers and applause from the citizens both inside and outside the courtroom where the meeting was held.

Wright held a brief press conference outside the building after the decision was made where he declared that his company "will not take 'no' for an answer," and will continue to explore other options to take control of the city water department.

WITH THE EVENTS we have witnessed in recent years pertaining to the private con-

trol of water both at home and abroad, there are two vital questions to ask:

First, why is there an increased focus on the commoditization of water? Second, why is Michigan presently the primary target within the United States?

There is no question that tightened SAPs from the IMF and World Bank are a significant factor.

Even without the backbone of military force, these programs allow the United States and other great-power capitalist countries that compose the Group of Eight (G8) to mandate privatization policies of all kinds throughout the world even within countries whose governments attempt to resist them.

Among all of the public resources and institutions affected by privatization policies, however, there are important reasons that water exceeds the others as a current central focus.

Along with increased population growth and climate change, capitalism's environmental policies, lack of cooperative economic planning, and continuous need for short term gain has resulted in water becoming an increasingly scarce resource at epidemic heights.

Currently over 1.1 billion of the world's people lack access to clean water and 2.4 billion lack access to proper sanitation.

According to the 2003 United Nations World Water Development Report, the global water crisis will reach unprecedented levels and a dramatically increased per capita scarcity in the years ahead.

As the scarcity of clean drinking water increases, so does its value as a commodity. The profit system is following its very nature by taking the necessary steps to reap the fruits of the epidemic it caused.

Another reason for the central focus on water is a human being's dependency on it for survival.

Water privatization and commoditization is a way that the ruling class can constantly remind the working people that its survival and the satisfaction of its most basic physiological needs are dependent on its productive output for capitalist profit-making.

For workers to deviate from doing so can cause any of them to interchangeably become part of the unneeded "surplus population," whose fundamental rights to life and subsistence are only privileges.

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Revolution or counterrevolution?

Venezuela's Bolivarian Republic at the crossroads

By **MARTIN SCHREADER**

Editor, the *Michigan Socialist*

THE MOST RECENT events in the South American country of Venezuela have brought its ongoing democratic revolution to a critical stage.

This democratic movement, called the “Bolivarian Revolution,” swept into power in December 1998 with the election of Hugo Chavez Frias as president.

The Bolivarians went right to work. Within a year of being elected, the Bolivarian movement called a national referendum to adopt a new, democratic constitution, which passed overwhelmingly.

Chavez won re-election under the new constitution in 2000.

A year later, in December 2001, he proposed close to 50 new laws meant to codify the aims of the democratic revolution, including regulations on land reform, railroad construction and the oil industry.

The combination of a new constitution and the reforms proposed by Chavez outraged the Venezuelan capitalists and their imperialist paymasters — particularly the U.S. Even though the state apparatus was still quite capitalist in character, the capitalists had lost control of its administration.

The capitalists vowed to regain control ... by any means necessary.

In April 2002, the capitalists conspired with the military and police forces to provoke a coup d'état.

In response, the Bolivarians called a massive march in the capital, Caracas, as well as organized loyal soldiers to retake the presidential palace and return Chavez to office.

Eight months later, the capitalists tried again to force the ouster of Chavez.

Working this time with their lieutenants



Hundreds of thousands of supporters of Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez and the Bolivarian Revolution rally in Caracas.

in the official labor union federation, the bosses organized a massive lockout of workers and sought to get the military to once again depose Chavez.

This time, the workers of Venezuela took matters into their own hands.

Workers in the oil industry broke through the capitalists' lines and occupied

the refineries.

The union movement split, with militant pro-Bolivarian workers organizing their own union federation and leaving the old pro-capitalist union bureaucracy to their own devices.

Millions of workers took to the streets to stop the coup plotters from succeeding.

The second attempt to crush the Bolivarian revolution collapsed and Chavez was still president.

THROUGHOUT 2003, the capitalists have attempted to reorganize and take another crack at forcing Chavez out and reversing the Bolivarian Revolution.

Their current tactic has been taking advantage of a provision in the new constitution that allows for the recall of the president.

The two main capitalist parties, AD (“Democratic Action”) and Copei (“Christian Socialists”), have poured millions of dollars into funding a petitioning drive to gather the signatures necessary for a referendum.

As of this writing, the National Electoral Council (an independent body established by the new constitution) has declared that the capitalist opposition has just barely achieved the necessary number of signatures.

This means that there will be a national referendum in August to decide whether to recall Chavez.

The petitioning drive has severely polarized the Venezuelan people, mainly along class lines.

The workers and poor peasants of Venezuela are solidly supporting Chavez and the Bolivarians.

The capitalists and their “middle class” appendages, along with the labor aristocracy, are backing the old parties and the recall.

Even though the capitalists are in a minority in Venezuela, they have a powerful ally that could tip the scales in their favor: American capitalism.

Ever since Chavez came to power, the U.S. government has done everything it can short of full-scale invasion to aid the overthrow of the Bolivarian Revolution.

Washington has provided money, equipment, logistical support and even the occasional mercenary unit to help crush the democratic movement.

In this election year, both of the main



Making the links: Bolivarian supporter uses the example of the war crimes committed by the U.S. at Abu Gh'raib prison in Iraq to demonstrate what will happen to Venezuelans if the pro-U.S. capitalist opposition succeeds.

capitalist candidates — George W. Bush and John F. Kerry — have decidedly thrown their support behind the Venezuelan capitalists, and have even went so far as to threaten “regime change” if Chavez does not give in.

Both Bush and Kerry have called Chavez a “dictator” (or, wishing to be more equivocal, have said he was “becoming a dictator”).

This is rich coming from a pair of billionaire capitalist plutocrats, one of whom was illegally installed in the White House by family friends sitting on the Supreme Court of the United States.

Both Bush and Kerry would hope to ever receive the proportionate level of mass support Chavez has — over 60 percent of the near 80 percent of the population who voted in the last election.

THIS COMING AUGUST, the people of Venezuela will once again have to affirm their support for the Bolivarian Revolution by going to the polls and voting against the recall of Chavez.

Should this happen, then it should be taken as a mandate by the Bolivarians to take the decisive steps forward.

After the defeat of the coups of April and December 2002, the capitalists were severely weakened and discredited.

In both cases, the situation was ripe for taking the Revolution to the next level and advancing toward a democratic socialist

society.

But the Bolivarian leadership, limited by their left-populist political viewpoint, hesitated in both instances, allowing the capitalists to regroup and reorganize.

At the same time, the rank and file of the Bolivarian movement has been pushing to move the revolution forward.

However, it appears that Chavez and a significant section of the democratic movement are beginning to see that the only way to deepen and extend the Bolivarian Revolution is to go beyond capitalism.

Recently, Chavez declared that the revolution was now in its “anti-imperialist” stage, and he and his Bolivarian movement have taken steps to that effect.

Last month, Chavez called for a general arming of the people and the organization of “workers’ and people’s militia” to defend the resources of the country from sabotage and plunder by the capitalists.

As well, he has been purging large sections of the state apparatus, removing certain “disloyal” military brass and police chiefs from their posts.

This purging process has also included removing hesitating and ineffective elements from his own movement’s leadership.

However, he has not touched the main levers of power that the capitalists hold over the Bolivarians — the banking institutions

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feature

The Gipper meets the reaper

The life and crimes of Ronald Reagan

By BEN BURGIS

The Michigan Socialist

ON JUNE 5, a very old man finally passed on, not violently and not in pain, but from the inevitable onset of age and disease, after having spent his last years in the lap of luxury receiving the best medical care available to any one.

The man in question was not the sort of good, kindly old man who had made no enemies who many might be expected to grieve for even in circumstances so fortunate.

Quite the opposite.

A former head of state, he had overseen a particularly violent turn in the policies of the most powerful empire in the history of the world.

A pathological liar, he broke the law to sell weapons to sworn enemies and conceal the act from his public and from the highest elected body in the land.

He used the funds from those sales to subsidize the actions of vicious terrorism against a diplomatically non-aligned, democratically elected government that displeased him, and was condemned by the

World Court for war crimes for mining the harbors of that nation.

All in all, he ordered or had a hand in the killings of thousands of soldiers and civilians around the world.

A life-long, notorious and unrepentant bribe-taker who accepted all manner of expensive personal favors from those with a stake in his political decisions, he bankrupted his country buying worthless and redundant weapons systems and paid for it all by cutting social services to the most desperately poor residents of his society.

The man in question, of course, was Ronald Reagan, and since he died a torrent of grief for him and tribute to his many great deeds has dominated the radio and television airwaves and filled the pages of mainstream newspapers.

The *New York Times* memorialized him as the very personification of "old-time values."

Here in Michigan, Governor Jennifer Granholm heaped praise on Reagan's "optimistic vision" and "ability to inspire the people to great things."

President Bush praised him in terms that might sound mildly exaggerated if applied



to the likes of Abraham Lincoln, and his nominal "opposition candidate" John Kerry suspended all campaigning for five days in mourning for, in his words, the "great man."

In his official statement on the matter, Kerry gushed that Americans from "sea to shining sea" should "bow their heads in gratitude" that the "great man" left an "indelible mark on the nation."

TO BE SURE, he did leave an "indelible mark."

One of Reagan's many lasting contributions was the first in a series of "free trade" agreements of the sort that have weakened labor, health, safety and environmental standards, and resulted in massive job loss.

Doubtless laid-off industrial workers working non-union, service industry jobs as a result of the "Gipper's" advances in this area will echo Kerry's sentiments, not to mention the thousands of air traffic controllers he fired (in what the *New York Times* memorialized as a "bold move") for daring to go out on strike.

Mention must also be made of his administration's ruthless prosecution of his

“war on drugs,” a “war” that of course has yet to lead to any decrease in actual use of banned narcotics but that led to an explosion in the rates of imprisonment in the 1980s, mostly of the very poor and disproportionately of Blacks and Chicanos, and mostly for non-violent crimes.

Many inmates of notoriously humane and comfortable correctional facilities serving life sentences for “conspiracy to deliver cocaine” may doubtless be bowing their heads in gratitude for the indelible mark even at this very moment.

Similarly with refugees from Latin American countries who came to the United States to escape the “anti-communist” death squads sponsored by the U.S. government when Reagan was at its head.

Certainly, the family members of the 241 U.S. Marines who Reagan sent to their deaths as part of his bloody colonialist efforts to (as he put it in the 1980 election) “make America stand tall again” will be bowing their heads as well.

Certainly, the widows and orphans of the terrorist atrocities of September 11, 2001, should be bowing their heads in gratitude at the “indelible mark” left on their own lives by the policies of the man who oversaw massive covert operations in Afghanistan in the 1980s, arming and training Osama bin Laden and his cohorts for the purposes of waging “holy war” against the USSR.

For some strange reason, the obituary

that filled several whole pages of the *New York Times* failed to touch on that point, just as most of the testimonials of grief and tribute filling the corporate-owned mass media to overflowing have chosen to leave out or brush past Reagan’s own most notorious act of grieving for the martyred dead.

When President of the United States, on an official visit to Germany, Reagan chose for reasons best known to himself (while declining to visit the sites of any death camps) to lay a wreath of flowers at the cemetery of 49 *Waffen SS* stormtroopers at Bitburg, taking the opportunity to point out that Hitler’s most ideologically zealous inner core of killers “were victims too.”

Perhaps the man who ordered the deaths of thousands in order to battle the pernicious influence of “godless Communism” felt a sense of kinship with the men interred there, who had, after all, dedicated themselves to the same goal, inspired by similarly rousing nationalistic appeals to make the fatherland “stand tall again.”

Physically, he will be buried in the United States, but spiritually he rests at Bitburg.

THE QUESTION THAT begs asking is why the *New York Times* no less than Fox News, Granholm and Kerry no less than Michigan GOP head Betsy DeVos and Bush, feel such a profound sense of kinship with “the great man” who laid that wreath.

Superficially, this seems odd. It would seem that for any one concerned as such



Joined at the hip: In a rare photo, Reagan is seen here with a young George W. Bush.

ruling-class figures are liable to be, with the empire’s “prestige,” Reagan would be an almost uniquely embarrassing presidential figurehead.

For one thing, he was an almost pathological liar, practiced in the skills of deception from an early age.

Before he was ever an actor, he was a sportscaster known for his remarkably captivating blow-by-blow accounts of baseball games.

The little redheaded boy who managed to catch the ball in the stands, the roar of the crowd. Audiences loved it.

The thing about it was, of course, that Reagan never attended the games he was reporting on, but stayed far away in the radio station the whole time, having the developments telegraphed to him and making up most of the details.

Once, when the wire went dead, he narrated what would have been the longest series of foul balls in history until it came back up. This is not a personal smear from his detractors, but a favorite story of Reagan himself, which he told and retold for its sentimental value.

While these came in handy when he secretly sold arms to Iran to subsidize terrorist operations against the democratically elected government of Nicaragua, he was constantly lying when he had little to gain from it, more or less out of habit or desire to appeal to whomever he was talking.

In a 1983 meeting with Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir, Reagan (who had



Remembering the real Reagan: Protester in Los Angeles (left) holds a cross inscribed with the name of someone killed by rightwing death squads in El Salvador financed by the U.S. government. Michael Hasenfus (above) was a CIA agent who ran drugs for the Nicaraguan *contras* fighting the leftist Sandinista government.

feature

spent the war in Hollywood doing training movies for the Army) claimed to have been present at the liberation of the death camps at the end of WWII.

And, let's not forget, this was the towering intellect that thought that ketchup should be considered a "vegetable" for school lunch purposes.

Reagan was, above all, the representative of a major turn in the policies of the ruling class of corporate owners.

STARTING IN THE 1930s, they had felt the need to make important concessions to those at the bottom of society.

The great symbol of this policy was Franklin D. Roosevelt, just as Reagan was the great symbol of its reversal.

Roosevelt is often portrayed (both by liberal Democrats who admire him and by Reaganites who see him as naïve) as a man motivated by humanitarian compassion for the suffering of the poor and downtrodden.

In point of fact, Roosevelt himself was always quite open and public about his real motivations.

When he first achieved the presidency in 1932, his backers were very, very worried by the shift in consciousness from below resulting from the massive poverty, misery and unemployment that accompanied the economic crash.

In an interview with the *New York Graphic* during that campaign, Roosevelt recited a conversation with "an old friend who runs a great western railroad. 'Fred,' I asked him, 'what are the people talking about out there?' 'Frank,' he replied, 'I'm sorry to say the men out here are talking revolution.'"

Driven by that understanding, the capitalist class as a whole, however much some of its individual members may have grumbled about it and resented FDR, much the same way that people resent the dentist even as they schedule appointments, was willing to make important concessions from above to avoid having to have their fortunes expropriated entirely from below.

This was, after all, the same period that saw some of the fiercest episodes of class struggle in American history, like the great Flint sit-down strike of 1936, where factories were temporarily seized by those who worked them, it took pitched battles to get food to the strikers inside and armed guards



Knowing the score: British cartoonist Art Bell, of the UK *Guardian*, pens his own special sendoff to Reagan (above). At a museum in Havana, Cuba, Reagan is enshrined in the "Cretins' Corner," alongside Fulgencio Batista, the Cuban dictator overthrown by Castro's revolutionary guerrillas in 1959 (right).



were stationed at the entrances to the tunnels leading up to the plants.

The fears that Fred confessed to Frank were hardly delusions.

In this context, "short-term demands" were quite literally lifted from the campaign platform of Socialist Party presidential candidate Norman Thomas and incorporated (in a watered-down form) into the legisla-

tive agenda of Roosevelt, as the latter established a social safety net against the worst ravages of poverty and opened the purse strings to public works programs to provide work and income to otherwise angry and restless unemployed workers.

Of course, for Thomas, these were steps in the direction of the qualitative transformation of American society, not sops to help

co-opt resistance to the status quo.

While later in life he capitulated to important parts of Roosevelt's politics, at the time he understood this.

When a friend remarked that at least Roosevelt was carrying out his platform, Thomas replied bitterly that it was being "carried out on a stretcher."

Even after the immediate danger Fred and Frank had conferred about had largely passed, the bipartisan consensus for decades was that, to one extent or another, it would be wise to keep everyone happy by maintaining important aspects of the Rooseveltian "welfare state."

Indeed, when conservative ideologue Barry Goldwater managed to win the Republican nomination in 1964 on a platform of prematurely Reaganite opposition to all of this, the Republican establishment largely abandoned him.

THE SOCIAL TURMOIL of the 1960s, as the inner cities exploded in long-suppressed rage against racism, poverty and oppression, social change movements grew seemingly out of thin air and resistance to the draft and internal resistance by GIs played a critical role in ending the U.S. intervention in Vietnam, all at least temporarily cemented this consensus.

By the time the Reagan presidency rolled around, however, all of this had long since passed.

The militant unions of the 1930s and been turned into neutered, bureaucratized shadows of their former selves that could be counted on to mount no serious resistance to the reversal of earlier concessions and the export of American jobs to areas of the "Third World," free from inconveniences like elections, unions and the minimum wage.

The radical movements of the 1960s and early-1970s had largely been destroyed by a combination of cooptation into the Democratic Party, concessions such as the end of the military draft, and outright government repression such as the FBI's notorious COINTELPRO program and the assassinations of prominent Black Panthers.

The left was mostly weakened, disoriented and incapable of causing any problems that the establishment couldn't handle.

There was little reason to maintain large scale concessions to those at the bottom, and the Empire's effectiveness was still hampered by what Norman Podhoretz calls the



... By the friends they keep: Reagan with former Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos (top), who starved the people of his country in order to feed his wife's shoe fetish; Reagan with former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher (middle), who did everything she could to break the trade unions; Reagan's Undersecretary of State, Donald Rumsfeld, with Reagan's friend, former Iraqi President Saddam Hussein (bottom), who acquired all of his weapons of mass destruction from his American pals.

"sickly inhibitions against the use of military force" accrued in the Vietnam era.

In this dramatically changed context, Reagan was the man of the hour.

With whatever charm and charisma he had developed in his career as a second-rate actor, he was fit to be something like a spokesman for an ideology of renewed zeal in the Cold War "struggle of good against evil," and a pseudo-individualistic "anti-government" stance that justified redistribution of wealth from the bottom up.

With his expertise at lying and his soothing, grandfatherly persona, he was the ideal front man for attacks on the economic interests of most of the population and for crimes against humanity abroad, such as his brutal "preemptive" invasion of the tiny and defenseless nation of Grenada for the crime of (horror upon horrors) *building an airport*.

After all, one can't rule out the possibility that the Soviet Union could have used that airport to launch air strikes against the United States!

THE CAPITALIST MEDIA mourns Ronald Reagan because he is the hero of the segment of society that owns the media.

He made their empire "stand tall again," with mountains of corpses abroad and vast reserves of poverty and misery at home to show for it.

His administration's economic and military policies setting the bipartisan agenda the has been followed by the representatives of both corporate-funded parties for the last twenty four years.

One can put it like this: *Reagan is not so much dead as undead, like a vampire who walks at night after ceasing to draw breath.*

His body may be dead, but his policies continue to terrorize the world.

The greatest political imperative at this point history is to build a democratic socialist alternative to the bipartisan Reaganite consensus, capable of collectively organizing his victims to drive a stake through the old bastard's heart. ★

national Federal court overturns 'partial-birth abortion' ban

By **L. MEYERS**

The Michigan Socialist

ON JUNE 1, a federal judge in San Francisco, Calif., ruled that the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003 was unconstitutional on the grounds that it violated a woman's right to choose.

In her mammoth 117-page ruling, U.S. District Court Judge Phyllis Hamilton stated that the Act had three central "flaws" that mandated declaring it unconstitutional.

The Act was signed into law amid great fanfare after both houses of Congress overwhelmingly approved it, since it was a key part of the anti-woman agenda of the Bush regime and its Christian-fundamentalist base.

The first "flaw" was that the Act placed an undue burden on a woman's right to choose any time up to the point when a fetus can survive outside of the womb with the aid of technology (about 24 weeks; almost six months).

The second and third "flaws" relate to the wording of the Act.

The language of the Act was vague and could be interpreted to ban other similar means for terminating a pregnancy; as well, there was no provision in the Act for exceptions to the ban in cases where the life and health of the mother are at stake.

Judge Hamilton sharply criticized the fact that basic medical understanding, in terms of the language and definitions provided in the legislation, was obviously lacking from the Act — which left a lot of it up to "interpretation."

This was no accident.

For years, the far-right Christian fundamentalists have sought to redefine the medical procedure known as "Dilation and Extraction" (D&X) as "partial-birth abortion," even though the vast majority of these procedures are done in instances where carrying the fetus to term would cause irrepara-



Hangin' with the boys: Bush signs the "Partial-Birth Abortion Act of 2003" with all of its main movers and supporters.

ble harm to the mother.

The "dumbed down" definitions in the Act, according to Hamilton, could be used to ban the more common "Dilation and Evacuation" and Induction procedures, thus making 95 percent of the second-trimester abortions illegal.

Without a doubt, this was precisely the plan of the Act's authors and sponsors in Congress and the White House.

Ever since the *Roe v. Wade* decision in 1973, anti-choice forces have sought to overturn a woman's right to abortion services.

However, *Roe's* importance was not in its legalizing of access to abortion services per se, but rather it was that it gave poor and working-class women the same rights that wealthy women of the capitalist could purchase by going to Europe.

This fact more than anything else has made *Roe* a target of the anti-choice and fundamentalist forces.

The Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act of

2003 was raw meat for the religious right.

It was meant to help line up these forces — many of whom have strong ties to the Ku Klux Klan and neo-fascist organizations — in anticipation of the upcoming presidential election.

It is not beyond the imagination to believe that this Act was passed only because it would be challenged in court in 2004, thus making it a "wedge issue" in the upcoming contest between George W. Bush and John F. Kerry.

That is, it was a calculated move on the part of the neoconservatives in Congress and the White House to divert media and public attention away from the deteriorating situation in Iraq and the sinking economy, and focus on the capitalists' "culture war" against working people.

After hearing of Judge Hamilton's ruling, the Bush regime issued a statement that talked a lot about being "committed to building a culture of life in America."

Such words are hollow and hypocritical

coming from a government that has been killing innocent civilians from Iraq to Haiti, and from an individual (Bush) who has a documented history of mocking those whom he placed on death row in Texas and were pleading for their lives.

The right of women to obtain an abortion is central to the right of women to control their own bodies and destinies — rights that Socialists have fought to protect and extend since the founding of our movement.

At those times in history when Socialists opposed the abortion procedure, it was on purely medical grounds; that is, at those times our predecessors felt that the medical procedure was too dangerous, and counterposed comprehensive access to birth control and other forms of contraception as a safer alternative.

Today, with advances in medical technology, the abortion procedure is no more dangerous than most minor surgeries like

endoscopies or laser eye surgery.

Thus, for the anti-choice forces, it is more important than ever to confuse, confound and convolute medical terminology in order to fit their far-right agenda.

For us Socialists, this fact makes it more important than ever to pierce the bubble of ignorance that the capitalists wish to impose on society from above by fighting to expand democracy through education and action. ★

GRANHOLM'S INDEX

A breakdown, by the numbers, about the new cigarette tax in Michigan

Amount in cents per pack that the cigarette tax will rise on July 1, 2004, in Michigan :	75
Percentage of Michigan population that smoke :	43.4
Percentage of Michigan smokers that fall into the general category of "working people" :	70.2
Members of the Michigan State Legislature who can be categorized as "working people" :	0
Number of advisors to the Governor who can be categorized as "working people" :	0
Amount, in dollars, given by the State of Michigan every year to capitalists and their corporations :	14 billion
Amount, in dollars, of the budget shortfall for the 2003-04 State of Michigan budget :	970 million



This Fourth of July, let us remember that the battle cry of the First American Revolution was

NO TAXATION WITHOUT REPRESENTATION!

This message brought to you by the staff of the Michigan Socialist.

Yes, yes, we know smoking is a filthy, disgusting habit, and not one member of the Socialist Party of Michigan who smokes would **EVER** recommend someone take it up. Nevertheless, smokers are people too, and they have rights.

Statistics based on the Behavioral Risk Factors Surveillance Study for 2003 from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (Significant at the .01 level.)

Water

continued from page 16

To increase such a state of desperation among working people is to cause workers' demands to wane and the tolerability of abuse to grow.

It is this same reason that cutting off civilian access to water is so often used as an imperialist weapon of war. In both cases, the end result for the ruling class is the stability and expansion of profit and oppression.

ALTHOUGH THE ISSUES of water privatization and shutoffs in Michigan do not all necessarily relate to Great Lakes water directly, it is the presence of the Great Lakes that has caused Michigan to become the initial prime focus of these policies within the developed world.

Michigan's surrounding lakes compose the largest body of fresh water on the planet, making Michigan the perfect premiere

state for corporations to test how much they can get away with in water privatization schemes and austerity measures.

Corporations have thus realized that pooling their assets toward maneuvering the policies of Michigan's state government and local governments, particularly within Michigan's poorest and most desperate areas, is the next major step toward the commodification of water in the developed world.

Once a sufficient level of progress has been made in cracking open the door to public resources, a point which we have already reached, corporations can then rely on international agreements such as the World Trade Organization and NAFTA which effectively mandate increases in the privatization of public resources once they've begun.

The fact that water bottling companies have not yet attempted to unleash NAFTA and WTO complaints against the State of Michigan over Ice Mountain's exclusive

pumping permit, indicates that these companies are waiting until the door opens further on different fronts within the state, such as the attempted proposal in Highland Park, before taking action through these agreements.

Working people in Michigan need only look to the conditions faced by other workers overseas to see the devastation created by water privatization and control of water from without.

Michigan workers in the cities of Detroit and Highland Park have already experienced the results firsthand through the imposed policies of city governments working in cooperation with multinational corporations.

Michigan workers must fight in solidarity with workers around the world against such regressive policies in order to keep the advances achieved by workers of the past.

The fight for free access to public water is a fight for workers' rights, human rights and the fundamental right to live. ★

Venezuela

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and the petroleum industry — and has not taken on the bulk of the armed state apparatus, including local police allied with the capitalist opposition.

If the referendum fails, and Chavez remains in power, there is little doubt that the capitalists will cry "fraud" and appeal to the Great Power imperialists (most notably the U.S.) to back them in a "regime change."

The capitalists will have to appeal to the imperialists because they will be far too weak at that stage to take any decisive action on their own.

Should such a situation begin to develop, it is necessary for the Bolivarians to seize the initiative and take the first decisive steps toward the overthrow of Venezuelan capitalism.

THERE IS LITTLE doubt that the capitalists will stage a series of provocations across Venezuela to provide an excuse for imperialist intervention.

The Bolivarians, through the workers' and people's militias, could keep these individual provocations in check.

However, this is not enough.

At this stage, it would be entirely justified for Chavez to invoke Articles 115 and

116 of the constitution, and expropriate the private property of those capitalists provoking violence, placing it under public ownership.

As well, it would be justified to extend the decree on expropriation and place all the banking institutions in Venezuela under public ownership, since the capitalists have used their control of the banks as a means to strangle the economy and people.

But public ownership, as a means to deprive the capitalists of a chief source of their power, is only a partial step.

In order for such nationalization to be a genuinely progressive act, control of these newly seized means of production needs to be placed in the hands of the workers themselves.

The embryonic workers' control practiced by the oil workers in December 2002 provides a guide for implementing it across the entire economy.

The local Bolivarian circles in factories and workplaces can be the launching point for democratic assemblies of working people throughout the country.

Aided by the workers' and people's militias, these new workplace assemblies could begin reorganizing and reorienting the economy of Venezuela to meet the needs of the people.

In those states and cities where capitalist politicians and their state confront them,

these workers' assemblies can also serve as the basis for a new municipal and state power — the democratic socialist republic in birth.

Finally, it will be necessary to codify this revolutionary transformation from below.

The most efficient means of doing this is through the convening of the National Constituent Assembly to codify the power of the revolutionary assemblies in the Bolivarian constitution.

If Chavez survives the recall, he should use the occasion of his victory speech as a call for open revolutionary transformation and call the National Constituent Assembly into session immediately.

At this stage, there is no room for hesitation or compromise. The capitalists are looking to drown the Bolivarian democratic revolution in blood.

The only way out — the only way forward — is for the Bolivarians to recognize that it will take the overthrow of the capitalist order to succeed.

They have already begun that process. We can only encourage them and double our efforts here in the U.S. to stop any imperialist interference. ★

An abridged version of this article will appear in the upcoming inaugural issue of the relaunched *Appeal to Reason*.
On the Internet: www.appealtoreason.org

Ballot access

continued from page 16

challenge their status quo, they are expected to do the impossible.

TO BEGIN WITH, the number of signatures required to secure ballot access, according to state election law, is equivalent to 1 percent of the number of people who voted for the winning gubernatorial candidate in the last election: 31,776.

This number, while seeming to be relatively small, is in fact the single greatest impediment to winning ballot access.

In an election year, partisan tensions run high.

This is especially true this year, with the Democratic Party's propaganda machine steadily chanting the mantra of "Anybody But Bush."

In this kind of environment, it is especially difficult to gather petition signatures.

SPMI petitioners ran into situations where activists from both the Democratic and Republican parties not only refused to sign, which is their right, but also actively discouraged others from signing.

This was especially true of members of the Michigan Democrats, who saw us as some kind of challenge to their "ABB" philosophy.

Some "Democrats" they are!

Many times, Party petitioners had to spend long amounts of time explaining to people that all parties have the right to seek

Can you say 'double standard?'

The State of Michigan can!

To run for State House...

As a Republican or Democrat:	As an independent or "Third Party":
Minimum: 200	Minimum: 600
Maximum: 400	Maximum: 1,200
signatures required for ballot access	

To run for U.S. Congress...

As a Republican or Democrat:	As an independent or "Third Party":
Minimum: 1,000	Minimum: 3,000
Maximum: 2,000	Maximum: 6,000
signatures required for ballot access	

Source: www.michigan.gov/sos/0,1607,7-127-1633_8721_11839-64205--,00.html

and obtain ballot access, and that agreeing with that right is not the same as voting for us (or pledging to vote for us).

What was most amazing to SPMI petitioners was that many people were not aware of the restrictive ballot-access laws.

"I thought all you had to do was tell them you want to run," was a statement commonly heard.

But unfamiliarity and partisanship were not the only factors.

According to ballot-access experts, including Richard Winger's *Ballot Access News*, Michigan has one of the most restrictive election laws in the country.

For example, the State of New York, which has twice the population of Michigan, only requires about 15,000 signatures to place an independent presidential candidate, and has no special procedure for placing a party on the ballot.

New Jersey only requires 800 signatures

to place a candidate on the ballot; Illinois, which has almost twice as many people as Michigan, asks for 25,000.

Many states, like Colorado and Louisiana, only ask that you pay a filing fee to place a candidate on the ballot.

Vermont, Mississippi and Florida only ask that you have an organized state party.

Michigan's restrictive ballot-access laws place it near the bottom of the democratic pile.

AND THEN THERE are the double standards written into Michigan's electoral law.

These "standards" favor Republican and Democratic candidates, while actively discouraging independents and "third party" nominees.

For example, if you want to run for U.S. Congress in Michigan as a Republican or Democrat (which may also mean winning a party primary, but that is not always as hard as it seems), you need to collect a minimum of 1,000 signatures.

On the other hand, if you are an independent seeking to win a Congressional seat, you have to collect at least 3,000 signatures.

The same is true for a lower office, like state representative; a Republican or Democrat only has to collect 200 signatures, but an independent has to collect 600.

(But, if they don't want to bother with that, they can simply pay the state \$100 and be placed on the ballot.)

To put it simply, an independent candidate — without the aid of a massive state party, access to large amounts of money and little or no media presence — is expected to collect three times the number of signatures as a Republican or Democrat.

Adding insult to injury is the fact that, in many areas of the state, Republican and

Join the Socialist Party USA

I, the undersigned, desiring to bring about by democratic means a new society based upon democratic socialism, hereby apply for membership in the Socialist Party USA, and subscribe to its principles.

Annual Income Dues

- ☐ Striker/prisoner **FREE**
- ☐ Student **\$10**
- ☐ Under \$20,000 **\$25**
- ☐ \$20,000-35,000 **\$60**
- ☐ \$35,001-50,000 **\$125**
- ☐ \$50,001 and up **\$250**

Waiver for poverty available

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone (optional): (_____) _____

E-Mail (optional): _____

Interests (optional): _____



Send check or money order to P.O. Box 3285, Kalamazoo, Mich. 49009-3285.
Or go online to <http://www.mi-socialists.org/join.html> and sign up.

CLIP HERE AND SEND



Democratic candidates run unopposed for their desired office. All it may take is a single vote (sometimes only a write-in vote!) for them to secure their candidacy.

In other words, a Republican or Democrat only needs the passive support of 1,001 people to be placed on the November ballot as a Congressional candidate, while an independent has to have three times that level of support.

Is there anyone out there willing to call this a fair and impartial process?

This double standard is an open affront to basic democratic standards.

It sends the message that the two main parties — and their moneyed puppeteers — wished to send: the system is theirs, and theirs alone.

THIS NOVEMBER, there will be Socialists appearing on the ballot in Michigan, but as candidates of the Green Party.

The GPMI has been gracious enough to allow SPMI members to run on their ticket as open Socialists, because they rightly understand that it is especially difficult to get “third parties” on the ballot in this state.

(The next issue of the *Michigan Socialist* will list the SPMI candidates running on the Green ticket.)

However, this is not the end of the story.

Many SPMI members have already pledged to work toward obtaining ballot access for the elections in 2006, and have already begun the early preparations for this effort on their own.

At the same time, the question of mounting a legal challenge to Michigan electoral law has been raised, with some SPMI members talking to constitutional lawyers about what it would take to make such a case.

While working people will not be allowed to vote a full Socialist ticket this November, many will still have a chance to vote for red Greens in many places.

Next year, there will be municipal elections across the state.

Members of the Detroit Socialist Party, for example, have already begun organizing to present a democratic socialist alternative to City voters in November 2005.

Based on the relative success our comrade, Carl Williams, had in the elections for Oakland Community College Board of Trustees (see article), we can expect that similar success in 2005 will provide an excellent launching point for placing the SPMI on the ballot in 2006. ★

Detroit

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party made it more important to seek a local charter for the DSP.

At its June meeting, the DSP also elected a Local Executive, consisting of a Chairperson, Secretary, Treasurer and Organizer.

“I think it’s great,” said Martin Schreader, who was elected Chairperson of the DSP.

“Our Party definitely needs to reach out more to working people in cities like Detroit, and the chartering of our Local allows us to show why that is so important.”

The chartering of the DSP marks the first time since the re-founding of the Socialist Party in 1973 that there was a local for the City.

The new DSP also discussed areas of work over the next period, including endorsing

and supporting Lisa Weltman’s bid for the Green Party nomination for U.S. Congress in the 14th District, and the municipal elections in 2005.

The DSP intends to run a slate of candidates in Detroit for Mayor, City Council and City Clerk next year.

Local elections in Detroit are non-partisan, and are often an arena for the various factions in the Michigan Democrats to win control of one of the party’s largest political machines.

The DSP meets at 2 p.m. on the first Saturday of every month, at Java In The Park, on Detroit’s northwest side. Meetings are open to the public, and readers are invited to attend.

For more information or directions to the meeting, call the DSP at (313) 535-4234 or visit their website at <http://detroit.misocialists.org/>. ★

Detroit

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website and discussing the issues with the workers and students of the school.

He had wide support from the Socialist Party of Michigan, who posted information on all their websites.

The SPMI, along with Socialist vice-presidential candidate, Mary-Alice Herbert, had a presence at the debate sponsored by

the South Oakland Chapter of the NAACP.

The areas in which Williams did best were the most working class, areas the SPMI needs to and will continue to focus on in the future.

The SPMI is continuing its work on the fall campaign, running candidates in several state-wide offices. ★

On the Internet...
Election results for OCC Board:
www.oaklandcc.edu/election

Pistons

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heart, but that was promptly cut out as the teams headed east.

By the fifth and final game of the series, the media was already beginning to point fingers.

The *L.A. Times* sports writers blamed “Shaq and Kobe” interchangeably, while the *L.A. Daily News* just blamed Bryant.

The national media howled from one coast to the other. They blamed the referees, the fans and the weather.

When Pistons fans rallied outside the hotel where the Lakers were staying during the Finals, they *really* blamed the fans.

But when the Lakers got stomped 100-87 in the final game, there was no one left to blame.

The *Detroit Free Press*’ Helene St. James probably said it best: “their facade of stars

[was] exposed by an assembly of workers.”

I couldn’t have said it better myself.

What I can say, though, is that the Pistons brought to Detroit a small taste of what the working people of the City have wanted for years: victory.

In spite of the propaganda blitz, the Hollywood glitz and yuppie fits, the Pistons — the team of “ugly ... outcast ... workers” — out-ran, out-shot and out-organized their opponents to win what they sought.

It was, to be blunt, class struggle on the hardwood. It was class struggle in the paint, and the collective action of the “assembly of workers” made mince meat out of the united front of the individualist “stars.”

Kinda reminds me of something.... A foreshadowing, perhaps, of what is to come.

Someday, the media will once again splash the lead, “their facade [was] exposed by an assembly of workers.” But, this time, it won’t be in the Sports section.

Let’s go to work. ★



Ballot-access two-step

How democracy is denied in Michigan

By **MARTIN SCHREADER**

Editor, the *Michigan Socialist*

WHEN WE IN the Socialist Party of Michigan decided to petition for ballot access, we knew it was going to be an uphill battle.

As a relatively small organization, with young members not very experienced in doing the systematic work necessary for such a task, we understood that the odds against us actually obtaining the tens of thousands of signatures were long.

Thus, when the SPMI at its June meeting voted to end the petition drive for 2004, it was little more than the recognition that, as a young organization, we need to build ourselves more in order to be successful in the future.

But this is not the end of the story.

As part of our preparatory work for petitioning, SPMI members — especially those members most directly involved in the organizing of the petition campaign — had

the opportunity to spend a lot of time studying the ballot-access laws of the state.

What we found in the State of Michigan's electoral law was a structure that systematically excludes and discriminates against smaller "third parties," especially those that seek to offer a choice for working people.

Two important elements stand out in this: first, the unnecessarily large and complicated statutes for gathering and compiling signatures; and, second, the obvious and blatant double standard the state has written into those statutes.

It is clear from reading Michigan's election law that it was written by the two main parties in the state — the Republicans and Democrats — for the two main parties, and for no one else.

As far the two main parties are concerned, only they have the right to hold office in Michigan. And if anyone wants to

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How hard is it to get on the ballot in Michigan? Hard, but not quite as hard as in Oklahoma, where you have to collect 150,000 signatures. What do 150,000 signatures look like? See for yourselves.



Detroit Socialist Party chartered

By **L. MEYERS**

The *Michigan Socialist*

AT ITS MONTHLY meeting on June 5, the Detroit Socialist Party voted to constitute itself as a chartered local of the Socialist Party USA and Socialist Party of Michigan.

On June 27, the State Executive Committee voted to approve the charter application.

The DSP was initially established in July 2003 as an organizing committee, a subordinate working group of the SPMI.

However, as the tasks of the DSP expanded, the need for developing as a local committee grew.

As well, the transformation of the SPMI from a statewide local to a chartered state

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Socialist receives over 11,000 votes for OCC Board

By **JOE DeNEEN**

The *Michigan Socialist*

ON MONDAY, June 14, school board elections took place across the state of Michigan and Carl L. Williams, Socialist Party member and Oakland Community College student, was on the ballot for OCC Board of Trustees.

Williams received 11,675 votes, coming in a strong sixth place (out of nine candidates).

This is a remarkable showing considering that the top four vote-getters were the three incumbents and two candidates with both wide name-recognition and previous office experience.

Williams' 11,675 votes translate to 10.1

percent.

By comparison, the top vote-getter received 17 percent.

This is a great showing for the first 2004 SP candidate in Michigan!

Looking at the votes broken down by district, Williams came in second place in Troy (Warren Consolidated District), and third place in Northville, Oak Park, Oxford and Southfield.

In Southfield, Williams was a solid 344 votes ahead of the fourth place finisher.

He came in fourth in a handful of districts as well.

While this was a non-partisan election, Williams made no secret of his affiliation with the Socialist Party, posting links on his

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