

Gorbachev gains in Soviet elections

BY FRED FELDMAN

The outcome of the March 26 elections to the Congress of People's Deputies in the Soviet Union has registered gains for Communist Party head Mikhail Gorbachev. A setback was dealt to those within the party and government apparatus who have slowed or obstructed implementation of *perestroika*, or economic restructuring.

Perestroika is Gorbachev's name for a policy of relying more on decentralized planning, market forces, and profitability — together with an increased degree of private ownership in agriculture, trade, and other areas — to overcome stagnation in labor productivity and economic growth.

In the past, primary reliance had been placed on centralized planning under the command of the bureaucratic apparatus.

To win broader popular support for his policies, Gorbachev has also advocated *glasnost*, or openness. This has included wider leeway for cultural expression, presentation of a somewhat wider range of political views in the mass media, and denunciation of crimes committed by Gorbachev's predecessors.

The staging of elections was part of this process.

Part of reorganization

A conference of the Communist Party held last July called for the balloting, as part of a reorganization of government proposed by Gorbachev. The meeting called for elections to a new legislature, the 2,250-member Congress of People's Deputies, 1,500 of whom were to be elected by popular vote and 750 appointed by the party and organizations it controls.

The new body is to elect a president, expected to be Gorbachev. The new post will have more power than the current presidency, which Gorbachev holds.

The next president will head the defense council and have considerable power in domestic and foreign policy. Heading both party and state, Gorbachev's formal authority will be greatly expanded.

The congress, which is to be in session only a few days each year, will appoint 422 members to a Supreme Soviet, which is empowered to enact legislation and be in session most of the year.

Unlike past elections, the new election rules allowed more than one candidate to contend for each of the seats elected by popular vote. The Communist Party, as the governing and only legal party in the Soviet Union, was the only political party permitted to field candidates. Certain non-party organizations were allowed to field candidates, some of whom were party members.

Nine out of 10 candidates were members of the party or its youth organization, guaranteeing the party an overwhelming majority in the new congress.

Party nominees were running unopposed for about 380 of the popularly elected seats. A majority of voters could, and in several cases did, block election of some unopposed candidates by crossing off their names. Another vote will be held for these seats.

The nominations procedure established several levels of screening, enabling party officials to block nominations.

Perestroika was the framework

With the Communist Party officially in strong support of Gorbachev's policies, the framework of the electoral debate was restricted to how far and how fast to go in im-

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Oil spill off Alaska: Exxon-made disaster

BY HARRY RING

Exxon's tanker operations off the Alaska coast were an environmental disaster waiting to happen. And on March 24, when a giant oil spill took place, it did.

As recently as a month ago, Exxon and other companies that own the Trans-Alaskan Pipeline assured concerned fishers and environmentalists they had a cleanup plan that could contain a major spill within five

The facts remain to be established on how the huge ship wound up on a reef three miles from its assigned shipping lane.

Exxon officials, and the media, were quick to try to pin the blame on the crew. Reports emphasized the captain's record of drunk driving convictions and that the mate who was on the bridge was not licensed for that assignment.

Catastrophe predicted

In the 1970s, when the pipeline was being built, area fishers and naturalists predicted there would be catastrophic spills. With huge tankers navigating through narrow channels surrounded by rock and reef, it was inevitable.

In 1971 the fishers sued to stop the pipeline. But they settled out of court when the companies promised to develop a state-of-the-art plan that could respond rapidly to any spill.

The companies also promised that their tankers would incorporate the latest safety design. This promise, too, was never met.

Although technology for double-hulled ships had been developed, Exxon rejected using it to save costs.

Alaskan Gov. Steven Cowper charged that the industry's contingency plan "was on the books, but it didn't work."

Riki Otto, a marine biologist and commercial fisher, called it "an extremely slow and essentially nonexistent plan."

Four days after the spill, an Exxon official admitted that with the equipment available, it was impossible to contain it.

John Devens, mayor of Valdez, responded that for years the oil companies had promised they would do everything necessary to cope with a spill.

"I think it's quite clear right now," he said, "that our area is faced with destruction of our entire way of life."

Even as the 100-square-mile oil slick continued to spread, the U.S. Coast Guard ordered the port reopened to tankers waiting offshore. Each day 84 million profitable gallons of oil flow through the pipeline

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hours of a rupture.

The first, totally inadequate containment equipment did not even arrive on the scene until 10 hours after the spill began.

More than 11 million gallons of crude oil have already poured into southern Alaskan waters, and there is the continuing danger that the reef-stranded *Exxon Valdez* may break up completely. The supertanker was carrying more than a million barrels of crude — some 53 million gallons.



Militant/Nelson Blackstock

Defenders of abortion rights in Los Angeles confront "Operation Rescue" sitdown and keep clinic open. See page 3.

Abortion rights march wins support

BY SUSAN LaMONT

Tens of thousands of supporters of women's right to choose abortion — from every corner of the country — are chartering buses and trains, buying airline tickets, and organizing car pools to come to Washington, D.C., April 9 for the national March for Women's Equality/Women's Lives.

The demonstration was called by the National Organization for Women "to show the country that we who support keeping abortion safe and legal are the overwhelming majority," a NOW fact sheet explains. The march has been endorsed by more than 175 national organizations, including the American Jewish Congress, Catholics for a Free Choice, Martin Luther King Center for Non-Violent Social Change, National Abortion Rights Action League, Mexican-American Women's National Association, Women's Commission of the National Rainbow Coalition, Nicaragua Network, Planned Parenthood Federation, Socialist Workers Party, Unitarian Universalist Association, War Resisters League, Young

Women's Christian Association, and many others.

Labor support for this action is greater than any previous abortion rights march, in both official union endorsement and active participation of union members. The Coalition of Labor Union Women and Coalition of Black Trade Unionists are sponsors, as are the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, International Association of Machinists, United Steelworkers of America, United Mine Workers, International Ladies' Garment Workers, United Electrical Workers, Association of Flight Attendants, American Federation of Teachers, and National Education Association. A number of regional labor bodies are urging members to attend as well, from the Minnesota AFL-CIO to the Illinois affiliate of the Coal Employment Project, a group that helps women get and keep jobs in the mines.

"It's been a major advance for the demonstration that we've gotten so much support from the labor movement," NOW

President Molly Yard told a meeting of 250 at Columbia University in New York March 27. She later commented that a contingent of Eastern strikers would be participating in the march from New York, Miami, Boston, and other cities.

In New York, students on dozens of campuses are organizing buses to go to Washington, D.C., reports Myra Brahms from New York NOW. Planned Parenthood's chartered train is already filled, and they are working on adding another car. The Communications Workers of America and other unions participating in the Labor Coalition for April 9 are also organizing buses for their members. Funds to pay for a bus for homeless people to participate in the march have also been donated, Brahms added.

April 9 coalition activists from Boston report similar building activities at dozens of colleges there. Almost 60 students from Brookline High School have signed up to go. Labor support for the action has also

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Ballot status in West Virginia town is big victory

Dick McBride, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Morgantown, West Virginia, City Council from the 6th Ward, was certified for ballot status March 16. McBride is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 347.

In order to get on the ballot, socialist campaign supporters gathered more than 200 signatures. "Gaining ballot status here in Morgantown is a victory for the democratic rights of working people throughout the state," said campaign director Mark Satinoff.

port. The election is April 25.

Morgantown is a small city located in the heart of one of the most productive coal fields in the world. It is within an hour's drive of five of the largest U.S. underground mines. Many working people in West Virginia face depression-like conditions, however. Unemployment in the state is double the national average, and one out of four children lives in poverty.

A handful of companies own the bulk of the state's natural wealth and pay almost no taxes.

the city, and at several nearby mine portals.

A March 14 visit by the SWP candidate for mayor of Los Angeles, Joel Britton, to the Los Angeles Center for Enriched Studies sparked a flurry of interest and controversy.

Britton and several supporters set up a campaign table at 7:00 a.m. at the high school. As school buses unloaded, groups of students surrounded the table to talk and look at literature. Socialist campaigners distributed campaign platforms, and leaflets for the March 18 protest against the U.S. war in El Salvador and for a series of demonstrations defending abortion rights.

Several copies of the *Militant* were sold, including to two teachers interested in the Machinists' walkout at Eastern Airlines.

"Probably the most striking thing," said Britton, "was the number of students interested in literature by Malcolm X." A young Nicaraguan student stopped by to talk. He was happy to see the table, he said, pulling out a copy of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, which he was reading for a school paper. "I really love this guy," he told Britton.

School officials and police had a different reaction to Britton's appearance at the school. First they said that the campaigning "endangered the safety of the students." Then they said it had to be



Militant/Nancy Cole

Morgantown, West Virginia, candidate Dick McBride.

restricted to 200 yards away from the school. After Britton demanded the same treatment Mayor Thomas Bradley would receive if he appeared at the school, officials regrouped, called "downtown" — and finally admitted Britton was within his rights.

As student interest mounted, school administrators rerouted buses so students would be dropped off much farther from the campaign table. They even began

boarding buses to discourage students from accepting literature when they got off.

As Britton and his supporters left, an assistant principal complained, "You've succeeded in disrupting the entire normal routine here."

Mark Satinoff from Morgantown and Geoff Mirelowitz from Los Angeles contributed to this column.

CAMPAIGNING FOR SOCIALISM

The SWP and nearly all other third party candidates for state and national office have usually been excluded from the ballot in West Virginia. The SWP and American Civil Liberties Union have filed suit seeking to overturn the state's restrictive ballot laws.

McBride's campaign — the first ever run by the SWP for city office in Morgantown — is generating considerable interest, including from the local media. Three radio stations and one television station aired interviews with him the day he filed the petitions.

McBride is a stocker at the local Kroger supermarket. Many food shoppers recognized him from the evening TV news show and stopped to talk with him about the campaign, and express their sup-

Mining and timber companies own 69 percent of the surface land. Seventy-two percent of the mineral rights are owned by coal and gas companies and railroads.

"This is a shameful and intolerable situation," said McBride. "The deteriorating standard of living for workers, farmers, and small business people in Morgantown is not a local problem, and cannot be solved locally. This is because the economic and social system we live under — capitalism — is in deep trouble."

McBride's supporters have mapped out some bold plans for reaching working people in the Morgantown area over the next few weeks, Satinoff reported. Volunteers will be campaigning in

House of Representatives passes 2-tier minimum wage

BY FRED FELDMAN

The U.S. House of Representatives voted 248-171 March 23 to institute a two-tier minimum wage.

For most workers covered by the measure, the minimum rate would increase in stages from its present level of \$3.35 per hour to \$4.55 in 1991.

The legislation provides for a lower tier, consisting of new hires without previous job experience. These workers would be paid a lower "training" rate during the first 60 days on the job.

Under the House bill, backed by the bulk of the Democratic majority and opposed by most Republicans, the minimum wage would rise to \$3.85 October 1, to \$4.25 one year later, and to \$4.55 in October 1991. The lower minimum wage for those beginning their first jobs would stay at \$3.35 for the first year, rise to \$3.87 by 1992, and expire in September of that year.

About 3.5 million businesses with less

than \$500,000 in gross sales would be exempted from paying the minimum wage. Under previous law, the level was \$362,500.

Construction firms, laundries, and gas stations with sales below the new threshold, which have been required to pay minimum wage in the past, were included in the exemption.

The House also voted to enable employers in Puerto Rico to phase in the increase to \$4.55 over a longer period.

After the House vote, Secretary of Labor Elizabeth Dole warned that President George Bush would veto any measure that increased the minimum wage to more than \$4.25 by 1992.

She asserted that the measure would be vetoed unless it also allowed the minimum wage of \$3.35 per hour to remain in effect for all workers as a "training" rate during the first six months of employment on any job.

The House rejected these administration

proposals March 23 by a vote of 218-198.

On March 20 several dozen people picketed a Washington, D.C., Burger King restaurant to voice opposition to the proposed lower minimum wage for new hires, which the owners of the fast-food chain endorse.

Virginia Reid, a retired teacher who participated in the demonstration, said, "When there is a wage like this, companies let people go at the end of six months and hire new people."

Sen. Edward Kennedy (D.-Mass.), the sponsor of a Senate measure to increase the minimum wage to \$4.65 by 1991, has indicated he would support a two-tier minimum wage in order to head off a Republican filibuster.

Some 8 million workers are acknowledged to be earning the minimum wage or less. The statistics do not include many undocumented immigrants, workers who are employed at home, children, and others who are illegally paid less than minimum wage.

According to official figures, nearly 60 percent of minimum wage workers are between the ages of 16 and 24. About 11 percent are 50 years old or more. Some 26 percent of those receiving minimum wage are heads of households.

The minimum wage has not been increased since 1981, although consumer prices have risen by 37 percent since then. The purchasing power of the minimum wage today is now less than that of the minimum wage of three decades ago.

A 40-hour week at minimum wage in a year-round job would result in an annual income of \$6,700. That is more than \$1,000 below the official poverty line for a single adult supporting one child, and only half what it now takes to support a family of four.

A wage of \$3.35 per hour is only 35 percent of the average hourly wage in the United States — the lowest percentage since the Fair Labor Standards Act first established a federal minimum wage in 1938.

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Circulation Director: NORTON SANDLER

Nicaragua Bureau Director: LARRY SEIGLE

Business Manager: JIM WHITE

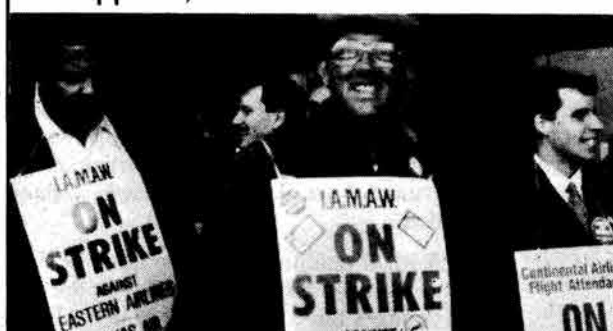
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Los Angeles prochoice supporters deal blow to antiabortionists

BY GEOFF MIRELOWITZ

LOS ANGELES — From March 23 to 25 a determined mass countermobilization by supporters of women's rights dealt a stinging defeat to antiabortion forces brought in from around the country by Operation Rescue. The largest confrontation took place on Saturday, March 25, when more than 1,500 prochoice demonstrators turned out to defend health clinics that perform abortions from attempts by Operation Rescue to close them down.

Some 90 clinics perform abortions in the greater Los Angeles area, which spans many miles. Supporters of abortion rights, organized in a coalition that included Planned Parenthood, the National Organization for Women (NOW), American Civil Liberties Union, and others, did not know where the antiabortionists would hit.

During the three days of Operation Rescue attacks, prochoice activists turned out at 5:00 a.m. each morning at six clinics designated as mobilization sites. From there they were dispatched as teams of "trackers," reporting to a command center on the location of Operation Rescue forces.

On the first day Operation Rescue hit a clinic in Cypress in Orange County. They were met by hundreds of prochoice supporters, who defended the clinic until police began arrests that totaled 350. The clinic remained open.

The following day some 300 antiabortionists staged a sit-in at the Women's Care Medical Group in Long Beach. The clinic was not open (at least in part due to Operation Rescue threats), and the cops refused to act on demands by the approximately 300 prochoice activists that the right-wing-ers be arrested.

Women's rights supporters, and some reporters on the scene, asserted that the cops used a double standard in threatening to arrest prochoice advocates, photographers, and reporters for not immediately moving away from the building, while antiabortionists were allowed to remain.

Hundreds guard clinic

Thursday and Friday's actions set the stage for the larger mobilization on Saturday. At 5:00 a.m., with rain falling steadily, hundreds of women's rights supporters began assembling. By 6:30 the word was passed that Operation Rescue had begun to arrive at the clinic on Westmoreland in Los Angeles, and many prochoice supporters were quickly dispatched there.

Abortion rights supporters stood in lines guarding the clinic doors, while antiabortionists began to sit down and press as close as they could get to the doors. Operation Rescue organizer Randall Terry and his lieutenants paraded around with walk-



Militant/Nelson Blackstock

Abortion rights supporters link arms to defend Los Angeles clinic on March 25

ie-talkies trying to direct their forces around the clinic defenders, who countered their moves with human chains of arm-linked demonstrators.

"Operation Rescue go away, abortion rights are here to stay!" and "Not the church, not the state, women will decide their fate!" the defenders chanted.

Demoralization began to show on the faces of those sitting in as they confronted hundreds of chanting clinic defenders with their "keep abortion legal" placards.

Cheers went up when the police finally

began to arrest and carry away Operation Rescue organizer Randall Terry and his supporters after several hours of confrontation.

'Take 'em away'

When the police took another four hours to slowly arrest what they claimed were 700 who sat in, the clinic defenders chanted, "Read 'em their rights and take 'em away." Most defenders stayed, despite the rain, until the last one was arrested, to make sure the clinic doors would be cleared.

Women with appointments at the clinic were either served there or taken by prochoice "escorts" to other clinics. Operation Rescue's attempt to deny them the right to safe, legal abortion was defeated.

This victory was the result not only of the three-day mobilization of some 1,500 supporters of legal abortion, but also of a weeks-long political campaign by abortion rights groups and individuals to put pressure on the cops and the city administration.

On February 11 the Los Angeles cops did the same thing as the Long Beach police, refusing to arrest 500 members of Operation Rescue when they confronted another 500 defenders of legal abortion at a Los Angeles clinic. On this occasion, the clinic stayed closed.

In response to the campaign and public outcry against this inaction of the cops, the Los Angeles City Council voted to instruct the police to enforce the law when Operation Rescue returned in March. On March 22 Mayor Thomas Bradley finally stated publicly that the law would be enforced.

Some 300 people turned up for a Saturday afternoon celebration of the victory, sponsored by NOW. There was much cheering and jubilation, but at the same time a recognition of the bigger battles that lie ahead. Everyone was aware that this spring the Supreme Court plans to review an abortion case from Missouri and could rule to limit the right to abortion.

In their own attempt to influence the court's decision, Operation Rescue has already announced plans to stage a national day of action on April 29.

Court blocks Washington, D.C., curfew

BY DAVID PAPARELLO

WASHINGTON, D.C. — On March 21 U.S. District Judge Charles Richey temporarily blocked enforcement of a new curfew law in the District of Columbia.

The ruling stemmed from a suit filed by the American Civil Liberties Union challenging an emergency curfew measure passed unanimously by the D.C. Council in February.

The curfew would require young people under the age of 18 to be off the streets between 11:00 p.m. on weeknights, and midnight on weekends, until 6:00 a.m. The measure included an exemption for youths who are going to and from work.

The law would allow police to question and detain youths who are on the streets after curfew. Young people could be held at police stations overnight or until they are retrieved by their parents.

City officials are not appealing the ruling. Instead, Mayor Marion Barry has urged the D.C. Council to approve another version of the curfew prepared by the mayor's staff that Barry says will be ruled constitutional. The new version reportedly includes more exemptions from the curfew.

The measure is one of several emergency steps that the government claims are aimed at dealing with an increase in drug-related violence. Officials say that the homicide rate for 1989 is nearly double last year's rate, citing 114 homicides as of March 18. Some politicians and newspaper editors have dubbed Washington the "murder capital" of the United States.

More cops, arrests, prisons

Drug trafficking and the homicide rate are being presented as the basis for a range of proposals from both national and local government officials. Virtually all of the proposals involve increasing the number of cops, expanding prison space, and curtailing democratic rights to make it easier for police to carry out harassment and arrests.

William Bennett, head of drug policy for the George Bush administration, has declared D.C. a "high-intensity drug trafficking area." He is drawing up an "action plan" that includes using federal funds to hire more D.C. police, assigning more federal prosecutors and judges to the District, as well as more agents from the Drug Enforcement Agency and the FBI.

Bennett has also floated the idea of converting abandoned military facilities into temporary prisons to house the large num-

bers who would be arrested in a new crackdown.

The D.C. Council has already approved hiring 300 more cops. Walter Fauntroy, D.C. delegate to Congress, has proposed a four-point plan that includes federal funds to hire 700 more police. He is also promoting legislation that would encourage courts to evict persons convicted of operating "drug dens."

D.C.-area residents are being bombarded with media coverage focusing on drugs and the homicide rate. The number of these stories ranks just above coverage of charges that Mayor Barry himself is involved with drugs and other illegal activities.

Corruption in D.C. government has been cited by several members of Congress to justify new attacks on D.C. home rule. Sen. Warren Rudman (R-N.H.) stated, "We can't have people killed and blood running in the streets like some Third World capital run by a despot." He proposed that the D.C. police be put under federal control.

Curfew not a dead issue

As for the curfew, Arthur Spitzer, the ACLU attorney who argued the anticurfew suit, explained, "This is clearly not a dead issue. We expect to see further council action on this."

Spitzer stated the ACLU's position is

that a curfew is "justifiable only in extreme emergencies" during which everyone would have to be off the streets, not just juveniles. The new curfew proposal, he said, "is saying that young people don't have the same rights as older people. We believe it's no more appropriate for a 17-year-old than for a 30-year-old to be ordered off the streets."

Drug and street violence are subjects of debate among area high school students. According to the *Washington Post*, a citywide meeting of high school students reached no consensus on how to deal with these problems, but "repeatedly, they demanded that the history and achievements of black people be taught more thoroughly and more often in classes." Some 70 percent of D.C.'s residents are Black.

Susan Winsten, a leader of the Socialist Workers Party in D.C. and currently on strike against Eastern Airlines, said, "The curfew is a cynical measure that has nothing to do with fighting against drug use or limiting violence. It's part of a campaign to use the concern of working people about the terrible scourge of drug addiction to enact laws that further limit democratic rights. These laws are passed and enforced by those who have repeatedly been exposed as being neck deep in the drug trade themselves — the cops and the government."

Idaho antiracist march isolates neo-Nazis

BY ANGEL LARISCY

SEATTLE — Growing support for an April 22 antiracist march has forced the Aryan Nations to cancel a planned neo-Nazi skinhead parade through downtown Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

Richard Butler, head of the Church of Jesus Christ Christian (the Aryan Nations) still plans to hold a neo-Nazi youth conference at his Hayden Lake farm seven miles from Coeur d'Alene. Butler's farm has been the site of many white supremacist gatherings over the past decade.

The Aryan Nations, which advocates the establishment of a white homeland in the Northwest, claim their parade was canceled because of the danger of AIDS-infected protesters coming from Seattle and San Francisco.

After Butler announced his plans for a conference and parade to mark the 100th birthday of Adolf Hitler on the weekend of

April 21-23, Citizens for Nonviolent Action Against Racism (CINAAR) was formed to plan a protest action. Its call for a Walk for Racial Equality has encountered hostility from the chambers of commerce, community leaders, and the press in both Coeur d'Alene and Spokane, Washington, 30 miles to the west. These forces urge people to wear or display orange ribbons and take part in an interfaith church service and dinner rather than participate in the march.

The press in both cities have given a platform to police officials who claim that the numerous protesters are more likely to cause problems than the 200 neo-Nazi youths who are expected.

Lisa Anderson, a leading organizer of the march, stressed the importance of getting a large turnout on April 22. "We've already won by forcing Butler to cancel his event. This makes it even more necessary

to march," she said.

Spencer Hamm, a Spokane Valley Black man who had an eight-foot cross burned on his lawn last August, contacted Anderson after he heard about the planned march, and has now become centrally involved in the effort to win support for it.

The Walk for Racial Equality has gained national attention with endorsements from Rainbow Coalition leader Jesse Jackson; Merle Hansen, North American Farm Alliance; Jennifer Davis, American Committee on Africa; and Prexy Nesbitt, Mozambique Support Network.

A building rally will be held in Seattle on April 15 where Anderson and Hamm are scheduled to speak. Buses are also being organized from other cities in the region. For more information on the protest call CINAAR at (208) 664-4825 or (509) 926-5099.

Prominent New Zealand labor figure backs defense

Mark Curtis is a unionist and political activist from Des Moines, Iowa, who is serving 25 years in jail on frame-up charges of rape and burglary. The Mark Curtis Defense Committee is leading an international political campaign to fight for justice for Curtis. To contact the committee, write Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa 50311. Telephone (515) 246-1695.

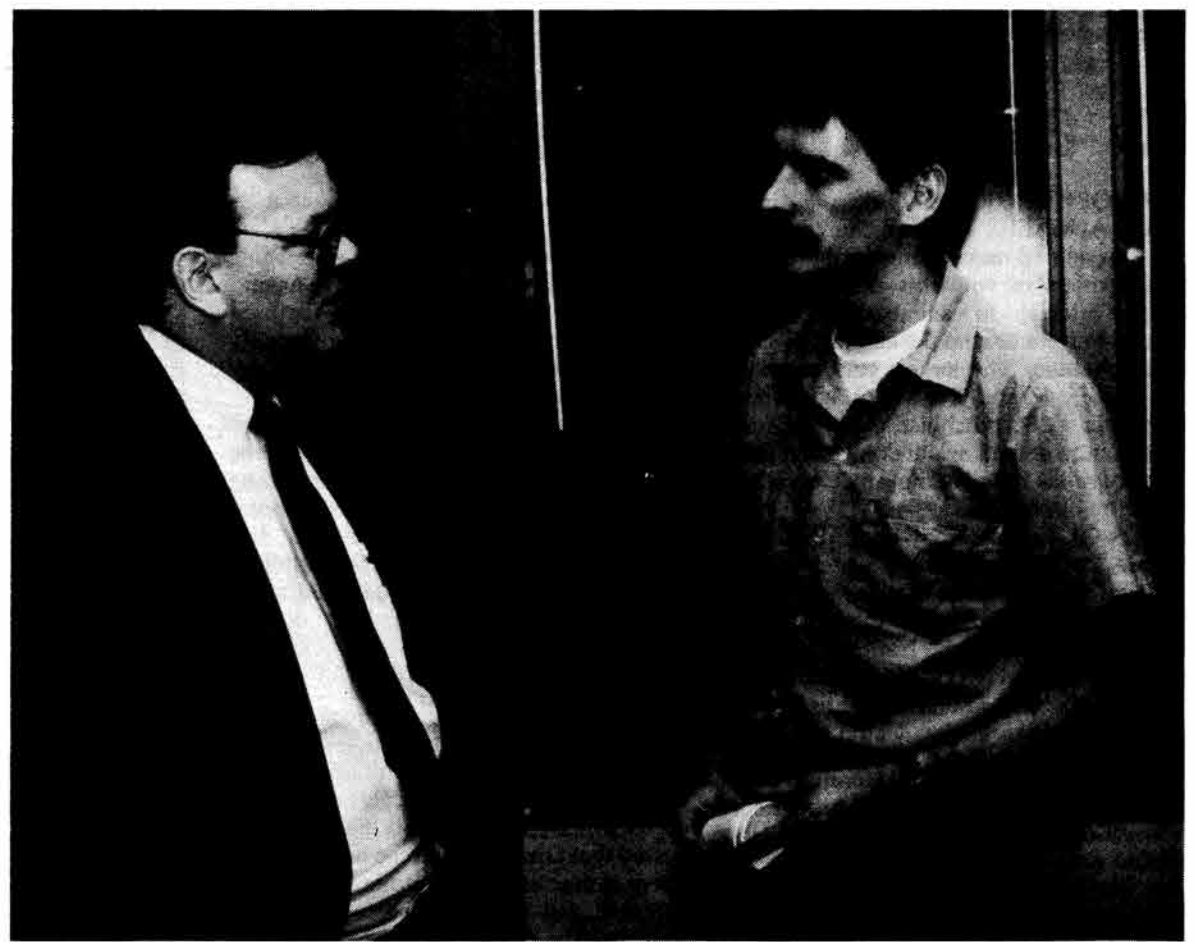
New Zealand supporters of the Curtis defense effort have been talking to a range of political activists, supporters of civil liber-

ternational pressure that Mark and every other persecuted fighter will be freed."

Bill Andersen, president of the Auckland District Council of Trade Unions, has also endorsed. Andersen was himself jailed in 1974 when he led the Northern Drivers Union in support of striking seamen in Auckland. He was freed after workers staged mass demonstrations.

The labor official recalled that "when you're in prison, what counts most is the support you've got on the outside."

Other endorsers include: Susan-



Militant/Stu Singer

Mark Curtis (right) meets with his attorney George Eichhorn at state prison in Anamosa, Iowa.

DEFEND MARK CURTIS!

ties, trade unionists, and other prominent figures, resulting in several new endorsements for the Mark Curtis Defense Committee.

These include Jock Barnes, now 84 years old. Barnes was the central leader of the biggest upsurge of New Zealand industrial workers in the years following World War II. As president of the New Zealand Waterside Workers Federation, he led that union through a six-month lockout by port owners in 1951.

"To suggest that the United States has a monopoly on persecuting fighters for freedom, justice, and workers' rights would be absurd," said Barnes.

"However, its record is anything but good," he added. "Well do I remember the framing of Tom Mooney and the judicial murder of Sacco and Vanzetti. Both these actions provoked worldwide criticism, and in the latter case U.S. embassies were attacked in many overseas cities.

"It is a privilege for me to be given the opportunity to voice my protest — and with it the protest of a host of freedom-loving New Zealanders — against the frame-up of Mark Curtis. It is only by in-

na Ounei, New Zealand representative of the Kanak Socialist National Liberation Front (FLNKS) of New Caledonia; Diane Cleary, Women's National Abortion Action Campaign; Noel Hilliard, novelist and longtime supporter of civil liberties; Joe Hawke, leader of the 1977-78 land occupation by native Maori people at Bastion Point; and Richard Naidu, former press secretary to the prime minister of the South Pacific country of Fiji, Timoci Bavadra. Bavadra was deposed in a rightist coup almost two years ago.

"I endorsed because I believe that an injury to one is an injury to all and this is a case where a union activist is being victimized for standing up and fighting for workers' rights."

That's how Doug Butler, longtime civil rights and labor activist from the A. Philip Randolph Institute in Boston, explained why he added his name to the more than 2,500 others that have endorsed the Curtis defense committee.

Curtis supporters in Boston have released an initial list of local

sponsors. Discussions about the Curtis fight have prompted many stories of similar victimizations, as well as discussions about ongoing attacks on the rights and conditions of workers in many different situations.

Deen Leonard, a leader of the striking flight attendants at Eastern Airlines, said she "was appalled that something like this could happen in 1989." It "makes you realize," she said, "not everyone's rights were protected like you thought."

International Association of Machinists Local 1726, which represents Eastern strikers in Bos-

ton, also endorsed.

Other Boston-area endorsers include: John Roberts, executive director, Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts; South Middlesex Chapter, National Organization for Women; Jill Nelson, director, National Jobs With Peace Campaign; George Sweeting, international representative, Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union, New England Joint Board; and Ange Collela and Tom Deary, international representatives, International Union of Electronic Workers (IUE) District 2.

Also Robert Meeropol, son of

Julius and Ethel Rosenberg; Dave Slaney, president United Steelworkers of America Local 2431; Annette Diaz and Juan Vargas, Puerto Rican Civil Rights Committee; American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees Local 1489 Executive Board; Jeff Crosby, executive board, IUE Local 201; Abner Darby, director, Community Minority Cultural Center, Lynn, Massachusetts; and David Brenner, president, Laundry Workers Local 66.

George Fyson from Auckland and Russell Davis from Boston contributed to this column.

Salvadoran refugees in Des Moines ordered deported

BY PRISCILLA SCHENK

DES MOINES, Iowa — On Dec. 24, 1988, the Immigration and Naturalization Service ordered Celfa Herrera and her three children, Sandra, Ismenia, and Carlito, deported from Iowa back to El Salvador. The Herrera family has lived in Des Moines for seven years. After senators Thomas Harkin and Charles Grassley and U.S. Rep. Neal Smith intervened, the deportation order was delayed.

Carlos Herrera fled El Salvador in fear of his life in 1981 after receiving an anonymous death threat. He went into hiding, made his way to the United States, and settled in Des Moines. His family joined him here six months later. Herrera works at

a factory building metal filing cabinets; Celfa Herrera works at a sewing factory.

They applied for political asylum based on a fear of persecution if they were returned to El Salvador. The INS denied their application. For the next five years they lived in fear of being deported back to El Salvador.

Last year Herrera applied for permanent residence under the 1986 immigration amnesty law. He now has temporary residence and is waiting for his permanent residence to be approved. Celfa Herrera and the children, however, arrived in the United States in February 1982, one month after the INS deadline to qualify for amnesty.

Now the Herreras live each day in fear of

what might happen to Celfa Herrera and the children if the INS proceeds with the deportation order, tearing their family apart. "Every day it is getting worse in El Salvador," Celfa Herrera told the *Des Moines Register*. "There is always the danger that we will be killed."

"It is good to have the amnesty, but how can I be okay without my family?" Carlos Herrera asked.

Of the 2 million people who applied for residence status under the amnesty law, nearly half have spouses who do not qualify for amnesty, according to a study by the U.S. Catholic Conference. Nearly 60 percent have children who do not qualify.

The Herreras' attorney, Don Nickerson, told the *Register* that in cases where family members do not qualify for amnesty there is a "family fairness" provision to review individual cases.

But, he cautioned, "there has not been one family-fairness case decided in favor of the family staying together. It is purely discretionary on the part of the [INS] district director to decide if the family says together or not."

Nickerson represented several immigrant workers arrested on March 1, 1988, in an INS raid on the Swift meat-packing plant here. Their case became widely known in the area and after broad protests, all charges against the Swift 17 were dropped.

"This is typical of what's happening on a national scale," Alfredo Alvarez, chairman of the Des Moines Human Rights Commission and a prominent immigrants rights activist, said. "They made assurances nationwide that families would be allowed to stay together, but with the amnesty law things are becoming more restrictive."

"It's no coincidence," Alvarez added, "that the INS had plans to set up camps prior to the amnesty program and they are setting up camps after the amnesty program

to hold Salvadorans and others waiting deportation. And in the southwest they are digging a big ditch to keep out people coming from Mexico. These are giant strides backward."

Héctor Marroquín, a well-known immigrants rights fighter who won his own struggle for permanent residence last September, also protested the action of the Immigration Service. "I went to visit the Herrera family to express my unconditional solidarity with their fight to stop their deportation and become permanent residents," said Marroquín, who lives in Des Moines. "I was able to share with them the experiences of my decade-long fight against the INS to win permanent residence status."

"I intend to denounce this cruel, immoral, and unjust attempt by the INS to deport this Salvadoran family," Marroquín added.

"Once again, as in the Swift 17 case, the INS is probing to try to undermine the so-called amnesty provisions of the new Immigration Reform and Control Act so as to limit the benefits of these provisions," he continued. "The INS is also trying to establish a precedent in this case that would affect hundreds of thousands of families where one or another member received amnesty but others, especially children, did not 'qualify.'"

"The same kind of public protest and broad outcry that stopped the deportation of the Swift 17 and made my victory possible is badly needed in the case of this family. The rights of the foreign-born are at stake."

The Herreras' battle to remain in the United States "will be an uphill fight," according to Nickerson. For now they can stay only until their deportation hearing before an immigration judge.

Curtis defense: how you can help

- **New Spanish-language literature available.** The Mark Curtis Defense Committee has translated its response to the letter signed by Keith Morris, slandering Curtis and the defense committee and asking people to withdraw their support. Morris is the father of the woman Curtis is falsely accused of raping.

- **In addition, the defense motion for a new trial, which summarizes some of the irregularities in Curtis' September 1988 trial, is available in Spanish from the defense committee.**

- **Win sponsors for the defense committee.** To date, more than 2,500 people and organizations from around the world have signed cards adding their names as committee endorsers. Sponsor cards are available from the defense committee, along with buttons and a variety of literature.

- **Raise money.** The defense committee needs to raise \$60,000 to cover legal and publicity expenses. Contributions should be sent to the committee. (Checks for large tax-deductible contributions may be made out to the Political Rights Defense Fund, Inc.)

- **Write to Mark Curtis.** He is incarcerated in the Iowa State Men's Reformatory in Anamosa, Iowa. He can receive letters, cards, and photos only, not packages of any sort, nor money. Address letters to: Mark S. Curtis, No. 805338A, Box B, Anamosa, Iowa 52205. The defense committee would like to receive copies of the correspondence.

Contact the Mark Curtis Defense Committee at Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa 50311. Telephone (515) 246-1695.

'We had to show our own strength'

New York Machinists explain issues in strike against Eastern Airlines

BY SUSAN LaMONT

NEW YORK — The strike headquarters of International Association of Machinists Local 1018 is located in the basement of the La Détente Restaurant, a few blocks from LaGuardia Airport in Queens, New York. The main room — usually busy with Eastern strikers coming from or going to picket duty, or just stopping by to help out — is filled with picket signs and leaflets, information for members on unemployment and strike benefits, pictures tacked on the wall from picket lines and rallies, and tables with donated food where strikers can get a bite to eat and a cup of coffee.

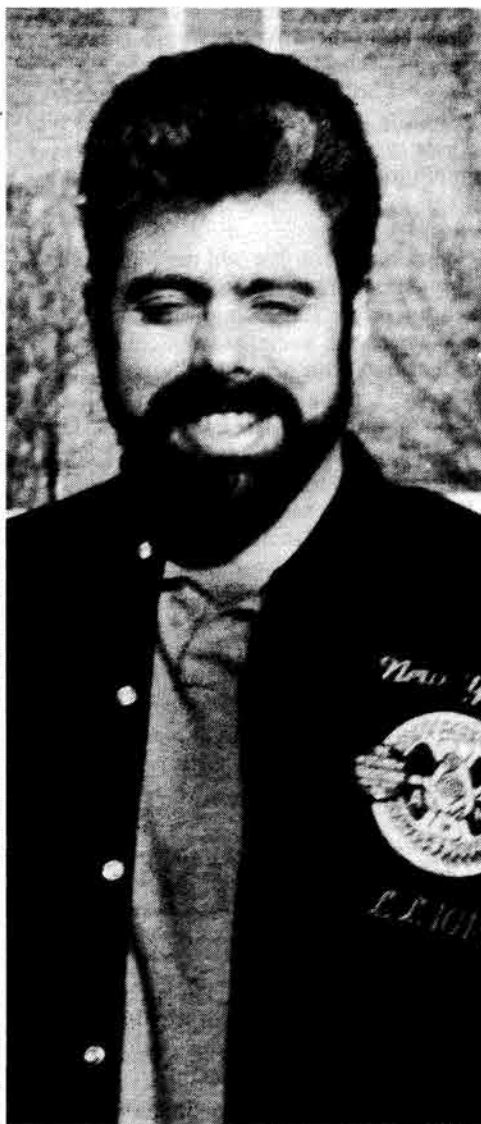
A new calendar — about eight feet high — has gone up on one wall, listing strike-related events local members are attending, from court hearings to an informational picket line American Airline workers have asked for help with. The days are filling up with lists of speaking engagements for Eastern strikers — mainly from other unions and college campuses in the New York area. There are 360 members in the local.

Two strikers

Joe Bauer, an aircraft mechanic who has worked at Eastern 11 years, and Ricky Solis, a ramp service worker with five years at the company, sat down over coffee in the strike headquarters recently and described why the 8,500 IAM members at Eastern had voted overwhelmingly to go on strike. "Money was one issue, but certainly not the major issue," said Bauer, who is 35. "It was more the conditions we were working under — what's sometimes referred to as the 'reign of terror.'" After Texas Air Corp. acquired Eastern in 1986, firings of union members shot up, from about 35 a year previously to more than 900 during the two years before the strike, he said. In addition, suspensions for "poor attendance," problems with "job performance," or other violations of company procedure multiplied many times.

The attendance program imposed on union members, without regard to their existing contract, said that three "occurrences" in 18 months were grounds for beginning disciplinary procedures and could lead to suspension and job loss, Bauer said. An "occurrence" was any time off work — whether for an injury received on the job or a one-minute lateness. "So if a person was sick twice in 18 months, and late once, they would get a letter the next time they were out," Bauer explained.

Workers also ran into problems with overtime. "I worked a lot of overtime," Bauer recalled. "A lot of times when they asked me, I was willing to help out. Several other times, I was required to work



Ricky Solis (left) and Joe Bauer, members of Machinists' Local 1018 at New York's LaGuardia Airport, outside strike headquarters.

overtime, and I did. It was against my will, but I did."

One day in 1987, however, he couldn't put in the required four extra hours. When he returned to work the next day, he was given two days off without pay.

Grievances 'bogged down'

Hundreds of other workers had similar experiences. Union activists were a special target for disciplinary action, including Local 1018's President John DiPaola, who was fired this January. Grievances by union members piled up, with little hope of ever having them resolved. "They bogged down our grievance and appeals procedure so much that when you filed a grievance, it could be lost in the system for years," Bauer said.

Mechanics like Bauer check the planes

when they come in — fluid levels, tire pressure, oxygen, and so on. In addition, they have to repair everything on the aircraft from engines and electronics to broken passenger seats. They also have to perform the servicing and regular inspections required by the Federal Aviation Administration, which licenses aircraft mechanics. "There's a release we sign when we finish an inspection, to say that the aircraft is air-worthy," Bauer explained. Despite the mechanics' responsibility for aircraft safety, some have faced disciplinary action for going by the maintenance manual in making repairs — which the company calls a "slowdown." The number of mechanics at LaGuardia was cut from 100 to 60 over the past several years.

Ramp service workers faced similar pressures, getting suspensions and write-

ups for running afoul of the company's new procedures, said Solis, who came to New York from Guatemala 16 years ago.

Ramp workers' jobs include loading and unloading baggage, freight, and mail on and off planes; setting up the "jetways" — passenger loading ramps — at the gates; and parking aircraft. Instead of two crews of three workers each to handle most planes, the company had moved in the last year to use only one crew on planes — even wide-body aircraft.

The cuts in wages and benefits demanded by Eastern management in the months of negotiations preceding the strike were severe, Bauer explained. Mechanics, for example, would have had their job classifications changed, and some would have had their wages cut by as much as \$8,000 a year. Eastern wanted ramp workers to take 50 percent wage cuts, driving starting pay down to about \$6 an hour, Solis added.

Pilots' support

Bauer and Solis explained that they were "pleasantly surprised" by the Eastern pilots' and flight attendants' decision to honor their picket lines. The Machinists didn't know what the other Eastern unions would do at the time they took the strike vote. "We were trying to not count on other people at that point. We had to show our own strength," Bauer said, adding that even without the pilots and flight attendants, "we would have gone out anyway."

Bauer described the backing the Eastern strikers are getting from students, community groups, unemployed people, and especially other unions. "We get a lot of support from the other unions. They're very concerned. A lot of them see this kind of thing coming their way if labor doesn't collectively draw a line at this point."

Mark Zaidel, a ramp worker with 25 years in at Eastern, sat down and joined the discussion. "I'm sure I won't have a job with Eastern after this," he said. "But what I'm fighting for is not for me. It's for the future," Bauer agreed.

All three workers described how the strike has lifted the spirits of the workers. Before, they said, workers felt hopeless in face of the company's blatant contract violations and abuse. "The unity of the strike has reversed our morale by tenfold," said Bauer.

"We feel better now that we're outside, fighting for something we believe in, something that's right," Solis stressed. "We're going to fight to the end. We're trying to build something for the next generation with what we're doing," Solis' wife also worked at Eastern, as a ticket agent. She, along with most other nonunion workers, was laid off shortly after the strike started. The Solises have four children, including a month-old baby.

The discussion ended with all three workers raising the problem of the legal restrictions being placed on the strikers by the courts. "First, they said we can't picket the railroads. Now they want to restrict our picket lines and bull horns," said Zaidel. "It's wrong."

"Why are all the restrictions on us," asked Solis, "and Lorenzo can do whatever he wants?"

"We have a legal right to carry out the strike," Bauer emphasized.

Paperworkers join Boston picket line

BY KIPP HEDGES

BOSTON — Ten members of United Paperworkers International Union Local 14 traveled 160 miles from Jay, Maine, to walk the picket lines with striking Eastern workers at Logan International Airport here March 14. The delegation included Local 14 President Bill Meserve.

Local 14 members were on strike against International Paper Co. from June 1987 to October 1988, along with paperworkers' union members at IP mills in DePere, Wisconsin and Lock Haven, Pennsylvania. During the same time, workers at IP's Mobile, Alabama, mill were locked out by the company. Workers at the four mills — 3,500 altogether — were fighting to resist IP's demands for concessions in wages, work rules, and on other issues. The company was able to hire scabs and keep production going at the mills during the strike.

Although their strike was ended by Paperworkers officials last October, and only a handful of union members have regained their jobs, the Jay workers see their battle as continuing. "This Eastern strike reminds us a lot of our strike," said Local 14 member Marty Thorn. "They use the courts and injunctions. The government backs them up. They say you're overpaid and they need cuts to compete. The more you see, the more you realize the unions face a com-

mon enemy."

Henry DiSotto, one of 38 union members called back by IP since the end of the strike, described the conditions inside the mill without a union. "You have no seniority, no security," he said. "You do as you're told. You don't talk back. You have no rights."

The conditions have led to a discussion

about the union inside the mill, DiSotto said. Some of the workers hired by IP during the strike "are starting to see the handwriting on the wall."

While in Boston, Local 14 members attended the Eastern Machinists' union meeting, where Meserve spoke to the strikers. They also joined the Eastern strike support rally of 3,000 held that night.

Courts aid Eastern's drive against unions

Continued from back page

erns railroads and airlines, such secondary pickets are legal.

In Miami a federal judge was ordered by a federal appeals court panel to hear a suit by Eastern charging that the pilots' support for the machinists' walkout is illegal. The judge had earlier declined to hear the case, saying he didn't have the authority to determine the issues in the case.

The strike by flight attendants at Continental Airlines, which began March 20, ended March 24. The Union of Flight Attendants' action aimed to win support for their fight against the substandard pay and working conditions at Continental, which is also owned by Texas Air. The UFA has been trying to negotiate a union contract

for more than five years.

Around the country, Eastern strikers continue to win new support from other unions, students, community groups, and political activists.

In New York more than 400 attended a demonstration at Columbia University March 23 — organized by Eastern strikers, students, and unions on campus — to protest the John Jay Alumni Association's refusal to cancel its Distinguished Alumni Award to Texas Air Corp. Chairman Frank Lorenzo. Pressure from strike supporters did force the association to postpone the award and a scheduled award dinner.

On March 23 some 6,000 pilots, flight attendants, and machinists, along with family members and other supporters, at-

tended a Miami "teleconference" organized by ALPA. Similar events — joined together by video hook-up — took place in Atlanta, Philadelphia, Boston, and three sites in the New York-New Jersey area.

One of those who addressed the rallies was United Airlines pilot Ken Bradley. "I flew as a management pilot during the 1985 strike at United," he said. "It was the biggest mistake of my life. I resigned from management four years ago. My advice to them [pilots flying through the Eastern strike] is: wake up and come out here where you belong." Eastern has about 200 pilots — half from management — currently flying, and is trying, with little success, to recruit and train more.

Big subscription effort set for April 8-15

Campaign to win 8,000 new readers off to a good start

BY SAM MANUEL

Supporters of the *Militant* have set the week of April 8-15 to make a special effort to sell subscriptions as part of an international campaign to get 8,000 new readers for five publications.

The drive, which got off to a good start March 25, will continue until May 20.

Distributors of the socialist press are aiming to sell more than 4,800 subscriptions to the *Militant*, 1,200 subscriptions to the Spanish-language monthly *Perspectiva Mundial*, 470 to the French-language *Lutte ouvrière*, and a combined total of more than 1,350 copies of the Marxist journals *New International* and *Nouvelle Internationale*.

Perspectiva Mundial is published in New York and, *Lutte ouvrière* and *Nouvelle Internationale* in Montréal, Canada.

Militant Circulation Director Norton Sandler explained that the April 8-15 target week "will mean an even bigger effort than usual, with supporters going out several times and for longer stretches."

Special opportunity

The April 9 march in Washington, D.C., in defense of abortion rights presents a special opportunity to sell subscriptions during the target week, Sandler said. "In many areas *Militant* distributors are organizing to sell at bus sites departing for the march, on the buses, and at the march."

On the opening weekend of the drive, participants sold 21 subscriptions in Brooklyn, New York. They are planning to send out sales teams each weekend to nearby Long Island and southern Connecticut. Another 24 subscriptions, 13 of them to *PM*, were sold by supporters in Manhattan. And 20 more were brought in by supporters in Newark, New Jersey.

A team in Charleston, West Virginia, sold three subscriptions in the coal-mining area of Cannelton Hollow. A three-day team plans to go to the northwest corner of Virginia where Pittston miners and their families live.

Distributors in Charleston got a reminder of why it is important for teams to always carry copies of *PM*. While distributing the *Militant* in a Charleston shopping center, members of the sales team met an individual from Puerto Rico who expressed interest in reading the socialist publications but preferred to read in Spanish. They didn't have a copy of *PM* but arranged to bring one by his home later.

New Zealand participants in the subscription campaign come into the effort with some momentum. In the three weeks

leading up to the drive they sold 140 subscriptions to the *Militant*. More than 100 of those were sold to students during campus registration. The remainder were sold on the job to workers and in working-class communities.

Teams

Sandler also emphasized the importance of organizing regional subscription sales teams to travel for a couple of weeks to areas where the socialist publications are not distributed on a regular basis. On the target week a team of volunteers will set out on a three-week sales effort at factories, campuses, and working-class communities in eastern Canada and Maine.

During the subscription campaign, *Militant* readers will also be promoting The Action Program to Confront the Coming Economic Crisis. The Pathfinder publishing house, is reissuing this pamphlet in April with an updated introduction.

If you would like to participate in the subscription campaign, contact the distributors nearest you, listed on page 12, or the *Militant* circulation office, at (212) 929-3486.



Militant/Katherine Reynolds
Militant sales table in New York. Supporters in 40 cities in North America, Europe, and the South Pacific are participating in the subscription effort.

U.S. officials meet with PLO leaders

BY HARRY RING

Representatives of the George Bush administration held their first formal meeting with the Palestine Liberation Organization March 22 in Tunis, Tunisia.

In December, Ronald Reagan's administration held several preliminary meetings and one full-scale session with the PLO.

At the Tunis meeting, Washington was represented by Robert Pelletreau, U.S. ambassador to Tunisia. The PLO representative was Yassir Abed Rabbo, a member of the organization's executive committee. Two senior advisers were present on each side.

The U.S.-PLO discussions stem from an abrupt policy reversal by the Reagan administration late last year. Until then, as in previous administrations, it had shared the Israeli regime's refusal to meet with the PLO.

In Tel Aviv, the administration of Yitzhak Shamir rapped Washington for agreeing to talk with the PLO and, later, for suggesting that the Israelis may be compelled to do likewise.

Following the four-hour session in Tunis PLO Chairman Yassir Arafat described the session as "positive and serious."

Queried on reports that the U.S. would ask the PLO to halt the *intifada* — the West Bank and Gaza Strip uprising — Arafat responded, "No one presented such a request, and no one can ask a people to stop resisting an occupation."

Pelletreau told reporters he had called on the PLO to take "practical steps to reduce tensions and improve the political environment" for "direct negotiations between Palestinians and Israelis."

Abed Rabbo responded by noting that Israel was responsible for the violence in the region.

"The PLO," he declared, "wishes to stress that the source of the continuation of tension and danger of explosion in the area is the Israeli occupation."

The PLO representative added, "There is a responsibility on the United States to make all efforts possible in order to stop this Israeli terrorism directed against our people."

A week prior to the Tunis meeting, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker suggested that if the Israeli government failed to find non-PLO Palestinians to talk with, then it might have to talk to the PLO.

"You're not going to have peace without

direct negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians," Baker said. "If that can be accomplished through a dialogue between Israelis and Palestinians in the occupied territories, that would be, of course, a preferred approach."

"But we ought not to rule out categorically, absolutely, and unequivocally consideration of going beyond that if it's necessary to move toward peace in the Middle East."

Growing pressure in Israel

In addition to the new U.S. stance, Tel Aviv faces growing domestic pressure to negotiate with the PLO. A recent poll indicated 54 percent of the Israeli people favored such discussions. Further pressure came with the leaking of an Israeli intelligence report that concluded that the *intifada* could not be ended without talking with the PLO.

After the Tunis meeting, Abed Rabbo indicated he had pressed the U.S. representatives for a "clear position" on what Washington means when it speaks of the "legitimate political rights" of Palestinians.

A U.S. embassy source responded that the PLO would be told that Washington remains opposed to a Palestinian state.

At the session, the PLO pressed for a preparatory meeting of the five permanent members of the UN security council for an international peace conference on the Middle East, with the PLO representing the Palestinian people at such a parley.

Mubarak's round of meetings

Meanwhile, Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak met with Arafat and King Hussein of Jordan. Following the March 25 meeting he was slated to meet with King Fahd of Saudi Arabia.

Mubarak, Hussein, and Shamir of Israel are all scheduled to visit Washington in the coming weeks. Referring to this, Mubarak said, "The main point of my talks is to arrive at an international peace conference."

Earlier, Jordan's foreign minister commented on the proposal for a Jordanian-Palestinian confederation, saying that Jordan would not accept the idea prior to withdrawal of the Israeli army from the West Bank and Gaza. He also rejected a U.S.-Israeli request that the Jordanian regime speak on behalf of the Palestinians.

Meanwhile, the Israeli forces continued their savage repression. Two Palestinians were shot to death in the Gaza Strip March 25 during a protest against the killing of five Palestinians the week previous by Israeli paramilitary border cops.

On March 13, in the West Bank village of Freidis, occupation forces bulldozed a six-room home housing a family of 15. Military authorities said the home had been built without a license.

Since the *intifada* began in December 1987, at least 672 unlicensed Palestinian homes have been bulldozed or dynamited.

Gorbachev gains in Soviet Union elections

Continued from front page
plementing them.

In some instances, government officials intervened in defense of candidates campaigning, for more aggressive implementation of perestroika, against official party choices.

In Yaroslavl, northeast of Moscow, the party-backed candidate was Alexander Koryashkin, whose literature dubbed him "the last hope for perestroika." Dmitri Starodubtsev opposed him as the candidate of the "Popular Front for the support of Perestroika."

Currently chairman of a state farm, Starodubtsev was jailed for a time when the late Leonid Brezhnev held power, because of his attempts to implement perestroika policies in agriculture.

A decree by the local Communist Party denounced the Popular Front for "trying to create a confrontation." But the head of the KGB police agency in the region publicly praised the group for making a "positive contribution" to perestroika by opposing "stereotyped patterns of thought."

Vadim Zorkaltsev, the party leader in Tomsk, was not elected even though he ran unopposed. Zorkaltsev is regarded as an ally of Yegor Ligachev, a top party leader who is generally regarded as advocating less wide-ranging and slower implementation of perestroika.

Boris Yeltsin was elected to Congress

from Moscow with 89 percent of the vote. Yeltsin was chosen by Gorbachev to head the party in Moscow in 1985 and soon became a nonvoting member of the party politburo. He was forced out of these posts in 1987 and later given a lesser position after he sharply criticized the slow pace of implementing glasnost and perestroika at a meeting of the party central committee.

Running against the party-backed director of a major automobile factory, Yeltsin's campaign statements ranged from denunciations of official privilege to calls to restrict the influx into Moscow of workers and peasants from other parts of the country.

"Yeltsin is the candidate of the people," proclaimed printed campaign posters.

Attempts by some party officials to undermine his campaign, such as the party central committee's announcement that Yeltsin's campaign platform was under investigation, appear to have won him more supporters. At two pre-election rallies and marches, up to 7,000 people chanted, "Hands off Yeltsin!"

After his victory became known, Yeltsin said the vote "has given perestroika a certain urgency."

Demands for national autonomy

The election campaign and results highlighted the growth of demands for economic and political autonomy in the Soviet

Union's Baltic republics — Lithuania, Estonia, and Latvia.

In Lithuania, Sajudis, a nationalist group, won 31 out of 42 seats. Two top government figures were defeated by Sajudis candidates.

Janis Vagris, party chief in Latvia, won by only a narrow margin over a candidate who openly advocated separation from the Soviet Union.

In Estonia, the founder of the nationalist Estonian People's Front won more than 80 percent of the vote in defeating the Communist Party candidate. However, most candidates who were identified with last year's protests in Armenia for national rights and against Moscow's policies were barred from the ballot. In response, nationalist leaders urged a boycott of the vote.

The election campaign in the Soviet Union served to direct discontent with social and economic conditions into channels that lent momentum to the political and economic measures that Gorbachev is advocating.

Gorbachev indicated his satisfaction with the results. "The main moving force in perestroika is Soviet man, and today we can register the fact that Soviet man has spoken up," he said. "And even if not everyone is pleased by the outcome of the elections, well, there is nothing that can be done about it."

El Salvador marches commemorate murder of Archbishop Romero

BY SETH GALINSKY

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador — On the ninth anniversary of the assassination of Archbishop Oscar Arnulfo Romero, two demonstrations took place here to commemorate his death and demand that his killers be brought to justice.

The actions took place just one week after the Nationalist Republican Alliance (ARENA) won the Salvadoran presidential elections. It is widely believed that Romero's assassination was ordered by ARENA founder and former army major Roberto D'Aubuisson. Romero was killed on March 24, 1980, while celebrating mass. In the weeks before his death, Romero called on U.S. President James Carter to cut off all military aid to the Salvadoran government. He also urged soldiers in the Salvadoran army to stop participating in repression.

The larger Romero commemoration here took place on March 26. Two thousand people organized by the Christian Base Communities, the Council of Shantytown Communities, and several Christian youth groups started their march from the chapel where Romero was shot.

Teams of young people passed out leaflets, pasted up posters with a picture of Romero, and spray painted slogans on almost every available space along the march route. One popular graffiti slogan was, "Punishment and prosecution for the killers of Monseñor Romero." The marchers, including many workers and peasants, chanted, "They killed Romero, we will resurrect him" and "Why did they kill Monseñor Romero? For defending the poor."

'You killed Monseñor Romero'

Near the end of the march route, marchers passed by the military hospital. While dozens of heavily armed soldiers looked on from inside the gates, young participants put up posters and painted, "You killed Monseñor Romero" on the hospital walls.

The demonstrators held a rally outside the Metropolitan Cathedral where Romero's body is buried. One of the organizers, Mirio Castro, addressed the rally. "Monseñor Romero encouraged the legitimate struggle of the people," he said.

Marco Tulio Lima also spoke. Lima is a member of the executive committee of the National Unity of Salvadoran Workers (UNTS). He said the victory of ARENA in the elections means "we have to redouble the struggle, especially around immediate demands." He called for a fight for "land for the peasants, credit for the cooperatives, jobs, fair wages," and a guaranteed market basket of essential goods for all.

Lima stressed that "we must demand that the new government spend money on schools and health clinics," instead of on war. "Half the children in the countryside are not being educated," he said, "because there is a lack of teachers, and there are not enough desks or classrooms."

Lima also spoke in favor of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) peace proposal. The FMLN has said that it will put down its arms if the size of the army is reduced, repression is ended, and the killers of thousands of Salvador-

ans, including Romero, are brought to justice.

"We want peace," Lima said. "But peace with social justice for all." He added, "We must reinitiate the fight for a dialogue" between the government and the FMLN to reach a negotiated political solution.

Other speakers at the rally included representatives of the Lutheran church; the Permanent Committee for a National Debate; COACES, a coalition of agricultural, credit, and transportation cooperatives; and Christian Youth for Peace. A U.S. solidarity activist spoke about the March actions in the United States protesting U.S. aid to El Salvador.

March 24 protest

On March 24 some 150 people participated in a march organized by Co-Madres, one of three committees in San Salvador that organize families of those assassinated or disappeared by death squads and the government, and the families of political prisoners.

Chanting "Who killed Monseñor Romero? D'Aubuisson and the armed forces!" marchers wound their way



Militant/Seth Galinsky

March 26 protest in San Salvador called for prosecuting killers of Archbishop Romero

through the working-class neighborhood of San Jacinto, in northeast San Salvador. One banner said, "The ARENA-Christian Democrat government does not want to punish the perpetrators, because they themselves are the guilty ones." Marchers from the National Federation of Salvadoran Workers (FENASTRAS) carried banners calling for the release of 10 recently

arrested political activists.

The march ended on the steps of the Metropolitan Cathedral. A Co-Madres spokesperson charged that a current government investigation of Romero's assassination is just a game. "They know perfectly well who killed Romero," she said. "They will never punish those responsible for his death."

Salvadoran government jails unionists

BY CINDY JAQUITH

SAN SALVADOR, El Salvador — Trade unionists and other supporters of democratic rights here are calling for the release of political activists who had been arrested by the government recently.

On March 17 the National Police picked up Juan José Huezo outside the offices of the National Federation of Salvadoran Workers (FENASTRAS). Huezo is organization secretary of FENASTRAS and general secretary of the textile union affiliated to the union federation.

That same day, Carlos Huezo, a member of the publicity committee of the National Unity of Salvadoran Workers (UNTS), was arrested by members of the armed forces and National Police. The UNTS is a coalition of trade unions, peasant groups, and student and neighborhood organizations.

I.D. cards checked

The Treasury Police have also stationed

officers at either end of the street where the UNTS office is located. Anyone walking down the street, whether going to the UNTS office or not, must have their bags checked before entering the street and again when they leave. The police sometimes ask to see I.D. cards, too. The UNTS charges that the police presence is aimed at intimidating its supporters from visiting the office.

Earlier, in late December 1988, Jaime Estévez, an executive committee member of the Movement for Bread, Land, Jobs, and Liberty, was picked up by the National Guard. And in February, Mateo Díaz Bernal of the construction workers' union SOISCES was arrested by the National Police.

"We are campaigning for the immediate release of these and other arrested sisters and brothers," said Francisco Martínez, an UNTS executive committee member.

The UNTS office reported that the au-

thorities have confirmed that they are holding the four activists. Frequently, when the government denies knowledge of someone who has been arrested, there is the danger they may be dead.

Two unionists killed

Two unionists, for example, were killed in February, the UNTS said. Air force troops picked up Carlos Rodríguez Domínguez from the United Federation of Salvadoran Trade Unions, and Miguel Ángel Lazo of the teachers' union ANDES, on February 22. Both were later found dead.

The UNTS said protest messages demanding the release of imprisoned activists can be sent to José Napoleón Duarte, President of the Republic; the Joint Chiefs of Staff of the Armed Forces; and the National Police — all in San Salvador, El Salvador. Copies may be sent to the UNTS, 17 Calle Poniente #121, San Miguelito, San Salvador, El Salvador.

White House, Congress set contra aid plan

BY SAM MANUEL

President George Bush, joined by Democratic and Republican congressional leaders, announced a bipartisan plan to provide \$4.5 million in aid to the Nicaraguan armed bands known as the contras. A plan adopted last year gave \$27 million to the contras over six months. That aid expires March 31. Congress is expected to approve the new plan and release the contra aid in early April.

The plan is being presented as a major foreign policy achievement for Secretary of State James Baker and a significant shift in approach to Nicaragua by the Bush administration from that of former president Ronald Reagan. The agreement involved four weeks of negotiations with members of Congress in which Baker played a direct role.

The March 24 agreement contains an alteration from the administration's original plan. It gives Congress power to veto the aid after November. At that time the administration would be required to obtain letters of approval from four congressional committees before sending further aid to the contras.

Sen. Edward Kennedy hailed the plan as "an excellent compromise. The one-year blank check sought by the administration for contra aid was too long," Kennedy said. Speaker of the House James Wright

called the plan "a peace program, not a war program."

The contras, armed, trained, and financed by Washington, were the centerpiece of the U.S. government's efforts to topple Nicaragua's Sandinista government. The counterrevolutionary forces suffered decisive military defeats in 1986 and 1987, which led to an end to the war and adoption of a peace plan in August 1987 sponsored by five Central American governments.

"We all have to admit that the policy basically failed," Baker said, referring to the contra war. The new proposal provides funds for food, shelter, clothing, and medical supplies for the contra bands. The secretary of state said there are no plans to seek congressional approval to send further military supplies to the contras but added, "There is no bar or prohibition to that in this agreement..."

In Managua Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega said that the bipartisan accord violates the agreement reached by the Central American governments at their mid-February meeting in El Salvador. That agreement called for the "voluntary demobilization, repatriation or relocation" of the contra forces now in Honduras.

Ortega said Washington's plan "reaffirms once again the policy of the strongest overriding the will of everyone else." The funds to be provided the contras, he added,

will keep the mercenary force "as a cannon aimed at Nicaragua."

Ortega said there is "still time to correct this mistake." The funds for the contras "could be used to aid the victims of last year's hurricane, as well as to purchase milk for the country's children, wipe out malaria, and pay for urgently needed medicines," explained Ortega.

Following a visit to Honduras by Robert Kimmitt, under secretary of state for political affairs, the Honduran government agreed to permit the contras to remain in their bases in that country for another year.

The contra aid would continue until Feb. 28, 1990, when Nicaragua has set its next national elections. That election date is nine months earlier than originally scheduled. Following the meeting of the Central American presidents, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega said the election date would be advanced to stress Nicaragua's commitment to implementing a peace plan sponsored by the five Central American governments.

On March 28 the Bush administration announced it is urging contra leaders based in Miami to return to Nicaragua to take part in the elections. "What our whole policy is about," a White House spokesperson said, "is bringing leverage to bear on the Nicaraguans to see that they comply with the promises they have made to implement democratic reforms."

In our next issue ...

Behind frame-up of Mark Curtis

The next issue of the *Militant* will feature a speech by John Gaige, national farm organizer of the Socialist Workers Party and Iowa chairperson of the SWP, on the Mark Curtis defense case.

The speech, which will appear in the monthly *International Socialist Review* supplement, will describe how Curtis was framed up by the Des Moines cops last year, the political context of the frame-up, and what can be done now to fight it.

Challenges facing Iran 10 years

What's behind Ayatollah Khomeini's break with Britain, probe



Iranians demonstrate at U.S. embassy in Tehran in December 1979. Massive actions voiced solidarity with embassy takeover by students protesting U.S. President James Carter's offer of asylum to exiled shah. Right, Ira-

nian soldiers. After September 1980 invasion by Iraq, workers and peasants surged to defense of regime, with thousands of youth volunteering to fight.

BY FRED FELDMAN

Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's call February 14 for Muslims to kill author Salman Rushdie and the publishers and distributors of his novel *The Satanic Verses* was part of a shift in Iran's diplomatic policies.

The crisis that Khomeini's action sparked in the Iranian government's relations with Britain and other imperialist powers called a halt, for the time being, to efforts to normalize diplomatic and economic relations with them.

The crisis came in the midst of debates within the Iranian government over how to deal with massive social and economic problems following the August 1988 cease-fire in the war with Iraq. The fighting began with the 1980 invasion of Iran by Iraqi forces.

While donning a mask of neutrality, the imperialist powers counted on Iraqi aggression to overthrow the Iranian regime and deal a death blow to the revolution. The momentum of that upsurge was challenging imperialist domination and threatening the stability of the landlord-capitalist governments in the region.

Struggle against shah

The revolution began as a massive upsurge against the rule of the shah and the landed aristocracy that was the foundation of his rule.

This tyranny had been imposed on Iran by a CIA-organized military coup in 1953. Some 45,000 U.S. advisers helped train the shah's brutal secret police and military.

The shah's regime acted as imperialism's cop in the region, crushing revolts in the Persian Gulf area. The shah maintained close relations with both Israel and South Africa, supplying the apartheid regime with 90 percent of its oil.

The monarchy guaranteed the imperialist oil monopolies effective control over the country's petroleum industry and other resources.

Throughout 1978, the workers and peasants of Iran challenged the regime with street demonstrations. As the protests intensified, millions filled the streets to demand the end of the shah's tyranny.

Strikes by the oil workers became the spearhead of walkouts and other job ac-

tions across the country.

Despite the bloody repression — the killing of 100 or more protesters became an almost daily event, and thousands were murdered on a single day in September — the revolt mounted until the shah was forced to flee the country in January 1979, appointing a caretaker regime.

The masses rejected the new government, and demanded the complete dismantling of the monarchy.

Insurrection

When the regime attempted to crush growing unrest in the air force, it was met by an insurrection of the working people of Tehran.

Independent defense committees sprang up in neighborhoods, and barricades were set up. Regular army troops retreated from confronting the masses, or joined them. By Feb. 11, 1979, the uprising had overthrown the government and shattered the monarchy.

The workers and peasants had overthrown the shah's regime in a revolutionary upheaval that had destroyed much of the state apparatus. The victory created an opening for working people to establish a workers' and peasants' republic.

However, the shah had long brutally crushed independent working-class and peasant organizations, including political currents and trade unions. The working people did not have a leadership capable of seizing the opportunity to establish their own government.

Under the circumstances, the masses looked for leadership to the Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. (Ayatollah is the title of a high religious official in the hierarchy of the Shiite denomination of Islam.)

Role of Khomeini

Khomeini returned from exile in February. He headed a wing of the Islamic religious hierarchy that supported capitalist rule while strongly opposing the shah's tyranny. His irreconcilable opposition to the monarchy and his appeals to the poorest and most oppressed to mobilize to bring it down won him enormous popular support.

Shortly before the regime fell, Khomeini had already handpicked its replacement — choosing Mehdi Bazargan, a prominent capitalist politician, as prime minister.

After the insurrection, this government was placed in power. Soon thereafter the new regime staged a referendum that proclaimed an "Islamic Republic." Later, a procapitalist constitution was adopted.

The revolutionary upsurge of the workers and farmers continued, however. Workers in factories and peasants in the countryside organized councils to represent their interests.

The momentum of their struggle dealt a shattering blow to the foundations of landlord domination in the countryside and Iran's economic and political dependence on U.S. imperialism. In response to this upsurge, the new government expelled the U.S. advisers and shut down CIA spy posts along Iran's border with the Soviet Union. Diplomatic relations were severed with Israel and South Africa, and oil shipments to South Africa and Israel were halted. Peasants began to seize land in many areas. U.S. and British control of the oil industry was ended.

In response to peasant demands, the regime began to build schools and other facilities, often for the first time, in the countryside.

Wide-ranging political discussion

The overturn of the shah was followed by a period of the broadest political freedom that workers and farmers had ever experienced. Wide-ranging political discussion and debate took place, newspapers of varying viewpoints were published, and communist and other radical organizations began to function openly. Women held public demonstrations against attempts to restrict their rights.

The new government sought from the beginning to suppress dissident views and block the independent organization of working people — sometimes in the garb of enforcing Islamic orthodoxy and suppressing "blasphemy."

The U.S. government, meanwhile, probed for ways to weaken or roll back the revolution. In October 1979 President James Carter offered asylum in the United States to the exiled shah, supposedly to enable the fallen monarch to obtain medical treatment. Iranians poured into the streets to protest, and students responded to the provocation by seizing the U.S. embassy and holding the personnel hostage.

They began to make public the previously secret documents they found at the embassy on U.S. operations against the Iranian people.

Massive demonstrations voiced solidarity with the embassy takeover. Peasants drove their tractors into the city to express support. In December a huge protest organized by all the factory councils in Tehran demanded that the regime "abolish capitalism and plunder" and that the land of big landlords linked to Washington "be confiscated and divided up."

Washington breaks diplomatic relations

Washington sent warships to the Arabian Sea, broke diplomatic relations with Iran, froze Iranian assets in the United States, and imposed a trade embargo.

In April 1980 U.S. commandos staged an unsuccessful raid against Iran, supposedly to rescue the hostages.

In September of that year, Iraq invaded Iran. The government of President Saddam Hussein and Washington counted on a quick victory that might bring down the Tehran government. But they had miscalculated.

Workers and farmers surged to the defense of the revolution, with thousands of youth volunteering to fight. Fierce resistance bogged down the invaders from the very beginning. After a time, the Iraqi troops began to be pushed back.

Peasants, who had benefited from the fall of the shah and his landlord backers, became the mainstay of Iran's fighting forces in the drive to roll back the invaders.

After Iraq's incursion suffered a setback, the Iranian regime launched a counteroffensive. Although some slivers of Iraqi territory were taken, the war soon reached a bloody stalemate.

In the wake of the Iranian capture of the Fao peninsula in 1986, which raised imperialist fears that the Iraqi regime might crumble, Hussein's forces got increasingly open support from the U.S., French, and other imperialist governments.

This culminated in the sending of a U.S.-led naval and air armada to the Persian Gulf in 1987, under the guise of protecting Kuwaiti tankers from Iranian attack.

The arrival of the armada was followed by stepped-up Iraqi missile attacks on

after the revolution

as toward USSR



Tehran and other cities. The enormous human cost of the war and the failure of Iranian forces to make headway led to growing war-weariness in Iran.

Massive use of chemical weapons

Iraqi forces made massive use of chemical weapons to begin pushing Iranian troops out of the bits of Iraqi territory that had been captured. In April the peninsula of Fao was recaptured. The Iraqi assault on the area coincided with a U.S. attack on Iranian shipping and planes.

In July a U.S. warship shot down an Iranian passenger plane over the gulf, killing all 290 passengers. The lack of international expressions of outrage over this atrocity highlighted Iran's isolation.

In the wake of this incident, the Iranian government agreed to accept terms for a cease-fire set by the UN Security Council. A renewed effort by Iraqi forces to push into Iran was set back, and the cease-fire went into effect August 20.

The Iraqi invasion failed to bring down the government, but the war took its toll on Iran's working people. As the conflict dragged on, the workers and farmers became relatively demobilized, in comparison with the massive struggles they had waged in the 18 months after the shah fell.

The casualty figures were staggering. The Tehran government claims that 162,000 Iranians were killed. However, Ayatollah Hosain Ali Montazeri, who was then the designated successor to Khomeini, acknowledged widespread skepticism about the official figure. Others in Iran give estimates up to twice as high.

The capitalist government led by Khomeini was able to consolidate its grip on power, call a halt to land reform and other measures that benefited workers and farmers, and eliminate most of the democratic space the working masses had won through the revolution. Executions of political dissenters were escalated, such as those of supporters of the Tudeh Party (Iran's Communist Party).

With the cease-fire, however, debates have intensified within ruling circles over how to respond to Iran's growing economic and social difficulties.

The problems range from the reconstruction of sections of the country devastated by the war to overcoming the problems of

unemployment estimated at 25 percent, inflation manifested in a 100 percent rise in prices in 1988, and industries that operate at less than 50 percent of capacity. Plummeting oil prices have brought sharp declines in revenues from oil, the main export.

The prospect of growing hunger among working people has been contained through rationing and government subsidies to limit prices of basic commodities.

No deepening of revolution

Although elections to the parliament in April 1988 resulted in a majority pledged to legislate the distribution of land and better the conditions of the poorest sections of the population, no steps have been taken to implement the promises.

The regime's fear of unrest and opposition among the masses was highlighted by a bloodbath in the country's prisons, where estimates of the number of political prisoners executed since the cease-fire range from 300 to 2,400. Other methods of intimidation have included a wave of executions of accused drug users and dealers.

The debate within the regime appears to have centered thus far on whether to seek a way out of the economic difficulties through normalizing diplomatic, trade, and other relations with U.S. imperialism and its European allies.

During the past months, the Iranian government took some important steps in this direction.

In November diplomatic ties were restored with the British government. The government of France had resumed diplomatic relations two months before the cease-fire.

In the wake of the war's end Washington sought to smooth the way to improved relations with Tehran by sharply criticizing the Iraqi government for its use of chemical warfare and violations of human rights.

Several hostages in Lebanon held by groups that look to the Iranian regime were released.

In November West German Foreign Minister Hans-Dietrich Genscher and a 112-member delegation visited Iran. The Iranian government agreed to accept West German credits, and that West German firms would participate in reconstructing some industries.

Bush hints at improving relations

In his January 20 inaugural address, President George Bush hinted that Washington hoped the Iranian government would move to resolve the hostage issue. "Good will begets good will," he promised.

On January 29 Iranian Deputy Foreign Minister Mohammed Javad Larijani urged Washington to smooth the way to normal relations by releasing Iranian assets currently frozen in the United States and paying compensation to the families of those killed last year on the downed airline. "It doesn't have to be that much money," Larijani said, "but it is a symbolic act that helps America get a better image inside our country."

Gholamreza Agazadeh, the Iranian oil minister, stated in February that the regime had decided to seek foreign loans to develop the economy.

Speaker of Parliament Hashemi Rafsanjani was often cited as a principal spokesman for those supporting this course, while Prime Minister Mir Hussein Moussavi was believed to represent an opposing faction. In September Moussavi submitted his resignation but was ordered by Khomeini to stay on the job.

While the U.S. government appeared to be interested in improving relations with Iran, few practical concessions were made. No further Iranian assets held in the United States were released, no compensation was paid to the families of those killed in the Iranian airliner, and the trade embargo remained in effect.

Other differences with Washington re-

mained unresolved, such as the Iranian government's support to forces in Lebanon that have contributed to blocking Washington's goal of establishing a stable regime linked to Israel.

Opposition to improving relations with Washington was voiced publicly in Iran before the Rushdie affair. Last November, the Center for Deepening Unity, a well-known Islamic student organization, stated, "The U.S. is trying to reimpose itself by any means. This is manifested by 'American Islam' which means the deviation and defeat of the Islamic revolution. . . . We reject the thinking that poses the possibility of establishing relations with the United States and declare that between us and the United States there is a sea of blood."

The continued willingness of Iranian workers and farmers to mobilize in opposition to U.S. imperialism was manifested February 11, the 10th anniversary of the insurrection. Up to 3.5 million people marched and rallied in Tehran, according to the *Iran Times*, published in Washington, D.C.

A resolution read over loudspeakers proclaimed that Iran should never have ties with Israel, South Africa, and "their godfather, the Great Satan," referring to the United States.

Probing other options

For several months, Khomeini appeared to give a free hand to those favoring improved ties with the imperialist powers. However, other diplomatic options were being probed in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union. In January Ayatollah Abdollah Javadi Amoli arrived in Moscow with a message from Khomeini, which he delivered personally to President Mikhail Gorbachev.

Khomeini praised Gorbachev for "courage and boldness in confronting the realities of the world." His letter combined signals for establishing closer relations with Moscow with language intended to appeal to the Soviet Union's 50 million ethnic Muslims. This was a switch from Khomeini's earlier denunciation of both "Eastern and Western superpowers."

"I strongly urge you that in breaking down the walls of Marxist fantasies, you do not fall into the prison of the West and the Great Satan," Khomeini warned Gorbachev.

Resuming trade

By the beginning of February, Iranian and Soviet officials reached agreement in principle on resuming exports of natural gas from Iran to the Soviet Union.

During the previous year, economic cooperation agreements had been signed with Bulgaria, Poland, and Hungary. In 1987-88, three of Iran's top five trading partners were Soviet bloc countries.

By calling for the murder of Rushdie, who lives in Britain, Khomeini seized on

the controversy over *The Satanic Verses* to halt, for the time being, moves to normalize ties with the British and U.S. governments.

Khomeini acted to identify the Iranian regime with protests by Muslim groups that had already taken place in Pakistan, India, and Britain.

The British government withdrew its diplomats from Tehran. So did the rest of the 12-member European Community, as well as Austria, Finland, Norway, Sweden, and Canada.

Khomeini's use of a purportedly religious issue to advance his political perspective effectively silenced those in the Iranian government who oppose his diplomatic course.

Khomeini, in a radio address, had denounced "American Islam" and "a handful of liberal sellouts."

"As long as I am around, I shall not allow the government to fall into the hands of the liberals," he declared. He denounced those in Iran who questioned "God's edicts and punishments" — a reference to his death sentence on Rushdie.

In the aftermath of the attack on "liberals," Ayatollah Montazeri was forced to resign on March 28 as Khomeini's designated successor. He had criticized the recent executions and other government policies.

On February 26 Soviet Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze met with Khomeini in Tehran, appearing publicly with him afterward.

"We want relations to become complete," Khomeini said. "We welcome your exit from Afghanistan, and we can cooperate against the troublemaking of the West."

Shevardnadze criticized the continued presence of U.S. and allied naval forces in the Persian Gulf. "It is dangerous. It must be stopped."

A U.S. State Department official criticized Moscow March 2 for attempting "to cozy up with Iran and maybe delay its inevitable rapprochement with the West."

The Iranian parliament called February 28 for a diplomatic break with London unless the British government made a statement denouncing Rushdie for his "unprincipled stand against the world of Islam" within seven days.

On March 4 British Foreign Minister Geoffrey Howe denounced Rushdie's book as offensive to Muslims and to the British government as well. Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher echoed his stand the next day.

Nonetheless, on March 7, the Iranian government formally broke diplomatic relations with Britain.

In a move to forestall further deterioration of relations, the European Community foreign ministers agreed March 20 that diplomats recalled from Iran could now return there. "There was never any intention that the ambassadors should stay away indefinitely," a diplomat explained.



Puerto Rican leader hits 'social cost' of U.S. colonial rule

BY SELVA NEBBIA

In his recent inaugural address, Rafael Hernández Colón, governor of Puerto Rico, requested that the U.S. government hold a plebiscite so that the Puerto Rican people could be consulted on the political status of their country.

Puerto Rico has been a colony of the United States since 1898. This status has

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been described since 1952 as a Free Associated State.

Hernández Colón's call has generated a broad discussion among Puerto Ricans — both the forces who support colonialism and those who favor independence.

One of the organizations participating in the debate is the proindependence Puerto Rican Socialist Party. On March 3 Alberto González, a member of the political committee of the PSP, gave the *Militant* an interview in New York on the question of the plebiscite and the economic situation and social conditions facing working people in Puerto Rico. González is one of several PSP leaders who will visit U.S. cities to talk about the plebiscite and its meaning for the independence struggle.

"We should begin by explaining that Puerto Rico is an archipelago with about three and a half million people," González said. In addition to the main island of Puerto Rico, two other islands — Vieques, and Culebra — are inhabited. Formerly a Spanish colony, Puerto Rico achieved its autonomy from Spain in 1897, González explained.

U.S. war booty

As a result of the Spanish-American War in 1898, Puerto Rico, Cuba, and the Philippines became part of the U.S. war booty. Under the treaty signed that year, Puerto Rico became a U.S. territory.

González described the character of U.S. colonial domination over Puerto Rico for the last 90 years. "In 1917 they imposed U.S. citizenship on the people of Puerto Rico. The U.S. military regime — we were militarily occupied — did this over the opposition of both the island's legislative bodies," said González. "We had no say in the matter."

"For many years the English language was imposed on us as the main language of education," the PSP leader continued. "It was not until the '40s that this practice was abolished and the Spanish language was reinstituted in education."

"During this whole period," he said, "the U.S. began building military bases in Puerto Rico. The Roosevelt Roads base, the most famous one, located at the eastern end of the country, is the largest U.S. base in Latin America and in the Caribbean. It is equipped to store nuclear arms, and ships and planes carrying nuclear warheads go in and out of it," he said.

11 U.S. bases

There are 11 U.S. bases in Puerto Rico, González pointed out. In Vieques, an island of 33,000 acres, 26,000 are used for U.S. bases.

He explained that every aspect of Puerto Rican life is dominated by the laws of the U.S. Congress.

"Radio and television communication in Puerto Rico are under the rule of the United States Federal Communications Commission. Our immigration laws are the U.S. laws," González said. "We don't have the power to decide who comes into or who leaves the country. The U.S. agencies also decide on all matters pertaining to agriculture and forests in Puerto Rico."

"The U.S. Department of Parks and Recreation, for example, is in charge of our national monuments," he added.

U.S. police agencies, such as the FBI and the CIA, as well as the intelligence agencies of the armed forces, interfere in the life of the Puerto Rican people.

"On one occasion, for instance, I and

others were participating in a rally in Vieques. We were arrested and taken to the Roosevelt Roads base, where we were photographed and fingerprinted. And those who did all this were from the security agency of the U.S. Navy. They are the ones who booked us!"

FBI trains police force

The FBI is also in charge of training the police force of Puerto Rico, González added. The fact that Puerto Ricans cannot vote for the U.S. president and have no representatives in the Senate or House of Representatives is another example of the island's colonial status, he indicated.

Opponents of independence both in the United States and in Puerto Rico argue that the Puerto Rican people do not favor independence. In the gubernatorial election held last November, the Puerto Rican Independence Party received a small percentage of the vote.

González explained that the proindependence forces have been persecuted throughout Puerto Rico's history. "Things got to such a point where it was impossible for a person who was for independence to get a job. They were totally discriminated against."

"In 1950, when the armed uprising led by the Nationalist Party of Pedro Albizu Campos took place in important towns of the country and the town of Jayuya was taken by the nationalist forces, thousands of Puerto Ricans were imprisoned. Not only the nationalists but many who had nothing to do with the events were victimized." The Nationalist Party is a proindependence party founded in 1922.

Throughout the years, the U.S. government not only subjected the proindependence movement to constant surveillance, but has actively persecuted the movement, González pointed out. Today many Puerto Ricans whose only "crime" has been to fight for independence are confined in U.S. prisons.

Files on 135,000 people

"The Puerto Rican police, the FBI, and other security agencies have accumulated files on 135,000 people who favor independence or who simply have expressed an attraction toward the idea of independence for Puerto Rico."

"All of this is part of the effort by the U.S. government," González said, "to present the question of independence as something bad for the Puerto Rican people."

This ideological bombardment and the repressive actions taken against proindependence activity has therefore sowed much prejudice against independence and fear among the Puerto Rican people, the PSP leader stressed.

"So when people are faced with the question of whether they want to be independent, I don't think they have the criteria to evaluate this situation."

"Yet in spite of the ideological bombard-

Proindependence groups respond to plebiscite

"Given the world situation today, the United States is extremely pressured by the achievements that humanity has made in the struggle against colonialism," explained Alberto González.

"As humanity has advanced, colonialism has decreased, less territories are under colonial rule."

"This has not been accidental. It has happened because of the struggles of the peoples the world over. And this is true in the case of Puerto Rico, one of the oldest colonies of the world, one of the most important colonies of the most powerful empire in the world."

"The United States has been pressured for many years, including by the position held by the United Nations through its committee on decolonization, where the case of Puerto Rico has been taken up year after year," González explained.

In his address to a joint session of Con-



Militant/Selva Nebbia

Alberto González, member of political committee of Puerto Rican Socialist Party.

ment, the Puerto Rican people are deeply nationalist. This is reflected in our culture. And the fact that we still speak Spanish represents a very important sign of the existing Puerto Rican nationality, which is very much part of Latin America," he emphasized.

'Showcase for democracy'

Puerto Rico is presented by the big-business media as a "showcase for democracy" for Latin America and for other underdeveloped countries.

"Puerto Ricans have had to pay a very high price for being this so-called showcase. On the one hand, since 1905, because of the lack of economic opportunities on the island, hundreds of thousands of Puerto Ricans have had to leave the country."

"More than 2.5 million Puerto Ricans, for example, live in the United States. Most of them live in New York, and from the fruits of their labor they send money to support their families in Puerto Rico."

Another way Puerto Ricans have paid a high price is by shedding "their blood in wars where we did not have any enemies. Citizenship was imposed on us so that we could fight in the U.S. wars. And this fact unites us with Blacks, poor whites, other minorities, and with U.S. working people in general, who also had to fight in those wars," González explained.

"So we are a showcase of what? If this is to be the model for Latin America and the Caribbean, then they should look somewhere else, because the social cost has been way too high, not only for the population, but in the criminal damage done to the environment and to the nation's resources in general."

González gave an overview of the economic crisis currently facing Puerto Rico.

"The official unemployment rate is 17.2 percent. If you take into account the way they arrive at this, one can easily state that the real figure is at least double that," he stated.

González pointed out that according to the criteria set in the United States, there are 428,000 families living under conditions of extreme poverty in Puerto Rico. "More than 65 percent of the population qualifies to receive aid from federal social service agencies," he said.

Studies reveal that 91,000 families generate no income at all. Of the 3.5 million Puerto Ricans on the island, 1 million live on government assistance. "So for all practical purposes, one could say that Puerto Rico has an artificial economy that can only be sustained through the influx of federal funds," González said.

Unions

Faced with this crisis, the bosses have launched an offensive against working people in Puerto Rico. As a result of this situation, for example, the number of workers organized into trade unions has decreased to only 9 percent. This is the result of the bosses' and, to a certain extent, the Puerto Rican government's campaign to discredit and persecute the union movement.

"In the pharmaceutical industry, which is one of Puerto Rico's main industries, workers are not organized into unions," González explained. There the employers "keep track of the activists and the union organizers so that they can be excluded from employment in those factories."

"Even though it is not illegal to form a union and the right to strike is guaranteed in the constitution, the bosses have carried out a very clever campaign to discredit the unions," the PSP leader said.

"Within this framework of antilabor propaganda, in many cases even the workers themselves are convinced that belonging to a union is a bad thing."

"Often, even the church joins in saying that the unions are terrorist or that they are there to create problems or to subvert order," González said.

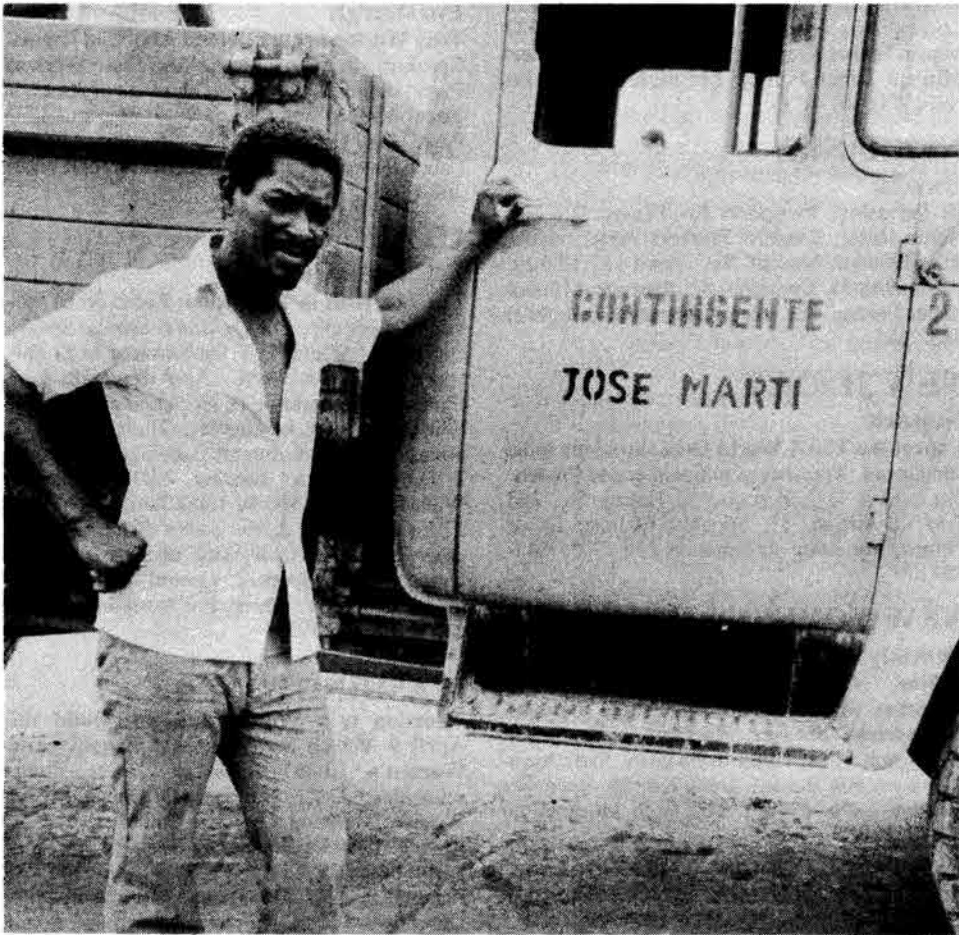
Today, U.S. corporations are by law exempt from paying taxes on the profits they make in Puerto Rico, explained González. Most environmental protection laws are also conveniently lifted for these corporations, making it possible for U.S. big business to reap huge profits from its colony. U.S. corporations also pay Puerto Rican workers lower wages than they pay workers in the United States.

The Puerto Rican Independence Party (PIP), the Puerto Rican Socialist Party (PSP), and other proindependence organizations and individuals in Puerto Rico have been meeting with U.S. government figures to raise their conditions for holding a plebiscite, González explained.

"The broader proindependence movement not encompassed in the PIP has also been meeting to map out an educational campaign in which a number of questions

Continued on Page 13

Cuban brigade helps rebuild Nicaragua city



Paolo Más, a Cuban scientist and truck driver on construction brigade, waits while supplies from Cuba are unloaded at Bluefields wharf.

BY BRIDGET ELTON

BLUEFIELDS, Nicaragua — "We've been in Nicaragua helping as doctors and teachers since the triumph [of the 1979 revolution]. But now we're here because of the special conditions after the hurricane. Our government decided to send everything — the boats, the materials, the food — necessary to rebuild here."

That's how Rafael Fernández, Cuban

construction brigade member and chief of personnel for the José Martí Contingent, described the Cuban presence here in Bluefields, in Nicaragua's Atlantic Coast region.

Cuban planes were the first to bring emergency relief to Bluefields after Hurricane Joan devastated this town last October. Almost immediately the decision was made to send a contingent to build

housing, and on January 11 the first group of 21 arrived.

There are now 132 Cubans and 46 *costeños* (Atlantic Coast residents) working together. All the Cubans are volunteers and veterans of their country's minibrigade movement, a mass mobilization of hundreds of voluntary work brigades that have organized in the last several years to help solve pressing social needs in Cuba by building housing, child-care centers, clinics, and other projects.

500 houses a year

Fernández explained the aims of the construction contingent in Nicaragua. "It's a two-year project of 500 houses a year, on three sites. We plan to have the first 100 ready to hand over for the 10th anniversary celebration of the Nicaraguan revolution on July 19," he said. "There will be 300 Cubans here in the end, and from 500 to 1,000 *costeños* will join us."

When the first group arrived, the only building on the housing site was an abandoned furniture factory. After restoring the roof, the contingent took up residence there. Now the building serves as a dining hall, complete with iced water on tap, color TV, and radio link to Cuba.

Housing with air conditioning is being built for the volunteers. "They are working very hard and are away from their families. They should have good living conditions," Fernández explained.

All the building materials, machinery, and food for the contingent and *costeños* comes from Cuba. The boats unload at the harbor at El Bluff, six miles away, and everything is transported on flat-bottom barges across Bluefields Bay, which is barely shoulder-deep.

"When we first got here we weren't accustomed to the weather," continued Fernández. "It was raining all the time. So we had three problems: the weather, the road, and the barges."

There was nothing that could be done about the depth of the bay. But, the unpaved road to the main site, previously unusable by big trucks, has now been paved. And the weather improved.

Each *costeño* working with the contingent will receive one of the houses. They are being built with prefabricated concrete, but in the traditional style of the coast.

Work when it's dark

Frank Hodgson, head of the *costeños* on the project, described the work. "We're getting on very well and another 24 *costeños* will join us tomorrow," he said. "We work from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.. We've got lights so we can keep going when it's dark."

The Cuban contingent members are not builders by trade, although all have learned construction skills through their participation in the minibrigades back home. The group includes engineers, a stevedore, architects, electrical engineers, and other professionals.

Paolo Más, a scientist who drives the truck to pick up material from the barges, explained the conception of the minibrigades. "It's an idea of Fidel's," he said, referring to Cuba's President Castro, "the integration of mental and manual labor. Everybody has several functions."

About half of the contingent had just finished working on ExpoCuba, the giant exhibition center that opened in Cuba in early January. The other half come from other minibrigades in Havana. Each of the city's 50 municipalities was asked to choose a group of its best *microbrigadistas* from the thousands of volunteers.

"It wasn't easy, but they tried to choose the best in terms of skills and health," said Fernández. "Conditions here are harder than in most places we've been. That's why there are no women at the moment." He thought women would be coming with the later groups.

For some of the volunteers, this is their first internationalist mission. Others, such as 40-year-old Alberico Oquendo Mendoza, who has served in Vietnam, Ethiopia, Jamaica, and twice in Angola, have quite a lot of experience.

Fernández explained why so many Cubans volunteer for such an arduous task. "When the imperialists wanted to crush our revolution, we got solidarity from all over the world. We're indebted to people who are still suffering," he said. "It's a principle of our revolution — because we're building a socialist revolution, and one of our most important principles is internationalism. That's why we send workers, doctors, teachers anywhere our help is needed."

"It's hard for our enemies to understand this, because the economic situation is not good and we have problems in Cuba too. But we don't care. If we have a little bit, and we can share it with our friends, we will. Fidel says you can't be happy eating knowing others are hungry."

Latin American leaders comment on Venezuela

BY DON ROJAS

The widespread popular rebellion that rocked Venezuela in early March sent shock waves reverberating throughout Latin America and sparked a range of reactions from political leaders and commentators around the continent.

While there was almost unanimous condemnation of the austerity programs of the International Monetary Fund (IMF), as well as consensus on the devastating effects of the foreign debt, there were also differences in emphasis in ascribing blame and responsibility to the main actors in the Venezuela crisis.

Although none who were quoted publicly were openly critical of Venezuelan President Carlos Andrés Pérez's handling of the rebellion, some did raise questions about how he chooses to exercise his political options now and in the future.

During the two-week period beginning February 27 when martial law was imposed by Pérez, some 1,000 persons were killed, thousands wounded and arrested, and hundreds detained and questioned by the police and army.

Reports from poor and working-class neighborhoods in Caracas revealed that army units shot people in their homes. Amnesty International expressed concern over accounts of torture and unexplained disappearances of dozens of trade union and student leaders.

García deplores rebellion

In a March 6 press conference in Lima, Peruvian President Alan García, like Pérez a leader of the international grouping of social-democratic parties, deplored the rebellion and added that "as Latin Americans we have to express our solidarity with the Venezuelan democracy and government, as well as our personal and political support for Carlos Andrés Pérez."

Argentinian President Raúl Alfonsín conveyed his "solidarity" to Pérez and said that he is willing "to cooperate as much as possible with the Venezuelan government."

Alfonsín's foreign minister, Dante Caputo, commented that "peace can be jeopardized"

by the implementation of economic programs that are demanding "and very difficult to carry out."

In a personal letter to the Venezuelan president on March 3, President Daniel Ortega of Nicaragua sent a "fraternal message" conveying "deep concern" over the events surrounding the protests.

"We know that these events are the result of the rigid policies and unjust economic relations that the industrialized nations and institutions such as the International Monetary Fund have been imposing on the developing nations and, in particular, on the nations of Latin America and the Caribbean," wrote Ortega.

"With the hope that you can overcome these difficult moments, I earnestly hope that one day the working people of Venezuela will receive the fruits of all their efforts and sacrifices," he concluded.

In a statement broadcast on Managua's Radio Sandino, Ortega said the policy of U.S. imperialism is responsible for the tensions that prevail in Latin America, "forcing governments to declare states of emergency, states of seige, and martial law — as has happened in Venezuela."

He declared that Latin American and Caribbean governments must adopt a more consistent and militant stance, a stance of unity behind a common policy "in the face of the onerous and unpayable foreign debt."

On March 5 Carlos Armando Figueredo, a representative of the Venezuelan president, arrived in Managua to begin discussions with the Nicaraguan government about how Venezuela can assist in organizing the elections scheduled for early 1990.

Panama's Defense Forces Commander Gen. Manuel Antonio Noriega said the violence unleashed in Venezuela was the result of the "IMF policy that tripped up Carlos Andrés Pérez."

Vilma Espín, member of the political bureau of the Communist Party of Cuba and president of the Federation of Cuban Women, said on March 8 that the Venezuelan events reflected the significance of the debt and that if Latin American govern-

ments try to pay it, the people will simply not accept it.

"The capitalists have created very difficult situations for the people," she remarked. "The situation is very explosive. During the past few years Fidel [Castro] has warned about this. The situation is becoming explosive all over the world, our world, the underdeveloped world, our America."

A commentary on Havana's Radio Rebelde speculated that perhaps Pérez does not have political room "to opt for other measures." It noted that while the Venezuelan president was critical of the IMF, "at the same time he defended its program of economic adjustment."

"To Pérez this means safeguarding the peace and patrimony of Venezuelans. There are reasons to assume that this could also be the road to political death," concluded the commentary.

Protests will back Peltier appeal

A week-long forum on "Aboriginal Rights and Justice for Leonard Peltier" will be held April 15-21 in Ottawa, the capital city of Canada.

The week's events will focus on the struggle of Native people across Canada to keep their cultures, languages, lands, and fundamental rights, according to a release from the Leonard Peltier Canadian Defense Committee. The announcement pointed out that it was because he fought on such issues that Peltier "was framed, falsely extradited from Canada, convicted, and finally imprisoned for the last 13 years."

The center of the week's activity will be a Native prayer vigil on Parliament Hill, which will begin at sunrise on Sunday, April 16, and continue until sunset on April 20. A news conference, concert, lobbying of Parliament, and speak-outs in public places will take place across the city during the week.

The Leonard Peltier Canadian Defense Committee is sponsoring the events as part of mobilizing support for an appeal to be presented April 17 to the Supreme Court of

Canada. The appeal charges that Peltier's extradition to the United States in December 1976 was illegal because the court order permitting it was based on perjured affidavits. The FBI has admitted to the falsifications.

Peltier is serving two life terms at the U.S. Penitentiary in Leavenworth, Kansas.

A leader of the American Indian Movement, he was charged with the 1975 killing of two FBI agents. The agents died after they, backed up by 200 police, opened fire on an AIM encampment at the Pine Ridge reservation in South Dakota.

Four Indians, including Peltier, were charged. Peltier was arrested in Canada and extradited to the United States.

The government has admitted falsifying testimony about the firearms allegedly used in the incident, in order to implicate Peltier. In a 1985 hearing, officials conceded that the government has "no idea" who shot the FBI agents.

The Leonard Peltier Canadian Defense Committee is headquartered at 43 Chandler Dr., Scarborough, Ont., Canada M1G 1Z1.

ARIZONA

Phoenix

Send-off Rally in Support of National March in Washington for Women's Equality/Women's Lives. Speakers, entertainment. Sun., April 2, 2 to 5 p.m. Los Olivos Park, 2802 E Devonshire. Sponsor: Phoenix National Organization for Women. For more information call (602) 265-5869, 277-7526.

Revolutionary Cuba Today: Advancing a Socialist Society and the International Struggle of Working People. Speaker: Rena Cacoullos, Socialist Workers Party, visited Cuba in 1987. Translation to Spanish. Sat., April 8, 7 p.m. 1809 W. Indian School Rd. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (602) 279-5850.

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Nicaragua After the Contra War: Challenges Facing the Sandinista Revolution. Speaker: Harvey McArthur, reporter for the *Militant* in Managua for past three years. Sat., April 1, 7:30 p.m. 2546 W Pico Blvd. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (213) 380-9460.

Support Striking Airline Workers, Solidarity with Union Organizing, Fight for Immigrants' Rights! A discussion by participants in these struggles, chaired by Joel Britton, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Los Angeles and member of Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union. Sat., April 8, Barbecue 5:30 p.m.; program 7 p.m. OCAW Local 1-547 Hall, 4637 Manhattan Beach Blvd., Lawndale (just east of Inglewood Ave.) Sponsor: Britton for Mayor Committee. For more information or a ride call (213) 380-9460.

San Francisco

Celebrate Palestinian National Independence. Honor the heroes of the *intifada*. Program includes dinner, folk dancing, Dabke, national songs. Sun., April 2, 7 p.m. Palace of Fine Arts Theatre, 3301 Lyon St. Donation: \$10. Sponsor: Palestinian Democratic Youth Organization.

GEORGIA

Atlanta

El Salvador: The Struggle For Peace. Speakers: Rodger Friedman, representative Atlanta Committee on Latin America; Heather Dean, Emory Central America Network; representative of Socialist Workers Party. Sat., April 15, 7:30 p.m. 132 Cone St. NW, 2nd floor. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (404) 577-4065.

ILLINOIS

Chicago

Jobs for All—Shorten the Workweek, Implement Affirmative Action, Cancel the Third World Debt! — Socialist mayoral campaign weekend. Sat., April 1, 10:30 a.m., campaigning for Socialist Workers Party candidate Omari Musa. Reception, 4–6 p.m. Forum, 6 p.m. "Cuba's Role in World Politics Today." Speakers: Steve Clark, director, Pathfinder Press, SWP National Committee. Sun., April 2, 10 a.m. Presentation and discussion: "The Economic Thought of Che Guevara." All events at 6826 S. Stony Island Ave. Donation: forum, \$3; Sunday presentation, \$2. Sponsor: Chicago Socialist Workers Mayoral Campaign Committee. For more information (312) 363-7322.

IOWA

Des Moines

Support the Strikers at Eastern Airlines. Sat., April 8, 7:30 p.m. 2105 Forest Ave. Do-

nation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (515) 246-1695.

Defend Abortion Rights. A panel discussion, including a report back from the April 9 abortion rights demonstration in Washington, D.C. Sat., April 15, 7:30 p.m. 2105 Forest Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (515) 246-1695.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

Children of the Debt. Video on Latin America debt crisis. Speaker: Nels J'Anthony, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., April 1, 7:30 p.m. 605 Massachusetts Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (617) 247-6772.

MICHIGAN

Detroit

Defend Democratic Rights — Support Salman Rushdie. Speakers: Margaret Sloan, representative of Irish Northern Aid Committee in Detroit; Fran Shor, associate professor of Humanities, Weekend College Program, Wayne State University; Bob Bruce, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., April 1, 7:30 p.m. 5019 1/2 Woodward Ave. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (313) 831-1177.

Rally to Defend Mark Curtis. Speakers: Kate Kaku, leader of Mark Curtis Defense Committee and wife of Mark Curtis; Rev. Daniel Aldridge, Jr., minister, Mayflower United Church of Christ; Sally Bier, president United Auto Workers Local 2500; Susan Farquhar, defendant in Detroit abortion rights case; Ken Hall, president Local 42 General Industrial Employees Union; Dick Soble, National Lawyers Guild. Sat., April 15, 7 p.m. Pullman Hall, Unitarian Church, (corner Cass and Forest). Sponsor: Mark Curtis Defense Committee. For more information call (313) 831-1177.

MINNESOTA

St. Paul

Grenada: 10 Years After the Revolution's Victory. Speakers: Argiris Malapanis, chairperson Twin Cities Socialist Workers Party; August Nimtz, professor, University of Minnesota. Translation to Spanish. Sat., April 1, 7:30 p.m. 508 N Snelling Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Forum. For more information call (612) 644-6325.

El Salvador — the Struggle for Freedom. Speakers from Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador and Socialist Workers Party. Sat., April 8, 7:30 p.m. 508 N Snelling Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Forum. For more information call (612) 644-6325.

Solidarity with the Eastern Airline Strikers. Panel of speakers from labor movement. Sat., April 15, 1 p.m. 508 N Snelling Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Forum. For more information call (612) 644-6325.

A Report-Back on the April 9 March on Washington for Women's Equality/Women's Lives. Panel of speakers from International Association of Machinists, United Auto Workers, and other organizations. Slideshow. Sat., April 22, 7:30 p.m. 508 N Snelling Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Forum. For more information call (612) 644-6325.

Working People's Stake in the Fight Against Censorship and Thought Control. Panel of speakers. Sat., April 29, 7:30 p.m. 508 N Snelling Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Forum. For more information call (612) 644-6325.

MISSOURI

St. Louis

Challenges Facing Auto Workers. Speakers:

Mac Warren, Socialist Workers Party national organization secretary; Jeff Powers, Socialist Workers Party, member United Auto Workers Local 174 in Detroit. Sat., April 1, 7 p.m. 4907 Martin Luther King Dr. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (314) 361-0250.

NEBRASKA

Omaha

El Salvador: Prospects for Peace. Speaker: Aaron Ruby, Socialist Workers Party; others. Translation to Spanish. Sat., April 1, 7:30 p.m. 140 S 40th St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (402) 553-0245.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Cancel the Third World Debt. Speakers to be announced. Translation to Spanish and French. Sat., April 1, 7:30 p.m. 141 Halsey St., 2nd floor. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (201) 643-3341.

NEW YORK

Brooklyn

Behind Controversy Around Salman Rushdie: Should Working People Oppose Censorship? Speaker: Margaret Jayko, editor of *Militant*. Translation to Spanish. Sat., April 1, 7 p.m. 464 Bergen. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (718) 398-6983.

Haiti Progrès is Having a Birthday. Come celebrate sixth anniversary. Special guest: Jean-Claude Martineau, poet and raconteur. Sat., April 22, 7 p.m. The Haitian Family Center, 1078 Utica Ave. (corner of Beverly Rd.) Donation: \$10. For more information call (718) 434-8100.

Manhattan

Fundraising Concert and Party for 'Tet Kole' (Heads Together), National Peasant Movement in Haiti. Featuring leading Haitian bands Kajou and Sakad. Art exhibition of Haitian paintings and crafts for sale; food. Sat., April 1, 7 p.m. Taller Latinoamericano, 63 E 2nd St. Donation: \$8. Sponsor: Haiti Support Committee. For more information call (212) 781-5157.

A Night in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador. Featuring Crowsfeet Dance Collective and Human Condition Afroamerican Group. Sat., April 15, 7:30 p.m. Martin Luther King, Jr., High School, 122 Amsterdam Ave. (65th and 66th Sts.) Donation: \$12 in advance, \$15 at the door. Sponsor: Central American Refugee Network. For information and tickets call (516) 481-3959, (212) 941-7962, (212) 941-9636.

NORTH CAROLINA

Greensboro

Abortion is a Woman's Right. A panel discussion. Sun., April 2, 7 p.m. 2219 E Market. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (919) 272-5996.

OREGON

Portland

Defend Santiago Ventura. Speakers: John Haviland, anthropology professor and linguist, Reed College, and member Santiago Freedom Committee; Lourdes Deleon, Spanish professor, Reed College, and Santiago Freedom Committee; Sherien Jaeger, juror in trial of Santiago Ventura. Sat., April 1, 7:30 p.m. 2730 NE Union. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (503) 287-7416.

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WISCONSIN: Milwaukee: 4707 W. Lisbon Ave. Zip: 53208. Tel: (414) 445-2076.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney: 181 Glebe Point Rd., 2nd floor,

PENNSYLVANIA

Pittsburgh

Why Workers Must Defend Abortion Rights. Speaker: Sarah Button, Socialist Workers Party, member United Steelworkers of America Local 15018. Sat., April 1, 7:30 p.m. 4905 Penn Ave. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (412) 362-6767.

UTAH

Salt Lake City

The Americas in Transition: Focus on El Salvador. Lectures, films, cultural events. Speakers: Robert White, U.S. ambassador to El Salvador, 1978–81. Wed., April 5, noon; Luis Flores, representative of El Salvador Information Office in Los Angeles. Thurs., April 6, noon. Salvadoran dinner, dancing. Fri., April 7, Dinner, 7 p.m.; dancing, 8:30 p.m. Indian Walk-In Center, 100 W 1300 South. Donation: \$7 for dinner and dance; \$4 for dance only. All other events at University of Utah, Student Union theater. Sponsor: Central America Solidarity Coalition, others. For more information call (801) 355-7925.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Abortion is a Woman's Right: Build the April 9 March for Women's Equality and Women's Lives! Speakers: Janice Steinschneider, D.C. National Organization for Women; Margaret Conway, Catholics for Free Choice; Claudia Roberson, Socialist Workers Party; others. Sat., April 1, 7:30 p.m. 3165 Mt. Pleasant St. NW. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (202) 797-7699.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

The Political Situation in El Salvador Today. Speakers: Matt Hereshoff, Socialist Workers Party; representative of Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador. Sat., April 8, 7:30 p.m. 5517 Rainier Ave. S. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (206) 723-5330.

WEST VIRGINIA

Morgantown

Defend Abortion Rights! A panel discussion. Sun., April 2, 4 p.m. 221 Pleasant St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (304) 296-0055.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

Situation in Southern Africa One Year After Cuito Cuanavale. Speakers: Representative from African National Congress; Kate Blakey, anti-apartheid activist. Fri., April 7, 7:30 p.m. 181 Glebe Point Rd, 2nd floor, Glebe. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (02) 660-1673.

ICELAND

Reykjavik

The Revolution in Burkina Faso: 1983–87 — Pathfinder Introduces Thomas Sankara Speaks. Speakers: Nestor Bidadanure, editorial staff of *Coumbite* magazine, founder of Thomas Sankara International Association; Sigthórður Gunnarsdóttir, head of anti-apartheid coalition; Doug Cooper, Pathfinder, New York; others. Wed., April 5, 8 p.m. Soknarsalurinn, Skipholti 50a. Sponsor: Pathfinder Iceland. For more information call (91) 17513.

Glebe. Postal address: P.O. Box 153 Glebe, Sydney NSW 2037. Tel: 02-660 1673.

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NEBRASKA: Omaha: 140 S. 40th St. Zip: 68131. Tel: (402) 553-0245.

NEW JERSEY: Newark: 141 Halsey. Zip: 07102. Tel: (201) 643-3341. **New Brunswick:** c/o Keith Jordan, 149 Somerset St. Zip: 08903. Tel: (201) 828-1874.

NEW YORK: Brooklyn: 464 Bergen St. Zip: 11217. Tel: (718) 398-6983. **Mid-Hudson:** Box 1042, Annandale. Zip: 12504. Tel: (914) 758-0408. **New York:** 191 7th Ave. Zip: 10011. Tel: (212) 675-6740.

NORTH CAROLINA: Greensboro: 2219 E Market. Zip: 27401. Tel: (919) 272-5996.

Farm aid program — Public service radio announcements advise farmers that the Alabama Agriculture Department has tapes



Harry Ring

available "designed to meet the emotional needs of families facing crisis."

Blissville — The Maharishi Development Corp. is projecting 50 housing tracts in collaboration with disciples of the Maharishi

Mahesh Yogi, the transcendental meditation guru. The homes will promote long life, bliss, and perfect health, and are expected to turn a profit. About \$400,000 each. Open to nonmeditators.

The march of democracy — "Opposition leader Jim Bolger yesterday announced a changed format for the National Party's three-day Caucus. . . . In a break with tradition, he has invited discussion." — *New Zealand Evening Post*.

April fool item — "Six foot of macho muscle . . . the ideal companion for single women, night nurses, the elderly or handicapped." — A Sharper Image catalog offering for Gregory, a crime

prevention dummy. Clothed, \$499; unclothed, \$449.

Canadians ease U.S. \$ shortage — Last month, a Canadian executive jet whisked Ron Reagan up to British Columbia for a rap to a gathering of corporate biggies. His reported fee — \$150,000, Canadian.

He did the thinking — British Columbia Premier William Vander Zalm assured that he wasn't miffed by not being invited to greet Reagan. His spouse added, "I've already met a president, Gerald Ford. He said being in the White House was the easiest job . . . everybody did everything for him."

They recover VCRs? — Dairy

farmers in southern California have been hit by a rash of burglaries of frozen bull semen used to impregnate cows. The Riverside County sheriff complained, "There's no way of tracing these things. It's not like a VCR."

The watchmen — To handle the assets seized from failed savings and loan banks, the government hired some 800 people — a "high percentage" of them from wiped out S&Ls. An official explained they had the experience and were looking for work. Currently, two are under criminal investigation.

Who insures the insurers? — In the wake of the thrift industry crisis, several dozen Texas insur-

ance companies are insolvent. The biggest firm crashed, short \$54 million. The company president, Robert Walker, is believed to be in Switzerland. Maybe to be closer to his bank account.

Guns don't rob people . . . — What with the temporary ban on semiautomatic assault rifles, there's been a run on gun stores with available stock. In Florida, one dealer said he sold out in one day, with a \$375 rifle going for \$575. "We jacked up the price," he said, "but I wouldn't say we gouged anyone."

Adding injury to insult — The Internal Revenue Service estimates that, combined, taxpayers will spend more than 5 billion hours preparing their returns.

Puerto Rican groups state views on plebiscite

Continued from Page 10

will be raised. "In the first place, this plebiscite must be held within the international rules set by the decolonization committee of the UN.

"Secondly, before any such a process can take place, all Puerto Rican political prisoners and prisoners of war in U.S. prisons must be freed," González explained.

Hartford trial

"How can we freely decide, for example, when 15 Puerto Rican proindependence activists are currently on trial in

Hartford, Connecticut," he added.

To assure that the proindependence forces have every opportunity to function under conditions of equality during the period leading up to the consultation, he said, there should be a "transference of powers."

"The United States should transfer to the Puerto Rican people all sovereign power. This would mean the absence of all U.S. troops and repressive agencies, so that the proindependence forces can carry out the task of educating the people without prejudice or unjust pressures," González explained.

This would also mean the formation of a Constituent Assembly, he said, whereby the Puerto Rican people can decide who would represent them during the provisional period in which the transference of powers would take place. "The people should have the right to decide what their options are without any U.S. intervention," he stressed.

"What slave is going to choose whether to be free or not when the whole system of slavery is weighing over him? When all the military and judicial repressive apparatus of the United States is present in the lives of Puerto Ricans, then there is no chance for the Puerto Rican people to freely choose what status they desire," González underlined.

Three formulas

"The call for a plebiscite has been placed by the United States within the same context as the electoral process in Puerto Rico, where three formulas are presented," explained González.

The Popular Democratic Party supports the current status of the Free Associated State, that is, the colonial government. The New Progressive Party favors the annexation of Puerto Rico as a state of the United States. The PIP calls for an independent republic for the island.

"But in reality there are only two positions: one in favor of colonialism and one against colonialism," continued González.

One of the reasons the U.S. government has declared itself in favor of the plebiscite, and that Bush has expressed his pref-

erence for Puerto Rican statehood, is to be able to say to the UN decolonization committee, come next August, that Puerto Rico's colonial situation is in the process of being resolved, said González.

No to annexation

"But the solution to colonialism is not the integration of the colony into the metropolis. On the contrary, it is the total separation of one from the other. And it is within this framework that we believe that Latin America and the rest of the world should send a clear message of no to annexation of Puerto Rico to the United States.

"We state to humanity that annexation is not the sovereign solution to colonialism. The current Free Associated State of Puerto Rico is not the solution for the Puerto Rican nation. It represents the advantage that the big investors and multinationals have in using Puerto Rico to more profitably exploit the labor of the Puerto Rican workers and its natural resources and environment.

"Given this situation we think that the question of international solidarity is very important. We need not only the solidarity of other Latin American nations but also the solidarity of the people of the United States.

"Broad forces can be united in the United States to denounce the colonial situation of Puerto Rico and reject the annexationist proposals. We call on the media, trade unions, and civic and religious organizations to take a stand on these questions, because we all have a stake in the struggle against colonialism."

Support broadens for April 9 rally to back abortion rights

Continued from front page

been growing. Unions and labor officials are backing the march and organizing members to attend. These include United Electrical Workers' District 2, International Union of Electronic Workers District 2, the ILGWU regional district, Hotel and Restaurant Employees Local 26, United Auto Workers District 65, locals of the Service Employees International Union, and Steelworkers Local 8751, which organizes Boston school bus drivers.

Abortion rights supporters will be com-

ing from as far away as the West Coast. A building action is being held April 2 in San Francisco. Supporters will also be coming from France, Germany, Canada, and several other countries.

The D.C. march will assemble at 10:00 a.m. on the Ellipse, behind the White House, and proceed to the Capitol, where a rally will be held on the West Side. For more information about the demonstration, contact National NOW Action Center, 1000 16th Street NW, Suite 700, Washington, D.C. 20036-5705; (202) 331-0066.

Exxon's profit drive set stage for giant oil spill off Alaska

Continued from front page
from Alaska's northern arctic slope.

A Coast Guard official acknowledged that the tankers would add to the damage by dragging oil from the slick into the port area. But, he insisted, this was outweighed by the need to get out the oil.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Young Socialist Alliance Open House

Sat., April 9
3-7 p.m.
Quality Hotel
415 New Jersey Ave. NW

The Young Socialist Alliance invites you to an open house after the April 9 March for Women's Lives. Come and discuss the fight to defend abortion rights with Socialist Workers Party candidates, unionists, and young people.

The afflicted area is remarkably rich in marine life. It is populated by whales, dolphins, sea otters, herring, salmon, crab, shrimp, and more. There are 10 million migratory birds.

Scientists and officials on the scene said that even with months of massive cleanup, there is virtually no way to escape major environmental and economic damage.

Meanwhile, the oil industry is pressing to further ravage the area by extending oil drilling into the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, a large federal preserve. A new leg of the pipeline would run from the refuge to Valdez.

In March, before the spill, the Senate Energy Committee voted 12-7 in favor of permitting drilling in the preserve.

The day after the spill — the biggest in U.S. history — Interior Secretary Manuel Lujan said he still supports drilling there.

Exxon has repeatedly assured local fishers that they would be compensated for all damage from the March 24 spill.

But the 1973 law that authorized the pipeline includes a clause limiting the industry's total liability to \$100 million.

In the wake of the spill, oil prices jumped to their highest level in 19 months. One Wall Street analyst said this would level off. It was, he explained, "a knee-jerk reaction."

—10 AND 25 YEARS AGO—

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEETLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

April 6, 1979

TEHRAN, Iran, March 25 — On the eve of the scheduled referendum that is supposed to determine what kind of regime succeeds the crowned dictatorship toppled by the Iranian masses, the procapitalist forces are trying to put a lid on the movement of the masses toward social and political liberation.

By the third week of March, the reactionary offensive of the authorities had gone as far as a military attack on the oppressed Kurdish people, resulting in hundreds of deaths.

The government has carried out its operation in Kurdistan as secretly as possible. Nevertheless, reports reaching Tehran tell of helicopter gunships and heavy weapons being used against the crowds in Sanandaj.

The government's March 30 referendum will take place under the shadow of the Kurdish events.

The referendum was designed to win a mandate for an "Islamic republic," which would sanction the attempt to keep the masses within the limits of the capitalist system. The procapitalist forces are trying to restabilize the bourgeois order, at the moment through the ideology and organization of the Shiite religious establishment

and the personal prestige of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini.



NEW YORK — Malcolm X announced at a March 29 rally that the first campaign of his new black nationalist movement would be a massive voter-registration drive.

"We've got to get everyone in Harlem registered, not as Democrats or Republicans but as independents," he declared.

Another point he stressed was the need for black unity. He explained that the purpose of his series of Sunday night rallies had nothing to do with religion. "Unity is the right religion," he said. He stressed that black people must forget their differences and discuss the points on which they can agree.

The starting point of his analysis was "the unwanted presence of 22 million black people in America." "If we aren't wanted we should go back home," he said. "Our homeland is the continent of Africa."

He explained, however, that black nationalists must have a program for better conditions here and now as well as the long-range program of going back to Africa.

Gov't role in Exxon oil spill

Ten million gallons of crude oil are fouling Alaskan waters because of the oil industry's greed for profit. And Washington shares responsibility for this worst oil spill in U.S. history.

In 1973 Richard Nixon's administration rammed a bill through Congress authorizing construction of the 800-mile pipeline from Alaska's northern slope to the port of Valdez.

The inherent danger of the project was so apparent, and Alaskan opposition so strong, that the Senate split down the middle on the issue. Vice-president Spiro Agnew cast the vote that broke a 49-49 deadlock on the authorization bill.

Environmentalists had argued that the pipeline to Valdez could be so damaging to the ecology of the area that it would be better to ship the oil overland. Backed by the Nixon administration, the oil industry insisted on the pipeline because it would be cheaper.

It was well known that the terminal for the pipeline, the Valdez harbor, was in an area of reefs, icebergs, and heavy storms.

This inherent danger to shipping was magnified by the industry's insistence on cutting costs further by using megatankers, each with a capacity of more than 1 million barrels.

In the debate that swirled around the issue, the administration shamelessly repeated the industry's patently

false assertions that the possibility of spills were remote and that if by chance one did occur, the industry was well prepared to respond swiftly.

Now, at the very moment of the Valdez spill, the Bush administration is peddling the same line in its moves to lease 1.5 million acres of federally owned Alaskan wilderness for oil and gas exploitation.

Discussing the situation at Valdez, Charles DiBona, president of the American Petroleum Institute, asserted that the spill had to be balanced against the fact that until now 6 billion barrels of oil had been shipped without incident. "Unfortunately," he added philosophically, "accidents do happen at sea."

With giant tankers such as the *Exxon Valdez* plying through perilous waters, accidents certainly will happen. But it doesn't have to be that way.

The Trans-Alaskan pipeline should be shut down and the Valdez harbor closed to oil tankers.

And Congress should rescind the scandalous proviso in its 1973 Alaskan pipeline law limiting the oil industry's spill liability to \$100 million.

Nearly 6,000 people depend on the area's fishing for their livelihood. Their losses alone will exceed \$100 million. An industry that has extracted 6 billion gallons of oil from the region can well afford the full compensation the people there are entitled to.

Join abortion rights march

Every person who favors equal rights for women and freedom from government meddling in private affairs should be in Washington, D.C., on April 9 to participate in the March for Women's Equality/Women's Lives. The protest will demand that the government keep abortion legal, and make it safe and available for all women, regardless of income or age.

Why is the right to abortion such an important political issue in the United States and much of the world? Because legal access to abortion, along with birth control and sex education, is key to women's ability to control their own bodies. And that control is a precondition for women's political, social, and economic equality with men.

There are no two ways about it. As long as there is a class of people — roughly half the human race — whose bodies and reproductive functions are, by law, controlled by someone else, they won't be viewed as, or view themselves as, equals of their male counterparts.

Antiabortion laws have never succeeded in preventing abortions from occurring. Nor do their proponents believe they will. Their real goal is to maximize the difficulties, dangers, and humiliation that women must suffer who seek this medical procedure. Their message is clear: women are child breeders and raisers first and foremost.

Without being able to decide if, when, and how many children to have, a woman has little power to decide the course of her own life. And if she should choose an illegal or self-induced abortion, she risks life itself.

The record of the past 16 years of legalized abortion in the United States confirms this assessment of the centrality of reproductive rights to women's equality.

Following decades of struggles by working people, leading to a broad range of conquests for human and civil

rights, the U.S. Supreme Court was forced to strike down state antiabortion laws in 1973. It ruled that the "Constitutional right to privacy is broad enough to encompass woman's decision whether or not to terminate her pregnancy."

Legalizing abortion removed one of the most burdensome shackles keeping women down. Women feel more confident, more independent, less submissive, like they have more control over their own destinies. Men's view of women has changed as well — for the better.

The legalization of abortion was a landmark victory for all working people: a big step forward for another section of the population that had traditionally been treated as second-class, less than fully human. And it was an important blow to the social divisions between men and women that contribute mightily to keeping all working people exploited and oppressed.

Control over one's body is part of women becoming equal fighters, alongside men, in the battles against the employers and the employers' governments that will break out more and more as the economic and social crisis of capitalism deepens.

This important gain for democratic rights is under increasing attack today by federal, state, and local authorities. Aiming their fire first and foremost at working-class women's access to abortion, they have outlawed federal funding for abortions, and state funding in most states. They have restricted teenagers' ability to obtain an abortion without notifying their parents. This encourages the right-wing vigilantes who have targeted abortion clinics.

The April 9 march will be a significant expression of protest and resolve not to be pushed back.

Keep abortion safe and legal!

All out April 9!

Halt aid to Afghan rightists!

The U.S. government, operating through the regime in Pakistan, is engaged in an intensifying assault on the right of the people of Afghanistan to self-determination.

In the wake of the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan, the Bush administration, with backing from Congress, has openly proclaimed the goal of bringing down the current Afghan government and replacing it with one that has Washington's stamp of approval.

These plans have now been dealt a setback, as the Kabul government has succeeded in holding off a weeks-long offensive against the city of Jalalabad by U.S.-armed rightist forces largely based in Pakistan.

Reports from the area have revealed the increasingly open role of Pakistani military advisers and some U.S. personnel, who are operating in Afghanistan to aid the attack.

The intervention by Soviet troops on the side of the Afghan government in December 1979 was viewed by large numbers of Afghan people as a violation of their national sovereignty.

Washington took advantage of the situation to beef up its operations in support of the rightists, sending massive shipments of arms to them through Pakistan. Military bases were set up in Pakistan for the antigovernment forces. Billions of dollars have been spent in this effort.

Over the past decade, the Pakistani military built up the seven rightist groups it favors by requiring many thousands

of Afghan refugees, who sought food and shelter in Pakistan, to join one of the groups as the price of survival.

In February of this year, the Pakistani military and their U.S. paymasters helped cobble together a "provisional government" for Afghanistan, based primarily on these groups.

This bogus government includes forces that aim to reverse every step forward that Afghanistan has taken in land redistribution, education, economic development, and women's rights.

The fierce opposition that the rightists have met at Jalalabad is evidence that this so-called provisional government has little popular support in Afghanistan — or even among the rightist combatants themselves.

The Kabul government's initial military success, in the context of the pullout of Soviet troops, can result in new openings for the Afghan peasants and other toiling people to organize and express their demands.

Working people and opponents of U.S. military intervention should speak out against the U.S.-sponsored attack on Afghanistan. We should demand that Washington halt all arms shipments to the Afghan rightists and Pakistan army, and that no U.S. military or civilian "advisers" be allowed to set foot in that country.

Full diplomatic relations with the Kabul regime should be restored, and there should be no U.S. recognition of any kind to the "provisional government."

Three Mile Island ten years later

BY DOUG JENNESS

Through the misty rain and leafless trees, the cooling towers of the nuclear power plant looked like phantoms. Only the yellow-blossomed forsythia on the riverbank seemed to offset the unreality of it all.

But it was real enough. A few days before, a meltdown in the core of one of the plant's two reactors had led to the

LEARNING ABOUT SOCIALISM

worst accident in the history of the nuclear power industry in the United States.

Standing on the bank of the Susquehanna River on April 2, 1979, looking out at the Three Mile Island reactor, I and other *Militant* reporters couldn't see the radiation that had spewed out of those stacks or that had been dumped into the river. But in the 10 years since, the 700 percent increase in the cancer rate in Goldsboro, Pennsylvania, the nearest town to the damaged nuclear reactor, is testimony that it was there. So is the increase in deformed farm animals and misshapen vegetation in the surrounding area. Some 2,000 victims of cancer and other illnesses have sued the owners of the plant for damages.

The plant was crippled beyond repair, and even after 10 years and \$1 billion dollars, the cleanup of the radioactive mess has still not been completed. And if the company gets its way, wrapping up the cleanup will mean leaving it in "monitored storage" for 90 years, not dismantling and removing the plant. It is also seeking Nuclear Regulatory Commission approval to get rid of 2.3 million gallons of mildly radioactive water by evaporation. This process, however, cannot remove radioactive tritium, which will be evaporated into the air with the water.

At the time of the Three Mile Island mishap, there were 72 operating nuclear plants, providing 11.4 percent of the country's electricity. Today there are 111, meeting 20 percent of electricity needs.

These figures, however, don't tell the whole story. All plants now running or approaching completion were ordered six years or more before the accident, and there have been no new orders since 1978.

Widespread opposition to the hazards of nuclear energy has played a role in halting the expansion of nuclear powered plants. By forcing more stringent restrictions, construction of new plants has become very costly to the utilities owners.

But today the nuclear industry is preparing for a comeback. The U.S. Council for Energy Awareness, the industry's main lobbying group, recently stated, "Although initially seen as a major setback for commercial nuclear power, the accident in fact proved to be an impetus for change that has left the industry far stronger 10 years later."

Thomas Pigford, a professor at the University of California in Berkeley and a promoter of nuclear power, is even more blunt. "The accident," he wrote in a March 28 column in the *New York Times*, "was arguably a positive development. Without hurting anyone[!], it triggered a substantial change in nuclear utility management, emergency planning and, to a degree, regulation."

The 10-year hiatus in orders for plants, he said, "has given the industry time to evaluate the technical fixes mandated after the accident, refine designs for future plants and improve plant management. This means America's nuclear option potentially can be even stronger."

For this nuclear engineer, Three Mile Island was a victimless experiment, not the grim warning that awakened tens of millions around the world to the dangers inherent in nuclear-powered energy.

In the 10 years since that disaster, more than 26,000 accidents have occurred at nuclear plants in the United States, including some in which scores of workers have been contaminated by radioactive substances. While no accident has been as grave as the 1979 one in Pennsylvania, the Nuclear Regulatory Agency estimates that the chance over the next 20 years of another meltdown, or worse, is high.

Internationally, we have already seen a nuclear accident far more disastrous than Three Mile Island — the April 1986 explosion at the Chernobyl reactor in the Soviet Union. As a fire burned in the reactor, a cloud of radioactive particles and gases floated over big sections of the USSR and Europe. Thirty-one people died as an immediate result, and countless more casualties can be expected over the next couple of decades.

Big business and their supporters, such as Professor Pigford, who are committed to nuclear power attempt to belittle the human costs of using this form of energy.

But the stubborn truth is that nuclear reactors are exceedingly hazardous, and scientific knowledge and technology have not found any way, at least up until now, to make nuclear energy safe. The only course that can stop nuclear disasters is to shut down all the nuclear plants.

Minnesota auto workers discuss abortion rights

BY SUSANNE DERBY

ST. PAUL, Minn. — Labor support for the March for Women's Equality/Women's Lives, set for April 9 in Washington, D.C., is growing in Minnesota. The national abortion rights demonstration was called by the National Organization for Women and has been endorsed by the Coalition of Labor Union Women and a number of international unions.

A February 24 letter sent out by Minnesota AFL-CIO President Dan Gustafson to 1,300 AFL-CIO affiliates in the state calls April 9 "the most important mass demon-

UNION TALK

stration for women's rights in this decade." It calls on all affiliates to support the demonstration "either by endorsement, by financial contribution to the march, or by encouraging your members to participate."

A debate over whether union members should discuss and participate in the April 9 march has broken out among members of United Auto Workers Local 879 at Ford's Twin Cities assembly plant here in St. Paul.

At the local's March membership meetings, the Women's Committee put forward a motion to send six union members to the April 9 demonstration. The meeting for night shift workers was larger than usual — more Black workers were present and more younger workers than at most meetings.

Although the executive board tried to cut off discus-

sion about the Women's Committee proposal, the membership voted to continue talking about April 9. A number of local members, including many male workers, spoke in favor of sending a delegation from our local to the Washington, D.C., demonstration.

One worker said that although he was "prolife" himself, he thought it was important to support this initiative by the Women's Committee. Others said that no matter what any individual's moral or religious beliefs are, women must have the right to control their own bodies. One worker, however, said he thought the proposal for Local 879 to send members to a demonstration backing abortion rights was "too controversial" and did not help "unity" in the local.

The motion was passed by a big majority at the night shift union meeting. The much smaller day shift meeting, however, defeated the proposal. Taking the two meetings' votes together, though, the decision passed by a substantial margin.

After the vote, some members of a Bible study group in the plant, along with some executive board members and others, began circulating a petition to demand a special union meeting to rediscuss, and — if possible — overturn, the motion. Some argued that the local's decision to send people to April 9 was wrong because "abortion is murder." Others said that abortion is not a "UAW issue" or that the question was too controversial for the local to get involved with. They succeeded in getting the 200 signatures — about 10 percent of the plant — needed to call a special union meeting, set for March 30.

Members of the Women's Committee and others who

support women's right to choose and think the union's participation in the march is important have been carrying out an aggressive campaign to talk to coworkers about going to April 9. Many workers have received copies of the national April 9 leaflet and a letter to local members urging them to attend the march. About a dozen members signed up asking to be part of the delegation. The Women's Committee will choose six delegates and six alternates.

Local 879 has also received copies of resolutions passed at the 1980 UAW Constitutional Convention that put the union on record in support of equal rights for women, and for women's right to choose when and if to have children.

In addition, UAW Region 10 Director Robert Vicars has sent a letter to all Region 10 locals. "UAW Region 10 locals should be highly visible in this event," the letter says, "just as we have been active and visible in all important demonstrations for human rights and social justice in the past."

Women's Committee members and other defenders of abortion rights in Local 879 are confident more support can be won for the April 9 march in the plant. They are confident that more coworkers, male and female, can be convinced that this is an issue for our union to take up — one that builds unity, not undermines it, by supporting the most basic democratic right of our women members, and all other women as well: the right to control our own bodies.

Susanne Derby is a member of UAW Local 879 at Ford's Twin Cities assembly plant in St. Paul.

LETTERS

Gloria Alonso

Puerto Rican independence activist Gloria Alonso Vélez, known as "Picci," died February 25 after a 30-year struggle with diabetes. She was 36 years old.

Alonso became politically active while a student at the University of Puerto Rico in 1971.

In 1974 she joined the Puerto Rican Socialist Party and remained a member until her death. She was a staff writer for the party's newspaper, *Claridad*, from 1975 to 1976.

A supporter of the Cuban revolution, Alonso went to Havana in 1978 to help the team of reporters for *Claridad* cover the World Youth Festival.

Recently, she had been a member of the committee working to have Puerto Rican activist Alejandra Torres released from solidarity confinement in federal prison.

When Hurricane Joan struck Nicaragua last October, she led in relief efforts at the Ciudad Universitaria housing cooperative where she lived. Confined to a wheelchair, she helped keep elevator doors open so collectors could move rapidly from floor to floor.

Diabetes could not stop her. And her death will not stop her memory from inspiring others in the struggles to come for a free Puerto Rico.

Ron Richards
Trujillo Alto, Puerto Rico

Rushdie II

I'm glad to read from the March 17 issue that the *Militant* shifted its stance on the Rushdie affair. I learned a lot from your explanations on why any blasphemy law, and censorship based on that, should be opposed.

As everywhere, here in West Germany Khomeini's call to kill Rushdie has been seized on as a pretext for an attack on the Iranian revolution and the self-determination of Third World peoples, putting the imperialist powers up as watchdogs for "freedom" against

the uncivilized masses in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

This occurs at the same time as journalist Ingrid Strobl is on trial for being part of a "terrorist association" and the only evidence is her writing on *anschlagsrelevante Themen* — themes referred to by the urban guerrillas and their sympathizers — and her buying of an alarm clock of the type being used as bombing timers. If Strobl is convicted, any writing on issues in the class struggle can be gagged.

Already, booksellers have been convicted for selling the magazine *Radikal* and Fritz Storim has been convicted for reprinting two speeches from a meeting on the prison situation of political prisoners.

Lüko Willms
Frankfurt, West Germany

Rushdie II

Nine writers from Oregon recently spoke at a rally in Portland to defend author Salman Rushdie. Two hundred people attended the event, which was sponsored by area bookstores, the librarians' union, the Oregon American Civil Liberties Union, and several literary guilds.

John Domini spoke about the writings of Muslim poets from the eighth to the 15th centuries. He said many of these poets were ridiculed and tortured for their irreverent poems.

Eleanor Langer read from a *New York Times* interview with Nigerian writer Wole Soyinka, who was imprisoned twice and forced into exile three times for political activities and writings.

Writer Margie Boulé sang several songs that had been banned from radio airways in the United States at various times during the past two decades on "political and moral grounds." She also sang "Morning Has Broken" by Cat Stevens, whose songs are currently banned from many radio stations because of his public support for Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's campaign against Rushdie.

Indian author Lakshmi Pratury spoke about Rushdie's book *The Satanic Verses*. "The book appears to be about the struggle between the good and bad within oneself — struggle between a religious past, a liberal present, and a nebulous future. All of us who are first-generation immigrants can sympathize with this," she said.



"Am I an Indian? Am I an American? Both? Neither? This lack of identity, the trauma and the struggle with the past is what I see in Rushdie's work," she continued. "Here is my appeal to my Muslim friends — let us look at the book from this perspective and we'll have a better understanding of Salman Rushdie's motives."

Janet Post
Portland, Oregon

Harsh conditions

Your newspaper brings to light the many harsh conditions workers face under capitalism. Recently I became more aware of these.

My sister is a production worker for a major international pharmaceutical company in Utah. Recently she became ill and required surgery on her bladder. Before the operation, with full knowledge of her medical condition, the time she spent in the restroom was clocked by her supervisor. She was made to make up this time after hours.

Now she is back to work while recovering from the surgery, and she is still clocked and has been threatened with losing her job. Her supervisor told her, "You have to make your quota regardless of your personal situation."

Keep printing the truth. Don't ever stop.
C. R.
Salt Lake City, Utah

Often asked for

On a recent visit to the main branch of the New York Public Library I noticed that the *Militant* appeared on a list with about 35 other periodicals in the DeWitt Wallace Periodical Room. I asked the librarian what the list was for, and he explained that it was a list of the most frequently asked for periodicals. These periodicals were catalogued in a way to facilitate easy access. DeWitt Wallace contains nearly 10,000 different periodicals from all over the world.

I asked if the *Militant* was indeed frequently asked for, and he said, "Not quite as often as the *New York Times*, but people often ask for it."

Diana Scalera
New York, New York

Cross-burning

Martin Borcerding, 19, said that the seven-foot cross he burned on the lawn of the Donn and Nora Fast home was just a "prank."

But the 400 Black, white, Native American, and Latino protesters who marched in Seattle February 12 didn't buy it. They rallied to express their outrage at a jury's acquittal of this confessed cross-burner.

Borcerding is a classmate of the Fast's daughter, who is Black and Native American.

Atlanta City Councilman Hosea Williams was the rally's featured speaker. Others included leaders of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, Citizens Against Racial Violence, American Women's Pacific Asian Coalition, Suquamish Indian tribe, El Centro de la Raza, and Socialist Workers Party, as well as several Black ministers.

Robbie Scherr
Kitsap County, Washington

A precious gift

I was released from captivity on Feb. 10, 1989, after serving one full decade for the state of Arizona, where I committed no crimes.

Your publication has been coming to me during all of this time in complete support. A precious gift indeed! It is now hoped that during the next few months and as I adjust to the so-called free world, your publication will continue to arrive at my new address.

William Roger Sawyer
Winslow, Arizona

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.

Correction

In the article "Unions back abortion rights march," in the March 24 *Militant*, the president of the Minnesota State AFL-CIO is incorrectly identified as Ben Gustafson. His name is Dan Gustafson.

Courts aid Eastern's antiunion drive

Support for month-old Machinists' strike continues to widen

BY SUSAN LaMONT

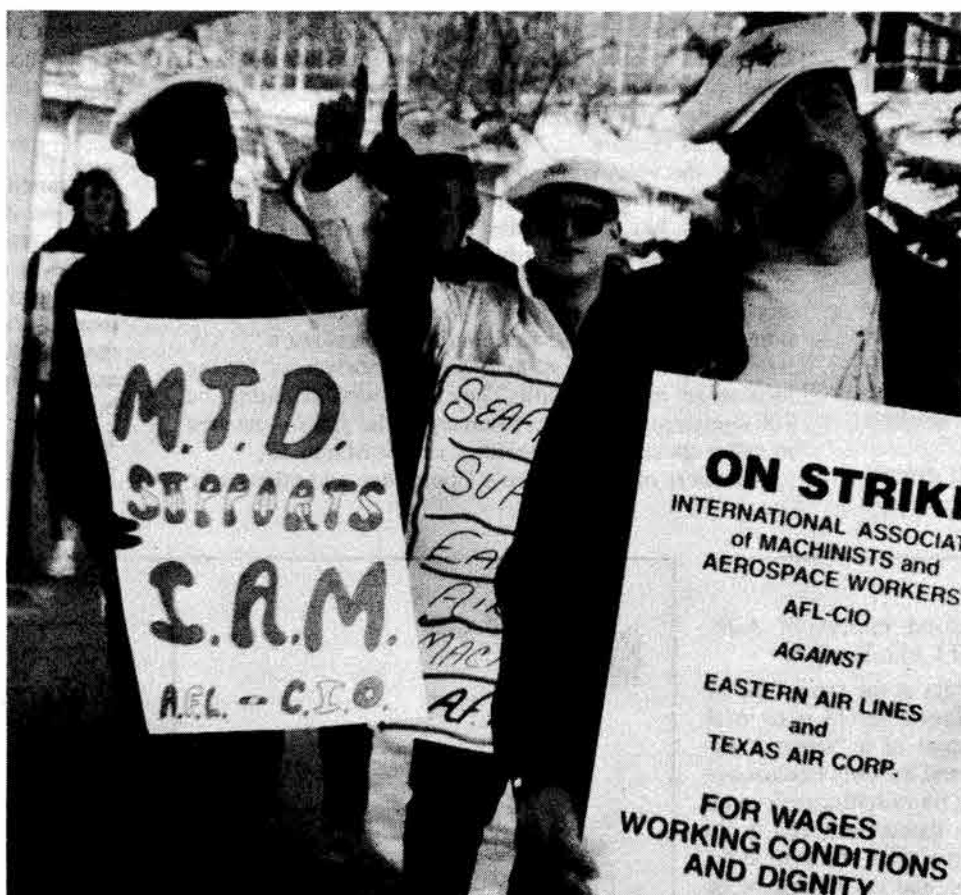
Nearly a month after the strike by 8,500 machinists against Eastern Airlines began, the company has failed to make a dent in the solid wall of support for the walkout. As a result of the pilots' and flight attendants' refusal to cross the International Association of Machinists' picket lines, Eastern cannot get more than 10 percent of its normal daily 1,040 flights off the ground.

Unable to break the strike directly, Eastern's owners are seeking to demobilize the unions by maneuvering in bankruptcy proceedings and getting other help from the courts to try to rein in the strike, which began March 4.

At the same time, reports have appeared that Peter Ueberroth is negotiating with Eastern's parent company Texas Air Corp. to buy Eastern Airlines, an effort that has the support of the pilots' union. Ueberroth, who owns a \$300 million-a-year travel company and was formerly a director of Trans World Airlines, is the outgoing baseball commissioner. TWA Chairman Carl Icahn has also been holding talks with officials from Eastern's unions about the possibility of his gaining control of the airline.

Strikers denied pay

On March 23 Judge Burton Lifland, who presides over the Eastern bankruptcy proceedings in federal court in New York, denied a request by the unions to pay Eastern workers wages owed them for the last week of work before the strike started. The main policy of the bankruptcy proceeding is to rehabilitate the debtor, the judge said, noting that the \$24 to \$35 million owed to union members was more than 10 percent of Eastern's cash on hand. Eastern filed for



Contingent from Maritime Trade Department of Seafarers' union joins striking Eastern workers on picket line at Washington, D.C.'s National Airport.

bankruptcy March 9.

In addition, all but a few of Eastern's noncontract employees — reservation clerks, ticket agents, and others who aren't unionized — have had their last paychecks bounce. Eastern laid off 9,500 noncontract

workers a few days after the strike started.

On March 22 and 24, Lifland also issued temporary restraining orders against the machinists' union in New York and Boston, prohibiting strikers on the picket lines from "harassing" Eastern passengers. The

company had shown the court videotapes made of the March 18 picket line, when hundreds of strikers and supporters gathered across the street from the New York-Boston-Washington, D.C. shuttle terminal in LaGuardia on one of the days Eastern was offering \$12 shuttle fares.

Also on March 22, the federal trustee appointed to oversee the administration of Eastern's bankruptcy case appointed representatives from the International Association of Machinists and Air Line Pilots Association to serve on the 15-seat creditors' committee. Eastern bondholders and engine and aircraft manufacturers make up the bulk of the committee, which is supposed to represent in the bankruptcy proceedings the interests of those to whom Eastern owes money.

The next day, the bankruptcy court judge announced that he would appoint an examiner in the Eastern case to prepare a reorganization plan for the company in order to end the strike quickly. "I do not intend to string this out," Lifland said, explaining that the examiner would have the power to "bang heads together."

The pilots' union had requested the appointment of a trustee to take over running the airline from Eastern's current management while the bankruptcy case winds through the court. An ALPA spokesman, however, greeted Lifland's decision on the examiner as "a trustee with an examiner's name."

A federal appeals court in New York refused on March 22 to lift the ban on rail unions honoring secondary pickets. The Eastern strikers had planned to set up secondary picket lines at railroads March 6. Under the Railway Labor Act, which gov-

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Jalalabad shaping up as key battle in Afghan war

BY FRED FELDMAN

After weeks of the most intense fighting in the 10-year war in Afghanistan, the U.S.-armed alliance of rightist guerrillas has failed to make decisive gains in its drive to capture the city of Jalalabad. Hundreds of civilians and soldiers have died, and at least 17,000 new refugees have joined the 3 million Afghans who have fled across the border to Pakistan.

Jalalabad, one of Afghanistan's largest cities, is located near the border with Pakistan on the main road to Kabul, the Afghan capital. The antigovernment forces have bases in Pakistan and are provided with U.S. arms and secure supply lines by the Pakistani military.

On March 23 the Afghan rightists succeeded in blowing up a key bridge on the road between Kabul and Jalalabad. Nonetheless, an 85-truck supply convoy reportedly arrived in Jalalabad the next day, dealing a blow to the siege the rightists had attempted to impose.

Large-scale defections from government forces, predicted by the rightists in the first days of the conflict, have not taken place. The Afghan air force has carried out effective bombing raids, and has succeeded in largely countering the Stinger antiaircraft missiles supplied to the rightists by Washington.

"Jalalabad is one of the strongest Government garrisons," the March 16 *New York Times* reported, "and its population has generally supported the Kabul government, American officials say." The U.S.-backed forces captured much of the countryside around the city prior to the latest offensive, but only after bitter fighting.

Now that Soviet troops have left Afghanistan, officials in the administration of President George Bush have publicly pro-

claimed that the fall of the Kabul government and its replacement by a rightist one is the key goal of U.S. policy in Afghanistan. Administration officials have indicated that arms shipments to the rightists will continue until a U.S.-backed government is in power.

Pakistani personnel involved

As the rightist offensive against Jalalabad met stiff resistance, evidence mounted that Pakistani army personnel and forces sent by other governments are participating directly in the war.

At a news conference in Kabul, the Afghan government presented two Pakistani soldiers who had been captured March 13 near the town of Kandahar. The two men said they had been sent into Afghanistan on the instructions of their Pakistani superior officers in order to gather intelligence on the Afghan army.

One of the captured Pakistani soldiers reported having seen military advisers from Saudi Arabia with the rightists in Afghanistan.

Pakistani military personnel are conveying supplies, training rightist troops, and operating equipment for them in the Jalalabad area. A *Washington Post* correspondent also reported seeing U.S. personnel in Afghanistan, supervising the delivery of arms to the rightists in the Jalalabad region.

Some rightists have complained that the assault on Jalalabad was undertaken at the insistence of Pakistani military commanders.

The rightist coalition represents primarily landlords, tribal chieftains, and other forces threatened by the reforms that the People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan tried to impose after coming to power in

1978. These forces began to make headway, in part because of the bureaucratic way the PDPA government attempted to implement land reform, universal education, and other progressive social measures and because of the brutal methods it used to suppress opposition.

After tens of thousands of Soviet troops moved into Afghanistan in December 1979 to prop up the Kabul regime, the rightists gained much more support. The U.S. and other governments began supplying them with arms and other aid, funneling it through neighboring Pakistan.

By the time the last Soviet soldiers returned home on February 15, the rightists controlled much of the countryside and had begun to lay siege to Jalalabad and Kabul.

Rightists establish provisional gov't

At a meeting in Pakistan on February 24, some of the rightist groups established a provisional government in exile. Gulbuddin Hekmatyar, one of the most prominent rightist leaders, summarized his political goals in a statement quoted in the March 6 *New York Times*:

"Democracy and Islam do not go together. Afghanistan will be a strict Islamic state. A group of wise men will adapt the laws to Islam, all alcohol will be banned, women will stay at home once again, and the mullahs [Muslim religious authorities] will have more power."

As the Jalalabad fighting continued, reported *Washington Post* correspondent Bernard Weintraub from the Pakistan capital of Islamabad, "many analysts here acknowledged that they had seriously overestimated the weakness of Kabul's forces."

"Officials in the White House, State Department, Pentagon, Central Intelligence

Agency, and Defense Intelligence Agency," the March 24 *New York Times* reported, "who were informally predicting Kabul's collapse within several weeks of the Soviet troop withdrawal on Feb. 15 now say it could take four to six months, or even longer."

The rightists' attempt to impose a siege on Kabul has also been dealt a setback.

On the weekend of March 4-5, a convoy of 1,500 trucks reached Kabul with food and fuel, passing through territory contested by antigovernment guerrilla Ahmed Shah Massoud.

"Government officials in Kabul said that safe passage had been arranged with local guerrilla commanders," the *New York Times* reported. In exchange, the government provided guerrilla-controlled areas with food, fuel, and fertilizer.

Divisions in rightist forces

The incident highlighted the many divisions within the rightist forces. The March 19 *Times* reported "secret negotiations that [Afghan President] Najibullah is said to have been holding with rebel leaders who were not involved in setting up the provisional government last month in Pakistan."

The March 22 *Times* reported a pact signed with village elders near Kabul, who promised to urge the rightists to end attacks on convoys. "The *shuravi* [Soviet troops] have gone home," one said, "so the essence of our *jihad* [holy war] no longer exists."

The same article reported "rethinking about the Government" among some Afghans, "particularly now that Soviet troops have gone." An increased number of Afghans, the report stated, now believe the Kabul regime to be preferable to one formed by the rightists.