

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Saskatchewan nurses defy back-to-work order

— PAGE 3

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 63/NO. 16 APRIL 26, 1999

Stop the imperialist bombing of Yugoslavia!

Support fight for self-determination in Kosova!

The big-business media and U.S. officials would have us believe that workers and farmers in the Balkans have been reduced to weeping Albanian refugees from Kosova, “un-

EDITORIAL

civilized” Serbs seeking “ethnic cleansing,” and corpses. Even to those repelled by the brutality that U.S., British, and German warplanes are unleashing on the people of Yugoslavia, the message is: these are helpless victims who can only be saved by the “civilized” military forces of NATO led by Washington.

This is false. These war images and so-called news reports are propaganda to justify the U.S.-led assault on Yugoslavia. They reflect the contempt the ruling rich have for working people everywhere, especially for those who fight for their rights.

Working people have a big stake in opposing this attack on our fellow toilers in the Balkans, who earned the undying hatred of the imperialist ruling families, from Washington to Bonn, by carrying out social revolutions in Yugoslavia and Albania in the 1940s that threw the landlords and capitalists out of power.

Central to the fight to defend these gains
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April 10 picket at U.S. consulate and Canadian government offices in Montreal demands end to bombing of Yugoslavia and independence for Kosova, called by Communist League and Young Socialists.

Militant/Colin McKay

NATO: bombing will last weeks

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Washington has escalated its pounding of Yugoslavia, killing a growing number of civilians and destroying factories, refineries, and other parts of the country's infrastructure. On April 14 NATO pilots bombed a convoy of Albanians in rural Kosova, kill-

ing at least 64 people and wounding 20. U.S. officials claim they only targeted military vehicles, though television footage clearly showed bodies of civilians.

NATO officials said the U.S.-led military alliance will bomb Yugoslavia for “many
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9,000 striking shipyard workers in Virginia demand a decent contract



Rose Wilkerson (left) and Phyliss Gary were among the strikers from Steelworkers Local 8888 picketing Newport News Shipbuilding April 10.

Militant/Stu Singer

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

NEWPORT NEWS, Virginia — Spirits are high among the 9,000 Steelworkers on strike here who are determined to win their fight for a decent contract and respect and dignity on the job. The members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 8888 at Newport News Shipbuilding build and repair ships, including the U.S. Navy's nuclear aircraft carriers.

“This is for our livelihood, our families and, most importantly, respect,” Stanley Womack, who works as a rigger in the yard, told the local *Daily Press*. “And that's something never given by the shipyard to its workers of Local 8888.” Enthusiastic strikers chant, “88, Close the Gate” and “What do we want? A contract. When do we want it? Now!” at the 50th Street gate entrance. Pickets are being maintained around the clock in front of the 10 gates at the shipyard, which stretches for two and a half miles along the Chesapeake Bay. Strikers have planned a march on Washington April 21 and on company headquarters April 28.

The strike, which began April 5, is one of the largest walkouts in the United States this decade. Through the first full week of the strike, the Steelworkers have succeeded in shutting down virtually all production in

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Farmers protest unjust decree in suit against USDA

BY VED DOOKHUN AND STEPHEN BLOODWORTH

MEMPHIS, Tennessee — Two hundred farmers filled a room at the Agricenter International here April 12 to hear details of the options available to them under a proposed consent decree. The decree is a settlement to a class-action lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for
Continued on Page 12

Contribute to SWP Party-Building Fund

April 15, 1999

Dear Friends,

At a rally following its 40th constitutional convention in San Francisco, the Socialist Workers Party launched a Party-Building Fund to raise \$75,000 by June 15. The fund will help cover expenses as the party responds to the changing reality in the capitalist world and the rise in resistance among workers, farmers, and young people in the United States and other countries. More than \$47,000 in pledges and contributions was raised
Continued on Page 14

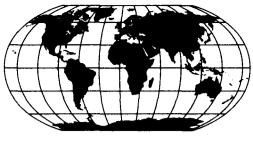
Mississippi actions back catfish workers' fight

BY VED DOOKHUN

BELZONI, Mississippi — Catfish Workers of America activists, along with supporting unionists from the region and others from their families and the community, brought a strong message of labor solidarity to this small Delta town April 9 and 10.

The first day of activities to back the catfish workers began with a spirited picket line at the Freshwater Farms catfish processing plant. Nearly 70 workers were fired from this plant last November for protesting miserable working conditions and discriminatory treatment. The fired workers, all of whom are Black and most of them women, have been fighting since then to win their demands and regain their jobs. They formed the Catfish Workers of America to better organize their struggle, in face of inaction by the officials of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), which organizes the plant. For the past four months, they have been in the forefront of labor solidarity actions around the South, as well as backing farmers fighting for their land. Meanwhile, they have been denied unemployment benefits and many have been blacklisted at other processing plants in the area.

Willie Evans, a member of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) on strike against Titan Tire in Natchez, Mississippi, and his wife Joan Evans, drove up to Belzoni to spend the two days with the catfish workers. Two locked-out oil workers, members
Continued on Page 3



U.S. planes pound Iraqi people

Washington is continuing its missile barrage against the people of Iraq. On April 11 U.S. forces struck civilian and military targets, which killed two residents and injured nine, according to reports by the Iraqi defense command. One day earlier, U.S.-led jets struck Iraqi radar and anti-aircraft sites in the southern region. This ongoing assault on Iraq has disappeared from the pages of most of the big-business press. What coverage there is parrots the U.S. government line that the bombing is due to "provocation" from Iraqi defense forces. Baghdad has been barred from using two-thirds of its own airspace with "no-fly zones" imposed by Washington since 1991. U.S.-led forces have attacked Iraq more than 160 times since last December, dropping hundreds of bombs.

Israel: public workers end strike

Tens of thousands of airport, military industry, sanitation, university, administrative, shipyard, and other workers in Israel ended their strike March 27 after the government agreed to raise wages by 4.8 percent and compensate workers for the difference accumulated since 1997. Histadrut, composed of a labor federation and other organizations, was demanding a 7-8 percent raise, while Tel Aviv said it could go no higher than 3.1 percent. As part of the agreement, Histadrut promised not to engage in further industrial action until October.

U.S. gets okay to sanction EU

The World Trade Organization ruled April 7 that European Union (EU) import rules on bananas cost U.S. companies more than \$191 million a year in lost business, clearing the way for Washington to slap sanctions equaling that amount on EU goods. The ruling will be retroactive to March 3. The U.S. government's claim was that EU countries shifted their trade policies with Chiquita Brands International and Dole Food Co., in favor of bananas from former colonies in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific.

The U.S. regime will impose 100 percent tariffs on a number of products produced in EU member states. EU trade commissioner Leon Brittan charged Washington with "fanning the flames" of a dispute between the

Washington, D.C.: Hundreds protest cop brutality



Hundreds of people protested in Washington, D.C., April 3 against police brutality. Participants signs read: "Stop the killings," and came from as far away as Florida and Michigan. The event was sponsored by the N.Y. Center for Constitutional Rights.

two biggest trading blocs on earth. The banana war is only one of many sore points in U.S.-EU trade relations.

Ultrarightist becomes state prime minister in Austria

Fascist-minded Jörg Haider, head of the Freedom Party of Austria, was elected prime minister of the state of Carinthia April 8. His party won 42 percent of the vote in elections held March 7, defeating the Austrian Peoples Party, who won 20 percent, and the Social Democrats, with 33 percent. The Social Democrats had been the largest party in the state since 1945. Haider was prime minister of Carinthia from 1989 until he was forced to resign in 1991 for praising the Nazi's labor policies. In this election, however, Haider won office on the basis his own party's majority. The People's Party deputies attended the parliamentary vote, but abstained,

ensuring Haider's victory. In this year's election, Haider particularly targeted women with a campaign promise of payments of nearly \$450 monthly to mothers for newborns for the first six months.

Japan: rightist elected governor

Rightist politician Shintaro Ishihara was elected governor of Tokyo April 11 on a campaign of Japanese nationalism. He received nearly twice the votes of his nearest rival. An outspoken opponent of U.S. military presence in Japan, Ishihara said in his acceptance speech that he would press Washington to give up its Yokota Air Base in Tokyo. There are more than 45,000 U.S. troops stationed in Japan. In the past Ishihara has called for Tokyo to develop nuclear weapons and denounced as "a lie" the 1937 Rape of Nanking in which Japanese soldiers slaughtered tens of thousands of Chinese civilians. Ishihara's election reflects deepening moves by Japan's rulers toward militarization, including public debates among big-business politicians on putting Japanese troops in combat situations and developing first-strike capabilities. While Tokyo remains subordinate to U.S. strategic air and naval power in the Pacific, it maintains the second-largest military budget of any imperialist power after Washington.

Salvador gov't lets U.S. troops in

The Salvadoran Congress agreed March 25 to permit the U.S. government to deploy troops in El Salvador, ostensibly to help the regime's own army repair damages left by Hurricane Mitch. Opposition politicians have denounced the move, suspecting it would lead to U.S. training of Salvadoran soldiers.

The defense ministry denied the allegations. When the hurricane whipped through Central America last October and early November, Washington's response was slow and aid was superficial at best.

INS won't free innocent Arab

Palestinian immigrant Hany Kiardeeen was found innocent in a court of law of terrorism charges related to the bombing of the World Trade Center in New York. Judge Daniel Meisner ordered his release and granted him permanent residency. But Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) officials blocked his release, claiming they suspect he is linked to the bombing a few years ago. The INS cops, who have put forward no concrete evidence, cite "classified evidence" that supposedly cannot be revealed. Kiardeeen immigrated from the Gaza Strip in 1990 and resides in New Jersey. He has been jailed since March 26, 1998, on charges of overstaying his student visa.

Kevorkian convicted of murder

Jack Kevorkian, a doctor who has helped consenting adults to commit suicide, was convicted of second-degree murder March 26 for administering a lethal injection to a man fatally diagnosed with Lou Gehrig's disease. Kevorkian was put on trial four other times for similar criminal charges, but was acquitted each time. Prosecuting attorney John Skrzyński called Kevorkian "a medical hitman in the night." The doctor argues he was attempting to assist patients who wanted to end their pain and suffering.

Maryland: abortion ban rejected

Registering the overwhelming sentiment supporting a woman's right to choose abortion, the Maryland House of Delegates rejected a ban on intact dilation and extraction — a late-term abortion procedure. Pro-choice forces won narrowly, by just two votes. The failed bill included a provision allowing for a woman's spouse or a minor's parent to file suit if the procedure was performed without their consent. Opponents say that it was unconstitutional. Twenty-five states have banned intact dilation and extraction, but many of the bans have been blocked or overturned in court. Seven states currently have the ban in effect.

Virginia leads in execution rates

The state of Virginia carries out more executions per 10,000 people than any other state with a million or more residents. Courts have scheduled five legalized killings for the month of April. *Washington Post* writer Stephen Fehr predicted in an April 4 article, "When 1999 is over, Virginia could break its record of 17 executions in a single year." Part of what makes that high rate possible is the elimination of many of the appeal laws set up for death row inmates. Since 1976 only six of the 107 death sentences handed down in that state have been overturned.

—BRIAN TAYLOR

THE MILITANT

Support striking workers!

From striking Skycheffs in London to the Steelworkers in Newport News, Virginia, workers on the picket line need the solidarity of fellow workers and farmers. The 'Militant' provides coverage of strikes and other fights that are important for working people. Don't miss a single issue!



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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the Militant's views. These are expressed in editorials.

Mississippi: solidarity actions build support for catfish workers

Continued from front page

of the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers, from Crown Central Petroleum in Pasadena, Texas, and their supporters, also came along with other unionists from Birmingham and Pittsburgh.

The picket line of two dozen, which took place during the lunch hour at Freshwater, caused quite a stir at the plant. Chants of "We are the union! Mighty, mighty union!" and "What do we want? Justice! When do we want it! Now!" rang across the parking lot. Evans, who helped lead the picket line, appealed to the Freshwater workers who stood in the parking lot to join the protest.

Many passersby, especially truck drivers, honked in support of the picketers. The driver of a small pickup who came to bring lunches to workers in the plant spoke with picketers and then turned around and refused to cross their line. Another young man who came to the plant to put in an application also turned around after talking with the protesters. Meanwhile, pickets confronted management personnel and workers they knew opposed their fight as they drove out of the plant. One worker driving out darted toward the picket line at high speed, almost hitting two people. Others were friendly and stopped a moment to talk to the protesters.

Shortly after the line was set up, picketers noticed an unknown person was videotaping the protest. He claimed to be from "the media," but refused to come over to the picket line. When workers walked toward his vehicle, parked several hundred feet from the plant driveway, he backed up. Finally one catfish worker drove her car behind the man's van, while others approached him from the front. Since he couldn't back up without hitting the other car, he drove away.

Freshwater bosses sent most workers home at the end of the lunch hour, shutting down production in much of the plant for

the rest of the day. This brought cheers from the picket line, especially the catfish workers. It's very unusual for workers to be sent home early, explained CWA vice president Joann Hogan, because the shifts often run to 12 hours, and sometimes longer.

After the picket line, everyone returned to the CWA headquarters, located in a church next to the plant, to relax and enjoy a barbecue lunch prepared by the catfish workers. Someone noticed the supposed journalist lurking around the bushes in back of the church, and he again was driven off.

March through Belzoni

After lunch everyone piled into cars and trucks and drove to downtown Belzoni. They marched two abreast through town, with police escort, to the Catfish Museum — an institution created by the area's wealthy catfish producers and local government to promote Belzoni's image as the "catfish capital of the world."

Dean Cook, a leader of the locked-out Crown workers, spoke at a short rally at the museum. "I came to support this fight because it is just," he said. "It is a fight for dignity.

"You face the same enemy as we do in Texas," Cook said. "It is the rich man, and it's the same enemy the people face in Iraq and in Yugoslavia. No matter what happens, we are going to fight with you — that is how we are all going to win justice."

Dr. Ron Myers, who runs two local health clinics, also spoke. He reviewed the history of racist discrimination by the Delta's catfish producers.

The march then proceeded to the local SuperValu supermarket, which is owned by one of Freshwater's stockholders. Protesters stood by the two main entrances to the parking lot, waving signs, chanting, and talking with passersby. Many people who drove by raised their fists in solidarity and one shop-



Militant/Phil Duzinski

Willie Evans, a striking Steelworker at Titan Tire in Natchez, Mississippi, spoke at the Buffalo Fish Festival in Belzoni in solidarity with fighting catfish workers.

per, Joyce Chew, joined the protest.

The next day, April 10, the African-American Heritage Buffalo Fish Festival was held in Belzoni. This was the fourth annual festival, which was started as an alternative to the overwhelmingly white, corporate-sponsored "Catfish Festival" held in Belzoni the same day. "This year the Buffalo Fish festival is in honor of the Catfish Workers," Hogan explained.

The Buffalo Fish Festival drew about 150 people from the area's Black community. Local musicians performed and another rally was held. Evans told the crowd that the Steelworkers' strike at Titan Tire "remains strong," and urged "all working people to stand behind the locked-out catfish workers."

Hogan spoke about the "unsanitary and unfair working conditions" at Freshwater that led to their protest last year, such as being denied the right to use the bathroom more than three times per shift. "Freshwater is no different than any other catfish pro-

cessing plant in the area," she said. "We are going to continue to fight for our rights."

Cook also spoke. To an enthusiastic crowd he said, "It is the rich who create racism to divide us. The Catfish workers are out four months, the workers at Natchez eight months, and at Crown for three years. We have to learn to fight together; don't let them divide us." He urged local residents to go out and help the catfish workers win their fight.

Dan Fein, a UFCW member who works at the Hormel meatpacking plant in Atlanta, came with a letter of solidarity signed by 52 co-workers there. "We came to show solidarity with catfish workers," he said. "We face some of the very same conditions the workers here do."

Ardy Blandford, a member of the United Auto Workers (UAW) at PEMCO in Birmingham, Alabama, was introduced as the Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Birmingham. She brought greetings from fellow unionists of UAW Local 1755, who had bought 75 tickets for a raffle to support the catfish workers. The drawing was held during the April 10 rally.

The fired workers are members of UFCW Local 1529, an amalgamated local that represents workers at several catfish companies in the Delta. Recently, some 20 CWA members traveled to the UFCW district office in Memphis to meet with union officials about their fight. They were told that the union will take their grievance against Freshwater to arbitration.

As the two days of solidarity actions drew to a close, CWA members began making plans to travel to Iowa, along with striking Steelworkers from Titan Tire in Natchez, on May 1 to mark the one-year anniversary of the strike at Titan's Des Moines plant.

Susan LaMont, a member of the USWA in Birmingham, contributed to the article.

Canada: nurses, phone workers strike

BY MICHEL PRAIRIE

MONTREAL — Two important strikes involving thousands of workers are currently occurring in Canada. Some 8,400 nurses, members of the Saskatchewan Union of Nurses, have become the rallying point of the labor resistance across Canada. And 9,500 telephone workers have walked out in Quebec and Ontario.

The nurses are defying back-to-work legislation and a court injunction against their strike for better wages and working conditions, which began April 8. On April 13 they were joined by another 600 hospital support workers, who also went on strike across Saskatchewan. The nurses say they are underpaid and understaffed, a result of the massive cuts in health services practiced by all provincial governments across Canada over the last decade. They are also protesting the forced overtime imposed on them.

The day their strike began, the Saskatchewan legislature, headed by the New Democratic Party government of Roy Romanow, adopted special legislation ordering the nurses back to work. The antistrike law imposed a 6 percent wage increase over three years.

Nurses are demanding everyone doing the same job receive the same pay. A government-legislated union amalgamation merged 10 disparate contracts together. "It's not that we are asking for a huge increase," June Tarr told the *Regina Leader-Post*. "Many of us haven't had an increase since 1997 when our contract expired."

At a mass meeting held April 9, the nurses refused to comply with the government dictate. Then the Saskatchewan Association of Health Organizations, which bargains for hospital boards, got a court injunction during the weekend to force them back to work. Again, some 3,000 nurses raucously rallied in Regina April 12 and decided to stay out.

The union faces a Can\$50,000 fine (Can\$1=US\$0.65) the first day its members refuse to work after the issuance of the injunction and \$10,000 for every day after.

According to the *Toronto Globe and Mail*, "donations are pouring in from unions across Canada in support of the strikers." And the French-language network of the Canadian Broadcast Corp. reported April 14 the labor movement in Saskatchewan was considering a series of one-day general strikes in solidarity with the nurses.

There have also been recent job actions by nurses in British Columbia and Newfoundland. In Newfoundland the liberal government was able to force striking nurses to go back to work with a special law. Nurses in Quebec voted in early April to give a strike mandate to their union in negotiating a new contract with the provincial government.

Meanwhile, the telephone technicians and operators organized by the Communication, Energy and Paperworkers Union (CEP) went on strike April 9 against Bell Canada in Quebec and Ontario. The main stake in the conflict for the 7,200 technicians is a series of important concessions in benefits demanded by the employer, according to several strikers on the main picket line in front of Bell's head office in downtown Montreal. Their wages have been frozen since 1993.

The stakes for the 2,300 operators are more dramatic. Last January, in the middle of the negotiations for the new contract, Bell announced that it was "selling" the services provided by the operators to a new outfit that would be jointly owned by Bell and a U.S. company. Half the current operators would be laid off. The others would see their wages cut in half and many would have to move to other cities and towns for work.

This provoked a major outcry. The operators organized several protest actions. And most of the media denounced the company's move. In face of this reaction, Bell recently announced that it would keep 900 operators and offer an early retirement to 875 others. The remaining 500 would keep their current wage through the year 2000 and 50 percent of it until the end of 2001 at the new outfit. The union is demanding an improved package.

When the Bell workers last went on strike, for four months in 1988; there were about 50,000 technicians and operators in the union. The number has dropped to less than 10,000 as a result of schemes like the one now planned for the operators.

Bell is clearly in for a tough fight. Hundreds of managers and clerks organized in a different union are escorted in and out of its main office in Montreal by the antiriot police squad — though not without noisy protests by the dozens of strikers picketing the building. Managers are also on the road providing what the company calls "emergency service."

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Upcoming Labor and Farm Actions

Sat., April 24

Iowa State-wide Meeting for Immigrant Rights

Conference. Perry, Iowa
For more information call: (515) 274-4851; or (712) 234-0418

New Trial for Mumia Abu-Jamal! End the Death Penalty!

March and rally. Assemble at noon, City Hall Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
For more information call: (215) 476-8812; Fax: (215) 476-7551
March and Rally. Assemble 10:30 a.m., Dolores Park. San Francisco, California

Solidarity Rally for Kaiser Workers

Newark, Ohio
Sat., May 1
Rally for striking United Steelworkers of America at Titan Tire
Des Moines, Iowa
12:00 p.m. 2727 East Market

For more information call: (515) 262-4935

POSTPONED: Rally for Locked-Out Crown Oil Workers

Pasadena, Texas
For more information call: (713) 475-9560

Tues., May 18

United Steelworkers Labor/ Environmental Conference

Conference. Houston, Texas
9:00 am-2:15 p.m. Crowne Plaza Tower, 2222 West Loop South; 2:15 p.m. March from Crowne Plaza to Maxxam/ Kaiser Aluminum at 5847 San Felipe.
Other activities planned for May 17 and 19
For more information call: (713) 783-1400 x123

Sat-Sun., May 21-22

2nd Annual Black Farmers Convention
Convention. New Orleans, Louisiana

YS sends greetings to the Union of Young Communists of Cuba

This column is written and edited by the Young Socialists (YS), an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information about the YS write to: Young Socialists, 3284 23rd St., San Francisco, California, 94110. Tel: (415) 824-1429.

E-mail: 105162.605@compuserve.com

Members of the Young Socialists and other youth who attended the April 1-3 convention of the Socialist Workers Party met the morning of April 4 in San Francisco. In addition to discussing the campaigns of the Young Socialists for the coming months, they decided to send the following message of greetings to the National Committee of the Union of Young Communists of Cuba (UJC), which was meeting that day in Cuba.

The Young Socialists is a revolutionary

youth organization that seeks to participate in the fight to overthrow capitalism and establish a workers and farmers government in the United States of America. We do this from within the "belly of the beast," as the Cuban national hero and great anti-imperialist fighter José Martí referred to it.

We understand that workers in the United States and the rest of the world, including the workers in power in Cuba, have the same enemy: U.S. imperialism. V.I. Lenin explained that imperialism is the highest stage of capitalism.

Capitalism as a world system has no solutions to offer mankind. In fact, it can only offer us uncertainty, racial discrimination, and brutality as it drags us towards fascism and war.

An example of this can be found in the U.S.-led NATO campaign to dismember the workers' state of Yugoslavia and to reimpose capitalist social and property relations in the countries where they were overturned.

We are participating in a campaign to demand: Imperialists hands off Yugoslavia! and to support the fight for self-determination by the people of Kosova.

The revolutionary path forged by workers and peasants in Cuba, in which they took power out of the hands of the capitalist class, points the road forward for all humanity.

We look forward to continuing our work with the UJC while our two organizations advance along our internationalist and social-



Militant/Marc Lichtman

YS member Doug Nelson, left, sells socialist literature at an April 9 event at Columbia University where Cuban youth leaders Itamys Garcia and Luis Morejón spoke.

Young Socialists Fund Drive

The YS has launched a \$9,000 fund drive to be completed by the end of May. The funds are needed for the expenses in building a proletarian youth organization that is financially independent and can respond rapidly to political developments and maintain its national office. Each chapter has taken on goals and a chart will appear in an upcoming issue of the Militant.

Send your contributions to:

Young Socialists, 3284 23rd St., San Francisco, California, 94110.

N.Y. cops picket union headquarters

BY AL DUNCAN

NEW YORK — Nearly 50 off-duty cops picketed across the street from the Hospital Workers Local 1199 offices in mid-town Manhattan April 12.

Their protest occurred just days before an April 15 demonstration called in

ist course.

The Young Socialists believe that our two organizations have similar tasks — to win youth over to communism and to the idea that oppressed people of the world can take their destiny into their own hands.

We have taken advantage of the presence of two comrades from the UJC (Itamys Garcia and Luis Morejón) in the United States to promote the truth about the Cuban Revolution and to win young people to a revolutionary perspective. We look forward

to a deepening relationship with the UJC.

We wish you a productive and successful meeting. The YS understands the importance of the UJC as an example to youth in struggle around the world as well as in the training of a new communist leadership of the Cuban Revolution.

From within the belly of the beast we join our voices with yours and scream ¡Cuba sí! Bloqueo no! Imperialist hands off Yugoslavia! ¡Viva la UJC! Workers of the world and oppressed peoples unite!

Socialist candidate denounces attack on Des Moines bookstore

BY RAY PARSONS

DES MOINES, Iowa — The windows of the Pathfinder bookstore here were pelted with eggs late in the night April 10, the third such attack in a month.

The bookstore lends its space to the weekly Militant Labor Forum and provides office space for the Socialist Workers Party election campaign of Amanda Ulman, who has entered the race for mayor of Des Moines.

On April 12 supporters of Ulman's campaign and the Pathfinder bookstore organized a news conference to respond to the repeated acts of vandalism.

At the news conference Ulman explained that campaign supporters use the political books available at Pathfinder Bookstore to "win working people to the our program to fight the deepening capitalist economic crisis."

Ulman said, "This pattern of attack is meant to strike a blow at freedom of speech and to silence those who question or oppose U.S. government policy or who oppose the attacks of the bosses on workers' wages and working conditions. We will not be intimidated."

Ulman presented messages of support that had been received in response to the vandalism. Paul Ford, a leader of the Grinnell

[College] Coalition in Defense of Mumia Abu-Jamal, wrote, "The Pathfinder Bookstore must be supported by the local community of Des Moines. In the books it sells and the forums it hosts, it provides this community with the opportunity to take an alternative look at the way our political economy works and who it actually benefits.... We must, as a community, denounce these acts of vandalism."

Other messages were received from Mack Shelley, a professor at Iowa State University; Adam McManus, a member of the Iowa chapter of Anti-Racist Action; and Don Gruber, a member of Pastors for Peace.

Hazel Zimmerman, a leader of the defense committee that won the release in 1996 of Mark Curtis, a union activist and socialist imprisoned on frame up charges said, "If these disgusting acts of vandalism are meant to intimidate this distributor of books that abhor racism, promote the ideals of social justice and equal opportunity, support the family farmer, and the interests of the working class — then be assured that they will not succeed."

The April 13 Des Moines Register covered this response to the attack.

Ray Parsons is a member of the United Steelworkers of America.

memory of Amadou Diallo, the young worker who was killed by police here two months ago in a barrage of 41 bullets. Local 1199 is one of the sponsors of the April 15 action, whose official demands are "for justice and reconciliation," and for "reform" of the police.

James Higgins, who is a candidate for president of the Patrolmen Benevolent Association (PBA), called the cop rally. According to Higgins, the picket was necessary because of what he called "cop bashing" ads playing on the radio and TV building the April 15 demonstration.

In addition to Higgins, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani has also denounced the commer-

cials, and at least one local TV station has refused to air them.

The TV versions of the advertisements show two white cops knocking on an apartment door demanding entrance. A Black child is shown peering out at them from a neighboring apartment with a look of fear. The announcer says, "Our children need someone who they can see as a friend rather than as an enemy." It then urges people to attend the April 15 demonstration as a way of making this happen by stopping police brutality.

The cops carried signs calling on Local 1199 to stop its "Cop bashing," to recognize that "Brutality goes both ways" and a few others.

COME TO AND BUILD AN Active Workers Conference

August 5-8, 1999

Growing numbers of working people are reaching out to others in struggle, as the employers and their government deepen their offensive against toilers around the globe. This conference will be an opportunity for workers, farmers, and young people involved in such social struggles to exchange experiences and learn from each other, and from the past lessons of the workers movement. It will be a place to gain information needed to broaden solidarity with others whose struggles are charting a way forward for working people in the United States and internationally.

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The conference will be held on the Oberlin College campus, Oberlin, Ohio.

Sponsored by: Socialist Workers Party Young Socialists

For more information, see listings on page 12.

Fighting workers in Mississippi pick up 'Capitalism's World Disorder'

BY FRANK FORRESTAL AND SALM KOLIS

PITTSBURGH — Socialist workers from Birmingham, Houston, and Atlanta were among those who participated in two days of solidarity activities for the Catfish Workers of America in Belzoni, Mississippi, April 9-10. Nearly 70 workers were fired from the Freshwater Farms catfish processing plant last November for protesting inhuman working conditions inside the plant. Since then, they have been fighting to regain their jobs and bring attention to the oppressive conditions under which thousands of catfish workers labor. They are in the forefront of solidarity actions with striking workers around the South and farmers who are Black fighting to regain their land and against government discrimination (see article on front page).

A Steelworker strike activist from Titan Tire in Natchez, Mississippi, along with his wife, drove up to be part of the weekend's activities. He has been reading the *Militant* off and on for several months and decided to subscribe. He also looked over *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* and decided to get a copy. He was very interested in learning more about how the working class, and the unions in particular, can build more strength and unity, in the face of growing economic uncertainty. He also wanted to learn more about the danger to working people posed by ultrarightist politician Patrick Buchanan. Several catfish workers are also interested in getting the book, and began working out payment plans.

Socialist workers have taken a goal of selling 1,500 copies of this book by May 31, including 500 copies to their co-workers and through collective work in the trade unions.

At the April 10 African-American Heritage Buffalo Fish Festival in Belzoni, several other Pathfinder titles were sold off a socialist campaign table. One catfish worker, Lillie Williams, also sold nine copies of "A Sea Change in Working-Class Politics." This talk by Jack Barnes, printed in the February *International Socialist Review* supplement to the *Militant*, is the first chapter of *Capitalism's World Disorder*. Fifteen copies of the *Militant* newspaper and two introductory subscriptions were also sold.

At the end of the day, as socialist workers were packing up to leave, a young worker from Newport News, Virginia, came by and bought a copy of the *Militant*. "I pulled out a copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder*," explained Dan Fein, "and explained the strike at Newport News shipyard was an example of labor's increased resistance today to the sacrifices demanded by the capitalist class. We are campaigning to sell this book be-

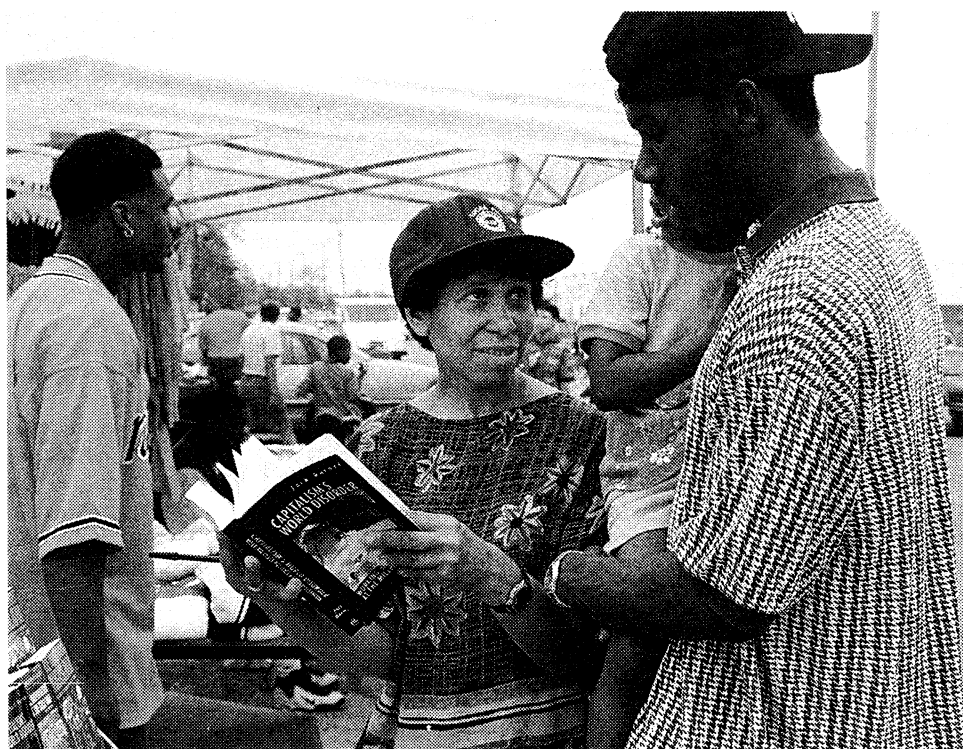
cause it is a book fighting workers need to read and study in order to be more effective in politics."

He bought the book and said, "I hope you have approached everyone here today as you talked to me!"

Fein has also sold two copies of the book to co-workers at Hormel Foods in Atlanta. One co-worker, who is a subscriber to the *Militant*, bought the book and a membership to the Pathfinder Reader's Club because he was particularly interested in where capitalism is heading and its consequences for workers. "I support Clinton," he explained, "but this book sounds important." Another young worker got the book, in large part because of his interest in changing the unions in the United States.

Stephen Bloodworth, a rail worker from Birmingham, reported that several farmers who held a protest April 12 at a meeting in Memphis, Tennessee, on the consent decree in the Black farmers' lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Agriculture, thumbed through *Capitalism's World Disorder*. "They were all struck by the photos in the book," said Bloodworth. Although no one bought a book this time, a leader of the farm movement in Tennessee signed up for a *Militant* subscription; another farmer bought the Pathfinder pamphlet *Farmers Face the Crisis of the 1990s and New International No. 4*, featuring "The Crisis Facing Working Farmers." Four farmers picked up copies of the *Militant* and two more copies of *Farmers Face the Crisis of the 1990s* were sold.

Two rail workers at New Jersey Transit bought copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder* from Jane Harris, an engineer and mem-



Militant/Phil Duzinski

Discussing *Capitalism's World Disorder* at Buffalo Fish Festival in Belzoni, Mississippi.

ber of the United Transportation Union. "One of my co-workers just renewed his subscription to the *Militant* for a year. I told him that I wanted to stop and show him an important new book. As he began looking through it, a picture of a young Palestinian caught his eye. 'What's with the slingshot?' he asked. So we discussed the *intifada* — the Palestinian uprising — and the struggle of the Palestinian people for self-determination. I told him this was an example of what Malcolm X meant when he said, 'By any means necessary.' As he was purchasing the book and a Reader's Club membership, another worker walked by and looked at the book and promised to get it soon.

"A few days later I ran into a conductor I rarely see, but who has purchased Pathfinder books over the years. He looked through the book before buying it, and we began discussing Yugoslavia. He really was having a hard time believing that Washington had no progressive role to play. I met his next train, showed him *The Truth About Yugoslavia*, in particular the chapter 'Will military intervention stop the slaughter?' and he bought that book too."

Progress is being registered in getting *Capitalism's World Disorder* where it counts the most: to immediate co-workers and fellow union brothers and sisters. In addition, books are being sold through union work in the course of campaigning to involve co-workers and our unions in solidarity with striking, locked-out, and fired workers, protesting farmers, anti-cop brutality demonstrations, immigrant rights actions, and other social protests. The total sales figures listed in the chart on this page, however, show that socialists need to press much harder in order to meet their quotas.

Next week's *Militant* will also include a listing of the quotas adopted and sales in local areas — which will include books sold as part of the effort in the trade unions as well as through the Pathfinder bookstores, on campuses, in working-class neighborhoods, and elsewhere. Reports on sales totals should be sent to the *Militant* by noon each Tuesday; reports on the campaign in the trade unions should also be sent to the Pittsburgh-based team that is organizing coverage of this campaign.

New Jersey students debate war in Yugoslavia

BY KATHLEEN FLANAGAN

MONTCLAIR, New Jersey — Close to 150 students gathered on the steps outside the student center here April 6 for a "Speak Out on the War in Yugoslavia." The "open mike" session, organized by several members of the college's English department, drew scores of students and a few professors up to the mike to state their opinions.

Several students who spoke identified themselves as Yugoslav and described what their relatives in Yugoslavia have told them about the situation there since the NATO bombing assault began.

One student referred to himself as a Serb and defended the regime of President Slobodan Milosevic; another student who identified himself as Albanian spoke in support of the NATO bombing.

"I oppose the bombing, but what can be done about these poor people being forced to leave [Kosova]? Something must be done," declared one woman. Many others made similar comments, without an answer to the question.

Professor Valentin Soto told the crowd he opposed the bombing and "as a Puerto Rican, I understand the importance of independence for Kosova."

The only other speaker to take a stance against the bombing and for the right to independence of the Albanians in Kosova was Ellie Garcia of the Socialist Workers Party. She said the aims of the U.S. government in this assault are to dismember the workers state in Yugoslavia and reimpose capitalism throughout the region there.

Garcia was one of two socialist rail workers attending the event. The two set up a table with big signs that quickly became a center of discussion and debate.

While a few students were convinced that Washington is acting out of humanitarian concerns, most of those who crowded around the table opposed the government's actions and were looking for an explanation.

Students purchased quite a few copies of the socialist newsweekly, the *Militant*, as well as Pathfinder books. Twelve copies of

the *Militant*, 1 copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*, 5 copies of *The Truth About Yugoslavia: Why Working-People should*

Oppose Intervention, 1 copy of *Socialism and Man in Cuba* by Ernesto Che Guevara, and one copy of *The Communist Manifesto* in Spanish were sold.

\$17

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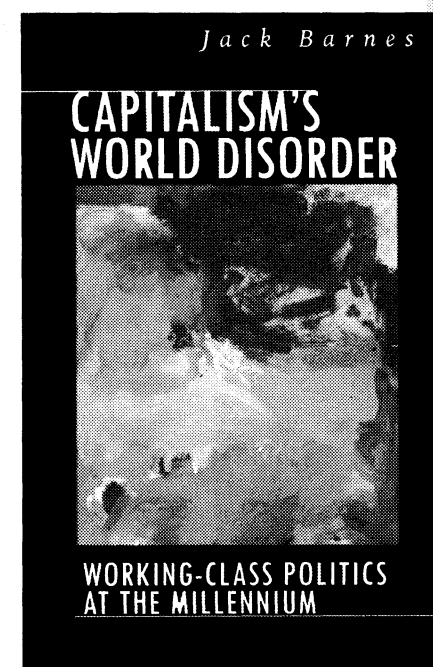
BY JACK BARNES

This may be the only *millennium* title on bookstore shelves today whose purpose is not to mystify and obscure but to reveal and clarify. The social devastation, financial panics, political turmoil, police brutality, and military assaults accelerating all around us are not chaos. They are the inevitable product of lawful and understandable forces unleashed by capitalism.

But the future capitalism has in store for us is not the future that inevitably must be. It can be changed by the timely solidarity, courageous action, and united struggle of workers and farmers conscious of their power to transform the world.

That is what this book has been written to bring closer.

Available at bookstores listed on page 12, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.



CAMPAIGN TO SELL 'Capitalism's World Disorder' IN THE UNIONS March 15 - May 31

	Goals	Sold	
UAW	75	22	29%
UTU	80	18	23%
IAM	110	21	19%
USWA	80	9	11%
PACE (in Houston)	15	1	7%
UFCW	80	5	6%
UNITE	70	3	4%
Total	510	79	15%
Should be	500	181	36%

IAM—International Association of Machinists; PACE—Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers; UAW—United Auto Workers; UFCW—United Food and Commercial Workers; UNITE—Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees; USWA—United Steelworkers of America; UTU—United Transportation Union

Quebec: Thousands of students rally for education funding

BY ELSSA MARTINEZ

MONTREAL — On March 24 some 16,000 students mobilized throughout Quebec to demand massive reinvestment in education, the abolition of auxiliary fees, and that the Federal government hand over \$2.5 billion to the Quebec government, the province's portion of the Millennium Scholarship Fund. The demonstration concluded a week of actions organized by the Federation of University Students of Quebec (FEUQ) and the Federation of College Students of Quebec (FECQ). French- and English-speaking students were united on these demands, with support of college and university teachers unions.

Organizers estimate 10,000 students participated in the march in Montreal, where colorful hand-made signs demanded, "Yes, to free education" and "Massive reinvestment in education, now!" Since 1994, the Quebec government has slashed \$1.9 billion in education (Can\$1 = US\$.67), including \$750 million from universities and community colleges. This is hurting the quality of education, the number of teachers, and access to libraries, materials, and human resources.

"I hope this action will force some change by the government," commented a student from Dawson college. Students were demanding that the government reinvest the same amount it had cut.

The demonstration began with thousands of people rallying in front of the Quebec education government building in the east side of Montreal. From there, students marched through a French-speaking working-class neighborhood. Many residents came to their windows to show support, some raising their fist in the air and others waving from their balconies. A group of electrical workers stopped working to wave and smile at the passing students.

Thousands more joined the action at the second rallying point close to the University of Quebec in Montreal and the Old Montreal College. Demonstrators marched on to the office of Jean Monty, chief executive of Bell Canada Enterprise (BCE). Monty is chairperson of the Millennium Foundation, which administers the federal scholarship fund.

The 1998 federal budget was a direct attack on Quebec's historic right to control education here. In it, the federal government of Jean Chretien announced the establishment of the Millennium Scholarship Fund, which overrides Quebec's student scholarship and loan system. The Quebec government opposes the intrusion of the federal government and demanded that the Quebec portion of the fund be integrated and managed by the province's own loans and scholarship fund. Students supported this request and noted that unlike the federally controlled



Militant/Elssa Martinez

Some 10,000 students and others mobilize for education in Montreal March 24.

fund, Quebec's is based on students' financial needs, not their grades. While the cost of living in Quebec has increased by 20.9 percent over the last 10 years, student indebtedness has gone up 63.5 percent.

In 1996 a general strike by college and universities students in Quebec that lasted several weeks won a freeze on education fees. The average debt of a Quebecois student is \$13,000 compared to an average of \$20,000 in the rest of Canada. This reflects the lasting gains of the fight for the rights of the Quebecois, the oppressed French-speaking majority in Quebec, in the late 1960s. The fight by Quebecois students for access

to subsidized French-language education played a major role in the struggle against national oppression.

Students at University of Montreal have already won a small victory. After several days of protest and the demonstration of March 24, the administration delayed for the time being an announcement of fee hikes for next year, including raising the thesis-writing fee for post-graduate student from \$67 per course per semester to \$556.

Elssa Martinez is a member of the Communication, Energy and Paperworkers. Michel Prairie contributed to this article.

Philadelphia cop who killed Black youth not tried

BY CANDACE WAGNER

PHILADELPHIA — A judge here has thrown out manslaughter charges against Philadelphia cop Christopher DiPasquale for a second time in the killing of Donta Dawson. At an April 6 Common Pleas Court hearing, witnesses described how DiPasquale shot the 19-year-old Black youth in the back of the head on Oct. 1, 1998.

Public outrage at the killing and numerous picket lines involving Dawson's family, friends, and anti-police brutality activists forced District Attorney Lynne Abraham to file charges against the officer. The charges were dropped in January following a hearing in Municipal Court. Abraham re-arrested DiPasquale in February and filed new charges.

Early October 1, Dawson was sitting in his car in a traffic lane. He did not comply with the demand to get out of the car or,

according to the cops' court testimony, to show them his left hand. DiPasquale and his partner, Kirk Dodd, said they believed Dawson was concealing a gun. At least two other patrol cars and four additional police officers joined in on the siege of the motorist.

Some witnesses testified that four or five minutes after the original cops arrived, Dawson leaned down. The cops claimed he then rose up rapidly, raising his left hand. DiPasquale said he thought Dawson had a gun, felt that his life was in danger on the other side of the police cruiser, and fired two direct shots. Dawson was unarmed and accused solely of impeding traffic.

Much of the prosecuting attorney's questioning revolved around changes in the testimony of the policemen who answered the radio call for backup that night. Several gave statements immediately following the incident that they had been told that Dawson

"might have a gun." At this hearing they testified that DiPasquale told them "he has a gun." Two of the cops said that they had been under tremendous stress and may not have remembered correctly at the time.

Dodd testified that Dawson was sitting on his left hand. The cop, who weighs 200 pounds, said he tried but failed to pull Dawson's hand out from under his leg. Dawson was 5'5" and weighed 130 pounds.

The defense attorney argued that the prosecution had not made a case that DiPasquale had acted "unreasonably" in thinking that Dawson had a gun and in shooting him dead.

The judge announced his decision to

drop the charges immediately after final arguments by the attorneys.

Following the judge's decision, Dawson's mother Cynthia Dawson, other family members, and 15 supporters held a spirited rally at City Hall. "We will not rest until we get justice for Donta," exclaimed his cousin Latonia Dawson.

District Attorney Abraham told the news media that she may appeal the ruling to Superior Court.

Candace Wagner is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees.

200 people rally in Seattle against police brutality

BY DEAN PEOPLES

SEATTLE — "What do we want?" yelled Oscar Eason, of the Seattle NAACP. "Justice!" came the loud response from nearly 200 people who rallied at Denny Park April 3 to protest police brutality in the death of yet another Black man in police custody, Michael Ealy. Ealy died, Eason said, while being restrained by Seattle police as he was driven to a hospital in an ambulance. An inquest has ruled that police did not use "excessive force."

The Seattle protest was part of a National Day of Protest Against Police Violence called by the NAACP to demand justice for Amadou Diallo in New York, and other victims of police brutality.

"Michael was a loving and caring person, and he was my best friend," Keith Lowe, Ealy's cousin, told the rally. "He was not a criminal, not a suspect; he did not deserve to lose his life. Enough is enough! Justice must prevail!"

Martin Lawson, another cousin of Ealy's, explained that Ealy had asked police for help that night, and that cops had said he was drunk.

Rev. John Wyatt chided the local big-business media for trying to turn Ealy "from a patient to a perpetrator." The "police used excessive force," said Wyatt. "He did not die due to clogged arteries or cocaine. Too many others have died in police custody."

Jackie Larrienzar, an immigrant rights activist, pointed out the recent acts of brutal-

ity, arrests and firings of Latino immigrants in eastern Washington State by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS). "Police are targeting anyone who looks Latino," she said, "including Native Americans and African immigrants." Larrienzar said her group is bringing a resolution into the Seattle City Council to halt city cooperation with recent INS activities.

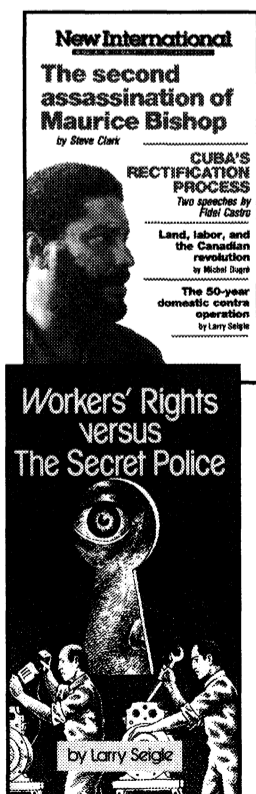
Norma Kelsey presented greetings on behalf of the King County Labor Council Executive Board. "We attended the inquest," said Kelsey, "What happened to the police motto 'protect and serve'?" Ealy was alive when he was picked up by police and put in the ambulance, but he ended up dead at Harborview Hospital, she said. "We know what it means today to be Black, Native American, or Latino. It's a question of which side are you on."

The rally, chaired by Rosalinda Aguirre from Jobs With Justice, also heard José Perry, from Carpenters Union, District 44, Will Perry, for Puget Sound Senior Citizens Council, and Harriet Walden, from Mothers for Police Accountability, who sponsored the rally.

Walden said her group wants President William Clinton to hold up funding for police departments that brutalize people. "We don't need 100,000 more cops," said Walden.

Dean Peoples is a member of the International Association of Machinists.

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Socialist rail workers discuss why merger of UTU and BLE won't strengthen union

BY ELLIE GARCÍA

SAN FRANCISCO — Socialist rail workers who are members of the United Transportation Union (UTU) met here recently to discuss political questions raised by the merger under way between the UTU and the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers (BLE).

Both union officialdoms have agreed to combine their respective memberships into one union. The UTU and BLE represent about 95,000 workers, more than 40 percent of all rail workers. Membership votes on the merger are projected for next fall.

The socialist rail workers had met just two weeks earlier in Newark and adopted a motion that said, "The proposed merger of the UTU and BLE unions is a move by the top officials to merge their dues bases after years of refusing to mobilize the ranks in opposition to job losses. Their claim that this merger will result in a stronger union is false."

Socialist rail workers, the motion continued, would not join the union officialdom's campaign for the merger, "but instead approach this as another opportunity to explain to our co-workers that the only way to strengthen our union is to join together to fight the carrier's offensive and to act in solidarity with the resistance of workers and farmers now expanding throughout this country."

This stance, however, was contradicted by the last sentence of the motion, which read, "Because the merger of the UTU and BLE would remove an archaic craft union obstacle to uniting rail workers, we will vote for it."

Frank Forrestal, a UTU member and a leader of the party's trade union work, reported to the meeting here and proposed the rail workers reverse their previous position of calling for a yes vote on the merger. After several hours of discussion, the rail workers voted to do so.

The greatest mistake, he said, would be to "underestimate the effect of the union officialdom's demagoguery in support of the merger," said Forrestal. "Why is this demagoguery so damaging?" he asked. "Precisely because of what we see today — the new mood and growing confidence among groups of workers and farmers across the country." Forrestal cited as examples the breadth of support for a series of strikes by Steelworkers in the Ohio valley, including a recent rally of 750 in support of the RMI Titanium strike in Niles, Ohio. He also pointed to the recent UAW union organizing victory of about 1,000 workers at the South Charleston Stamping and Manufacturing plant in West Virginia.

"The union tops' demagoguery diverts workers from meaningful activity in the labor movement. It affects workers in a negative way because there is motion toward greater solidarity," said Forrestal.

Workers cut across craft lines in battle

"More and more rail workers want to fight," Forrestal noted. "They want to find ways to resist the carrier's offensive. They want to find ways to combat government intervention into their unions. They want to show solidarity with other rail workers."

"Last year the *Militant* ran front-page articles on the two short, but very important strikes by the Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (BMW) in May and August. In each strike we saw UTU and BLE members refusing to cross BMW picket lines. In many places rail yards were shut tight. Rail workers got a glimpse of their power and of the importance of solidarity."

Another example Forrestal cited was the 47-day UTU strike against Canadian Pacific-owned Soo Line Railroad in 1994. After working seven years without a contract, the 1,100 UTU members called a strike, setting up picket lines in 11 Midwestern states. "About 3,000 workers in 16 craft unions honored picket lines and helped the UTU cripple CP's operation. Very few broke ranks and crossed picket lines," said Forrestal.

The most important display of solidarity came from the ranks of the BLE. "The BLE officialdom told its members to cross picket lines 'to protect their craft,'" said Forrestal. "But out of 450 engineers, only a tiny handful in 11 states scabbed on the strike."

Despite the craft structure, used for decades by rail bosses to pit one union against the other, he said, "this experience shows that rail workers can be unified when a real

fight breaks out."

The motion in Newark to decide to vote for the merger assumed that "amalgamation, even if engineered by the union chiefs, would benefit the ranks of labor. But only fighting against the carriers' offensive will benefit the ranks and strengthen the union. A bureaucratic merger of the two unions may place even more obstacles in the way of members who want to fight," said Forrestal.

Barbara Bowman, a UTU member from San Francisco, said she was wary of the merger "because it opened the door to more job combinations, more job cuts."

Some socialist rail workers reported that in their discussions at work they had tended to support the merger, although they did not campaign for it. This stance "had the effect of placing us on the side of the merger, albeit with objections to how it was being done — thereby easing the tension between vanguard workers and the union officials, seeming to put us on the same wave length as them," said Forrestal.

Noting any membership vote on the proposal was six months away, he added "a lot can happen" between now and then. It's too early to decide what vote to cast.

Officials' campaign heightens divisions

"The UTU officials have pursued this merger in a way that is likely to heighten divisions among rail workers rather than promote unity," said Tom Headley, a rail worker from Washington D.C.

"Where I work, I've heard expressions of opposition to this merger from some people who in the past have said they thought the two unions should merge. Last year, the UTU leadership went to the National Mediation Board (NMB) to call a representation election, thus encouraging further government intervention into union affairs — which is always a danger. Plus, the kind of intervention the UTU officials requested could only encourage further company attacks on crew size, by asking the NMB to rule that only one job classification exists where previously there were two because supposedly technology has rendered the distinction between engineer and conductor obsolete."

This course of action, which would have given the rail bosses a weapon to eliminate jobs and take another step toward greater profits at the expense of safety, was set aside by the UTU labor tops when merger discussions with BLE officials began.

Lessons from Teamsters struggles

"What's important is the content, not the form. What's important is not the structure, but the lines of resistance in the class struggle," said Forrestal. He pointed to the lessons from the labor battles that transformed the Teamsters union in the 1930s in Minneapolis and much of the Midwest into a fighting social movement. These lessons are contained in the four volume series — *Teamster Rebellion*, *Teamster Power*, *Teamster Politics*, and *Teamster Bureaucracy* — published by Pathfinder Press. The books are written by Farrell Dobbs, one of the central leaders of these battles and of the Socialist Workers Party.

Workers at that time were saddled with an AFL craft-union structure. Dobbs explained in *Teamster Power*, "Like other AFL units, Local 574 had long been characterized by conservative policies and an obsolete craft-union structure embracing few members. By 1934, however, it was drawing broad layers of workers into a militant fight against the general trucking employers of the city. The change resulted from an internal transformation the union was undergoing during the heat of battle."

The lessons learned in these struggles were applied to an 11-state over-the-road organizing drive that, for the first time, brought union power to much of the Midwest. Dobbs described the unions that were transformed as "insular baronies." In the end, through organizing the broadest possible number of workers in the trucking industry, the whole old-line craft structure began to crack, putting an end to the dominance of the relatively privileged driving crafts in the union movement.

Andrea Morell, a UTU member from Boston, made a similar point about the rise of the CIO in the 1930s. "Building indus-



Militant/Jon Hillson

Rail workers picket Soo Line Railroad in St. Paul, Minnesota, in August 1994. Members of 16 craft rail unions refused to cross UTU picket lines in that strike. "This experience shows that rail workers can be unified when a real fight breaks out."

trial unions embracing thousands and thousands of mass production workers was a major step forward for the working class. But we shouldn't lose sight of the fact that these unions were the vanguard of a mass social movement that began to transform U.S. society," said Morell.

Rail union bureaucrats often invoke the name of Eugene Debs, a revolutionary trade union and socialist leader in the late 1800s and early 1900s, to give a "progressive" cover to their merger, as well as to other issues, several participants noted. "Eugene Debs' dream of a strong and undivided operating railroad union is finally coming true," read a recent editorial in *UTUNews*. The UTU and BLE "are joining together to create a new and even more powerful union."

"These utterances are part of the rail officialdom's demagoguery," said Forrestal. "They have nothing in common with Debs, who stressed the need for independent working-class political action, who opposed U.S. imperialism's intervention in WWI and was jailed for it, and who was convinced of the need for overturning capitalist rule."

While Debs urged workers to follow a class-struggle course, Forrestal noted rail workers should be mindful of his weaknesses too. Forrestal encouraged reading *Revolutionary Continuity: Marxist Leadership in the United States, 1918-1922*, by


Farrell Dobbs, which explains how Debs did not support the 1919 break by revolutionary left-wing workers against the reformist course of the Socialist Party (SP). Although his views clashed with the reformists and centrists who dominated the SP, Debs remained one of its leading figures, providing "left cover" for the misleadership.

Uniting rail workers, and the form it takes, will be the byproduct of real struggles by rail workers fighting to advance their interests, participants in the March 31 meeting concluded. The top union officials live in fear and hatred of the ranks of labor. "They are incapable of leading a fight against the bosses," Forrestal noted. "More and more they try to merge the dues bases of 'their' unions, because they are capable of little else."


Coming out of the meeting, socialist rail workers agreed to expand their work to build solidarity with striking and locked-out workers, protesting farmers, anti-cop brutality demonstrations, immigrant rights actions, and other social protests. In the course of this, they will work to meet their goal of selling 80 copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* to co-workers and others.

Ellie Garcia is a member of the UTU in New York.

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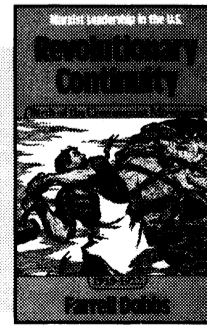
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Washington steps up Yugoslavia bombing

Continued from front page

more weeks." Their goal is to pressure Belgrade into accepting a partition of Kosova with an imperialist occupation army. The Clinton administration announced plans to call up several thousand military reservists. The U.S. rulers are also trying to ratchet up a flag-waving war atmosphere at home. The Associated Press reported April 14 that the FBI issued warnings of "possible Serb-led terrorist attacks" in the United States, supposedly based on death threats received by unnamed churches.

Meanwhile, the conflict is threatening to spread into neighboring Albania. NATO officials said Yugoslav forces crossed the border into the village of Kamenica April 13 and fired mortars and automatic weapons, driving off most residents. Belgrade denied its forces entered Albania. The area had been a base for attacks on the Yugoslav army by the Kosova Liberation Army (UCK), which has been waging a guerrilla war for independence in Kosova.

The Clinton administration, which has repeatedly stated its opposition to Kosova's independence, has used Belgrade's attempts to crush the Albanian struggle for self-determination as a pretext to launch its military operation. The U.S. rulers aim to use the NATO bombing campaign to boost their dominance in Europe and prepare the groundwork for overturning noncapitalist social relations in Yugoslavia.

Washington hopes the relentless military barrage will force the regime of Slobodan Milosevic to accept a deal to pull the Yugoslav army out of most of Kosova, paving the way for NATO troops to enforce its partition. U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright hinted that some Serb forces might be permitted to remain in Kosova as part of a "peace" agreement. "We are not stating specifically what the numbers are," Albright told reporters in Brussels April 11. "We have to be flexible and realistic as we look at the future."

Sen. John McCain, a Republican presidential hopeful, suggested adopting a resolution urging the use of "all means necessary" against Yugoslavia, implying ground troops. That is not the majority view in Washington at this point, though.

Other U.S. government officials are pressing for partitioning the Yugoslav province. "A partition plan for Kosovo would avoid a more costly alternative — thousands of American lives lost in a Balkan ground war that could last for years," wrote Democratic Congressman Rod Blagojevich in the April 13 *Washington Post*.

'Take bombing campaign to next level'

In his April 13 statement from the Oval Office, U.S. president William Clinton announced an expansion of the air war against Yugoslavia. Washington is adding 300 more warplanes for the bombing campaign, hiking the military operation to more than 1,000 aircraft. Pentagon officials said they are considering launching strikes from air bases in other NATO countries including Hungary, the Czech Republic, Germany, and France.

A NATO missile slammed into a passenger train 180 miles south of Belgrade April 12, killing 10 people and injuring 16. After seeing the first missile strike the train, the pilot of the plane circled back and bombed it a second time.

Four days earlier, NATO warplanes bombed the Zastava car factory in Kragujevac after workers announced they would form a "human shield" to protect the plant. Some 124 workers were injured and 20 seriously wounded. Zastava is the largest auto-manufacturing plant in Yugoslavia with 38,000 workers.

Responding to the bombings, a woman who lives on the outskirts of Belgrade told the *Financial Times* of London, "All men here are praying for NATO to come on the ground so we can fight and inflict great losses on them. It will be worse than Vietnam for them. There is a big anger now, a lot of hatred."

One member of her family stressed that they have no animosity toward the Kosovar Albanians and share their neighbor's cellar with an Albanian family that lives on the

same street.

More than 500,000 Albanians have been driven out of Kosova as result of Belgrade's assault on the Albanian independence movement and the NATO bombing. Albanians made up 90 percent of the province's 1.8 million people before the crisis erupted.

Some 300,000 Kosovar residents have been displaced to Albania and another 250,000 in Macedonia. Many are crammed into refugee camps run by NATO. Other governments in Europe have put sharp limits on the number of Kosovars they will accept.

Washington had planned to send 20,000 Albanians to the U.S. naval base in Guantánamo, Cuba, pointedly noting that as they would not be on U.S. soil they could not apply for asylum in the United States. After an international outcry over the sub-human conditions they would face, U.S. officials dropped the plan. The Cuban government offered to provide assistance to those forced to flee Kosova, while condemning the air strikes against Yugoslavia.

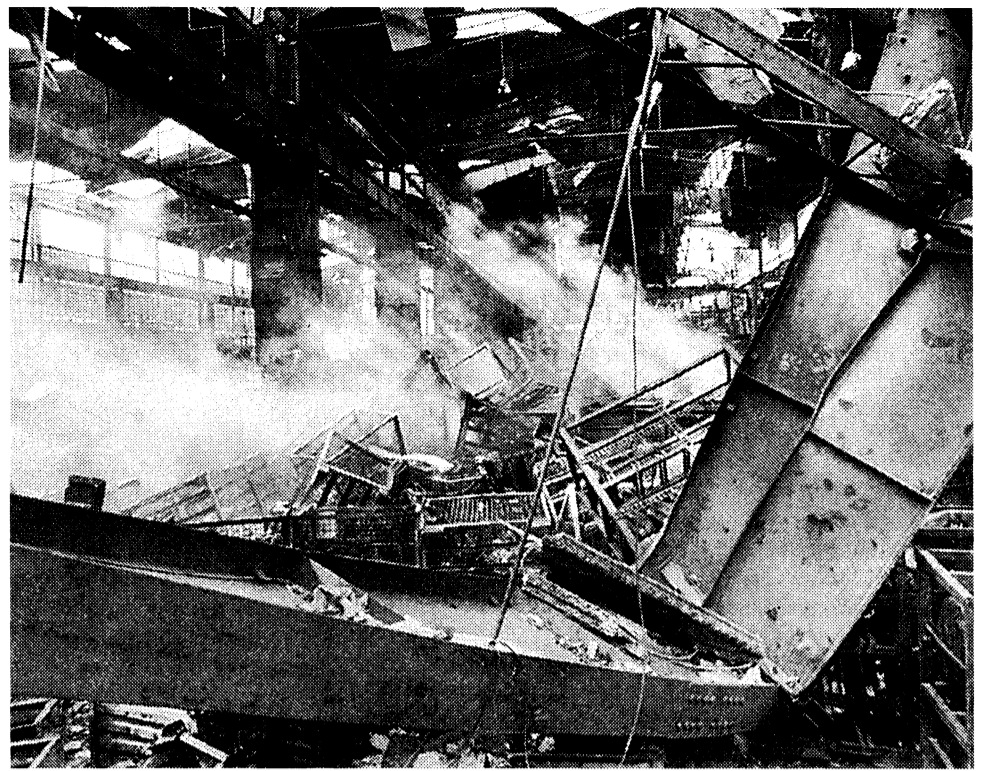
Rebels recruit from refugees

The UCK is carrying out a recruitment drive among the tens of thousands of people who have poured over the border into Albania. They operate numerous bases in the mountains, including a training base in Krume, Albania, 12 miles north of the refugee camp in Kukes. Scores of Albanian immigrants are traveling from Italy, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Italy, and other countries to join with the rebels.

In mid-April some 100 UCK fighters captured the Kosova towns of Koshare and Batusha. "We took the Serbs by surprise," one combatant told the *Wall Street Journal*. The owner of a pizzeria in Germany, he arrived in Albania two weeks earlier to join the UCK. He said he participated in the Koshare battle after a week of training in a UCK camp in Albania.

NATO has stressed its refusal to give any assistance to the Kosova independence fighters. According to the April 13 *Washington Post*, Albright told UCK spokesman Jakup Krasniqi that Washington maintains support for the UN arms embargo on Yugoslavia, including against the UCK. In his meeting with Albright, Krasniqi had requested some antitank weapons.

At the "peace" talks in Rambouillet, France, in February, Albright had pressured the UCK delegation to reduce its military



Smoke rises from a destroyed auto factory in Kragujevac, Yugoslavia, after U.S. and NATO forces bombed in mid-April. Some 124 workers were hurt, about 20 seriously.

activities, while Belgrade continued its attempt to crush the rebels.

U.S. seeks Moscow's acquiescence

Tensions are rising in Moscow over the imperialist military assault. Washington is seeking to convince Moscow to accept an imperialist-led "peacekeeping" force in Kosova, which could include Russian troops. At an April 13 news conference in Oslo, Norway, Russian foreign minister Igor Ivanov spoke against an occupying army in Kosova without "the agreement of the leadership of Yugoslavia." Albright had attended the news conference and met with Ivanov to "reengaged" Moscow into pursuing a "diplomatic solution."

The U.S.-led war in the Balkans has raised hackles among politicians in Moscow, some of whom have called for sending arms, military advisers, and volunteer combatants to Yugoslavia.

Washington is on a collision course with the Russian workers state, marked by the expansion of the North Atlantic military alliance into Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic. This opens the possibility of deploying imperialist troops on the borders of Russia.

Patrick Buchanan, the ultrarightist politician who is running for U.S. president, has been interviewed on television arguing that the bombardment of Yugoslavia pushes Moscow closer to Beijing, at a time when Washington should be dealing with "communist China." In a column published in the April 13 *Washington Post* he warned that

Soldiers refuse to join Greek force against Yugoslavia; protests marked by nationalism

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

THESSALONIKI, Greece — "We declare decisively that we won't spill even a drop of our blood or the blood of other peoples to serve the interests of the imperialists," said a statement by a group of new conscripts in the Greek army's Center for Training in Heavy Weaponry. Their open letter, condemning the participation by Athens in the U.S.-led NATO assault on Yugoslavia, has received wide publicity in the media here.

On the same day, April 13, Nikos Gardikis, a sailor, refused to obey an order by his officers to board the frigate Themistoklis that's being dispatched by the Greek Navy to the Adriatic to join the NATO armada there. His letter to the minister of defense was also widely quoted in the press.

These actions by Greek GIs are part of a widespread sentiment against the brutal NATO bombing of Yugoslavia. Protests are taking place throughout the country virtually every day, demanding the government of premier Constantinos Simitis reverse its support for the imperialist assault.

"Schröder, Simitis, and D'Alema — they divide the world with the peoples' blood!" was one of the main slogans of a rally by hundreds outside the ministry of defense in Athens April 13. It was referring German prime minister Gerhard Schröder, Greek prime minister Simitis, and Italian prime

minister Massimo D'Alema — all three social democrats leading governments in imperialist countries that have joined the NATO assault. D'Alema comes from the Democratic Party of the Left, the country's former Communist Party.

In fact, the majority of governments in the European Union that are taking part in the brutal bombing campaign by NATO are run by social democratic parties.

Simitis is dispatching a contingent of 200 "volunteer" troops to Albania, as part of the NATO force of 8,000 being deployed there. These soldiers are paid handsomely for choosing to take part in the imperialist expedition in Albania.

Larger demonstrations took place April 15 here in Thessaloniki, Athens, and other cities. Up to 10,000 people have turned out for some of previous such rallies. These actions have been mostly called by the youth organizations affiliated to all the major political parties — from the Communist Party of Greece to New Democracy, the main opposition party that's conservative — and various peace groups. Even the youth group of the ruling Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) is co-sponsoring the marches. The officialdom of the country's trade union federation has also backed them.

The actions are marked by a heavy dose of Greek nationalism and political support for the regime of Slobodan Milosevic in

the NATO assault "may have called into being a Moscow-Minsk-Beijing-Belgrade-Baghdad axis." Buchanan opposes the Clinton administration's actions not because he is against the use of U.S. military might, but as being the wrong war for Washington to fight and win today.

Government officials in Hungary, one of the newest NATO members, held up a convoy of 73 trucks delivering aid to Yugoslavia from Russia and Belarus April 11. In the end, Budapest allowed 68 to go through. Five trucks were turned back after Hungarian officials declared them military vehicles.

Around 300,000 Hungarians live in the Serbian province of Vojvodina, with some serving in the Yugoslav army. Several have been killed by NATO bombs since the air war began March 24. Hungarian foreign minister Janos Martonyi told NATO officials in early April that Budapest "has been placed in the agonizing position of going to war against fellow Hungarians," the *Washington Post* reported April 12. Despite pleas from Budapest to spare Vojvodina from bombing raids, the NATO military alliance has blasted the province since the first day of its military assault.

Meanwhile, the imperialist military deployment in the region is growing. London is preparing to send 2,500 soldiers to join the 12,000-strong NATO force in Macedonia and some 8,000 imperialist troops are getting ready for deployment in Albania. Washington has already taken control over some Albanian military facilities, including airfields and seaports.

Belgrade. Greek flags, along with the red, hammer-and-sickle banners of the CP dot the crowd. The open letter by sailor Gardikis to the minister of defense is one such example.

"The role of NATO's naval forces in the Adriatic, where I was called to go, does not serve the interests for which I joined the Navy," Gardikis said. "I can not accept two flags. The flag of NATO doesn't suit me, as it doesn't suit any Greek youth. I do have a flag! The interests of national independence and territorial integrity of my country."

Often flags with the Byzantine double-headed eagle — an emblem associated with rightist groups and others affiliated with the Greek Orthodox church — can also be seen.

All the organizers are opposed to self-determination for the Albanian nationality in Kosova.

Among the hundreds of thousands of Albanian immigrants in Greece a small but not insignificant minority has opposed NATO intervention into Kosova, even before Washington launched the bombing March 24, while at the same time supporting independence for Kosova.

But given the predominance of the political forces among Kosovar Albanians who support the imperialist assault, the Albanians opposed to intervention have not yet succeeded in organizing demonstrations around these demands.

London: 2,000 protest UK, NATO bombing

BY PAMELA HOLMES

LONDON — More than 2,000 people marched through central London April 11 to protest the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia in a demonstration organized by the Committee to Stop the War in the Balkans. Most marched behind banners from the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, labor movement, and left-wing political organizations. A large number of the participants were from Yugoslavia, including both Serb nationalists and others who described themselves as Yugoslav to *Militant* reporters.

A rally at the end of the march was addressed by a range of speakers, including the journalist John Pilger, Bruce Kent of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, Labour Party Member of Parliament (MP) Anthony Benn, and Conservative Party MP John Randall. The speakers' views ranged from eulogizing the role of "Serbia" in World War II to calling for the involvement of the United Nations. Despite periodic chants of "Yugoslavia, Yugoslavia," few of the speakers described the assault as being against Yugoslavia. Instead, most spoke of the at-

tack on Serbia. A speaker who criticized Yugoslav president Slobodon Milosevic, who has taken the lead in whipping up Serb chauvinism against the Albanian population in Kosova, was shouted down. Not one of the speakers expressed support for an independent Kosova.

A Communist League banner demanding "UK-NATO Hands Off Yugoslavia! Independence for Kosova!" attracted interest. Many people came up to the banner and the accompanying campaign table at the start of the march and at the rally afterwards. Most of them, including Yugoslavs, wanted to discuss the CL's position that supporting self-determination for Kosova is essential to defending the workers' state in Yugoslavia from imperialist assault.

A small number of Serbian nationalists were openly hostile to the demand for Kosova's independence. As the march went by a 300-strong picket by Serbian nationalists of Downing Street, residence of Prime Minister Anthony Blair, a crowd of 30 chanted slogans aggressively in response to this banner.



Militant/Phil Waterhouse

Some 2,000 people rallied in London against U.S. and British bombing of Yugoslavia April 11. But not everyone agreed on the demand for independence of Kosova.

Adjacent to the rally, a counter-demonstration backed NATO intervention. It numbered about 200 people, with mainly Albanian flags but also a few Union Jacks being flown.

By the end of the rally members and supporters of the Communist League and the

Young Socialists had sold 46 single copies of the *Militant*, a subscription renewal for one year to the paper, four copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*, and seven copies of *The Truth About Yugoslavia: Why Working People Should Oppose Intervention*.

Bonn joins imperialist assault on Yugoslavia

BY ROBERT DEES

AUGSBURG, Germany — The German government's participation in the NATO bombing of Yugoslavia is its first use of military force — outside of the cover of so-called peacekeeping operations — since 1945. In a debate March 25, the morning after the bombing began, many of the major parties in the German parliament expressed their support for the action.

The current government is a coalition of the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the Green parties. "You can count on the support of the CDU-CSU fraction," said Wolfgang Schäuble, chair of the opposition parliamentary fraction of the Christian Democratic Union and Christian Social Union. These parties are usually sharp critics of the government. Angelika Beer, representing the Greens, and Wolfgang Gerhart for the Free Democrats (FDP) made similar statements. Gregor Gysi of the Party of Democratic Socialism (PDS), successor to the former East German Stalinist party, spoke against the attack.

German chancellor Gerhard Schröder of the SPD alleged that NATO had worked up to the last minute to prevent war, and that "we have no other choice." In fact, at a transition meeting that included the previous CDU-FDP and the current SPD-Green governments, the Schröder administration agreed last October 16 to participate in NATO air attacks on Yugoslavia. The decision to send ground troops to Macedonia for a "peace-keeping mission" in Kosova was approved by parliament November 19.

When the Stalinist bureaucracy that ruled Yugoslavia began to crumble in 1990, Bonn was the first imperialist power to get involved, immediately recognizing the Croatian regime of Franjo Tudjman.

Fourteen German Air Force Tornado jet attack bombers are among the 400 military aircraft that have carried out the most recent

attack. The Tornados, armed with Harm missiles, specialize in destroying air defense systems. Germany also has 3,000 soldiers stationed in Macedonia as part of the 12,000 NATO troops there. The German soldiers have some 1,900 vehicles, including 28 Leopard II heavy tanks armed with 120 mm cannons and 52 medium and light tanks with 20 mm cannons. The force also has 30 Fuchs armored personnel carriers armed with 7.6 mm machine guns, 10 medium and light helicopters, 3 armored mine sweepers, and an armored, motorized bridge builder. Another 2,600 German ground troops are stationed in Bosnia as part of the 30,000-strong imperialist occupation force there.

Schröder alleged the attack is intended to "prevent a humanitarian catastrophe in Kosova." The killings and expulsions of Kosovar Albanians by soldiers of the Belgrade regime have received prominent coverage in the media here. This "humanitarian" rationalization is contradicted by the German government's actual practice toward Kosovar refugees. More than 98 percent of asylum petitions by Kosovars are rejected as "obviously unfounded."

War of conquest

Germany has the second-largest trading economy in the world, with more than \$527.61 billion in exports in 1998. But exports to Russia fell 53 percent in the last quarter of 1998 over the same period a year before, and exports to southeast Asia dropped nearly 33 percent. Trade with China and Japan also declined. Exports to the United States increased, but are marked by ever-sharper clashes and protectionist legislation as the various capitalist powers turn increasingly on each other. At home, "the engine of the German economy is sputtering," according to a report in the *Frankfurter Allgemeine*.

Attempts at "peacefully" finding profitable new areas of investment in Eastern Europe and Russia have been a disaster. Even integrating the workers state of East Germany into the capitalist economy, to date, has failed. And that attempt has dragged Germany down from its position as the dominant economic power in Europe. The recent Romanian miners strike and march on the capital served notice that dunning letters from the IMF would not be sufficient to reimpose capitalist property relations. The attack on Yugoslavia is the beginning of an effort to use military force to accomplish this goal in Eastern Europe and Russia.

Shortly before the attack, German General Klaus Naumann, who heads NATO's military committee, made clear that any idea of a short-term intervention in the Balkans is an illusion. "If we go in, it will be a beginning that will bind us for years."

Chancellor Schröder evaded a journalist's question March 25 on whether war plans included sending in ground troops. Schröder claimed that "the question is not

posed." Two months earlier, however, he said, "Isolated air attacks would not lead to any improvement for the people in Kosova," and it is "urgently necessary to consider broader military pressure." Wolfgang Petritsch of Austria, currently European Union Commissioner for Kosova, has openly called for sending in ground forces, though there do not appear to be concrete plans to do so right now. NATO strategists have from early planning stages considered 200,000 soldiers necessary.

Majority in east oppose the bombing

Within days of the initial attack, Ilona Rothe, a teacher from the eastern state of Thuringia whose son is stationed in Macedonia, formed "Mothers Against War" in an appeal that has gotten broad coverage. She said that more than 1,000 women called her from all over Europe less than a week into the air campaign. A recent poll stated 55 percent of those asked in the eastern states of Germany opposed Bonn's use of bombers against Yugoslavia. This is in comparison to 25 percent in the western states.

The rapid transition of the Green party leadership from "pacifists" to war politicians surprised many people here. Green deputy Hans-Christian Ströbele denounced the attack in parliament as an "offensive war from German soil."

Divisions within the ruling SPD and Green parties are being played out in the media, and both parties called special congresses in mid-

April to attempt to deal with internal dissent. Three-quarters of the delegates at the SPD congress voted for Schröder as the party's chairman — a solid majority but not as large as usual. The congress adopted a motion backing Bonn's involvement in the assault on Yugoslavia, and a proposed amendment opposing the use of German ground troops was defeated by a wide margin.

Former Hamburg mayor Henning Voscherau, a member of the SPD executive committee, spoke out against German involvement "for historical reasons."

The previous conservative defense minister, Volker Rühle of the CDU, generally considered a hawk, publicly distanced himself from the attack. This reflects divisions within the German ruling class about whether the NATO intervention is the best way to advance Bonn's imperial interests in the region.

The right-wing tabloid *Bild* ran a headline asking "Is This War Right?" with brief statements from 50 "prominent Germans" — several of whom said "no." Manfred Kock, chair of the Protestant Church of Germany, Catholic Archbishop Joachim Meissner, and Michel Friedman, executive committee member of the Central Council of Jews in Germany, all came out in favor of the attack.

Demonstrations against the bombing have taken place in Berlin, Bonn, Stuttgart, Nuremberg, and other cities. Most have been dominated by pro-Milosevic forces. An Albanian group rallied in Munich in support of the attack.

Help the *Militant* report from Balkans

Beginning this week, an international team headed by *Militant* staff writer Argiris Malapanis will be providing invaluable coverage from the Balkans on the NATO assault on Yugoslavia, the struggle for self-determination in Kosova, and other developments in the region. You can help make this possible by sending a contribution to the *Militant*, earmarked Travel Fund, at 410 West Street, New York, New York 10014.

In New International no. 11

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Jack Barnes

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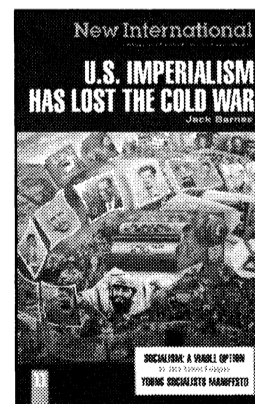
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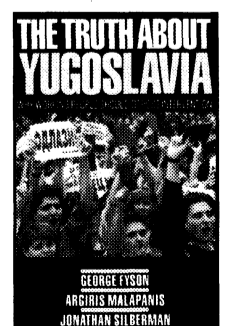
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Lessons of the 1979 Newport News strike

Members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) walked out at the Newport News, Virginia, Shipbuilding and Drydock Company on Jan. 31, 1979. Exactly one year earlier, the Steelworkers won a union representation election among the 17,500 production and maintenance workers at the country's largest shipyard. But Tenneco, the oil giant that owned the company, refused to recognize the union and negotiate a contract.

The following selection is from "A new stage in revolutionary working-class politics," a report by Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes adopted by the party's National Committee on April 29, 1979. It took up the importance of the strike in Newport News, which had ended just six days earlier, and the SWP's participation in this battle.

The entire report is published in *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions*, by Jack Barnes. It is copyright © 1994 by Pathfinder Press, and is reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.



Militant/John Cobey

Members of United Steelworkers of America Local 8888 on picket line February 1979

BY JACK BARNES

We began to take a look at the Newport News organizing drive at our last plenum back in December [1978]. We didn't know too much about it then, but it looked pretty important. This outfit called USWA Local 8888 had organized a big shipyard of 18,000 workers in right-to-work-for-less Virginia, and now they wanted recognition and a contract. Nobody else in the radical movement seemed to pay much attention to it or care much about it. But we said that it looked like the single most important strike coming. It turned out we were right.

As the strike unfolded, many aspects were similar to the coal strike last year. Of course, there are differences between the composition and character of the UMW and Local 8888, but that's not so important to us as the similarities.

The union ranks took a measure of democracy at a crucial turning point and altered the outcome of the strike. In making a tactical retreat, and preparing to enter the next battle in the best possible position, they changed for the better what they had to face on the job.

The *Wall Street Journal* hit wide of the mark here, too. Before the union ranks met and voted they already had 8888 laid out on a morgue slab. They were gloating.

But the workers, a little union democracy, and a tactical misjudgment by the cops and Tenneco all came together to change things. And we got a glimpse of the future.

The workers reversed the rout that the USWA bureaucracy had set them up for in accepting Tenneco's back-to-work conditions. The workers staved off going back under conditions that would have cut them apart in the worst possible way, making the next stage of the battle far more difficult.

The decision to return to work is not the end of a war, remember. It's just the first battle.

Those 8888 militants learned some big lessons when the cops attacked their picket lines and tried to bust up their headquarters last week. They call it Bloody Monday now.

And seeing those club-swinging cops roaming around smashing the heads of Black and white strikers made a few other workers in the Tidewater area take a new look at the strike, too.

Effects of civil rights movement

The Newport News battle tells us a lot about the effects of the civil rights movement, the role of the Black struggle. It's a big mistake to look at what happened in the South over the past twenty years in too narrow a framework. It's not just that some important civil rights were won, narrowly construed.

There were elements of a social revolution in the South; Jim Crow was smashed. The South today is more desegregated than many of the big northern industrial states; studies have shown that.

This was a big victory for our entire class, Black and white. It means that there has been a sort of leveling-out process in some of the conditions of the class struggle throughout the country. The South is more like the rest of the country than ever before. The big difference today is not the Jim Crow system and all the social, political, and economic features that flowed from that. That was the big difference from the defeat of Reconstruction through the 1960s.

The big difference today is that the southern working class is still much less unionized than in the North. That is one of the legacies of Jim Crow, and the class-collaborationist policies of the labor

bureaucracy. But, as Newport News showed, the battles that demolished Jim Crow have created much more favorable conditions for solving this important remaining difference as well. It's a big challenge confronting American labor—and the entire union movement will be fighting from a position of weakness until it is met.

A great deal was changed in the South by the civil rights movement. The consciousness of the working class was dramatically changed. Not only Black, but also white workers became more capable of moving in a class-conscious direction; their attitudes were profoundly altered. They became more capable of seeing their common class interests with Black workers—which is absolutely necessary to move forward. There was a rise in the self-confidence of the Black workers. The composition of the workforce changed, as more and more Blacks fought their way into industry. There has also been a rise in the number of women workers, like everywhere else. Finally, there is a lot more industry in the South today. In addition to the textile and other traditional southern industry, there are more auto plants, steel mills, electrical assembly plants, rubber factories, and so on.

The origins of the 8888 organizing drive directly reflected these important changes in the South. The vanguard was made up overwhelmingly of Black workers inside the yard. They sensed what these changes meant. They sized up how they could take advantage of these changes to put together a new struggle, in a new way, and with broader forces—white and Black workers, men and women. They took the initiative to draw the USWA into the fight.

A lesson in solidarity

The Newport News workers also learned something about the importance of solidarity. Although the support they got from unionists around the country fell far short of the potential had the USWA officialdom energetically pursued it, the workers nonetheless got a taste of what solidarity can mean.

They also got a taste of what the bureaucracy will never mean by solidarity. They never mean solidarity inside the labor movement or with the oppressed. The bureaucrats' solidarity is with the capitalist government. They try to teach the workers to look to the government, to look to the National Labor Relations Board, to look to some mediator, to look to the courts. That's what USWA president Lloyd McBride and the entire USWA officialdom tried to drum into the heads of the 8888 workers.

But from their own experiences with the cops, the capitalist politicians, the courts, and the NLRB, the Newport News workers began learning something about where they must really look for allies, and why. The process is just beginning. It's still being thought through. It's not all totally understood. There are still hopes that the courts or the Carter administration will come through with some real assistance.

But the question is posed right out in the open. This, too, presents the bureaucracy with

difficulties. George Meany personally sent letters to AFL-CIO affiliates telling them to hold no Newport News solidarity activities without an explicit go-ahead from the USWA officialdom. The deliberate intent of this was to put the kibosh on solidarity, including in cities where union support meetings were already in the planning stages.

McBride gave his infamous press conference where he said there had been a "tactical blunder," an unfortunate misunderstanding. Some people, McBride said, were incorrectly portraying the Newport News strike as part of a crusade to organize the South.

"I don't look on this as a crusade," McBride insisted. "We are not interested in broadening the dispute beyond our efforts to get a contract."

But without a crusade to organize the South, it will be much more difficult to get a contract. That's another lesson the Newport News workers are learning. They have everything to gain, and nothing to lose, from projecting their fight as a struggle for workers throughout the South and throughout the country.

How the SWP participated

Our party was the first and the only group on the left to size up correctly the stakes at Newport News. I couldn't believe my eyes in reading the opponent papers over the past couple of weeks. Papers such as the *Guardian* hardly ever had datelines from Newport News. They didn't send reporters, let alone teams, down there, except for one or two short trips. They didn't understand the importance of going through this experience with the workers there.

The *Militant*, on the other hand, was looked to by literally hundreds of strikers as the only prostrike newspaper—the paper that told the truth, that told their side of the story. A good number of them were quite interested in discussing other ideas in the *Militant* with the party and YSA members who were down there.

We didn't leave our views about solidarity on the level of propaganda and education. We acted on our views. We helped build solidarity not only inside the Steelworkers union throughout the country, but in the UAW, the Machinists, and elsewhere. This was a valuable educational experience, another step forward for our union fractions and for our fraction, branch, and local leaderships.

At each stage of the strike, we sent teams of socialists down to Newport News. We didn't send just reporters and sales teams, but socialist steelworkers as well.

We always acted responsibly. We used our heads. We knew that the ability to shut down production in the shipyard depended on shifting the relationship of forces more and more to the advantage of the strikers, and that was a political question, not a narrow tactical one. We didn't pretend to come in from the outside to dish out tactical proposals to get the strikers out of a jam. We didn't launch into tirades against the USWA leadership, or urge the 8888 workers to do that. We didn't tell them that we had some magical tactic, such as smashing a few scabs, that would solve their problems and bring Tenneco to its knees.

We carefully avoided all these traps. Instead, we concentrated on doing what we could to help shift the relationship of forces in the strikers' direction. We helped get out the truth about the strike both through our industrial fractions and through the *Militant*. We analyzed the strike correctly, and filled the *Militant* with all the other social and political lessons that the workers needed to think out and discuss.

We did this openly as socialists. We were down there as fellow workers who wanted to do what we could to support 8888 and to discuss our views with anyone who was willing to listen.

As a result, there are thousands of people down there who have read the *Militant*. Some of our subscribers pass the paper around a little bit, too. We've met a lot of people who are interested in what we have to say—both about the strike and about many other things.

This kind of receptivity to the *Militant* by workers in the midst of an important strike struggle is something new. We haven't seen it over the past three decades.

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Shipyard workers demand decent pay raise

Continued from front page

the yard. "See how this yard looks," striker Michele Afforter told the *Militant* as she pointed to the idle giant cranes and lack of movement of any materials in the yard. "This is how it's been all week." Several workers on the picket lines made the point that the company was surprised the Steelworkers actually went on strike and that support for it has been so solid.

"People are pulling together," stated William Hines, who has worked at the yard for nine years. "The union is stronger now than it's ever been. As the strike goes on, we have more people joining." More than 80 percent of the 9,200 hourly workers have joined the union. And this figure continues to rise. This is up from about 50 percent in 1997. Because Virginia is a so-called "right to work" state, the USWA cannot have a union shop agreement where workers in the bargaining unit automatically join the union. Mark Zephir, who was picketing at the 37th Street gate, described a video by company chairman William Fricks where he says that if workers don't like the way he does business they can go to Hardees to flip burgers. "Well, we will flip burgers before we build William Fricks another ship," stated Zephir.

The shipyard employs thousands of non-union contract workers, many of whom face immediate termination if they do not go into work. A number of these workers give the striking unionists the thumbs up as they enter the yard. "We realize we have to go in, but we're milking them for everything they're worth," was how one of these contract workers summed up his view of things, according to Zephir.

A lot of people were recently hired and still on their 90-day probation when the strike started. Ron Taylor, 37, who has worked in the yard 11 years, stated, "We've been telling them, the best place to be is in the union. A lot of them have come out and picketed with us."

Impressive support

Support from the community and area unionists has been impressive. The Teamsters and Communication Workers of America (CWA) are honoring the Steel-

workers picket lines. Teamsters at United Parcel Service (UPS) have refused to make deliveries through the gates. Some have even walked the picket line in solidarity with the strikers.

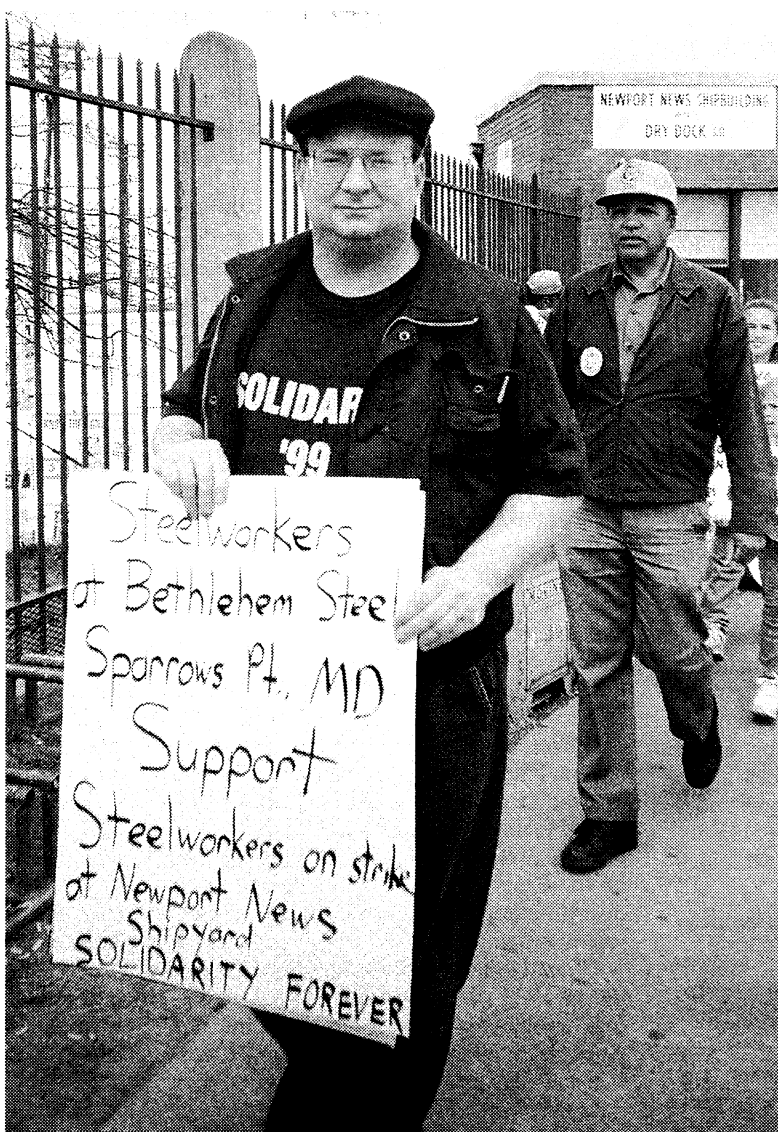
Meanwhile, the company in an April 8 bulletin announced that it was going to two 12-hour shifts and a 56-hour workweek for salaried supervisors and scabs who have crossed the line in order to be "more efficient and productive."

"They won't get much of anything done until we go back in there," was how striker Marvin Lockley, who does nuclear work on the *Nimitz* aircraft carrier, reacted to the company's announcement.

The main issues in this contract fight are wages, pensions, and health benefits. In 1995 the union took a concession contract with a wage freeze and surrendered two holidays and 10 percent of workers' vacation time. Yard workers were locked into a contract that kept pay at 1993 rates, while inflation has risen 12.3 percent and Virginia's average manufacturing wage has gained 17.7 percent over the past six years. The company "wants to give us a 50-cents-an-hour raise and then jack up our medical expenses so that we'd actually be losing money," stated striker Donna Schneider.

Michele Afforter, pointed out that she currently pays about \$40 a month for health coverage for herself, her husband, and son. The company wants to raise this to \$160 a month.

Striker Marvin Lockley, who has worked 32 years in the shipyard, would only get a pension of \$260 a month if he retired now.



Militant/Brian Williams
Rob Price, a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 2609 in Sparrows Point, Maryland, walks picket line in solidarity with striking Steelworkers at Newport News Shipbuilding in Virginia.

Out of this he would have to pay \$152 a month for medical insurance. "We're demanding a \$900 a month pension for 30 years of service," stated Lockley.

"I'm out here for the people who have been injured and stepped on for years, and for people who are retired" said Stacey Lilly,

who has worked at the shipyard for 19 years but is currently on picket duty. "The yard drains blood out of you and they're working on the bone marrow. There's not much more left."

"People don't understand what a shipyard worker goes through," stated Barry Credle, a pipefitter. "This is a nasty environment. I work in tanks no bigger than an oil truck in the bowels of ships. It's dark and nasty. One misstep on a ladder and I could lose my life." Chenelly, another pipefitter, pointed out, "This is a plantation. They've changed the name from plantation to corporation. If you can pay your workers mediocre wages then you can become a corporation giant."

An electrician at the yard for 38 years who walked the picket line with his family said, "The next two weeks are critical. We've got them if we just hold out." When asked what he sees as the biggest difference between the current strike and the 85-day walkout for union recognition 20 years ago, the unionist stated, "This strike has a different breed of people — a lot of young people with guts who will take a chance." Eric, a sailor from the *Nimitz*, was going through the 50th Street gate to do his job on the ship. The Navy requires sailors to work through the strike. He said, "Everybody supports the

strikers. They deserve what they're asking for. If we were allowed to, we would all walk out with them."

The U.S. bombing of Yugoslavia is a topic of discussion here, with strikers and sailors expressing various views. The carrier *Theodore Roosevelt* left the shipyard here shortly before the strike and is now in the Adriatic Sea, off the coast of Yugoslavia. Eric commented, "Yugoslavia is not really a war. We're just dropping bombs on them. But my uncle told me this is what Vietnam looked like in 1962. So, we'll see what happens."

Brian Williams is a member of USWA Local 2609 in Sparrows Point, Maryland. Stu Singer, a member of the United Transportation Union, contributed to this article.

Philadelphia: Irish worker fights deportation

JAMES McFADDEN
AND CANDACE WAGNER

PHILADELPHIA — "We are celebrating tonight our defiance, our resistance against the ongoing injustices in Northern Ireland," declared Oistin MacBride to 300 supporters of John McNicholl, an Irish worker facing deportation.

MacBride then called for a moment of silence for Irish attorney Rosemary Nelson, assassinated by a pro-British loyalist death squad the previous week. The March 21 event at the Philadelphia Irish Center raised funds for McNicholl's legal fees.

An activist in the Northern Ireland Civil Rights Association, McNicholl was framed for the July 1975 shooting death of Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) officer Robert McPherson in Dungiven, Northern Ireland. He escaped Long Kesh prison in Belfast in 1976 after being jailed there for only a few

months. McNicholl, who works as a pipefitter, has resided in the Philadelphia area for the last 12 years. His wife and three children are U.S. citizens.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) began deportation proceedings against McNicholl in 1995. He was charged with "entry without inspection." Later the INS added a charge of terrorism. A six-day deportation trial was held in February 1999. The judge said he will rule on McNicholl's case by September 1.

Prior to the scheduling of the deportation trial, it appeared to McNicholl's supporters that he might get a reprieve. The British government had declined a U.S. government request to seek the man's extradition.

Deportation proceedings have been suspended against six other Irish nationalists living in the United States, and bail was granted to three others who escaped from Long Kesh prison in 1983. But the INS in Philadelphia has proceeded with McNicholl's case.

British army and RUC officers testified against McNicholl during his deportation trial, including RUC sergeant William Elliott, who was wounded in the 1975 gun battle and claims to have identified McNicholl from a lineup. According to the RUC inspector who organized the lineup, McNicholl, who had been tortured and not allowed to bathe since his arrest, was placed at a specific spot in a room, disheveled, and without shoes. Nineteen other men, all of them taller than McNicholl, were also present when Elliott "identified" the supposed gunman.

"I wonder how long it took them to find the Catholic with no shoes on," remarked Jack Worrall of the Federation of

Irish Societies, who attended the deportation trial. "Elliott's description fits that of another man who has admitted his part in the Dungiven incident. It does not fit John Eddy McNicholl."

When McNicholl took the stage at the event in his honor, he thanked many for their continuing support, including his union local. McNicholl described the years-long siege of his parent's home in Northern Ireland by the British army and the RUC before his arrest in the 1970s. The house was searched dozens of times, 38 times in one month, six times one day. Helicopters regularly buzzed the house. Several times his mother was awakened to find armed British soldiers in her bedroom.

McNicholl explained at his deportation trial that the RUC cops tortured and threatened to charge the elderly man who owned the farm where McNicholl was seized with weapons possession and other crimes. To gain the other man's freedom, the Irish nationalist signed a "confession."

"In 1969 John was 17. That year he decided to join the Civil Rights Association in his town of Derry," explained MacBride to McNicholl's supporters, "to do something about the economic apartheid that we lived under." MacBride, also a native of Derry, is a photo journalist living presently in New York City.

During the deportation trial McNicholl's supporters packed the courtroom and held a picket line outside. The fight received front-page coverage in the main daily here, the *Philadelphia Inquirer*.

"John can not be sent back," stated MacBride. "You each have the ability to make sure it doesn't happen. Every one of us is a weapon to assure that we get freedom, justice, and peace in our country."

Information on the case can be accessed on the web at <http://members.aol.com/johnmcn3/john.htm>

Candace Wagner is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees.

Federal court rules searching passengers in cars is okay

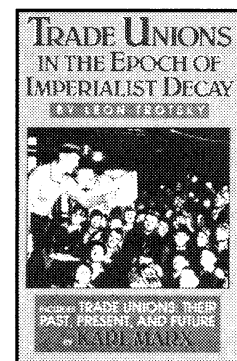
BY GREG McCARTAN

NEW YORK — The U.S. Supreme Court dealt another blow to Fourth Amendment protections of individuals against unreasonable police searches and seizures. The court ruled April 5 that police may search the belongings of a passenger of an automobile when looking for criminal evidence against the driver.

In the ruling Supreme Court Justice Antonin Scalia wrote, "Effective law enforcement would be appreciably impaired without the ability to search a passenger's personal belongings." Scalia wrote that passengers of a vehicle "will often be engaged in a common enterprise with the driver and have the same interest in concealing the fruits or the evidence of their wrongdoing."

Getting right down to brass tacks, Robert Scully of the National Association of Police Organizations praised the Supreme Court judges for "giving officers the tools they need to do their jobs." He added that, "Officers must be free of unreasonable, confusing, and unworkable restrictions on what may be searched."

Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay



LEON TROTSKY
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from being narrow and selfish, aim at the emancipation of the downtrodden millions."
— Karl Marx, 1866.

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Farmers fight for land

Continued from front page

racial discrimination toward farmers who are Black.

Many farmers who have been leading the fight to keep their land and demand justice oppose this settlement as totally inadequate. Nevertheless, U.S. District Judge Paul Friedman gave it his final approval April 14.

The meeting in Memphis was one in a series of 41 that will take place in 17 states across the United States between April and August 1999. The schedule of meetings is updated every two weeks and farmers are informed by mail. The increased frequency of the meetings clearly indicates an attempt by the legal council for the plaintiffs and the USDA to expedite signing up farmers to accept the terms of the lawsuit.

Under the consent decree, the "Track A" option promises farmers a \$50,000 settlement along with relief from USDA debts, provided "substantial" evidence of discrimination is presented.

"Track B" allows farmers to seek a larger monetary settlement, but they have to meet an even higher standard of documentary evidence. A third possibility is to opt out of the class action settlement and seek a private lawsuit. There are no provisions under either Track A or B to appeal rejected claims.

As Attorney O. Kendall Moore explained

to farmers how to go about filing, a dozen farmers walked into the room carrying signs protesting the proposed settlement. Moore paused and said, "There are some folks who have been at many of these meetings who don't agree with us." They "are welcome here, but these folks want their land back and this settlement cannot do that." When one of the protesters attempted to explain their purpose for being there, he was told by the attorney that he had "no right to speak at this meeting."

Among the protesters were Thomas Burrell, a leader of the Concerned Black Farmers and the Tennessee Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association (BFAA) and Eddie Slaughter, a Georgia farmer who is the national vice president of the BFAA, as well as other farmers from Georgia, Arkansas, and Tennessee.

One of their signs said, "Avoid the spring round up — OPT OUT." Slaughter explained to these reporters, "We say opt out so we can have our day in court. How can these lawyers speak for us if they cannot speak to us? No Black farmer had any say in this suit."

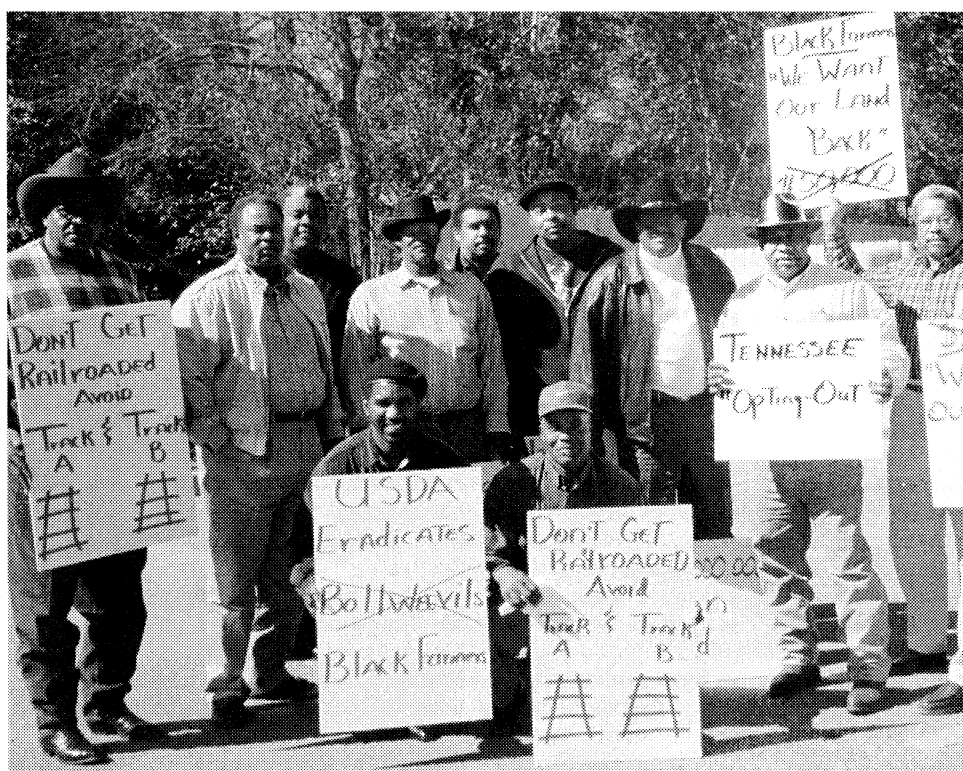
Burrell added, "The majority of farmers have a Track B claim. The problem here is that the Department of Agriculture has admitted to discrimination, but we still have to provide proof. The burden of proof still lies on the Black farmer. This settlement is as discriminatory as the policies the original suit was against."

Unable to state their views on the floor of the meeting, the protesters talked one-on-one with many farmers as they left the Agricenter. They also gave several media interviews, some of which were aired over the next couple of days.

Many of the Tennessee farmers are veterans in the battle to win their land back and justice from the USDA. In 1982 a group of farmers occupied the Farmers Home Administration (FHA) offices for 21 days.

Alvin O'Neal, a hog farmer from Fayette County in west Tennessee, said, "This settlement is a gimmick; we've had over 20 years of it. In 1982 we staged a protest against the FHA. They were holding up the money then, they made a few loans that year — you may have gotten your loan approved in January, but you wouldn't get your money until July, which was too late. We went into the FHA and when it came time to close, we told them we would be staying."

ing, commented, "We plan to continue organizing events around Cuba."



Militant/Arlene Rubinstein

Farmers from Tennessee and Arkansas attend a meeting of 700 in Albany, Georgia, in February, which discussed the USDA suit. Some of the same fighters protested at the Memphis meeting, and others joined in for the first time.

Joining in the discussion, George Bonner, who farmed until 1994 in Fayette County, said, "It was the lateness of loans that killed me more than anything else." Reflecting on their occupation of the FHA offices he said, "They brought in federal marshals and USDA negotiators, but we stayed and nobody got arrested. Farmers who belonged to the American Agricultural Movement from Missouri came down and helped us, also."

In a similar story J.J. Boozer, a farmer from Pulaski, Illinois, recalls how the lack of government lending, floods, and excessive charges for grain storage ended his farm career. The government finally foreclosed on his farm in 1981. "In 1973 we had 10 feet of water all over the land. The Ohio and Mississippi rivers crossed in my front yard and we lost everything that couldn't float or swim. We lost 126 head of cattle; only 9 sur-

vived. Not only were my loans held up, but I couldn't get disaster relief either."

Boozer said he is what some would call a "radical." In the early 1980s, he supported Missouri farmer Wayne Cryts and other farmers when they raided a bankrupt grain elevator to reclaim their soybeans.

He also said he once had a face-to-face run in with Earl Butz, a former secretary of agriculture who was fired due to the reaction to a racist remark he made in a public speech.

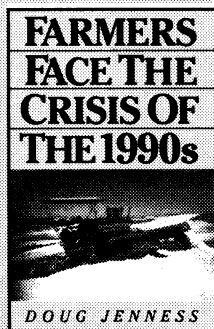
In reference to the consent decree, Boozer said, "The \$50,000 is a joke — that's nothing in farming today. I am going to continue to raise hell, wherever farmers are at, I will be there."

Stephen Bloodworth is a member of United Transportation Union Local 1291 in Birmingham, Alabama.

FROM PATHFINDER

Farmers Face the Crisis of the 1990s

DOUG JENNESS Examines the deepening economic and social crisis in the capitalist world and explains how farmers and workers can unite internationally against the mounting assaults from the billionaire bankers, industrialists, and merchants of grain.



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Cuban youth tour N.Y.

Continue from Page 16

sor of Political Science. A dozen high school students attended from Open Road, a New York City-based group that organizes youth into gardening projects in the city.

Connie Lobur, chair of the Humanities Department, opened the event. Also welcoming the youth was Rafael Santiago Jr., a pro-independence Puerto Rican poet.

Following their presentations, García and Morejón were asked a number of questions. One student asked whether the Cuban government discourages hip-hop music from the United States. Morejón replied that no such prohibition exists. To the contrary, he said, at his campus, "such music is quite popular" among students.

Another student asked if people can easily become artists in Cuba. García explained that since the revolution's triumph, the Cuban government has supported and promoted the arts. "Anyone wanting to develop an artistic talent has opportunities and is given the means to do so."

She explained that despite the very real material limitations facing Cuba, the government sponsors culture houses all over the country open to anyone to engage in artistic activities and have access to resources.

García added that one of the most important things the Cuban revolution has done for art is that major Cuban artists "take the theater and other arts to the countryside and the most remote areas of the country — something never seen prior to the revolution."

At a reception following the meeting, several students gave their impressions of the exchange. "The meeting helped to cut through the bad impressions we get of Cuba," said Rafael Santiago. "Meeting the Cuban youth encouraged me as a Puerto Rican nationalist to keep up the fight for independence."

Larisse Díaz, who had co-chaired the meet-

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Workers — who the hell are they! — Citing the Toledo, Ohio, *Blade*, Associated Press reports: "During the last five decades, the U.S. government risked the lives of

metal lighter than aluminum, yet six times stiffer than steel. It is vital to the operation of missiles, jet planes, and nuclear weapons." — AP

Skeptics on the march — "Stuttgart (KNA) — Only every other German believes that there is a life after death. Among Catholics, more than two-thirds are convinced of it, among Protestants only one in two, according to a survey of the Inra Institute for *The Best of Readers Digest*. Among west Germans 73 percent believe in God... in east Germany only 31 percent."

Progress or dwindling collections? — In Scotland, the Catholic archbishop is offering "fast track"

abortion to women who have had abortions. Priests can now can return women to the church without consulting the bishop.

The offer also holds for doctors and nurses who performed the procedure, and relatives who counseled it.

That's capitalism — When she was 18 months old, Mychelle Williams, died of a treatable infection easily detected by a simple blood test. Her family belonged to Kaiser HMO, but an ambulance took her to another hospital. Kaiser refused to pay for the blood test there. She was then sent to Kaiser where she died. Her family sued and a jury awarded them \$1.35 million.

P.S. — The California Supreme Court upheld an appeal against the award to the Williams family. Ignoring a federal law against "patient dumping," it sliced the \$1.35-million award, basing its decision on a state law capping jury awards at \$250,000. After paying the lawyers, the Williams family will have less than \$150,000.

Cleaning up the clutter — A truck loaded with lethal radioactive waste drove from the Los Alamos nuclear research center in New Mexico to the first radioactive waste dump, near Carlsbad, 270 miles away. An AP report said: "The shipment contained 600 pounds of plutonium-contaminated trash, including clothing,

gloves, and metal pans."

Aren't issues in wrong order? — Reporting on the latest in a series of fires at northern California oil refineries, the *Los Angeles Times* headlined the story "Fire at Refinery Raises Safety, Gas Price Issues."

Really, Dick Tracy — Nearly half the students tested at three Los Angeles elementary schools were found to need glasses. Traditionally, school nurses have screened children for eye problems. But nurses who had been full time at many schools are now there two days a month. Declared the district administrator, "It's a real problem."



Harry Ring

thousands of workers by knowingly allowing them to be exposed to dangerous levels of beryllium, a metal critical to the military."

Why? — "Beryllium is a gray

The transitional program for socialist revolution

The following excerpts are from the introduction by Joseph Hansen to *The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution. The Transitional Program — originally titled "The Death Agony of Capitalism and the Tasks of the Fourth International"* — was drafted by Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky in 1938 as the program for the founding congress of the Fourth International, the international organization of communist forces at that time. The book includes not only the text of the Transitional Program, but also transcripts of discussions and articles about it by Leon Trotsky.

In his introduction, Hansen explains the continuity of the Transitional Pro-

gram to the Communist Manifesto

gram to the Communist Manifesto drafted by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in 1847-48, and to the Bolshevik party and Communist International under the leadership of V.I. Lenin into the early 1920s.

BOOK OF THE WEEK

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BY JOSEPH HANSEN

It thus fell to the Bolsheviks to revive the concept of transitional measures and to put it to use in Russia. Lenin's article "The Impending Catastrophe and How to Combat It," written in September 1917, illustrates his approach on this question.

In face of economic chaos and the worsening threat of famine resulting from Russia's involvement in the First World War, Lenin proposed five general measures:

- (1) Amalgamation of all banks into a single bank, and state control over its operations, or nationalisation of the banks.
- (2) Nationalisation of the syndicates, i.e., the largest, monopolistic capitalist associations (sugar, oil, coal, iron and steel, and other syndicates).
- (3) Abolition of commercial secrecy.
- (4) Compulsory syndication (i.e., compulsory amalgamation into associations) of industrialists, merchants and employers generally.
- (5) Compulsory organisation of the population into consumers' societies, or encouragement of such organisation, and the exer-

cise of control over it. A noteworthy aspect of these proposals is their reasonable nature. They are far removed from the declamations that ultraleft firebrands might have thought appropriate to the situation.... Propaganda of this kind dovetailed with the situation and had a powerful effect in winning the masses to the program of the Bolsheviks.

In power, the Bolsheviks were not given much opportunity to apply transitional measures. Faced with widespread sabotage by the capitalists and those under their influence, they had to proceed faster than they wished. One of the consequences was the necessity to make a retreat later on. This was undertaken under the New Economic Policy, which permitted an expansion of small-scale commodity production, particularly in the countryside.

The first four congresses of the Communist International, which codified and amplified the Bolshevik positions on many subjects, did not draw up a transitional program as such....

Despite the absence of theses or resolutions dealing specifically with transitional measures in a comprehensive way, the thinking of the Bolsheviks on this subject was nonetheless evident in the first four congresses. The "Theses on Tactics" adopted by the Third Congress refers to the "character of the transitional epoch" that makes it obligatory for all Communist parties to raise to the utmost their readiness for struggle. "Any struggle may turn into a struggle for power."

"The most important question before the Communist International today," the theses state, "is to win predominating influence over the majority of the working class, and to bring its decisive strata into struggle." ...

Workers' control of production was considered by the authors of the theses to be the key slogan:

Every practical slogan which derives from the economic needs of the working masses must be channelled into the struggle for control of production, not as a plan for the bureaucratic organization of the national economy under the capitalist regimes but through the factory councils and revolutionary trade unions. Only by building such organizations, linked together by industry and area, can the struggle of the working masses be organizationally unified and resistance put up to the splitting of the masses by social-democracy and the trade union leaders. The factory councils will accomplish these tasks only if they arise in the struggles for economic ends which are common to the broadest working masses.

The document takes up the charge that it is reformist to advance immediate or transitional demands:

Every objection to the putting forward of such partial demands, every charge of reformism on this account, is an emanation of the same inability to grasp the essential conditions of revolutionary action as was expressed in the hostility of some communist groups to participation in the trade unions, or to making use of parliament. It is not a question of proclaiming the final goal to the proletariat, but of intensifying the practical struggle which is the only way of leading the proletariat to the struggle for the final goal.... The revolutionary character of the present epoch consists precisely in this, that the most modest conditions of life for the working masses are incompatible with the existence of capitalist society, and that therefore the fight for

even the most modest demands grows into the fight for communism.

The document takes up other tasks — the need to appeal to the unemployed ("in present circumstances the army of the unemployed is a revolutionary factor of immense significance"), the need to press for "joint action in the struggle for the immediate interests of the proletariat," the need to prepare to meet the attack of the capitalists with adequate defense organizations. The latter point is of special interest....

Three kinds of demands are advanced in the Transitional Program. It is important to understand what they have in common and wherein they differ.

Immediate demands involve the day-to-day defense and improvement of the standard of living of the masses; i.e., the issues that give rise to the most elementary form of defensive organization of the masses — militant unions. This is the ground level for revolutionists. Participation at this level of struggle is the prerequisite for everything else. Battles over the standard of living of the masses derive their current acuteness from the growing incapacity of capitalism on a world scale to guarantee even food to its wage slaves.

Democratic demands involve the defense and extension of the right to organize independently on both the economic and political levels. Democratic demands are of special importance in the struggle against the retrogressive tendency in modern capitalism to suppress democracy, set up totalitarian regimes, and crush the organizations of the masses. The logical extension of the proletarian struggle for democracy is the establishment of democracy

in the economy itself.

Transitional demands are of a broader scope. They are based on the incapacity of capitalism to provide for the needs of the working class as a whole. They stress the feasibility of meeting those demands in a society constructed on a rational basis. On the economic level, transitional demands point toward the planned economy of socialism. On the political level, they center on the need for the workers to establish their own government. Concomitantly they outline the measures required to assure putting such a government in power against the reactionary resistance of the small minority holding a vested interest in the preservation of capitalism.

The three sets of demands express the objective needs of the working class in face of the economic, social, and political realities of the capitalist world....

Whether the struggle centers around immediate, democratic, or transitional demands, revolutionary Marxists promulgate *methods* of battle in which the proletariat is strongest; i.e., utilization of its strategic position in the economic system and mobilization of its numbers on a mass scale.

It should be observed that in the struggle for socialism, immediate, democratic, and transitional demands are but *means* to an end. In fighting for immediate demands, for instance, the workers gain organizational cohesiveness and battle experience of prime importance in more far-reaching struggles.

However, only as they gain *consciousness* of their interests as a class do workers take the goal of socialism as their own and begin utilizing the means open to them to achieve that goal....

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



April 19, 1974

In the wake of the startling disclosures of government "counterintelligence" operations against radical groups, the debate over the attorney general's list of so-called subversive organizations is being renewed.

Originally established by Democratic president Harry Truman in 1947, the list was one of the initial moves toward the attempts at thought-control that became known as McCarthyism. The stated purpose of the list was to keep "subversives" out of allegedly sensitive government jobs. In reality, the list was rapidly expanded to bar from any federal employment members of listed organizations.

In addition, the list was soon adopted by state governments and may corporations as an official black list.

Inclusion on the "subversive" list has been used by the government to justify its campaign of disruption and illegal harassment, sabotage, and surveillance against organizations like the Socialist Workers Party. The government's credo has become "anything goes against the subversives."

The socialist's Watergate suit against Nixon and other government officials, including the attorney general, is the most far-reaching and serious challenge yet brought against the existence and use of the "subversive" list. If the suit is successful, the list will be relegated to the trash heap, where it belongs.



April 18, 1949

In recent weeks the Kremlin has stepped up to fever pitch its war of nerves against the Yugoslav government. The answer to this campaign was given by Tito at the People's Front Congress in Belgrade April 9 where he declared that "no intimidation from the West or East can divert" Yugoslavia from the independent course it has pursued since the split with the Cominform last year.

The stream of propaganda urging Yugoslavia to revolt against Tito, has been accompanied by physical assaults against Yugoslav militiamen on international trains entering Bulgaria; by secret trials of Yugoslavs in Sofia, on charges of spying"; and by ruthless economic pressure aimed at destroying Tito's 5-year plan.

Apparently the imperialist powers do not intend to apply any immediate political pressure on the Tito regime. For the time being, they are content to help Tito remain in power. They have their eyes on the Cominform's latest maneuver against Tito, the proclamation of a "Macedonian National Liberation Front."

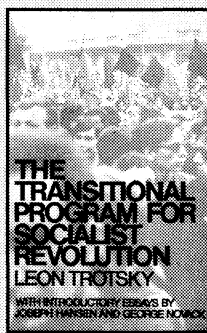
As planned by the Cominform, a "fine Macedonia" pledging allegiance to Stalin would be carved out of Macedonian areas of Yugoslavia, Greece and Bulgaria. Such a development might, as Tito warned and the imperialists hope, lead to war in the Balkans and be the imperialists' excuse for intervention against the Soviet Union.

From Pathfinder

The Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution

LEON TROTSKY

Contains discussions between leaders of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party and exiled revolutionary Leon Trotsky in 1938. The product of these discussions, a program of immediate, democratic, and transitional demands, was adopted by the SWP later that year. This program for socialist revolution remains an irreplaceable component of a fighting guide for communist workers today. \$20.95



Available from bookstores listed on page 12.

Solidarity with toilers in Balkans

Continued from front page

of working people in Yugoslavia against the imperialist onslaught is the struggle for national self-determination by the Albanian population and other oppressed nationalities in the region. Despite the premature obituaries in the capitalist media, this struggle has not been stamped out. While the mass mobilizations in the cities of Kosova and the guerrilla struggle led by the Kosova Liberation Army (UCK) have been dealt heavy blows for now, the desire for independence is more deeply rooted today than it was a decade ago when the national struggle there began to re-emerge. Once working people step into the political arena as independent actors and gain a greater sense of their power and self-worth, it's not so easy to shove them out of politics.

The imperialist powers have ganged up with the Slobodan Milosevic regime to try to undercut the struggle by the people of Kosova. White House officials have repeatedly stated their opposition to Kosova's independence. At the U.S.-orchestrated "peace" talks in France, Washington attempted to ram through an agreement by excluding any Kosovar leader who would not go by the script. Today, the objective of the NATO bombing campaign is to pressure Milosevic into a deal to partition Kosova and establish an imperialist-led military occupation force there. Washington seeks to advance toward its goal of dismembering the Yugoslav workers state and reestablishing capitalist social relations there, while giving U.S. imperialism a stronger edge over its European rivals.

In their effort to dehumanize working people there, spokespersons for big business bombard us with assertions that the people of Serbia and throughout Yugoslavia are by nature prone to "age-old ethnic conflict." This too is false. The Yugoslav socialist revolution triumphed because millions of workers and peasants of different nationalities united in a common struggle that defeated the German imperialist army and then the native capitalist exploiters. This living legacy still shapes the views of many working people today who continue to see themselves not as Serbs, Croats, or Slovenes but as Yugoslavs. This is true despite the chauvinist misleadership in Belgrade.

Likewise, despite their pro-capitalist, middle-class misleaders, working people in Kosova will learn through struggle that NATO is no friend but a deadly enemy. Their fight for self-determination strengthens the Yugoslav workers state and tends to break down, not reinforce, national borders and divisions.

The working class in United States and other imperialist countries should reject the efforts to drag us into supporting the employers' war drive through their nationalist "yellow ribbon" campaign around the three U.S. soldiers captured in Yugoslavia, as well as their stepped-up "antiterrorist" propaganda, which seeks to legitimize FBI harassment and victimization and the curtailing of civil liberties at home.

Our demands should be: Stop the U.S./NATO bombing of Yugoslavia! Independence for Kosova! Open the borders to all Kosovars seeking refuge abroad!

Help fund proletarian party

Continued from front page

at the April 3 rally.

An "emerging pattern is taking shape, defined by the actions of a vanguard whose ranks increase with every single worker or farmer who reaches out to others with the hand of solidarity and offers to fight together," explains the opening chapter of the new book *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* by SWP national secretary Jack Barnes. That chapter, entitled "A sea change in working-class politics," was one of three documents discussed and adopted by convention delegates.

The *Militant* is now running a labor and farm action calendar as a weekly feature (see page 3). It is put together by reports from locked-out oil workers in Texas, immigrant rights fighters in Iowa, farmers from Georgia to Pennsylvania, striking Steelworkers, and others. Participating in these struggles by workers and their allies on the land — across the width and breadth of North America, and beyond — takes political attention and collaboration. And it also takes money.

The party-building fund will help pay for increased travel, phone, and other expenses incurred in the course of extending the reach of the communist movement and winning new members to the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists. Joel Britton, a leader of the party's national trade union work who will be on the road over the next few months helping to advance this effort, explained the purpose of the fund during discussion on his convention report, "Stand Up, Act, Fight, and Be Counted."

Prior to the convention, workers in the party's national trade union fractions, composed of SWP and YS members who belong to six industrial unions, held meetings at which, among other decisions, they adopted a campaign to sell 500 copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder* to co-workers on the job and to unionists and working people at solidarity activities and in the course of other social struggles. Building on that initiative, convention delegates decided to campaign to sell an additional 1,000 copies. This will be led by branches of the SWP together with Young Socialists members and YS chapters, who are enlisting the aid of supporters and co-fighters in this effort.

Delegates to the SWP convention voted to deepen the party's collaboration with miners in the Western coal fields as well as in Central Illinois and throughout the United States. One delegate reported that just in the two weeks prior to convention, he and another party member had logged a few thousands miles (and many gallons of gasoline) driving throughout the Mountain Time Zone. SWP and YS members in Illinois have begun a campaign to get 100 copies of the newly reprinted pamphlet *Coal Miners on Strike* into hands of members of the United Mine Workers and other coal miners there. Party members in central Illinois are also continuing to reach out to fighting workers at Caterpillar and others across the state.

Workers in the SWP and YS are also joining in efforts through their unions and in other ways to mobilize solidarity with Steelworkers on strike at the giant shipyard in Newport News, Virginia; catfish workers in Mississippi fighting for dignity; and many others. They are reaching out to working farmers in the South, across the

Midwest, and joining with farmers who are Black to oppose government discrimination at meetings across the South.

As the brutal U.S. bombardment of Yugoslavia escalates, a major New York big-business newspaper, the *Daily News*, recently trimmed its budget by recalling its Balkans correspondent — with a statement by the owner affirming "a commitment to send a correspondent there should conditions warrant"! In contrast, an international team of worker-correspondents led by *Militant* staff writer Argiris Malapanis is now in the Balkans to help politically arm class-struggle militants with the truth about Washington's nearly 10-year assault on the working people of Yugoslavia.

All this activity over the spring and summer converges along the road to the August 5-8 Active Workers Conference in Oberlin, Ohio, sponsored by the SWP and YS. Wherever socialist workers and youth are traveling to join in struggles, they are encouraging workers and farmers to pack up their cars and vans to come to the conference and exchange experiences and ideas, help broaden active solidarity, and participate in classes on books and pamphlets recording the lessons of workers' struggles the world over.

Supporters of the \$75,000 Party-Building Fund will be reaching out broadly to workers, farmers, and rebel-minded youth who want to make a contribution to this effort as an important way of resisting the devastating consequences for toilers of capitalism's growing world disorder. Working people and youth interested in joining the Young Socialists or the Socialist Workers Party, or who are collaborating with them regularly in common battles, understand why the working-class movement can only advance on the basis of self-financing organizations whose efforts are supported by voluntary contributions of time, labor, and money.

SWP branches and trade union fractions, YS chapters, and groups of supporters of the communist movement are currently discussing goals for the fund drive in their areas. They will be organizing special Party-Building Fund public meetings and banquets to hear reports from some of those directly involved in leading the political activities the campaign is organized to help finance. When such meetings are organized early on in the drive, they can help maximize contributions and help ensure that payments are made on a regular basis throughout the effort, not left to a frantic last-week surge.

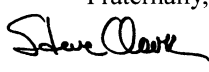
A scoreboard listing the goals from cities across the United States will appear in the issue of the *Militant* printed May 6. Each week articles reporting the progress of the drive through the course of activity in the class struggle will appear in the *Militant*, along with the scoreboard and chart recording the regular progress toward making and surpassing the \$75,000 goal by June 15. Checks that arrive in New York by noon each Tuesday will be recorded in that week's issue.

Contributions can be sent to 410 West Street, New York, NY 10014. Please make checks and money orders out to the Socialist Workers Party.

Fraternally,



Brian Taylor



Steve Clark

co-directors, 1999 Party-Building Fund

Crime rates do fall — at cost of life and limb

Several readers have questioned a statement that appeared in a news article in the March 22 *Militant* on protests in New York City against the police execution of Amadou Diallo. The article, by Al Duncan and Argiris Malapanis, said the "drop in 'crime rates' had been reached not by changing social conditions but by locking up a record number of U.S. residents."

In a recent letter, John Votava wrote, "I feel certain that the authors did not mean... that there is some relationship between the supposed drop in crime rates and the increased rate of incarceration that workers in the United States are facing."

They meant it, and the *Militant* agrees.

Who defines crime? The capitalist class makes the laws that determine what crimes are and, consequently, who criminals are. The criminals overwhelmingly are workers.

The capitalists, through their various government representatives, are increasingly cracking down on working people. In New

DISCUSSION WITH OUR READERS

York City, for example, Mayor Rudolph Giuliani has been carrying out a "quality of life" campaign that has resulted in the accelerated lockup of toilers for actions that administration made criminal. A new "zero tolerance" law allows cops to seize a person's car if the driver is accused of drinking. Teen curfews, teen smoking laws, the stepped-up enforcement of laws against public consumption of alcohol — all result in more arrests.

Nationally, the Clinton regime has tightened immigration laws and amassed the country's largest police force to find, arrest, and jail or deport undocumented workers. Homeless people under capitalism are criminals, too. One day you are sleeping on a park bench because you have no place to live, the next day you're hauled off to jail for criminal trespass. Striking workers who picket their bosses' plant often find themselves in violation of the law, of course. By expanding the definition of crime, the rulers create more criminals and crime rates soar. They arrest and jail more of these criminals, and crime rates drop.

Votava's letter implied that cop brutality and imprisonment lead to "a greater spirit of rebelliousness." But jails are not hotbeds for rebellion; they are designed to degrade and alienate workers behind bars. The food is terrible, the conditions are cruel, and violent abuses by guards are well documented. The fact that some inmates maintain their dignity is a testament to the perseverance of the proletariat.

Amadou Diallo met cops' 'generic description'

The case of Amadou Diallo shows that just being Black in a working-class neighborhood fits the description of a criminal. Never forget that the cops who shot Diallo argued he fit the "generic description" of a rapist they were allegedly chasing.

When the cops organize extensive roundups of workers and youth who "fit the description," such as when cops shut down a street and stop every car, they are *mathematically bound* to find someone they can charge with smoking a joint, carrying a gun, evading traffic tickets, jumping bail, or some other petty crime.

This approach *has* resulted in more people being arrested and imprisoned, including gang members and drug dealers. And when someone is arrested they get thrown in jail more often and for longer periods of time. The result *is* less crime in the streets.

In a letter on the facing page, reader George Rose notes that the "real criminals" are in Washington, those who carry out genocidal wars abroad, as well as against toilers on native soil. But those acts are not against *their* laws. The killing of tens of thousands of Iraqi people and countless others is — under the rule of imperialism — a legal act. That should be reason enough to fight for the abolition of such a system.

Most actions defined as crimes that are carried out against working people are by other workers who, demoralized by the crisis of capitalism and ignorant of their own self-worth, prey on members of their own class. This is a small, but very real layer.

According to the *World Almanac*, in 1993 the total estimated number of arrests in the United States stood at 10,448,491. In 1996 the figure jumped to 15,168,100. In the state of New York, one of the centers of the "anticrime" crackdown, total crime rates — including those for rape, murder, and robbery — dropped during that same period. Statistics on crime are no more or less reliable than other government statistics. It is our duty to face them, understand them, and explain them.

In exchange for lower crime rates and "safer communities," middle-class elements and some workers have given a degree of consent to these methods. For example, some Black store owners in Harlem would say Mayor Giuliani is racist and lets cops run amok, but give him credit for making their establishments safer and for kicking out the street vendors. Vendors used to flourish along 125th Street in Harlem. They are virtually nonexistent now.

The question is not whether crime rates have dropped, but rather, what price have we paid for this reality? Broken limbs and lost relatives from cop brutality, more time in jail from sentencing laws, waiting for the bus due to a car seizure, and hesitation about speaking your mind or protesting for fear of arrest or deportation.

The capitalists, however, can only push so far before they provoke a response. Tens of thousands of people took to the streets to demand the four cops who killed Diallo be jailed. This example is of a piece with a growing shift in the morale and psychology of the workers and farmers towards resistance and solidarity.

— BRIAN TAYLOR

Skychefs strikers in London call May 3 rally

BY CAROLINE BELLAMY
AND JONATHAN SILBERMAN

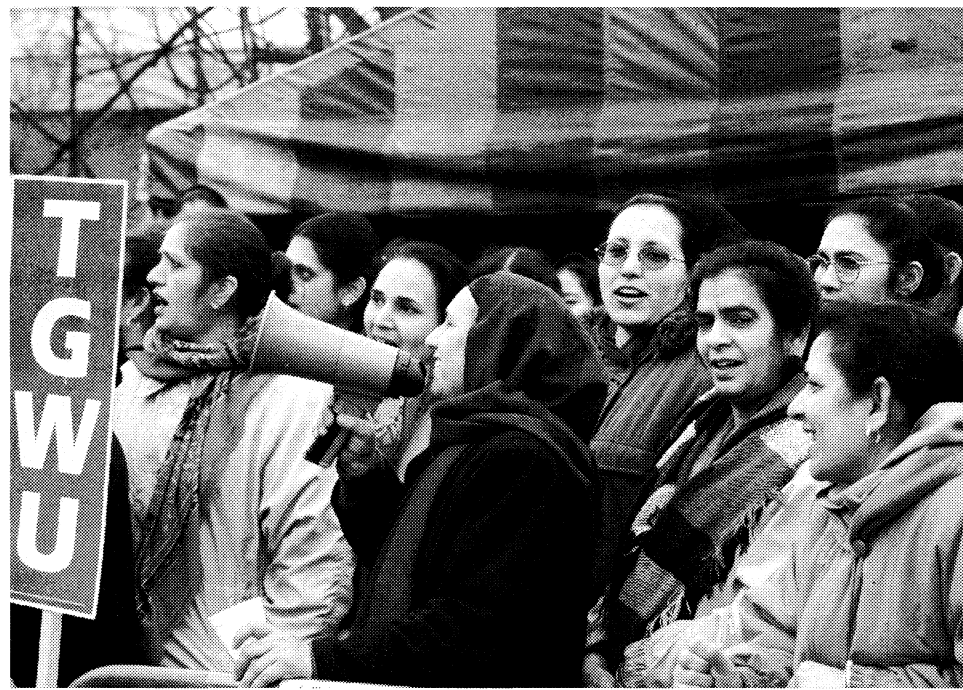
LONDON — Strikers at LSG Skychefs have called a rally at the plant gates May 3. They are appealing to trade unionists and supporters to demonstrate their solidarity with the struggle against the airline catering company, which is now in its fifth month. The strike by 278 members of the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) at Heathrow airport, which began November 20 in opposition to company attacks on working conditions, has become a battle over union rights.

The strikers have received many expressions of solidarity — visits to the picket line, participation in rallies and in a demonstration, invitations to speak to labor organizations, and thousands of pounds in donations.

The strike is especially significant for airport workers. There are 30,000 TGWU members at Heathrow, the largest of London's three airports.

Skychefs workers at Gatwick airport are also resisting attacks on their conditions. TGWU members at the Gatwick plant rejected a package of proposed measures, including annualization of hours, 10-hour shifts, and one-man loading on trans-Atlantic flights. In a secret ballot, they voted by 324 to 24 against a company offer of a 1 percent wage rise and an additional 3 percent if they agreed to the new terms.

One worker reported that he anticipates losing £3,000 per year (£1 = US\$1.6) in overtime pay if the annualization of hours



A mass picket of 300 people rallied February 1 in solidarity with Skychefs strikers at London's Heathrow Airport.

proposal goes through. "It's not just the money but the whole uncertainty of how many hours we'll work and when: one week it could be 52, the next 30," he added. Workers at the plant reported company intimidation as the bosses sought to push the proposals through. They showed big interest in

the Heathrow strike, snapping up leaflets and buying copies of the *Militant* along with packs of *Militant* articles on the strike.

TGWU members at Alpha, another airline catering company at Heathrow, have also overwhelmingly rejected a package of measures that include a new 12-hour shift pat-

tern. Despite a recommendation by union official Alan Green to accept the package, the workers voted overwhelmingly against it.

News of the votes by the Skychefs workers at Gatwick and the Alpha workers boosted the Heathrow pickets. Striker Surjit Lehat, who has worked at Skychefs for 17 years, said that conditions at Heathrow and Gatwick have been similar. "We voted against annualization of hours about 12 months ago. Now the company is trying to divide us up by getting it adopted at Gatwick during our strike. The fact that they've rejected it is great news."

Two workers from Skychefs in Paris, members of the Force Ouvriere union federation, visited the Skychefs picket line March 18. They brought solidarity from the workers at the Paris plant, where 1,000 workers are employed.

"Their visit has been a big boost to the strikers," said strike leader Garth King. "They are resisting moves by Skychefs to erode conditions at the Paris plant in much the same way that they've done here," reported King, who traveled with union official Green to Paris to first make contact with the French unionists. The two also visited Madrid, where a meeting was held with representatives from the unions at three Skychefs plants in Spain. Skychefs strikers have also traveled to Germany and the United States.

Caroline Bellamy and Jonathan Silberman are members of the TGWU.

Skychefs pickets will fight strikebreaking frame-up

Skychefs strikers and supporters will rally outside Feltham court at 9:45 a.m. May 13 in support of picket Parmjit Bajwa. He is set to be tried that day on trumped up charges of threatening behavior and common assault.

Police claim Bajwa assaulted a strikebreaker, Anmol Gill, by grabbing him by the collar and tie and shouting at him in an aggressive manner on the picket line December 23.

Bajwa, who has worked at Skychefs for five years as a driver/leading hand,

is a picket line activist. He denies the allegations and points to significant omissions and lies in the witness statements of Gill, and of policewoman Tracey Miller.

"They are lying," he told the *Militant*. "I was one of about 30 pickets. We shouted 'scab' at him [Gill] and then he came back to us and started swearing in Punjabi and threatened to 'sort us out later.' I said, 'Why later, let's sort it out now,' and he ran to the police." Police vans or cars are permanently stationed in the Skychefs forecourt, behind the picket lines. Gill returned with the po-

lice and pointed to Bajwa as the man who had allegedly assaulted him. Bajwa continued, "The policewoman said then that she saw me grab him by the throat. She was lying; she was sitting in the police van and the tent would have stopped her seeing anything. Anyway, if she had seen something, why didn't she come over straight away?"

In her witness statement, Miller changed her story, saying that Bajwa swore and shouted threats at Gill as she approached the strikers' tent. Miller embellished the story claiming that the "increasing aggressive

manner of the remaining pickets [made me] concerned for my own safety."

"This isn't true either," said Bajwa. "We were chatting when they called me out." Gill's statement makes no reference to the initial threats he made to the strikers.

The local press and *Despardes*, a Punjabi paper with a worldwide distribution, have covered the case. In an attempt to smear the strike, "they made me look like a criminal. *Despardes* even included my address in the article," Bajwa said.

— C.B. & J.S.

LETTERS

More on crime rates

The article on protests against police brutality in New York City (March 22 *Militant*) included one sentence that I think is misleading, or at best unclear, about crime and cops in capitalist society. It stated: "the supposed drop in 'crime rates' has been reached not by changing social conditions but by locking up a record number of U.S. residents."

The massive increase in jailings is a fact. According to the U.S. Justice Department, a record 1.8 million persons were behind bars in U.S. jails and prisons in 1998. The rate of incarceration has more than doubled since 1985, to 668 inmates per 100,000 residents. And the total prison population is almost six times higher than in 1972.

People in jail can be counted. But all statistics on "crime rates" are of doubtful accuracy — most are compiled by the cops — and even more dubious significance.

"Crime" in such reports of course never includes the murderous violence of the cops themselves, or the killing and maiming of workers on the job, or the atrocities of imperialism against workers and peasants around the world, or the daily robbery of the working class by the capitalists.

What is usually called crime comprises the smaller scale antisocial acts — muggings, murders, assaults, burglaries, etc. — by individuals or small groups. According to various statistics, the rate of such crimes has declined in recent years. This is certainly contrary to the attempts by capitalist politicians and the media to convince workers that

crime is our biggest problem — but exactly what the decline means is open to debate.

I am certain, however, that the jailings of hundreds of thousands of working people has contributed *exactly nothing* to reducing crime.

It is vitally important for class-conscious workers to explain, as the *Militant* has done over the years, that more prisons, longer sentences, more power to the cops, fewer rights for accused persons, more hollow-point bullets, more executions — none of these will do *anything* to curtail petty crime. And that's not their aim. The real target of these repressive measures is not criminals (with whom the cops are closely tied) but the ability of the working class to resist the big-scale crimes of capitalism.

Crime does not result from poverty, but from the breakdown of solidarity, the loss of identification with other human beings, among people who have thoroughly absorbed the dog-eat-dog values of capitalism.

Only the growing unity of working people, our ability to fight for our common interests instead of "looking out for number one," offers a road to eliminating small-scale crime—in the course of eliminating the criminal capitalist system.

George A. Rose
Toronto, Ontario

Iraqi pilgrims aren't fake

I am writing to call your attention to what I think is an error in the April 5 *Militant* "In Brief" section. The first article, "Tensions bubble in Mideast over sustained bombing of Iraq," notes the fact that the Iraqi government had broken the imperi-

alist-imposed "no-fly zone" when it transported Muslims from Iraq by air to Mecca for the annual Haj. The article referred to those who traveled there as "pilgrims" — in quotes. There should be no quotes around the word. Putting quotation marks around a word or phrase

nificance for a believer of making such a trip.

At different times the Saudi authorities have challenged Muslims coming to Mecca for the Haj from Iran and other places, attacking them on political lines and subjecting them to police harassment and



which is not a quotation from someone often implies that something else is really involved, that the meaning of the word or phrase is open to doubt when used in the context it appears. It is analogous to inserting the phrase "so-called" before the word or phrase.

But the Muslims who boarded the Iraqi planes bound for Mecca were not "so-called" pilgrims. They were pilgrims. They were individuals who went to Mecca on a religious pilgrimage. We don't have to believe in Islam to understand the sig-

repression during their stay. We don't want to imply that some who go to Mecca are suspect, or more to the point, that the *Militant* would know whether any of them planned on making the pilgrimage with aims or intentions other than performing their religious obligations.

This may seem like a small point, but I think it is important that our use of commonly used literary devices not imply things that we really don't know to be true.

Jim Altenberg
Oakland, California

An anti-snitch stand

I was disappointed that the *Militant* did not mention the most courageous anti-[Elia] Kazan actor at the Academy Awards — Black comedian Chris Rock.

When Rock was on stage to present an 'Oscar,' he made the most defiant (and funniest) joke of the evening. He warned Kazan to stay away from actor Robert DeNiro because, "You know how he hates rats." DeNiro is best known for his (always incredibly similar) roles in gangster movies.

Rock made his joke in front of a televised audience of over a billion people, and a live audience containing some of the most powerful people in Hollywood. I thought his actions merited mention, along with the actions of Nick Nolte, Ed Harris, Amy Madigan, and others.

One final point. The award for Kazan was not the only televised, telltale sign of the Academy's reactionary politics. In a pre-Oscar show, the security van that transports the actual awards was shown. The company name on the side of the van? Pinkertons — the name of one of the most notorious strikebreaking security firms in the world. Just thought that it was worth mentioning!

Chuck Demers
Vancouver, British Columbia

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

Cuban youth: 'revolution has brought results through deeds, not just words'

BY BRIAN TAYLOR
AND OLGA RODRÍGUEZ

NEW YORK — Luis Ernesto Morejón and Itamys García Villar, two young leaders from Cuba speaking in several cities across the United States, addressed some 250 students, workers, and others here at three campus meetings during the New York leg of their five-week tour.

The largest meeting was held at Columbia University April 9. It drew 130 people, mainly students from Columbia, as well as from Barnard and Vassar Colleges. Also attending were a dozen youth in town to attend the annual East Coast Chicana-Chicano Students Forum Conference.

The event was co-chaired by Columbia students Jane Garrido, president of Casa Latina, and Griselda Pérez of the Chicano Student Caucus.

Addressing the students in the audience, Morejón, 23, pointed out, "Our schools are not as sophisticated as yours, but we do have the essentials, including teachers who devote themselves to the education of their students. Under no circumstances will a school in Cuba be closed, nor will a teacher be left unemployed. Education is something all have access to."

Morejón outlined Cuba's fight for national liberation from the 19th century anti-colonial struggles against Spain led by José Martí and Antonio Maceo, to the revolutionary movement, headed by the Rebel Army led by Fidel Castro, which overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista and established a revolutionary government in 1959. In addition to this history, he said, "we are anti-imperialist and internationalist because we know" the history of U.S. interventions in Haiti, Panama, the Dominican Republic, Grenada."

Deeds, not words

What distinguishes Cuba is that "the revolution has brought concrete results for our people through deeds, not just words," Morejón stressed.

García elaborated on these results, noting that "the revolution is proud of what it has demonstrated in the arena of democratic rights." She highlighted statistics on infant mortality and life expectancy that "put us at the top of the Third World and that are comparable to the industrialized countries."

Pointing to strides made by Cuban women, García added, "Before 1959, women were less than 12 percent of the workforce. Today we are 42 percent, including 60 percent of



Militant/Marc Lichtman

Cuban youth leader Itamys García, right, speaks at Columbia University April 9.

the middle-level technicians."

García explained that starting in the early 1990s Cuba was hit by a deep economic crisis, known on the island as the Special Period. "The Soviet Union collapsed and Cuba lost 85 percent of its commercial trade. And the U.S. deepened its embargo," she noted. The revolutionary leadership led the population to take a series of necessary steps to confront the economic crisis.

"Today in Cuba we have socialism and will continue to have socialism, but we have to use certain capitalist measures to maintain the gains of the socialist revolution" and overcome the worst effects of the economic crisis, García said. These measures include the decriminalization of the use of the dollar, the expansion of tourism, and seeking foreign capitalist investment to bring in needed hard currency to fund social priorities.

One member of the audience asked a question about the volunteer Cuban doctors who have gone to Central America and the Caribbean in response to the devastation caused by the hurricanes last fall. "It's the countless Cuban doctors, not only in Latin America but also in Africa, who not only go to these countries, but to the most remote areas and even learn local languages to treat patients better," Morejón said.

"Is there police brutality in Cuba? How do people see the police?" was asked.

García, who had learned much since ar-

iving in the United States about the reality of police and right-wing violence here, replied, "Under no circumstances in Cuba do you have cops gunning people down for being black or homosexual. What role do they play in combating drug use and prostitution? Primarily one of prevention, but if they have to detain someone they will do so."

"But we also rely on the forces of people's order" to minimize antisocial activity, added Morejón, referring to the fact that millions of Cuban working people play an active social role through neighborhood organizations and other mass organizations.

One man raised several sharp criticisms about the Cuban revolution. "How do you justify Cuba having political prisoners?" he charged. "How do you justify that Cubans were forced to turn out to see the Pope? How do you justify putting AIDS victims in camps? I have been to Cuba and people are afraid to say anything about this."

The two Cuban youth leaders replied to each one of his points. Morejón said, "From our experience as youth who live in our country, there are no political prisoners, but there are counterrevolutionary prisoners. It had been proven in a court of law that the actions [those who are jailed] took violated Cuban laws. He referred to recent trials of a Salvadoran citizen convicted of bombing Cuban tourist hotels, and to the conviction of several Cuban citizens belonging to small groups that oppose the revolution and have called for foreign businesses not to invest in Cuba.

Religious freedom

Replying to the comment about the pope's 1998 visit to Cuba, Morejón explained that most Cubans are not Catholics, and some hold other views and religious beliefs. "That's why the Cuban constitution defends all beliefs but backs none in particular. People were encouraged to treat the Pope's visit as an educational experience," he said. The revolutionary government asked Cubans to treat Catholic believers and the Pope with courtesy and respect, and that is what happened.

Morejón added, "When the AIDS virus first broke out there was no understanding of how to live with the virus. What happened in Cuba is another example of social justice. [Those suffering from AIDS] were interned in centers and treated with the best medicine available, as we waged an intense campaign explaining the truth about AIDS and contraception." Today, the government's policy is to "make it possible for people with AIDS to live with their families."

After the meeting, Ann Fraioli, 22, remarked that she came to the meeting in part due to her opposition to the U.S. bombing of Yugoslavia. As she learns more and finds she disagrees with some U.S. government policies, she has come to question Washington's hostile policy toward Cuba.

Sponsors for the Columbia event included the Institute of Latin American and Iberian Studies, United Students of Color Council, Black Students Organization, Students Promoting Empowerment and Knowledge, Young Socialists, Roots of Culture Magazine, Casa de las Américas, and Socialist Workers Party.

In addition, co-chairs Garrido and Pérez read messages welcoming the two Cuban youth from Gary Okihiro, director of the campus's Asian American Studies Program; Shannon Salinas, Columbia Law School Dean of Students and member of the Native American Law Students Association; and Manning Marable, director of the Institute for Research in African American Studies. Greetings also came from New York state assemblymen Edward Sullivan and Adriano Espaillat; Fernando Ferrer, Bronx borough president; and Maude LeBlanc, co-director of *Haiti Progrès*.

Also on the platform were Francisco Rivera-Batiz, director of the Latino Studies department, and Latino Studies professor Carlos Sanabria. Sanabria denounced the hypocrisy of the U.S. government for attacking Cuba over alleged human rights abuses while Puerto Rican independence fighters are locked up in U.S. prisons for their political beliefs and Mumia Abu-Jamal is framed up and placed on death row.

The Columbia University *Daily Spectator* ran a favorable front-page article on the meeting in its April 12 issue. New York's main Spanish-language daily, *El Diario/La Prensa*, ran a question-and-answer interview with García and Morejón April 10.

A few days earlier, on April 6, 40 students and others turned out to hear the two Cuban youth leaders at the Brooklyn campus of Long Island University (LIU). Sponsors for the event included the Caribbean Students Movement, History Department, Latinos Unidos, Political Science Department, and Young Socialists.

Henry Dávila, president of Latinos Unidos and John Brennan, head of the History Department, chaired the meeting. Ofelia García, dean of the School of Education, was acknowledged from the audience.

Washington's hostile policy

One member of the audience, Curtis Harris, asked if the baseball games between the Baltimore Orioles and the Cuban national team reflected motion in U.S. government policy toward normalized relations with Cuba.

"We feel the policy of hostility by the United States toward Cuba will not change," Morejón answered. "Maintaining workers, farmers, and students in power in Cuba is a powerful example that the United States will never be in agreement with." He later added, "We are for any positive initiatives, but these are isolated from general U.S. policy."

A Puerto Rican student pointed to some Cuban athletes who had recently left the island to live in the United States, and said he thought this was a sign of oppression. García responded by explaining that millions of Cubans were striving to build a society based on human solidarity, and that people such as these athletes who seek individual solutions and want to make millions won't find that in Cuba.

Another meeting for the Cuban youth took place at the State University of New York at Purchase. More than 75 people listened attentively to the talks and then engaged in a lively discussion. Morejón and García were warmly received by Larisse Díaz, vice president of Latinos Unidos, which initiated the event, and Eric González, a leading activist in the Organization of African Peoples in America.

Other sponsors included NYPIRG, Purchase Environmental Society, SISTAS, Open Road, The Brotherhood, the Humanities Department, and Peter Schwab, profes-

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Hear Cuban Youth Speak

CALIFORNIA

San Francisco
Tuesday, April 20, 11:00 a.m.
Rosenberg Library, Room 31
Sponsor: Concert-Lectures Series of City College of San Francisco. For more information, call Brenda Chinn at (415) 239-3580.

Thursday, April 22, 12 noon
San Francisco State University
César Chávez Student Center Auditorium
Sponsors: Ricardo Montenegro, Associated Students president; La Raza Students at SFSU; Professor Felix Kury in La Raza Studies Department; CARECEN, The Share Foundation; MEChA; Women's Center at SFSU

Santa Cruz
Thursday, April 22, 7:30 p.m.
University of California-Santa Cruz
Sponsors: J.M. Thompson, associate vice chancellor of Outreach Administration and Student Academic Services; Larry Trujillo, director of Chicano/Latino Student Life Resource Center; Manuel Pastor, chair of Latin American Studies; Francisco Hernandez, vice chancellor of Student Academic Affairs, Student Body President Heliana Ramirez; SANAI Student Alliance North American Indians; Mike Rotkin; Crown College Provost House; Language Studies Department

WASHINGTON

Seattle
Thursday, April 29, 7:00 p.m.
Seattle University
Pigott Auditorium
Sponsors: Seattle Committee on Cuban Youth and Education; El Centro de la Raza, MEChA; University of Washington; MEChA of Seattle University; ASUW La Raza Student Commission; Seattle Cuba Friendship Committee (Project of the Church Council of Greater Seattle), Young Socialists, Department of Foreign Languages at Seattle University