

South Africa threatens Namibia freedom fight

BY SAM MANUEL

South African troops initiated attacks against the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) of Namibia on April 1. The attacks came on the first day that the United Nations began supervising a plan for the independence of Namibia. The

See editorial on page 18.

southwest African country has been militarily occupied by South Africa for 73 years.

The plan, known as UN Resolution 435/78, provides for the withdrawal of South African administrative and armed forces from Namibia. During a transition period the country would be administered by a UN special representative, a South African-appointed administrator-general, and an armed force drawn from the military of UN member nations. UN-supervised elections to establish an independent Namibian government are scheduled to take place on November 1.

In May of last year the Pretoria regime agreed to begin negotiations on the plan, which was first adopted by the UN Security Council in 1978. That decision came in the wake of a decisive defeat of South African troops by military forces of Angola, Cuba, and SWAPO at the Angolan town of Cuito Cuanavale.

South Africa accuses SWAPO

South African Foreign Minister Roelof Botha charged that armed units of SWAPO had violated a cease-fire agreement by crossing the Namibian border from bases in Angola and clashing with police in Namibia. The police claimed that 129 SWAPO fighters and 18 policemen had been killed, and 14 persons wounded.



Afrapix-Impact Visuals/Paul Weinberg

Supporters of South West Africa People's Organisation rally in Namibia in March.

In a threat to suspend implementation of Resolution 435 Botha said that unless UN Secretary-General Javier Pérez de Cuéllar "makes his position clear" on the alleged cease-fire violation, the South African government would request that the UN armed forces leave Namibia until SWAPO can be "brought to its senses." Pérez de Cuéllar was given until April 9 to respond.

SWAPO President Sam Nujoma strongly denied the apartheid regime's allegations, calling them a "figment of its imagination." In a statement released April 2 from Harare, Zimbabwe, Nujoma reaffirmed that SWAPO would abide by the cease-fire.

The Namibian independence leader said
Continued on Page 17

Spill highlights Exxon's deceptions

BY FRED FELDMAN

The spill of 10 million gallons of oil from the *Exxon Valdez*, the worst ever in U.S. waters, into Prince William Sound off the coast of Alaska now covers an area the size of the state of Rhode Island.

On April 3, 10 days after the accident, the government of Alaska barred herring fishing for the season because the spawning grounds are now badly contaminated with oil. Last year fishers caught more than 10,000 tons of herring in the area.

Shrimp harvesting has been called off and shellfishing shut down.

In an effort to salvage the \$80 million salmon industry, fishers organized their own effort to contain the slick — independent of the Exxon-organized effort, which the fishers regard as "pathetic."

It took 10 hours for any of Exxon's oil-containment personnel or equipment to even reach the scene.

There have been much bigger tanker spills in waters off France, Trinidad, and Sicily, but the *Exxon Valdez* ran aground in the midst of one of the richest concentrations of marine wildlife in North America. The oil spilled not into the open sea, as in the bigger incidents, but into a relatively isolated body of water ringed by islands.

The spill coincided with the salmon hatching and herring spawning seasons, and with the annual arrival in the area during April and May of 20 million migratory birds. More than half of the 200 species of birds in the area are water-related.

A population of 15,000 sea otters is also threatened with extermination. Oil on even

a small part of their bodies destroys their insulation and leads to death from cold.

The accident cast a glaring light on the claims of Exxon and Alyeska Pipeline Service Co., a consortium owned by the seven companies (including Exxon) that pump oil in the region, that they were well prepared for any eventuality.

Back in 1971, when big oil companies were campaigning for acceptance of the

pipeline to Valdez, L.R. Beynon, head of environmental studies for British Petroleum, had guaranteed that tanker traffic to and from Valdez "will not cause any significant damage to the marine environment or to fisheries' interests."

Alyeska spokespeople had insisted that a spill was "highly unlikely."

The pipeline project squeaked through
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Gorbachev's visit to Havana: what media coverage revealed

BY MARGARET JAYKO

One thing the massive news coverage of Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev's April 2-4 visit to Havana, Cuba, shows is the political weight of Cuba's revolutionary government in world politics.

The U.S. media resources devoted to the three-day visit were unprecedented in the 30-year history of the Cuban revolution. All three networks — ABC, CBS, and NBC — dispatched their leading anchors to Havana. Morning and evening news reports included live coverage of the events surrounding the "summit meeting" between Gorbachev and Cuban President Fidel Castro.

To a significant degree, the big-business media's attention to this event stems from the growing concern in Washington about

the rebellious moods and revolts in Latin America and the Caribbean.

The recent uprising in Venezuela was a warning signal of the explosive situation in many of these increasingly impoverished countries.

Castro and the Cuban government have won growing prestige and authority among working people in the hemisphere and internationally for their leading role in opposing the foreign debt burden, unequal trade relations, and all the other forms of exploitation of the semicolonial world, and for uncompromisingly standing up to imperialism.

Castro has been the most vocal international spokesperson for the demand that the debt be canceled as part of the effort to establish a new, more just world economic
Continued on Page 2

Rising stakes in fight for abortion rights

BY FRED FELDMAN

Tens of thousands of working people and other defenders of democratic rights are converging on Washington, D.C., April 9 for a march and rally in support of women's right to abortion.

The March for Women's Equality/Women's Lives takes place as the George Bush administration is urging the U.S. Supreme Court to deal a major blow to abortion rights.

The Supreme Court has agreed to rule on *Webster v. Reproductive Health Services*, an appeal by Missouri officials who demand reinstatement of an antiabortion state law that was thrown out by lower courts.

Missouri antiabortion law

The measure forbade performing abortions in public hospitals and clinics, barred organizations that receive public funds from providing counseling that includes advice or information about obtaining abortions, and requires doctors to perform tests on women seeking abortions to determine whether a fetus older than 19 weeks is viable.

Backed by the Justice Department, Missouri officials have asked the Supreme Court to uphold these attacks on women's right to abortion. In addition, they are urging the court to overturn *Roe v. Wade*, and allow the federal or state governments to outlaw abortions. Oral arguments are scheduled to begin on April 25.

Coinciding with these moves, foes of abortion have carried out a nationwide campaign under the name "Operation Rescue" to shut down abortion clinics, bar women seeking abortions from access to them, and to abuse and threaten those who use or work at the clinics.

President Bush spurred on the disruption efforts when he denounced women's right to abortion as "a national tragedy," when he addressed a national antiabortion rally held January 23 in Washington, D.C.

The Jan. 22, 1973, *Roe v. Wade* ruling
Continued on Page 4

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Media coverage of Gorbachev Cuba trip

Continued from front page

order. And he has tried to forge the maximum unity among the governments, political parties, trade unions, and other forces in Latin America around this perspective for dealing with the burgeoning social, economic, and political crisis.

In addition, the Cuban revolution's success in eliminating hunger, poverty, eradicable diseases, and illiteracy, and its big steps in coping with a housing shortage — at a time when these social ills are rapidly increasing in the rest of the underdeveloped world — has made socialist Cuba a beacon for millions.

That's why when Castro attended the recent inauguration of Venezuela's new president, Carlos Andrés Pérez, he was the center of the media's attention. Similarly with his trips last year to Mexico and Ecuador.

The Cuban communist leadership has increasingly emerged as the voice that most effectively articulates the aspirations of millions of toilers throughout the world in the face of the deepening capitalist crisis. And it points a road forward for fighting against the devastating consequences of this crisis. That's the threat the Cuban government poses for Washington and why the proimperialist media can't ignore Cuba and at the same time attempted to use Gorbachev's visit to portray Cuba's policies in the worst light and belittle its social accomplishments. During the course of the three days, the media sought every opportunity to prejudice its readers and viewers against Cuba by emphasizing what it described as Cuba's economic crisis, totalitarianism, and attempts to "export" revolution.

What Washington demands

Media coverage of Gorbachev's visit to Cuba was largely colored by Washington's efforts to press the Soviet government to use its influence and resources to restrain the class struggle throughout the region, especially in Central America.

The week before the Soviet leader's arrival, U.S. President George Bush wrote a letter to Gorbachev urging him to cut Soviet aid to Nicaragua as a way to bolster efforts to end armed conflicts in Central America. The letter urged Gorbachev and Castro "to end all aid that supports subversion and destabilization in Central America."

"We have been telling the Soviets through a variety of channels that we hope Gorbachev will use his Cuba visit to both say and do something in terms of Nicaragua that will demonstrate that they are serious about cooperating with us in resolving regional issues," a Bush administration official told the *New York Times*.

"We have let them know that if they really want to impress people here with their 'new thinking' the best place to start is by using their influence with the Sandinistas," said the official. "We've shown our 'new thinking' in Central America, now let's see

theirs."

That was apparently a reference to the recently negotiated deal between the Republican administration and the Democratic majority in Congress that would give the contras \$4.5 million each month until February 1990, when national elections are scheduled in Nicaragua. And Bush has urged contra leaders who are living in Miami to return to Nicaragua and participate in the elections.

The government of Costa Rica has given its seal of approval to the contra aid plan, as well as to efforts to pressure Moscow and Havana.

"It is our belief that now that the United States has assumed a policy toward Central America that will give a real chance for peace, it is time for the Soviets to adopt the same attitude," said Guido Fernández, Costa Rica's information minister. "It is time for the Soviets to suspend any military aid to Nicaragua in order to contribute to the creation of an environment propitious to a peace settlement in Central America," he added.

"If the Soviets now keep supplying arms to Central America to be used in Nicaragua, or through Cuba to guerrilla movements in El Salvador and Guatemala, it is going to be very difficult for Central Americans to promote a real peace," Fernández emphasized.

Rep. David Bonior (D.-Mich.), head of the Democratic Task Force on Central America, said "I think Gorbachev has a real opportunity in his discussions with Castro to signal a shift away from a military effort in Nicaragua to a more economic bent — especially in light of the bipartisan accord reached last week and the fact that the administration is clearly emphasizing a policy of diplomacy and encouraging the contras to enter the electoral process. In

light of all that, we should expect from Gorbachev some positive moves."

Part of the bipartisan agreement to aid the contras that was reached March 24 stated: "The United States believes that President Gorbachev's impending visit to Cuba represents an important opportunity for both the Soviet Union and Cuba to end all aid that supports subversion and destabilization in Central America."

Shortly before Gorbachev's visit, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker sent a policy statement to U.S. embassies throughout Latin America, saying that any betterment of relations between Washington and Havana depended on improved human rights conditions in Cuba and an end to alleged efforts to export revolution in the hemisphere.

Massive turnout

More than a half a million Cubans turned out in Havana on April 2 to greet Gorbachev. Many of those interviewed by U.S. journalists expressed support for close relations between Moscow and Havana. It was the first visit by the top leader of the USSR since 1974, when Leonid Brezhnev went to Cuba.

Most of the media coverage consisted of contrasting their portrayal of the Soviet government's policies to those of the Cuban government, with Cuba always getting the short end of the stick.

Thus, the "dogmatic" Castro was counterposed to the "flexible" Gorbachev; the "democratic" Soviet elections to the Cuban police-state system; the economic "pragmatism" with which the Soviet government is confronting that country's economic crisis versus the "Leninist orthodoxy" being used by Havana to deal with "the economic basket case" that is Cuba; and Castro's archaic "proletarian interna-

tionism" versus Gorbachev's modern abandonment of foreign policy based on "class struggle."

Hundreds of journalists from around the world followed close on the two leaders' heels, as well as freely interviewing people on the street who held a wide range of political opinions, including sharp criticisms of the government. "The access has been remarkable," commented Tom Brokaw, NBC's leading anchor.

On March 31, seeking to use the heightened media attention to get international publicity for their cause, two different dissident groupings held news conferences.

Elizardo Sánchez, whose organization calls itself the Cuban Commission on Human Rights and National Reconciliation, was interviewed in Havana by many reporters. He released copies of a letter delivered to the Soviet embassy asking Gorbachev to withdraw Soviet support from "Castro's repressive machine."

A representative of the other group of dissidents, which announced the formation of the Movement of Democratic Integration, told reporters, "Gorbachev has great significance for us. He is a symbol of change and reform."

On April 4 several of these activists were arrested. They were reportedly planning a demonstration in front of the Soviet embassy to press their demands.

While reporters gave considerable play to all of this, they took little opportunity during their three days in Cuba to show the hospitals and schools that have been built since 1959, or the activities of the volunteer work brigades that are building housing, child-care centers, and other socially needed facilities. Involving tens of thousands of working people, these brigades are the heart of the "rectification process" that is going on in Cuba today — a process that is unique and has never been carried out before. This, in itself, should have made them newsworthy.

Address National Assembly

On the last day of Gorbachev's visit, he and Castro signed a friendship treaty. According to a report in the *Washington Post*, the pact said both countries will contribute "to the solution of regional conflicts and hotbeds of tension through negotiated political means, based on respect for the sovereignty and the right of the peoples to exercise self-determination and to freely choose their political and social regimes without foreign interference."

Gorbachev and Castro both gave speeches to Cuba's elected National Assembly of People's Power. According to news accounts, Castro sharply condemned Washington's intervention in Central America.

Gorbachev also denounced U.S. policy in the region, calling the new contra aid package "regrettable," opposed U.S. aid to Afghan rightists, reaffirmed solidarity with Cuba, and praised the recent Soviet elections.

Australian women can be coal miners

For the first time since 1876, women are legally able to get jobs as underground coal miners in New South Wales, the most populous of Australia's six states. The law barring women from work in the underground pits was abolished on February 1.

In the past decade laws covering employment underground that apply to both men and women equally have been adopted in Western Australia, South Australia, Victoria, and the Northern Territory. In the northeastern state of Queensland, some female miners are working in open pits and amendments are being prepared to remove underground restrictions there too.

An editorial in the March 15 issue of *Common Cause*, published by the Miners Federation of Australia, noted that labor's fight in the 19th century to prohibit the employment of women in underground jobs went hand in hand with barring children from working in the mines. "These campaigns," the paper stated, "were particu-

larly strong in the shocking and dangerous mining industries of Britain and Europe and much of Australia's mines legislation barring women and limiting the age of boys at underground pits was drawn from British laws framed in response to mass campaigning to protect the rights and interests of women and young boys."

"Since the ban on women working underground was first introduced," the editorial continued, "the mining industry has changed dramatically, and so have social attitudes and expectations."

"While underground work still remains a hard and hazardous occupation, there remains no objective reason why women should be denied the right to work underground."

The miners' paper stated that if the mines are not safe enough for women to work in, then they are not safe for anyone. It noted that the right of women to work in underground coal mines was won in the United States in the mid-1970s.

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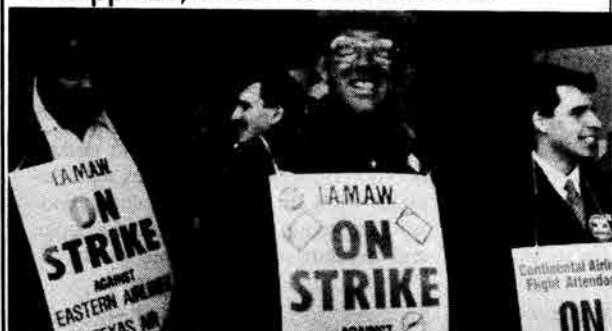
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Eastern unionists question safety of nonunion flights

BY SUSAN LaMONT

Since the strike by 8,500 Machinists' union members began at Eastern March 4, almost all Eastern pilots have been honoring the picket lines. They also have been keeping close track of the airline's operations. As a result, the pilots' union has been able to provide accurate information about the number of flights Eastern is getting off the ground each day — less than 100 — and the number of pilots crossing the picket lines — also about 100. The pilots are members of the Air Line Pilots Association.

At LaGuardia Airport in New York, ALPA has an observation room set up on the ninth floor of one of the airport hotels. They recently discovered that Eastern flight crews were not doing the preflight aircraft safety checks required by the Federal Aviation Administration. As a result of the pilots' findings, the FAA has said it would assign an inspector to every Eastern flight.

At Eastern's large maintenance base facility in Miami, office personnel — secretaries, reservation clerks, sales managers — are performing maintenance on the company's planes that are flying. "The men and women on the tarmac normally spend their days in air-conditioned and

pristine offices selling blocks of seats, calming fliers, and arranging food deliveries," said the *Miami Herald* recently. "Now they work in stifling hangars for 12 hours a day, six days a week, rebuilding landing gear and brakes, taking apart engines and maintaining the fleet alongside the supervisory staff of Eastern's maintenance division."

"I hope the FAA was watching this check really carefully," said Frank Ortiz, vice-president of International Association of Machinists (IAM) Local 702, which represents mechanics and other striking workers at Eastern's Miami maintenance base and airport. "Secretarial staff just shouldn't work on a jumbo jet on a cram course, especially when the supervisors training them have had their hands off the equipment for 20 or 25 years." The FAA says Eastern is complying with federal safety regulations.

The FAA is investigating charges by the IAM that repair work signed off by maintenance supervisors at New York's John F. Kennedy International Airport wasn't actually performed. The Machinists provided the FAA with 50 pages of documents showing that maintenance foremen, general foremen, and managers signed their names to worksheets certifying certain



Militant/Jon Hillson

Eastern pilots picket at New York's LaGuardia Airport. Pilots' decision to honor Machinists' picket lines dealt blow to company plan to break strike.

maintenance jobs had been finished. In depositions presented to the FAA, the mechanics testified that the work was in fact not performed. The charges against Eastern were made shortly before the strike began.

Sale of Eastern

The Eastern strikers are mechanics, ramp service workers, aircraft cleaners, stock clerks, and facility cleaners. They walked out March 4 after months of government-sponsored negotiations during which the company refused to back off from its demands for \$150 million in wage and benefit cuts and other concessions. The flight attendants at Eastern — members of the Transport Workers Union — have also been honoring the Machinists' picket lines.

A few days after the strike began, Eastern management filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy in federal bankruptcy court in New York. Since then, it has sought to shift the ground of the strike away from the picket lines and into the courtroom.

Reports that several capitalist investors are vying to buy Eastern from its parent company, Texas Air Corp., have become the focus of the big-business media's attention. In addition to Peter Ueberroth, who owns a travel company, Hyatt hotel chain owner Jay Pritzker is bidding to buy Eastern. Trans World Airlines owner Carl Icahn has also expressed interest in buying the airline. These potential buyers are all demanding further concessions from union members.

Union officials have been talking with prospective buyers in an effort to reach an agreement that might allow the airline to be sold. Those investors interested in buying Eastern are supposed to present their plans to the creditors' committee set up by the bankruptcy court. Both the Machinists and the pilots' union are represented on the committee.

Texas Air announced March 31 that agreement had been reached to sell Eastern's New York-Boston-Washington, D.C., shuttle to real estate and gambling casino multimillionaire Donald Trump for \$365 million. The number of Boeing 727 aircraft included in the sale was increased from 17 to 21 to entice Trump to stick to his original offer. Trump had demanded that Eastern lower its selling price. The sale must be approved by the bankruptcy court.

The company is also using the bankruptcy court to try to restrict strikers' picket lines. On April 3 Mario Zayas, a striker from IAM Local 1018 at New York's LaGuardia Airport, was arrested for allegedly breaking a window in a van being used to transport scabs, despite witnesses who saw that the van's window was already broken. The arrest was used to bolster company claims of "violence" on the picket lines at a court hearing April 4.

Zayas, a ramp service worker with four years at Eastern, has been received a letter from the company informing him he has been fired. At least 10 Local 1018 members have been fired for strike activity since March 4.

Solidarity

The Machinists' strike has won broad

support from working people around the country, especially other unionists.

On March 29 some 1,400 people in St. Louis attended a strike support rally held at the Machinists' hall. The event was called by the Labor Council and backed by United Auto Workers District 5. Coal miners, steelworkers, electrical workers, and members of many other unions participated. The previous day, about 100 strikers and supporters picketed the Federal Building in downtown Pittsburgh.

On March 24, in Portland, Oregon, about 200 IAM members who work at Boeing and Freightliner, along with paperworkers, Teamsters, longshoremen, and other unionists, turned out at a picket line to back the Eastern strike.

United Airlines

On April 2 flight attendants from United Airlines organized an informational picket line at Washington, D.C.'s National Airport to spotlight their fight for a decent contract. A few days earlier, United workers participated in a 300-strong Eastern picket line at Los Angeles International Airport, carrying signs that read "Eastern now, United next." Informational picket lines were also planned by United workers for eight other cities.

The United flight attendants are members of the Association of Flight Attendants. "We've been working without a contract for 19 months," said AFA member Claudia Ridley at the Washington, D.C., picket. "Right now, we're in mediation. Like at Eastern, the company is asking for too many concessions. They want to take away vacation days, cost-of-living allowance, and make longer duty days. We have 10 holidays now; the company wants us to have three."

"We're here to support you," Ridley told the Eastern strikers. "But this is also an informational picket line. If we don't get a contract, we may have to walk too." United pilots also participated.

Nancy Brown from Washington, D.C., Andrea González from St. Louis, and Alan Gummerson from Miami contributed to this article.

Israeli on trial for support to Palestinians will visit U.S.

BY FRED FELDMAN

Michel Warschawski, on trial in Israel for opposing the regime's repression and anti-Palestinian policies, is scheduled to begin a one-week speaking tour in the United States on April 21.

The charges against Warschawski stem from a Feb. 16, 1987, raid by Israeli police on the Alternative Information Centre in West Jerusalem. The staff was arrested, and all but Warschawski (the center's director) were released within 48 hours.

The Alternative Information Centre, (AIC) which has Palestinians and Israeli Jews on its staff, monitors and publicizes social conditions and governmental abuse of Palestinians. It publishes the periodical *News From Within*.

The raiders shut down the center and newsletter, and it was only reopened after many protested in Israel and other countries.

Warschawski was interrogated for two weeks by Shin Bet, the internal security police. He was then charged with "rendering typesetting services to a prohibited or-

ganization"; "possession of materials belonging to a prohibited organization"; and "support of a terrorist organization."

If convicted, Warschawski faces up to 23 years in prison.

The protests against the government's actions led to his release on \$4,500 bail. He is barred from entering AIC offices and can do no work related to editing, printing, or typesetting. He must report to the police once a week.

The trial before a three-judge court opened in October, and sessions are scheduled at intervals through May.

The accusations stem from commercial typesetting work the AIC did for unions, women's groups, and student organizations allegedly linked to the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, an affiliate of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

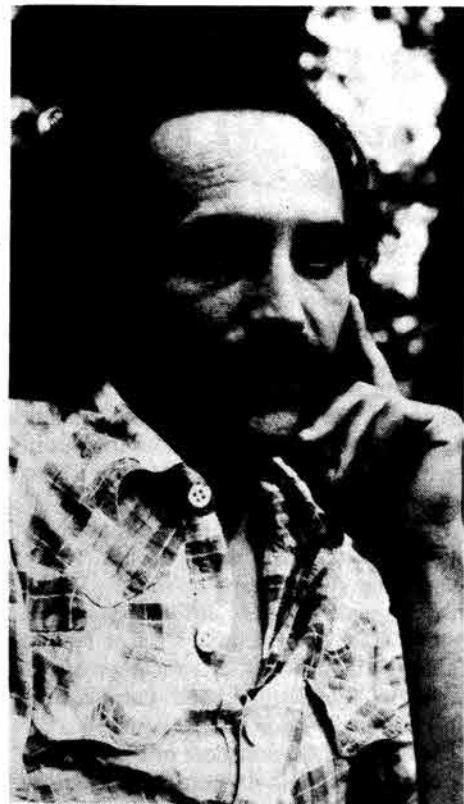
Shin Bet states that the "ideology" of these groups proves that they are PLO "fronts." The labeled groups function openly, running in campus elections and holding public news conferences in the West Bank.

Warschawski, born in France in 1949, came to Israel in 1965 to study in a talmudic school. In 1968 he joined the Matzpen group and later became editor of the monthly journal of the Revolutionary Communist League. He was a cofounder of the Committee of Reserve Soldiers Against the War in Lebanon in 1982, and was twice jailed for refusing to serve in the occupation forces in 1983. Today he is a member of the Coordinating Committee for the Movement Against Occupation.

Those in Israel who have spoken out against the prosecution of Warschawski include the Association for Civil Rights in Israel, the Jerusalem branch of the Israeli Journalists' Association, authors Amos Elon and A. B. Yehoshua, and professors Yehoshua Arieli and Ruth Gabizon.

In the United States, the Committee to Protect Journalists, chaired by Walter Cronkite, telegraphed a protest. Nobel Prize winners George Wald and Salvador Luria are among other U.S. figures who have criticized the treatment of Warschawski.

Warschawski is expected to arrive in the United States on April 21. A tentative schedule calls for him to spend April 22 in New York, April 23 in Detroit, April 24 in New York, April 25 in New Jersey, April 26 in Washington, D.C., and April 27 in Miami.



Michel Warschawski. His prosecution by Israeli government has stirred international protests.

In our next issue Firsthand coverage of Alaska oil spill

• The next issue of the *Militant* will feature firsthand coverage of the oil spill from Valdez, Alaska. A reporting team of Robbie Scherr, Janet Post, and Fred Nelson is flying there April 7.

• Also, there will be extensive reporting on the April 9 abortion rights march in Washington, D.C.

• Unfortunately, we were unable to get ready in time the speech by John Gaige on the Mark Curtis defense case that we announced last week for this issue. It will appear in a future issue.

Stakes rise in fight for abortion rights

Continued from front page

came in the immediate aftermath of the social upheaval wrought by the civil rights movement, which began shaking U.S. society in the mid-1950s and continued throughout the 1960s.

Spearheaded by the mobilizations of hundreds of thousands of Black workers and farmers, the civil rights movement overturned the system of "Jim Crow" legal segregation in the South and its many ramifications in the rest of the country.

The gigantic extension of democratic rights that Black people won strengthened all other fights for democratic rights.

Changed outlook of working people

The gains, including the blow that was dealt to racism and other prejudices that are used to divide and demoralize working people, heightened the confidence of workers and farmers and expanded their claims to legal and human rights. Layers of the population that had not been viewed as deserving full democratic and human rights were able to score significant gains.

The courts were forced to sanction, for example, an expansion of the right to privacy. This right signifies that there are areas of people's lives — from politics to sexual behavior — over which the government has no control, and into which it has no right to pry.

In 1958 the Supreme Court ruled that requiring the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People to provide lists of its members to the government of Alabama violated the members' right of privacy. In *Griswold v. Connecticut*, a 1965 case, the Supreme Court ruled that the right to privacy was also violated by state laws outlawing use of contraceptives.

The growth of struggles for women's rights in the late 1960s and 1970s were among the consequences of the victories won by the civil rights movement. The massive demonstrations against Washington's war in Vietnam and the victory of the Vietnamese revolution also heightened confidence among workers and other oppressed people.

The emergence of a women's rights movement reflected changes in the role of women in U.S. society as well. In 1950 a total of 33.9 percent of women were in the labor force. By 1970 the figure had risen to 43.3 percent. In 1980 it reached 52.9 percent.

The shift included a sharp increase in the number of women working in industrial

jobs — the number classified as "blue collar workers" jumping 61 percent from 1950 to 1981.

The fact that having or performing abortions was a criminal act in most states was a life and death matter for thousands of women. The criminalization of abortion forced women to obtain illegal abortions under circumstances that threatened their health and safety.

In New York City alone, more than 200,000 women were hospitalized for complications stemming from illegal abortions in 1969. Nationally in 1970, 109 women were officially conceded to have died from the consequences of botched abortions.

The outlawing of abortion violated the rights of all women, but working people were the hardest hit. About 80 percent of the thousands of women who had died over the years as a result of back-alley abortions were Blacks and Latinas.

The denial of women's right to control their own bodies was at the center of the discrimination against women in all areas of life. Without the right to control their bodies, women could not participate as equals in the work force, politics, or any other aspect of society.

Demonstrations spread demanding legalized abortion, and support for the demand grew rapidly.

Battle for abortion rights

In April 1970 the New York State legislature adopted what was then one of the most permissive abortion laws in the country.

The first of the new wave of nationwide protests for women's rights took place Aug. 26, 1970, when tens of thousands of women in cities across the country marched and rallied. The right to abortion was often one of the central demands.

Other national protests demanding legalized abortion, as well as many local ones, were held in the period that followed.

The capitalist ruling class and its political representatives became divided on the issue, with a significant section holding that the political price they were paying for denying this right to women was too high.

The Supreme Court's 1973 *Roe v. Wade* decision legalizing abortions registered the shifts that were taking place. The majority opinion stated that "a right of personal privacy, or a guarantee of certain areas or zones of privacy, does exist under the Constitution. . . .

"This right of privacy is broad enough to encompass a woman's decision whether or not to terminate her pregnancy. The detriment that the State would impose upon the pregnant woman by denying this choice altogether is apparent."

Laws in 46 states that forbade or restricted medically safe abortions during the first 24 weeks of pregnancy were declared unconstitutional.

The antiabortion forces, who ranged from top figures in the Democratic and Republican parties to the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic church, began a fight to roll back *Roe v. Wade*.

In 1976 bipartisan majorities in the U.S. Congress adopted the Hyde Amendment (which took its name from Republican Rep. Henry Hyde of Illinois), which barred the use of federal Medicaid payments to finance abortions except where the woman's life was in danger, or where the pregnancy resulted from rape or incest.

Blow to 'Roe v. Wade'

The U.S. Supreme Court upheld state moves to bar Medicaid funding in 1977, in a ruling that struck a blow at the central holding in *Roe v. Wade* that having an abortion was a private decision to be made by the pregnant woman.

The majority ruling held that while abortion cannot be outlawed, states "may make a value judgment favoring childbirth over abortion, and . . . implement that judgment by the allocation of public funds." The ruling also held that public hospitals could refuse to provide abortion services.

In 1981 Congress cut off Medicaid funding for abortions even where incest and rape were involved, and barred 3 million government workers from using federal health insurance for abortions except where the woman's life is in danger.

Thirty-seven states have now either banned or never permitted public funding of abortions. In about eight out of 10 U.S. counties, there is no place to obtain an abortion.

This has dealt a savage blow to the right of many working-class women to obtain abortions, especially Blacks and Latinas.

State legislatures have come up with a variety of other gimmicks to restrict abortions such as requiring teenagers to obtain parental permission in order to have an abortion, or requiring that certain abortions be performed in hospitals.

Several such laws have been ruled unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. But in 1981, the Supreme Court chipped away further at *Roe v. Wade* by upholding a Utah law that made it a crime to perform an abortion on a minor without first notifying her parents.

The courts have stalled abortions in order to weigh the demands of husbands for the right to decide whether women can have abortions, or the claims of antiabortion activists to represent the "interests" of a fetus.

Abortion clinics have come under attack

— ranging from blocking doors to firebombings.

Despite these setbacks, the antiabortion forces are a long way from achieving their goal of completely rolling back the 1973 victory. Over the past decade, an estimated 1.5 million women have obtained legal abortions each year. Most have been working women, and a majority are from families with annual incomes under \$25,000 per year.

The number of deaths officially reported as stemming from abortions dropped to 10 in 1983. The price of an abortion in Los Angeles fell from an average of \$500 in 1972 to \$230.

The intensified attack on abortion rights today is taking place in an economic situation very different than the relative capitalist prosperity that prevailed through the early 1970s.

The U.S. and world capitalist economy face increasing difficulties. Symptoms include the unprecedented growth in the debt owed by corporations and semicolonial countries, heightening the vulnerability of the capitalist system to social and economic catastrophes including a full-scale depression.

High stakes for workers, farmers

The U.S. rulers have responded with attacks on the wages and living standards of working people that range from cutbacks in social services to extracting takebacks from workers to outright union-busting.

These attacks have heightened the stakes for workers and farmers in defending the right of women to choose to have abortions. Restricting or denying this right is a part of the capitalist employers' efforts to heighten the burdens on working women and undermine their self-confidence.

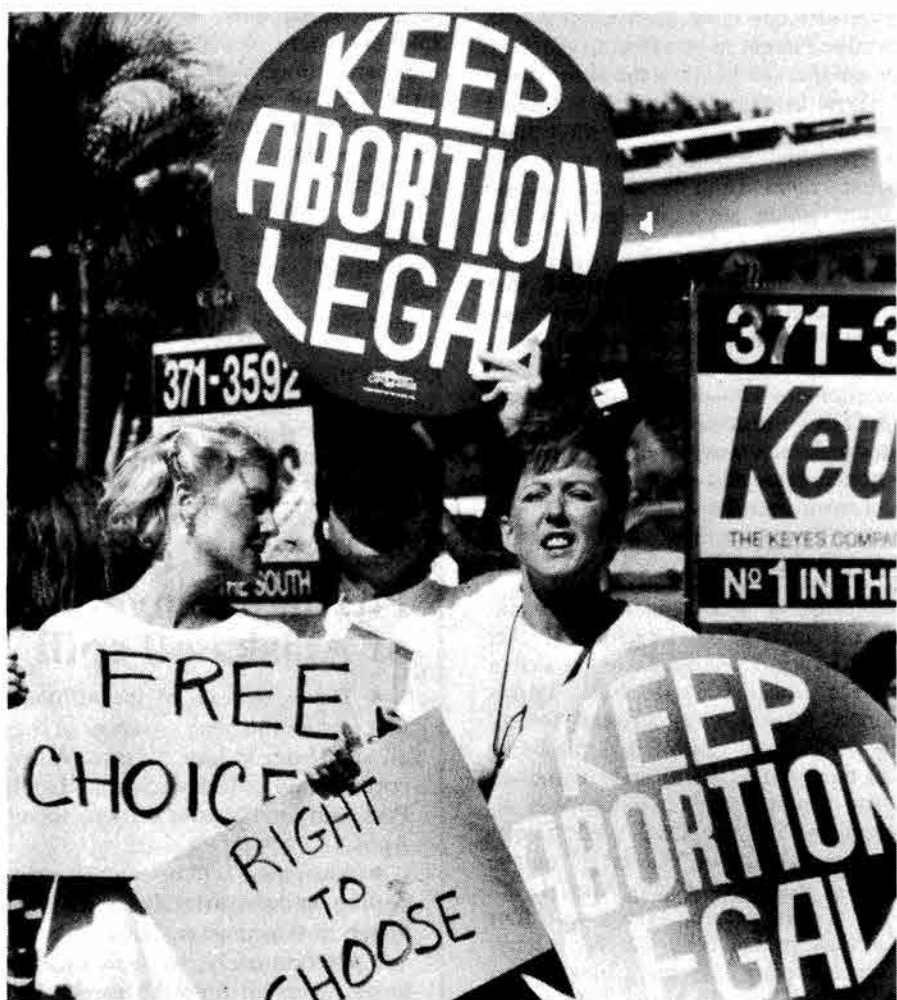
The rulers seek to force working women to accept lower wages and worse working conditions, including homework and other forms of highly profitable discrimination — all in the name of their supposedly primary role as childbearers rather than "breadwinners."

The attack on abortion rights is part of the employers' effort to forge and extend pariah layers of the working class who can be denied elementary human and democratic rights. This is part of the rulers' effort to chip away at all democratic rights that are vital to working people, from the right to speak and read as we please to the right to organize and demonstrate.

Like racist discrimination against Blacks and Latinos, the denial of abortion rights to women divides and weakens the working class. This undermines working people's capacity to defend their interests against the employing class and to unite workers and farmers for a fight to end capitalist rule and exploitation.

The support by many national and local unions for the April 9 march is an indication that working people, male and female, are increasingly aware of the high stakes in the battle to defend women's right to choose abortion.

'Not the church, not the state. . . .'



MIAMI — Chanting "Not the church, not the state, women shall decide their fate," 70 prochoice activists protested disruption of abortion clinic here by Operation Rescue on April 1.

San Francisco area march for abortion rights draws 20,000

BY AMY BELVIN
AND CAROLYN ALLEN

SAN FRANCISCO — In the largest demonstration for women's rights ever held in the San Francisco Bay Area, thousands of defenders of the right to choose abortion marched here on April 2.

Twenty thousand people demonstrated to build support for the national abortion rights protest in Washington, D.C., on April 9. Bay Area chapters of the National Organization for Women (NOW) are sending a large delegation of abortion rights supporters, and dozens more from the Bay Area are planning to attend.

The march stretched for more than a mile down San Francisco's main street. The crowd was loud and spirited. For many demonstrators, this was their first march, and a large percentage were very young. There were student contingents from many California schools and colleges.

NOW led the largest contingent, with chapters from all over northern California mobilizing their members.

Many marchers heard about April 2 at supermarkets, street corners, parks, and campuses where hundreds of volunteers set up information tables and distributed flyers over the last few weeks. Many people came out in response to recent attacks on California abortion clinics by antiabortion vigilantes. The victory against the vigilante group Operation Rescue, in Los Angeles in late March, inspired prochoice activists to turn out for April 2.

The march rallied at San Francisco's City Hall with music and speeches. Holly Near sang. Speakers included Willie Brown, speaker of the California State Assembly; San Francisco Supervisor Nancy Walker; Wilson Riles, Jr., member of the Oakland City Council; and Patricia Ireland, national vice-president of NOW.

Lisa Desposito, president of the California chapter of Catholics for Free Choice, said, "We are here to tell Congress and the courts that we will not tolerate going back to the days of criminal and illegal back alley abortions."

Lawsuit against book banning to go to trial in Grenada

Novelist Graham Greene joins protest of book seizure

BY NOAH ELLSWORTH

Book banning and censorship will go on trial in the Supreme Court of the Caribbean nation of Grenada April 7.

The plaintiff is Terry Marryshow, leader of Grenada's Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement. He is being represented by attorney Kendrick Radix, also a prominent MBPM spokesperson.

The lawsuit calls on the government of Grenada to turn over to Marryshow four boxes of books he had ordered from the New York-based Pathfinder publishers. In early March the Grenadian government impounded the books from the Federal Express courier service, which was attempting to deliver the books to Marryshow.

The government of Prime Minister Herbert Blaize has sought to justify its seizure on the basis of a McCarthyite-style book-banning law decreed in 1951 by Grenada's then-British colonial administration.

The suit filed on Marryshow's behalf demands that the 1951 law be declared in violation of 13 sections of Grenada's 1973 constitution. Marryshow's suit argues that the book-banning law is "in conflict with the rights guaranteed me by the said Constitution and . . . cannot reasonably be justified in a democratic society."

According to Radix, the repressive British colonial law was repealed by the People's Revolutionary Government led by Maurice Bishop that came to power in the March 13, 1979, revolution. Radix served for several years as attorney general in that revolutionary government.

Even if the current regime claims that the 1951 law remains in effect and is constitutional, Radix points out, none of the impounded Pathfinder books are among the titles barred under existing legislation.

The Blaize government, Radix explains, cannot maintain a secret, unpublished list of indexed books. It will at least have to seek to amend the reactionary law to include an explicit ban on *Maurice Bishop Speaks*, *The Struggle Is My Life* by Nelson



Militant/Lou Howort

Attorney Kendrick Radix

Mandela, works by Malcolm X, and other titles in the Pathfinder shipment.

A regime above the law

The lawsuit filed on behalf of Marryshow also seeks "an injunction restraining [the Blaize government] from sending [Marryshow's] publications out of Grenada or otherwise parting with same until the trial of this Motion or further order of the Court."

Despite having been served by the court

bailiff with this motion on March 28, Blaize administration officials *the very next day* shipped the books back to Pathfinder in New York. In doing so, the U.S.-installed regime placed itself above its own laws, refusing to wait even 10 days for the country's Supreme Court to hear arguments and rule on the injunction.

International protest campaign

Protests against the Grenadian government's arbitrary and undemocratic actions continue to mount.

A March 23 letter was sent to Prime Minister Blaize by U.S. Rep. Ronald Dellums, newly elected chair of the Congressional Black Caucus. Referring to the barring of books from Grenada, Dellums wrote: "It goes without saying, that I am alarmed by these developments, given the struggles made by you and the people of Grenada toward a more democratic society."

A protest by well-known novelist Graham Greene was published in the letters column of the March 27 issue of the London daily *Independent*. Greene pointed out that in addition to the seizure of Pathfinder books, "a personal copy of my novel *Our Man in Havana*" was taken from a representative of Pathfinder who traveled to Grenada in early March. "Surely some protest should be made by the British Government?" Greene wrote.

Other protests have come from the PEN American Center writers' organization; members of the British and Canadian parliaments; the Oilfields Workers' Trade Union of Trinidad and Tobago; the Committee to Protect Journalists, chaired by former CBS-TV anchorman Walter Cronkite; and others.

In addition to banning books, the Grenadian government barred a number of invited guests from participating in a March 11-13 conference and rally sponsored by the MBPM to mark the 10th anniversary of the March 1979 revolution.



Militant/Rena Cacoullos

Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement leader Terry Marryshow.

These included Omar Córdoba Rivas, a representative of the Communist Party of Cuba; prominent political figures from countries in the English-speaking Caribbean; and Pathfinder Director Steve Clark and three other U.S. guests.

Despite the Grenadian government's undemocratic attacks, it was unable to block the conference and rally from taking place successfully. (See the March 24 and 31 issues of the *Militant*.)

On March 31 the New York City Support Group of the MBPM held a public meeting on "The Struggle for Democracy in Grenada Today" to report on these events and celebrate the 10th anniversary of the revolution.

Roderick Thurton, who participated in the March 11-13 conference representing the New York Coalition for Caribbean and Central American Unity, opened the program with a firsthand report. Steve Clark from Pathfinder brought the audience up to date on the fight against book banning and for freedom of travel in Grenada, placing it in the framework of struggles for democratic rights around the world.

Dessima Williams, Grenada's representative to the Organization of American States during the years of the revolution, cataloged the U.S.-imposed regime's reversal of the economic, social, and political gains won by the Grenadian people from 1979 to 1983.

Don Rojas, former press secretary to slain Prime Minister Maurice Bishop, closed the meeting by assessing the ongoing significance of the Grenada revolution and its lessons for fighters for national liberation and socialism today.

Greetings on behalf of the Anti-Imperialist Organizations of the Caribbean and Central America were presented by Olga Sanabria, a leader of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, and Kim Ives delivered a message from *Haiti Progrès*. A delegation from the African National Congress of South Africa was introduced from the audience. The meeting was chaired by Gary Alexander of the New York MBPM Support Group.

Cuba solidarity leader denounces bombing of travel agency in Miami

BY PETE SEIDMAN

MIAMI — At a packed news conference March 30, Andrés Gómez, editor of *Areíto* magazine, denounced the bombing of offices of Marazul Charters here. No organizations or individuals have claimed responsibility for the two small bombs that went off March 26, causing only minor damage.

Marazul is the principal agency that arranges travel between the United States and Cuba. According to its president, Francisco Aruca, Marazul's waiting list of people applying for such trips is 25,000.

This list has mushroomed since last October, when the Cuban Government announced that exiles who left since 1978, including those who departed at the time of the Mariel boatlift in 1980, will be permitted to visit the island. Gómez said the attacks on Marazul are aimed at intimidating those who want to make such visits.

Bombings such as these, he said, are aimed "not just against the left, against individuals like ourselves, who recognize the right of the Cuban people to have forged their own destiny and who recognize that the Cuban revolution is a result of a majority decision by the Cuban people. No," Gómez stressed, "the coercion, the threats, the attacks, the shots, and the bombs are directed against any person or organization that proposes an end to this situation of intolerance and violence, or has political po-

sitions different from those of this powerful sector."

Gómez cited Metro-Dade County police reports that there have been 18 bombings in the last 20 months against individuals or organizations here proposing normalization of relations with Cuba or maintaining positions different from certain rightist organizations.

The *Areíto* editor also protested a decision by *El Nuevo Herald* to reject an advertisement by the Antonio Maceo Brigade. The paid ad described how Miami Cubans, including those who came via Mariel, could join a planned contingent to Cuba this summer.

The Antonio Maceo Brigade is an organization of young Cubans who call for normalization of relations between the United States and Cuba. The brigade seeks to promote a dialogue on this issue within the Cuban community in the United States.

In a March 20 letter to editor Carlos Verdecia released at the news conference, the brigade condemned such censorship by the paper, which is the city's mass-circulation, Spanish-language daily. *El Nuevo Herald*'s advertising director had claimed the ad was rejected because "the paper has a political line. We are in exile, and it is our right to reject an advertisement that goes against this."

"This same political line," the brigade letter objects, "has prevented a free discussion of ideas in our community for all these years."

In a related development, widespread protests greeted a decision by the Kiwanis Club of Little Havana to bar three musical acts from its annual Calle Ocho festival March 11-12 because the artists involved

had previously performed in Cuba.

After a coalition of Puerto Rican community groups called for a boycott of the Latin music festival and organized a picket of some 40 people, the Kiwanis Club backed off from banning a fourth singer, Wilfrido Vargas. The popular Dominican star had also performed in Havana, in 1979.

Mayor Xavier Suarez said the Kiwanis policy was a "litmus test that didn't make any sense to me." After protests by the American Civil Liberties Union, city officials froze \$15,000 originally budgeted to pay the costs of the police, fire, and sanitation departments at the festival until they were satisfied the ban doesn't violate a contract barring "political or religious activities" connected with the event.

COMING SOON!

THE MARK CURTIS STORY: Behind the frame-up of a young packinghouse worker

By Margaret Jayko

This new pamphlet, published by Pathfinder, tells the story of how and why Mark Curtis was arrested, beaten, and sentenced to 25 years in jail, and why thousands of people around the world are fight-

ing this frame-up. In telling that story, the pamphlet describes a little piece of what the future has in store for working people as a whole as times get rougher and workers and farmers fight back more.

To obtain a copy, contact the Pathfinder Bookstore nearest you. See list on page 16. Or by mail from Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.

Prisoner Subscription Fund

Send your contribution today to help us continue sending the *Militant* to our readers behind bars.

Mail to: Militant Prisoner Subscription Fund, 410 West St., N.Y., N.Y. 10014.

April 8-15, key week in subscription drive

BY NORTON SANDLER

Militant supporters around the world are gearing up for the April 8-15 international circulation drive target week.

Supporters are organizing so they will be on time, or ahead of schedule, in the drive to win a combined total of 8,000 new readers to the *Militant*, the Spanish-language *Perspectiva Mundial*, the Marxist magazines *New International* and *Nouvelle Internationale*, and the monthly French-language journal *Lutte ouvrière*.

Plans for the target week include the following:

- Hundreds of *Militant* backers from cities across the United States and Canada will introduce the publications to demonstrators at the April 9 march and rally in defense of abortion rights in Washington, D.C.

- A team headed by Robbie Scherr, Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Seattle, will begin a tour of the area near Valdez, Alaska, which has been devastated by an oil spill from an Exxon tanker.

Scherr explains that the team will get a firsthand report from fishermen and other Valdez residents on the impact of the spill on the environment and on their lives.

The team, which will include supporters from Vancouver, British Columbia, and Portland, Oregon, will also spend a few days in Anchorage, Alaska, distributing the *Militant* at factories and on campuses.

- A second team headed up by Robert

Simms will begin a three-week circulation effort at paper mills, campuses, and working-class neighborhoods in Québec, the Maritime Provinces of eastern Canada, and in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont.

Several distributors report that they are off to a strong start in the eight-week drive.

In Detroit, backers have sold a few dozen subscriptions to members of the International Association of Machinists. Many of the subscriptions were sold at activities in solidarity with strikers at Eastern Airlines.

In London, distributors sold a couple dozen subscriptions to the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* at an event organized by the El Salvador solidarity campaign and at a Central America crafts fair.

Atlanta supporters sold subscriptions to *Perspectiva Mundial* and a copy of *New International* at a soccer match attended by a number of Mexican- and Salvadoran-born workers.

The international circulation effort runs through May 20. Counted on the scoreboard each week will be subscriptions received in the *Militant* business office by 12:00 p.m. each Wednesday. Distributors should mail in reports on the number of copies of *New International* and *Nouvelle Internationale* sold each week.

Readers are encouraged to join in the drive. To order a bundle of the *Militant* write us at 410 West St., New York, New York, 10014, or phone (212) 929-3486.



Militant/Halket Allen

Militant supporter discusses paper with prospective reader in Philadelphia

Candidate for mayor of Seattle leads Alaska fact-finding team

BY KAREN RAY

SEATTLE — Robbie Scherr, a railroad worker who announced March 30 that she is running for mayor of this city on the Socialist Workers Party ticket, is planning to go to Valdez, Alaska — the site of the recent oil spill — on a fact-finding and reporting team. Departing April 7, Scherr and other participants plan to volunteer some time helping on the cleanup. They will also introduce Alaskans to the *Militant*.

Scherr, who works for the Burlington Northern Railroad, explained that the purpose of her campaign is to engage workers and farmers in a discussion about the developing social and economic crisis of capitalism.

"In the context of this growing crisis," she said, "everything from the disastrous Alaska oil spill to the recent airplane accidents to the creeping rise of homelessness reminds us of the frailty of this system."

Scherr, a member of the United Transportation Union, pointed to two opportunities for workers and farmers to act in unity to fight these growing attacks — the Eastern Airlines strike and the April 9 demonstration in Washington, D.C., to defend safe and legal abortion. She said that these

two issues go "hand in hand." "The convergence of these important social forces point in the direction of a fighting labor movement that champions social causes and unites women, Blacks, and farmers struggling for equality and justice," she said.

Two days after announcing her campaign, Scherr spoke at a Militant Labor Forum on the topic of the environment versus jobs. She was joined on the platform by Gene Lawhorn, a member of the Western Council of Industrial Workers — Lumber and Sawmill Workers Local 2949. His local union is on strike against Roseburg Forest Products in Oregon and California.

There has been a debate raging for several months in the Pacific Northwest over the deforestation of old-growth forests by the lumber monopolies and the threatened extinction in the region of the spotted owl. The media and most politicians in the area have tried to portray this as an isolated concern by environmentalists who don't care about the large number of jobs connected to the lumber industry.

Scherr explained that it is "working men and women and farmers who have the most interest in preserving the Earth's natural resources and implementing social programs that ecologically defend the interests of future generations."

Only about 10 percent of old-growth forest is still standing from the time the region was first conquered by settlers.

In Lawhorn's opinion it is "well past time to stop the madness, and if it means I lose my job to save the forest, then so be it. I'm adaptable, man is adaptable, we can change our lifestyles and jobs."

Scherr called for a moratorium on logging old growth on any tract of more than 80 acres. And she called for shortening the workweek with no reduction in pay, to cushion the unemployment that will be created.

She also called for a massive public works program to "begin the long, hard process of reviving our forests."

Scherr's campaign will be reaching beyond Seattle. On April 2 Scherr and campaign supporters visited the Yakima Valley for two days where they attended the convention of the United Farm Workers of Washington State.

The following day, Scherr and her supporters visited the health clinic in Wapato, Washington, where there has been an outbreak of meningococcal disease, from which six people have died in the last three months. This outbreak has been centered on the Yakima Indian Reservation and among farm workers.



Militant

Robbie Scherr, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Seattle.

Subscription drive scoreboard

Area	Drive Goals			Militant			New Int'l*			PM*			LO*		
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	%
UNITED STATES															
Detroit	175	49	28	125	44		30	0		15	2		5	3	
Portland	145	40	28	110	25		20	13		10	1		5	1	
Cleveland	100	22	22	70	16		18	1		10	4		2	1	
St. Louis	175	32	18	130	30		30	1		10	1		5	0	
Houston	180	30	17	100	21		30	0		45	9		5	0	
Omaha	120	19	16	80	18		20	0		15	1		5	0	
Miami	250	37	15	145	16		35	4		45	7		25	10	
Pittsburgh	165	23	14	120	17		30	3		10	3		5	0	
Los Angeles	470	64	14	240	38		90	0		130	26		10	0	
Price, UT	62	8	13	40	7		10	0		10	1		2	0	
Boston	265	34	13	160	31		40	0		45	3		20	0	
Twin Cities, MN	275	35	13	200	27		35	0		30	8		10	0	
New York	635	75	12	300	38		150	7		150	30		35	0	
Philadelphia	190	21	11	125	17		25	0		30	4		10	0	
Brooklyn	345	38	11	190	26		60	0		65	11		30	1	
Newark	500	42	8	250	24		100	0		100	12		50	6	
San Francisco	215	18	8	135	14		35	0		35	4		10	0	
Oakland	175	14	8	100	12		30	0		40	2		5	0	
Baltimore	155	12	8	115	12		25	0		10	0		5	0	
Phoenix	132	9	7	70	7		20	0		40	2		2	0	
Charleston, WV	92	6	7	70	5		15	1		5	0		2	0	
Des Moines	200	12	6	140	9		35	0		20	3		5	0	
Salt Lake City	120	7	6	80	4		20	0		15	3		5	0	
Seattle	180	10	6	120	5		25	0		30	2		5	3	
Atlanta	205	11	5	150	9		30	0		20	2		5	0	
Milwaukee	130	6	5	80	5		20	0		27	1		3	0	
Austin, MN	87	4	5	60	4		15	0		10	0		2	0	
Chicago	320	13	4	200	12		50	1		60	0		10	0	
Kansas City, MO	105	3	3	65	2		20	1		15	0		5	0	
Birmingham	170	3	2	130	3		25	0		10	0		5	0	
Morgantown, WV	130	2	2	90	0		25	2		10	0		5	0	
Greensboro	100	1	1	75	1		15	0		8	0		2	0	
Washington, DC	170	1	1	100	1		25	0		35	0		10	0	
Other U.S.	-	7	-	-	7		-	0		-	0		-	-	
U.S. TOTAL	6,738	708	11	4,165	507		1,153	34		1,110	142		310	25	
AUSTRALIA															
BRITAIN	30	0	0	17	0		4	0		8	0		1	0	
London	150	46	31	95	35		30	2		20	9		5	0	
South Yorks	60	9	15	30	9		20	0		10	0		0	0	
Manchester	61	4	7	40	4		15	0		5	0		1	0	
South Wales	59	2	3	40	2		10	0		7	0		2	0	
Other Britain	70	2	3	25	2		25	0		8	0		12	0	
BRITAIN TOTALS	400	63	16	230	52		100	2		50	9		20	0	
CANADA															
Vancouver	30	9	30	20	9		2	0		6	0		2	0	
Toronto	280	41	15	150	29		50	0		50	10		30	2	
Montreal	250	20	8	80	8		40	1		30	4		100	7	
Other Canada	-	1	-	-	1		-	-		-	-		-	-	
CANADA TOTAL	560	71	13	250	47		92	1		86	14		132	9	
ICELAND															
NEW ZEALAND	15	0	0	15	0		-	-		-	-		-	-	
Auckland	100	23	23	75	22		15	0		6	1		4	0	
Christchurch	75	13	17	60	12		10	0		3	1		2	0	
Wellington	70	0	0	45	0		20	0		3	0		2	0	
Other New Zealand	-	2	-	-	2		-	-		-	-		-	-	
New Zealand Totals	245	38	16	180	36		45	0		12	2		8	0	
SWEDEN															
PUERTO RICO	56	5	9	30	2		5	1		20	2		1	0	
Other International	25	9	36	3	3		3	0		19	6		-	-	
TOTAL	8,074	895	11%	4,895	648		1,402	38		1,305	175		472	34	
Drive Goals	8,000			4,900			1,350			1,300			450		
SHOULD BE		944	12%		613		169			163				56	

*Single copies. Includes *Nouvelle Internationale* **Perspectiva Mundial* **Lutte ouvrière*



Joel Britton, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Los Angeles.

Socialist demands 'swift, serious' action by federal gov't to protect environment

BY NELSON BLACKSTOCK

LOS ANGELES — "Working people around the world have watched with horror in recent days as pictures from the worst oil spill in North America's history flashed on television screens and newspaper front pages," said Joel Britton, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Los Angeles April 4. "The pictures of sick and dying oil-blackened birds and otters, darkened waters and beaches, and angry fishers in danger of losing their livelihood have added urgency to demands for swift and serious action by the federal government to protect the environment — starting with the Alaska oil spill."

The 240,000 barrels of oil that spewed from Exxon's tanker *Exxon Valdez* into the waters of Prince William Sound March 24, "is the latest in a series of environmental disasters that have come to light just in the last year — disasters that have caused potentially irreparable damage to the environment and created hazardous and even life-threatening conditions for millions of people," said Britton, who works at Chevron's El Segundo refinery here. He is a member of the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers union.

Radioactive contamination

"Last fall we learned that Washington's nuclear-weapons plants have been contaminating the environment — along with the workers in the plants themselves and those who live in surrounding areas — with deadly radioactive waste for 40 years," the socialist candidate said.

"Hardly a week goes by without some new revelation about the extent to which the land, water, air — and people — are being poisoned by toxic wastes and industrial pollutants in every state." He noted that on March 22 the Environmental Protection Agency released a report showing that 2.4 billion pounds of toxic chemicals, many of them known carcinogens, were released into the air in 1987.

"And last summer," Britton continued, "a massive tide of medical debris and raw sewage washed up on beaches in the New York area, highlighting the extent to which the waters of the Atlantic Ocean have become a dumping ground for millions of tons of industrial and human waste, regardless of the consequences."

"The scope of the Alaska oil spill — which has now grown to the size of Rhode Island — requires that the resources of the federal government be mobilized immediately — and for as long as it takes," Britton said. "A loud outcry is needed to reverse President Bush's criminal refusal to order a federal takeover of the clean-up efforts."

"In addition, the most stringent safety measures and procedures, paid for by the oil companies and enforced from here on out by the federal government, need to be enacted to avoid any possibility of a repetition of this catastrophe," Britton stressed. "And shipping in and out of the port of Valdez must be stopped until these safeguards are in place."

Los Angeles' air pollution

"Here in the Los Angeles Basin, where 12 million people live, we also have an environmental and health disaster: air pollution," Britton said.

"For years the atmosphere has been poisoned by automotive and industrial emissions. Ozone levels were dangerously high 176 days out of last year; carbon

monoxide and nitrogen dioxide levels in the basin regularly exceed federal standards. There is no question that immediate and real steps are required to begin to reverse the damage. While the new air-pollution control plan — which was a long time coming — contains some measures that will be helpful, it can't do what it promises: create clean air for Los Angeles."

Under the pollution plan Britton referred to, some 120 pollution control measures are to be enacted over the next 20 years. The plan, which Britton opposes, has been approved by the South Coast Air Quality Management District board and the Southern California Association of Governments' executive committee.

On March 17 Britton testified at a day-long hearing on the proposal that drew hundreds of people. "This plan doesn't provide for basic changes needed in the transportation system," Britton told officials at the hearing. "About four decades ago, an extensive electric rail car network was ripped up at the behest of the auto, oil, and tire companies." This helped pave the way for Los Angeles' vast system of freeways, and forced virtually everyone in the area to use cars. This, in turn, contributed heavily to the basin's severe pollution problem, now

the worst in the country. There are now 5.6 million cars and 2 million trucks in the area.

The current smog plan "assumes continued overwhelming reliance on transportation methods other than mass transit," Britton said. It projects that in less than 20 years, gasoline-powered automobiles will give way to electric cars.

"This is exactly the opposite of the direction we need to go in," commented Britton after the hearing. "A crash program to begin construction of a Los Angeles area-wide public transportation system has to be the heart of any long-term solution to the air pollution problem here."

The oil companies oppose the new smog-control plan as too costly. "Exxon, Chevron, and other oil companies have demonstrated repeatedly their lack of concern for the environment, and for peoples' health. They have one concern and one concern only: their profits," Britton said. "They must be compelled to comply with, and help fund, the measures needed to clean up the air."

Some, including the Los Angeles Federation of Labor and Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union officials are opposing the plan on the basis that it would cost

jobs. "We don't need to counterpose saving jobs to protecting the environment," Britton explained. "This is a trap set by the corporations to justify their refusal to spend the money needed to protect the environment."

Workers who are exposed every day to toxins have the greatest interest in eliminating pollutants, Britton explained at the public hearing. Those actually doing the work know how to take immediate steps to make the air cleaner. "Workers must be empowered to deal with production processes and practices that pollute, with no victimization of workers who discuss, decide, and act on such questions," he said.

The socialist candidate further explained that the current plan would put the burden of making many of the goals for lowering pollution on the backs of working people. Higher fees, for example, would be charged for registering more than one car. "If two people in your household are working, you most likely need two cars," the socialist candidate said. Higher parking lot fees for cars with only one passenger and charging road tolls — two measures under consideration as part of the plan — would penalize working people without providing alternative means of transportation.

Spill highlights Exxon's deception

Continued from front page

the U.S. Senate in 1973. The vote was 49-49, with Vice-President Spiro Agnew casting the tie-breaking vote in favor. One-quarter of U.S. oil is now shipped out of Valdez.

Two years ago, Alyeska prepared a "worst case" type of scenario for a spill in the sound of more than 8 million gallons. The plan assured that 50 percent of the spill would be recovered, 15 percent removed from the shore, 15 percent would evaporate, 15 percent "naturally disperse," and only 5 percent enter the environment.

Environmentalists challenged the plan as unrealistic, but in an 1,800-page contingency program the company insisted that its teams of experts and state-of-the-art technology would have a spill under control within hours.

It is now known that Exxon and the Alyeska consortium had all along been dismantling the modest preparations they had made to deal with a major spill.

When the pipeline battle was being fought, Alyeska executives promised that the tanker fleet would be specially designed to minimize spills, incorporating double bottoms and protective ballast tanks.

Once the pipeline opened in 1977, Alyeska decided these features weren't needed and the *Exxon Valdez* didn't have them.

In 1981 the operators disbanded a 20-member team of experts maintained to provide a round-the-clock response to spills in Valdez Harbor and the Prince William Sound.

The *Seattle Times* quoted Jerry Nebel, Alyeska's coordinator for oil-spill response at the Valdez port from 1981 and 1982, and James Woodle, general manager of the port from 1982 to 1984, as saying they were fired for protesting safety cutbacks. Seven Exxon oil-spill experts were encouraged to accept early retirement in 1986 as part of personnel cutbacks.

Equipment was allowed to deteriorate.

The one barge Alyeska maintained to bring oil-containment booms was in drydock awaiting long-delayed repairs (the company said it couldn't find a licensed marine welder) and the equipment had been unloaded. The company violated its agreement with Alaska environmental officials to inform them when equipment was out of commission. The company never had enough containment booms for a large spill.

While neglecting its own equipment, the industry rejected an offer from Valdez city officials to stockpile cleanup equipment there.

'Bad rap'

Exxon President William Stevens stayed away from the scene until President George Bush announced he was sending three representatives to investigate. And Exxon chairman and chief executive, Lawrence Rawl, made no comment for a week.

Rawls then claimed that Exxon was getting a "bad rap" for the delayed cleanup. "We were ready," to spray oil dispersants quickly, he claimed, asserting that "we couldn't get authority" from the state and coast guard "to do anything until 6:45 p.m. Sunday."

In fact, Exxon had only 4,000 gallons of chemical dispersants on hand when the accident occurred, whereas 500,000 would have been necessary. Six days later, the company had gathered only 110,000.

The U.S. Coast Guard initially claimed that its equipment was unable to track ships near the reef where the Valdez went aground. After fishers reported frequently being warned away from the reef by the Coast Guard, officials admitted that the ship could have been tracked and warned away from the reef.

Exxon and government officials are attempting to shift the bulk of the blame onto Joseph Hazelwood, captain of the damaged oil tanker. On April 5, Hazelwood was arrested in New York and jailed. Bail was set

at \$1 million.

The captain is charged with operating a motorcraft under the influence of alcohol, reckless endangerment, and negligent discharge of oil.

Workers at a New Jersey Exxon plant were mostly unimpressed with the company's response to the disaster.

"Most people I've talked to think Exxon didn't act fast enough," said Mary Roche, one of the workers at the plant. "One guy said he had the feeling Exxon doesn't care about the environment."

"The mechanics tend to think that Exxon just messes up everything it touches," she said. "They're running their shipping business just like they run the refineries and chemical plant."

One worker joked that Exxon was "so poor" it couldn't be expected to handle the spill efficiently, Roche reported.

Oil shipping renewed

Oil is again being shipped out of the Valdez port, and President Bush reiterated that he would continue to press for congressional approval — on hold since the accident — for oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Reserve.

Secretary of the Interior Manuel Lujan sounded a warning note to a meeting of top oil executives April 3. He compared the potential popular impact of the spill on oil drilling offshore and on federal land to that of the 1979 reactor meltdown at Three Mile Island on reducing the construction of nuclear power plants.

Company officials pledged to repay what they term "reasonable" damage claims. But Valdez Mayor John Devens warned that people "were coming under enormous pressure to settle their claims quickly."

"Believe me," Exxon executive Don Cornett promised fishers from the area, "bring it to Exxon, and you won't have a problem. You have had a bit of luck here. . . . You have Exxon."

Jamaica's Manley: 'wiser' or more compromising?

BY DON ROJAS

Michael Manley was in Harlem recently at the end of his 10-day visit to the United States.

From the podium of the famous Abyssinian Baptist Church, standing on the same spot from where Jamaican national hero Marcus Garvey had delivered many a pow-



CARIB NOTES

Don Rojas

erful message over 50 years ago, the Jamaican prime minister addressed more than 1,000 persons, mostly from the Caribbean and African-American communities of New York.

When he walked into the church, phalanx by U.S. Secret Service agents, the crowd erupted into wild applause. There was electricity in the atmosphere. The people were in a highly expectant mood as the "Manley mystique" seemed to be working again.

But an hour later, when he walked away from the podium, the mood of the audience had changed. The applause was polite. Many faces, jubilant a short time before, were now subdued. Some revealed confusion and bewilderment.

While, undoubtedly, some people related to Manley's "new" message, many more who had come to have their memories of the "old" Manley rekindled were disappointingly shortchanged.

All had come to the event out of respect and admiration for the man who had once stood up to imperialism and had defended the rights of the exploited and oppressed, the so-called little people of Jamaica and the Third World.

But on this occasion, Manley failed to address adequately, if at all, any of the great issues of the day. He said nothing about the grave dangers of the foreign debt to Jamaica, the Caribbean and the Third World.

There was no talk about the fight for a new international economic order or about the situation in Central America and no mention about reestablishing diplomatic relations with Cuba.

He lauded the "constructive relationship" that has developed between the Jamaican private sector and his People's National Party (PNP) and said that foreign investors

have now restored their confidence in Jamaica.

He carefully avoided criticism of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank at the very time when the policies of these two international agencies of finance capital are being universally condemned in the wake of the bloody suppression of a revolt against austerity measures in Venezuela.

Towards the end of his speech, Manley tried to reassure his audience that his "ideals" had not changed. To be sure, he had grown "older," "wiser," and "more mature" and had recognized that "a lot of errors were made when we were in power in the 1970s."

"We tried to change too much too fast," he said, "because we were idealistic and impatient."

Now, after eight years in the "wilderness" of opposition a more "sober-minded" Manley has returned to office with a social-democratic program that, by his own admission, will retain many of the initiatives and institutions that the preceding right-wing Edward Seaga regime had implemented, all of which had wrought increased suffering on the workers and farmers of Jamaica.

Many were questioning after the Harlem speech if "wiser" and "more mature" were not euphemisms for an attitude that is, in reality, more compromising and more collaborationist with imperialism and with the forces of reaction.

Other views

Others expressed the view that Jamaica's working people don't need a reversal of Manley's democratic-socialist program of the 1970s but rather a strengthening of it. There were many weaknesses and deficiencies in that program, they conceded, but its guiding principles and political dynamic were historically correct.

Some of Manley's "ideological" defenders argued that his new pronouncements are skillfully contrived tactics designed to assuage imperialism's fears that his return to office will tilt the balance of forces against U.S. control of the Caribbean region. Once these fears have been put to rest, the "real" Manley will reemerge.

Others, not convinced by this reasoning, say he will be held accountable to his greatly moderated public utterances by the ruling classes of Jamaica and the United States, and that if he doesn't come good on his word he will be removed.

Some maintain that the new Manley is, indeed, the real Manley. He has simply made peace with his own class, they say. He has made his accommodations with the rightists in the PNP and with the manufacturing sectors that were alienated by Seaga's unwillingness to protect

them from foreign competition.

Manley and his PNP inherited a legacy from the proimperialist Seaga of political corruption and economic crisis, a situation that aggravated the existing contradictions between the haves and the have-nots of Jamaican society.

Pinning their hopes on his leadership qualities and on his own legacy of the 1970s, these have-nots voted overwhelmingly for him and his party two months ago because they perceived him as a "people person."

'Crisis manager'

Yet, Manley now sees himself more as a crisis manager than as a fulfiller of the people's hopes and expectations. Social programs aimed at alleviating class contradictions do not carry the same degree of importance as before.

Manley's approach to managing the inherited crisis is even more idealistic than the very idealism of the past that he criticizes. He calls this new approach "rational" government.

It is based on the notion that what is needed is some sort of grand national consensus uniting the interests of capitalist and worker, management and labor, exploiter and exploited, oppressor and oppressed — all cemented under the rubric of "national interest."

The supposedly "impartial" arbiter of this multiclass alliance is to be the state, over which Manley will preside. It will manage, guide, and stimulate all these inherently conflicting interests towards greater material production, which would then provide the basis for the advancement of social justice.

All of this is to be done within the framework of the "free market."

This idealistic notion is unworkable now, as it has been historically. It is a classic social-democratic attempt to negate the class struggle and to keep the lid on the impending social explosion; to delay the inevitable outcome of the deepening social and economic crisis in the Caribbean and other semicolonial regions.

Furthermore, the entire history of class society in the world (the Caribbean being no exception) teaches us that there is no such thing as an impartial state. All states and governments defend, promote, and articulate the interests of a given class.

The only truly "rational" approach to government for Jamaica and the Caribbean is one that recognizes that capitalism cannot be reformed because it creates and maintains the contradictions and inequalities that lie at the very heart of the crisis that Manley hopes to manage.

Economy in Nicaragua slides deeper into crisis

BY LARRY SEIGLE

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — This country's per capita gross national product shrank by 12 percent last year. Of all the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean, only Panama had a bigger decline, dropping 27 percent. Taking the region as a whole, per capita production fell by 1.5 percent.

The figures are contained in the annual report of the United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean.

According to the report, the total volume of Nicaragua's exports last year was 25 percent below the 1987 level. As a result, despite increases in world market prices for several important crops, the country's overall 1988 earnings from exports fell by 16 percent.

Nicaraguan exports brought in \$220 million in 1988. In 1987 the figure was \$259 million. In 1986 it was \$247 million.

In the midst of the generalized capitalist downturn in Latin America and the Caribbean, Nicaragua is facing a particularly acute crisis.

Nicaragua's capitalists are continuing to run many agroexport farms and other businesses into the ground, taking capital out of the country rather than investing it in maintaining — let alone expanding — production.

At the same time, the cumulative costs of Washington's contra war and economic embargo have sharply disrupted Nicaragua's productive capacity and access to markets for exports.

The contraction of economic activity in 1988 was the sharpest drop in this decade. Nicaragua's total production per inhabitant has declined by 27 percent since 1981, according to the UN figures.

The downturn in 1988 encompassed all major categories of economic activity. A drop in overall agricultural production was aggravated by the disastrous effects of Hurricane Joan, which hit in October, destroying crops and washing out roads in many parts of the country.

Industrial production for the year shrank by 35 percent, reflecting both a drop in demand and shortages of imported raw materials and spare parts.

Moreover, the construction industry, which had grown in recent years, was hit hard by big cutbacks in government-financed projects.

Inflation

In addition to growing unemployment, Nicaragua's working people are being walloped with an extraordinarily high rate of inflation. According to the UN's figures, consumer prices increased by 7,800 percent from September 1987 to September 1988. The corresponding figures were 1,350 percent in 1987, and 750 percent in 1986.

The runaway inflation in 1988 was fueled by the continuing government budget deficit, as well as by repeated devaluations of the córdoba. The devaluations result immediately in sharply higher prices for imported products. Before long, prices all along the line go up.

In the past, an "official" exchange rate was kept artificially low, acting as a form of government subsidy for imports of materials and equipment deemed necessary by the government. But in 1988 the government began phasing out this form of import subsidy.

Climbs sharply

The official exchange rate has been climbing sharply as part of the new policy, whose stated goal is to gradually eliminate

the gap between the official rate of exchange and the so-called black market rate. During 1988 the official rate went up 40,000 percent.

Nicaragua's foreign debt also rose by 7 percent in 1988. The debt now totals \$6.7 billion. The increase reflects unpaid in-

terest, rather than substantial new loans, which have not been available.

Figures on how much Nicaragua paid on its debt last year were not readily available. However, the UN report noted that Nicaragua "pays only a small fraction of the total accrued interest" on its debt.

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Nicaraguan president urges ranch owners to back social pact

BY JUDY WHITE

CAMOAPA, Nicaragua — "No other government of Latin America could apply the economic measures Nicaragua is applying," President Daniel Ortega told ranchers assembled at the national cattle fair held here in mid-March. "For much less," he continued, "any other government of Latin America would fall."

Referring to the recent rebellion in Venezuela, Ortega said, "We have to share these difficult moments if we don't want to face social explosions."

Ortega's speech, which inaugurated the fair, was an appeal to capitalist ranchers to "act with responsibility" and support the social pact being promoted by the Nicaraguan government. The government is seeking an accord with opposition forces in the hope of encouraging capital investment, thereby stimulating economic recovery.

One of the central aims of Hatofer '89, as the cattle fair was called, was to publicly demonstrate the improved relations between the government and the capitalist ranchers' association, which is affiliated to the opposition business federation known as COSEP.

Ortega and Minister of Agrarian Development and Reform Jaime Wheelock shared the platform at the opening ceremonies with leading opposition cattlemen. The participation in the fair by COSEP members was widely publicized on the government-run news programs and in *Barricada*, the newspaper of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN).

Notable by their absence from the platform, and in fact from the fair itself, were central leaders of the pro-FSLN National Union of Farmers and Ranchers (UNAG), which includes a number of cattlemen.

Designer jeans

The audience for the festivities inaugurating the fair was dominated by several hundred well-to-do ranchers, many dressed in imported designer jeans and hand-tooled leather boots. The parking area was full of late-model Toyota pickups and other expensive vehicles.

More than 200 specimens of purebred cattle and horses were on display prior to the judging for best of breed. Some of the entries were from state-owned farms, but the majority were owned by individual ranchers.

Elsewhere on the fairgrounds, another several hundred head of cattle were on sale, along with heavy machinery and supplies of all kinds for use in cattle raising.

The government had promoted Hatofer '89 widely in the weeks leading up to it. On the second day of the fair, the national bank announced that it would grant loans covering 100 percent of costs for all purchases made during the event, at a special low interest rate. Normally, the bank has financed only 70 percent of the cost of cattle purchases.

In his remarks to the audience, Wheelock reviewed recent government policy decisions designed "to convert cattle raising into the axis of the country's economic recovery." These include quicker payment and higher prices to sellers of beef and dairy stock, and preferential interest rates for loans directed at upgrading the national herd.

Concessions to capitalist ranchers

There has also been a policy shift allowing ranchers to directly export some cattle. In addition, negotiations are taking place over a proposal by ranchers to return at least one state-owned meat-packing plant to private hands, with the right to bypass the government monopoly of sales of major agricultural exports.

These concessions to capitalist ranchers have been accompanied by government promises that there will be a permanent halt to confiscations of large landholdings, which will be codified in a new agrarian reform law.

"We are pledged," President Ortega told the ranchers, "to seeking the economic re-

covery of the country." Such a recovery, Ortega said, will benefit not only the workers but also businessmen and "producers," a term often used by government figures to refer to capitalist farmers or ranchers.

"The notion of economic recovery," the president continued, "is now a revolutionary concept. Revolutionary because what is involved is economic recovery to benefit all Nicaraguans."

No limit on landholdings

Ortega stressed that under Nicaragua's land reform legislation, there is no upper limit on landholdings. "Here the limits are established by productivity. If a man is productive and he is producing well on 5,000 or 10,000 manzanas, then let him work those 5,000 or 10,000 manzanas." A manzana is equivalent to 1.73 acres.

Moreover, Ortega continued, the government is in favor of "productive" landowners increasing the size of their holdings. "Let them expand their investment," he said. "We aren't opposed to that. We are in favor of production. We don't place limits on landholdings," he stressed again.

Although some "producers" have dedicated themselves to decapitalizing their businesses, Ortega said, "this has not been the conduct of the majority."

"The conduct of the majority of the producers has been to struggle in favor of production, independently of the ideological political position they might have."

Road forward in Latin America

Ortega also took the occasion to present his view that throughout Latin America, not just in Nicaragua, the road forward lies in the direction of expanding collaboration between working people and "nationalist" political figures and businessmen who, he said, are trying to develop their countries.

Their common foes, Ortega argued, are the "oligarchies" and those capitalists who have "for decades submitted to the dictates of the economic policies of the United States and of the developed countries with market economies, those who have accepted the measures of the International Monetary Fund, and those who when the economic crisis appears, decapitalize the country."

In all of this, Ortega said, "there has been a stance lacking in nationalism."

"I have spoken with Latin American political leaders," Ortega told the audience, "chiefs of Latin American governments who are willing politically to do a lot in favor of social welfare, to seek a real economic recovery, and to confront the problem of the debt. But they face serious obstacles."

He continued, "The proposals that Guatemalan President [Vinicio] Cerezo and Salvadoran President [Napoleón] Duarte make have been called extremist proposals. By whom? By the oligarchs, by the Salvadoran capitalists, by the Guatemalan oligarchs."

"If they want to advance with some measures favoring the peasants, if they want to turn over a little land, if they want to tax the producers and businessmen in order to distribute those riches among the workers, then we get a reaction — a protest — from the capitalists and businessmen. And hiding behind these capitalists and businessmen in Central America and other Latin American countries is the military."

'Political willingness'

"This is the great tragedy that the countries of Latin America have lived through and are living through. That is the reality. A political willingness has existed among the rulers. A political willingness to sacrifice has existed among the masses. But such a political willingness has not existed among the capitalists."

Ortega bolstered his appeal to the ranchers by warning that a social pact is the only way to avoid in Nicaragua a rebellion of the toilers such as the one that shook Venezuela at the beginning of March.

"It is in our interest for the producers to exploit their property efficiently, and that



Alvaro Arrolla

Presiding at opening of Nicaragua's national cattle fair were (left to right) Rafael Martínez, head of opposition cattlemen's association; President Daniel Ortega; and Minister of Agrarian Development and Reform Jaime Wheelock.

they understand that we have to share these difficult moments if we want to avoid social explosions, because social explosions could take place here, too, as I have stressed.

"But are social explosions in Nicaragua's interest? What benefit would a social explosion bring? What would we gain if the working people began to rise up? And since here there are no big business districts, they would assault the commercial districts in Managua, in the towns. But, who are they going to hurt? They are going to hurt the private merchants and small state businesses."

"And if the peasants rise up, what will they do? They will take the producers' properties. And what would we gain with that?"

'Mixed economy'

If this should happen, Ortega added, "it would damage the mixed economy. And we don't want to damage the mixed economy. We want to strengthen the mixed economy."

The Nicaraguan president also repeated to the ranchers his solidarity with Venezuelan President Carlos Andrés Pérez, a theme he had stressed on several occasions since the outbreak of the revolt in Venezuela and its drowning in blood by government repressive forces.

The explosion in Venezuela, Ortega asserted, was "not the response of the Venezuelan people against Carlos Andrés

Pérez. It is the response of the Venezuelan people to a situation of oppression that became intolerable." The cause of the crisis, he said, is the unjust economic order and the foreign debt.

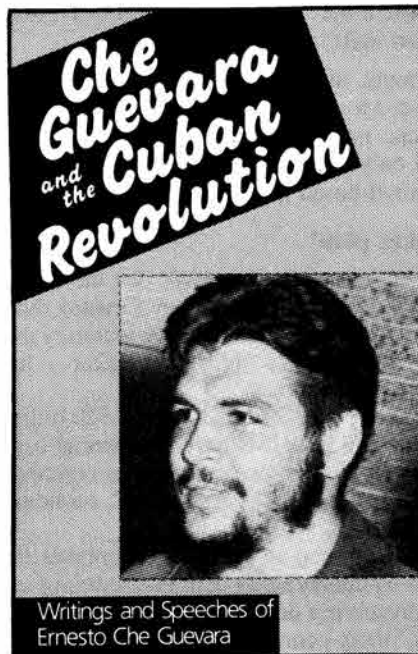
Solidarity with Venezuelan president

When the explosion took place, Ortega informed the audience, "I telephoned Carlos Andrés to express my solidarity with him, the solidarity of the Nicaraguan people, the solidarity of the Sandinista Front. But I also expressed to him a repudiation and condemnation of the foreign and domestic policies that lead to situations like this one."

Ortega added, "Carlos Andrés himself has asked what good democracy is, what is it worth if we are not capable of responding to the economic problems?"

"And we would add, isn't it perhaps necessary and indispensable to have profound revolutionary changes in order to be able to respond to those economic problems that afflict the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean?"

Appealing for national unity in Nicaragua, Ortega said, "Today there are much better possibilities to develop the country, but we still have difficult moments to pass through. We are going through difficult moments and we need the moral support of the businessmen, the rural producers, the working people — of all Nicaraguans — to move the country forward."



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Washington's 'new' Third World debt plan will change little

BY DON ROJAS

In what was trumpeted by official spokesmen in Washington as a fundamental shift in U.S. government policy regarding the enormous problem of Third World debt, Secretary of the Treasury Nicholas Brady announced March 10 that for the first time Washington will emphasize debt reduction over additional loans.

Immediately dubbed the "Brady Plan", the policy change could cut the total debt owed by 39 countries in Africa, Latin America, and Asia by 20 percent, or about \$70 billion over three years. It could also shave another \$20 billion in payments on interest.

Coming on the heels of the rebellion in Venezuela against debt-related austerity programs imposed at the end of February, the plan implied a recognition that the seven-year debt crisis is, in the words of the *Wall Street Journal*, "again becoming explosive." Currently, the total foreign debt of the semicolonial countries stands at \$1.3 trillion, \$430 billion of which is owed by Latin American and Caribbean countries.

The plan will induce commercial banks to cut principal, reduce interest rates, and extend maturity on the debt to 30 years. It permits certain debtor countries to use a percentage of the loan money they receive from the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund to reduce their debt.

In addition, countries qualifying under the plan would be able to use special "pools" of IMF and World Bank money, amounting to \$24 billion, to back up future interest payments to their creditor banks.

This means that the U.S. and other imperialist governments that contribute to these lending agencies will become liable for some of the Third World's debt. The burden will be on working people who pay taxes, while the big banks will enjoy more government protection.

To qualify for the Brady Plan, debtor countries must prove among other things that they are recovering "capital flight," that is, money shipped out of the countries over the last decade by local capitalists and deposited in private bank accounts in North America, Western Europe, and Japan.

The debtors must also convince Washington that they will encourage new investment flows from North America and Europe, strengthen domestic savings, keep down wages, and maintain the harsh IMF austerity programs already in place.

Although the emphasis is on debt reduction, the plan, nevertheless, acknowledges

that additional lending will continue. It recognizes that without access to sufficient additional bank credits some Latin American countries might stop paying interest on their debts, which could trigger a collapse of the U.S. banking system.

Reactions to plan

So far, reactions to Brady's proposals have been mixed. At an April 4 meeting in Washington, the World Bank and IMF endorsed it. Some of the largest U.S. banks are also delighted with it, but small and medium-sized lenders are taking a wait-and-see attitude, claiming that they must study the not yet available details before expressing a position.

Both Mexican and Venezuelan officials have said the 20 percent relief isn't sufficient to make a real difference and that nothing less than a 50 percent debt reduction can bring any relief to their crisis-ridden economies.

In a meeting with President George Bush on April 1, Venezuela's President Carlos Andrés Pérez appealed for urgent action to help ease Latin America's debt burden. Bush's response was to encourage Pérez to continue implementing the harsh austerity measures that provoked Venezuela's massive protests a month ago.

Before meeting Bush at the White House, Pérez and other representatives of leading debtor countries held talks in Atlanta with top U.S. administration officials and leading members of Congress at a debt conference sponsored by former presidents James Carter and Gerald Ford.

An observer at the meeting said that Secretary of State James Baker got "an earful" as Latin American leaders let him know that "their only agenda is debt and that they are desperate."

'Enough relief?'

Senator William Bradley, chairman of the Senate Subcommittee on International Debt, asked: "Will the plan provide enough relief and will it come quickly enough to avert a crisis?" Other legislators are skeptical and uncertain but none have offered any alternative proposals.

James Robinson, chairman of American Express Co., said his biggest concern was that "because you've got so many players — banks, creditors, countries — a framework has to be put in place for some central leadership to make the plan happen."

Robinson himself has come up with a plan which the Group of Eight Latin American countries find more feasible than Brady's. The Group of Eight countries are Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela, Uruguay, Mexico, Peru, Colombia, and Panama.

Robinson's plan calls for debtor and creditor countries to set up a special fund for purchasing Third World debt at a discount on the market price. The instrument for making these purchases would be the World Bank, the IMF, or a newly established multilateral entity.

Doubt about the Brady Plan was expressed by West European government officials, many of whom think the proposal will only win backing in Congress if there is broad-based international support for it.

'Baker plan'

There is wide agreement that the much-touted "Baker Plan" — put forward three years ago by the then treasury secretary and now secretary of state, James Baker — has proved to be a failure.

Baker's plan had called for a \$20 billion package of new IMF and commercial bank loans to the debtor countries on condition that they adopt "free market" economic policies.

It attempted to stave off imminent default by encouraging debt rescheduling and by pressuring debtor countries to "restructure" their economies by displacing government-owned enterprises with private industries. Local bankers and employers were urged to aggressively curb wage demands by labor unions.

The objective was to maintain the steady outflow of capital to the United States



Banner in foreground of mass demonstration in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, demands 'Out with the IMF!'

while — somehow — trying to stimulate economic growth with low inflation in the developing countries.

What occurred instead was a marked increase in the Third World's debt, little or no economic growth, uncontrollable inflation, and rapidly falling living standards.

In this situation, the banks became increasingly reluctant to risk more of their own money without government guarantees.

Threats to debtors

Apart from the guarantees built into the Brady Plan, the U.S. government will bolster nervous bankers with threats to the debtors that if they don't accept terms imposed by the commercial creditors, the multilateral lenders and government agencies will cut off "public" aid.

Like the Baker Plan, Brady's scheme contains "carrots": inducements to the debtor countries on condition that they carry out "domestic economic reforms."

In this case, instead of the commercial banks, the IMF and the World Bank will be expected to offer "adjustment loans" to help cover international payments deficits.

And these loans will be accompanied by the same inhumane conditions that the IMF has already imposed on debtor countries such as Venezuela, Brazil, Trinidad and Tobago, Guyana, and the Dominican Republic.

Adjustment loans are for the World Bank something of a departure from its traditional lending practices, most of which are directed towards funding development projects like dams, highways, ports, etc.

World Bank President Barber Conable, uneasy about this departure, is worried about the safety of the bank's capital. The IMF has already requested the Bush administration to increase its capital outlays if the IMF is to provide the guarantees for the commercial banks.

Government officials and advisers in the Third World, on the other hand, worry that this new arrangement will divert funds from development projects to protect the banks.

Beyond his concern over the World Bank having sufficient capital, Conable is apprehensive that even with increased benefits from debt reduction, "the financing requirements of the severely indebted countries will be very substantial."

In a recent World Bank report he states that when one compares the requirements of the debtor countries with the likely availability of external capital, the future looks "very discouraging."

A small group of New York's richest banks — Citicorp, J.P. Morgan, Bankers Trust, Manufacturers Hanover, Chase Manhattan — warmly welcomed the Brady Plan's government guarantees since they all have large lending portfolios in Latin America.

They are also pleased that the plan gives them more latitude to sell, swap, and manage their billions in credit since they have already accepted, in theory, that the bulk of their outstanding debt is uncollectible.

BankAmerica Corp. chairman A.W. Clausen views interest relief as one of the best aspects of the Brady Plan if debtor countries adopt so-called viable economic adjustment programs.

In recent years the banks have been carrying out their own debt-reduction strategy by forcing Latin American governments to exchange millions of dollars of their debt for government-owned industries and enterprises.

The capitalist rulers of these countries are pressured to sign over the ownership of economic resources to the big U.S. banks at prices below current market value in return for writing off a percentage of the debt. This arrangement is called a debt-for-equity swap.

Citicorp, for example, is about to take over Celulosa S.A., a major Argentinian pulp company, in return for a several million dollar debt write-off. Chase Manhattan recently exchanged \$200 million in debt for an investment in Brazilian automaker Autolatina.

This practice has resulted in these banks reducing their Third World debt by several billion dollars while at the same time enhancing their industrial holdings and capital assets inside the cash-strapped countries themselves.

The outcome has been less economic sovereignty for the Third World countries and more long-term economic domination of them by the giant U.S. banks. As a consequence, debt-for-equity swaps, which will be vigorously promoted under the Brady Plan, are today under fire in many Latin American countries.

Cuban Vice-president Carlos Rafael Rodríguez is particularly critical of debt swapping, saying that it only increases the power of the banks and the monopoly corporations over the Latin American economy.

Speaking recently at a conference on the debt in São Paulo, Brazil, Rodríguez said the Brady Plan does not give solutions to the debt or to the other serious problems that the United States has imposed on the region. The Cuban leader cited as some of these problems high interest rates, economic protectionism, unequal trade and the drying up of credits and investments.

Guaranteed failure

Several built-in contradictions in the Brady Plan will almost certainly guarantee its failure.

If the debt is reduced too much, it may undermine the possibility of debtor countries getting new lending that would enable them to continue paying interest on the debts they still have. This could lead to increased pressure to refuse to make interest payments.

Too little debt reduction and stiff austerity measures, on the other hand, are likely to spark more Venezuela-type rebellions and increase instability throughout the Americas.

Locally owned capital that fled the debtor countries at the beginning of the crisis may only flow back after the economies have

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Militant/Selva Nebbia

Rafael López Valdés

BY SELVA NEBBIA

NEW YORK — "Racial discrimination first began to manifest itself in Cuba the moment the Europeans set foot in this part of America," said Rafael López Valdés.

López Valdés is currently touring several U.S. cities speaking about the African roots of the Cuban population, and their impact on Cuban culture and on the fight against racial prejudice in Cuba. López Valdés is an anthropologist who special-

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izes in Afro-American studies. He works in the Department of Ethnology at the Cuban Academy of Sciences. In a March 29 interview in an apartment on Manhattan's Upper West Side, López Valdés discussed the Cuban socialist revolution and efforts to combat remnants of racism.

"Racial discrimination was used to strengthen the regime of exploitation set up by the colonizers," he explained. "First against the Indians. Later, as Africans were introduced in greater numbers into the population as slaves, it also served as a very efficient ideological mechanism to support the exploitation that characterized the slave system of production."

With the advent of the struggle for national liberation in 1868, the revolutionary forces in Cuba began to advocate and practice equality. Many of the independence fighters and leaders were darker-skinned Cubans.

A colony of Spain since 1511, Cuba remained a Spanish colony until the end of what is known as the Spanish-American War, gaining its independence in 1899. After a two-year occupation by U.S. forces, Cuba became a republic.

"With the installation of the neocolonial republic, under the tutelage of the United States, racial discrimination was again used by the ruling classes to maintain a divided Cuban population. They used racism to justify the exploitation of those sectors of society that were the most oppressed and that were darker-skinned," López Valdés said.

Soon after the U.S. occupation forces landed — many of whose soldiers were from the southern part of the United States — racial discrimination became more pronounced. "For whites only" signs began to appear in public places, explained the Cuban anthropologist.

"Under Spanish colonial rule in Cuba, the process of racial mixing began very early. Even the laws of the time reflect the prevalence of this racial mixing. In 1795, for example, a royal decree was approved making it possible for the sons and daughters of wealthy mixed parents to become white at birth by paying a duty to the Spanish crown," López Valdés pointed out.

"So in this manner racial discrimination in Cuba followed the class lines that existed in Cuban society," he added.

Racial composition of population

Because of this racial mixing, information that appears in the census pertaining to racial composition in Cuba is not trustworthy, he said. "For the simple fact that this information is based on simple observation. However, this is not a scientific criterion to judge what race a person belongs to."

"In Cuban society, for example, the sons

and daughters of the same mother and father can and often have different racial traits. Some might have wide noses, others narrow noses. Some can have curly hair. Others have straight hair. Some obviously might appear to be of mixed origins and others seem white.

"In my opinion, given the extent of this racial mixing, no less than 70 percent of the Cuban population has African ancestry," López Valdés explained. "This is one of the reasons I use the term darker-skinned Cubans instead of Black Cubans."

López Valdés described the conditions darker-skinned Cubans faced before the 1959 revolution.

"Both during the colonial period and under the neocolonial republic, darker-skinned Cubans were among the most impoverished sectors of the Cuban population. They lived in miserable conditions, much worse than the rest of the population," he stressed.

"Darker-skinned Cubans suffered more unemployment. They had the highest illiteracy rate. They were among those that lacked the means to pay for adequate health care.

"They had no access to the better schools — which were the private schools — not only because they were too expensive but also because they were racially segregated. They had no access to many of the urban areas, where housing was reserved for the whiter elements of the population."

"When they had a job, Blacks had the worse-paying jobs, the most filthy jobs, the hardest and most difficult jobs."

'Unrelenting struggle'

The revolution in January 1959, led by the July 26 Movement, fought for Cuba's independence from U.S. imperialism, overthrew the capitalist exploiters, and opened the road to the establishment of a socialist society in Cuba. With this workers' and farmers' revolution, it was possible to do away with this kind of institutional racism very fast, explained López Valdés.

In March 1959 Fidel Castro gave a speech where he "defined the policy of the revolution toward the racial question," López Valdés said. Under colonial rule, Castro stated, Blacks were worked to death as slaves. Under the neocolonial, so-called democratic society, they are denied jobs and starved to death. Castro declared that the revolution would embark on an unrelenting struggle to eliminate racial discrimination in Cuba.

This speech created a big uproar, re-

called López Valdés. "So much so that Fidel had to follow it with another one a couple of days later, where he reaffirmed this policy. He explained that those who favored racial discrimination were against the revolution. To be a revolutionary one had to fight against racial discrimination."

From that moment on, López Valdés continued, "every measure taken by the revolution had a social impact that to a great extent contributed to beginning to eradicate racial discrimination in Cuba."

The literacy campaign of 1961, for example, which eliminated the illiteracy that had afflicted about 30 percent of the population, benefited the darker-skinned sectors of the Cuban population, he said.

"The law on rents immediately cut rent in half," he explained, "followed by the law of urban reform that nationalized housing, under which Cubans paid rent according to their economic means. These benefited darker-skinned Cubans. The changes that took place with the nationalization of private enterprises opened the way for darker-skinned Cubans to get jobs that were previously denied them. The development of a national education and health system improved living conditions most for those most oppressed," he added.

The nationalization of private schools opened their doors to all Cuban children for the first time.

Defense of the revolution

"The defense of the revolution itself opened the road to the true elimination of racial discrimination, López Valdés emphasized. "It involved Cubans of all skin colors, sharing the same risks, the same sacrifices, the same blood."

López Valdés explained that defense includes the international aid and assistance Cuba has extended to other countries. "International solidarity has been an important aspect of the survival and the development of the revolution," he explained.

"We have offered help to those countries that are more underdeveloped than ours. Our brothers are the exploited of the world, the countries of the Third World that share the same conditions of exploitation and lack of resources," López Valdés continued.

"Obviously a great part of the Third World is made up of African countries. So in terms of these, internationalism has had a special meaning from the point of view of the fight against prejudice and discrimination." Since 1975, for example, more than 300,000 Cubans of all colors have served as volunteers in Angola to help defeat the invading South African forces, he stressed.

López Valdés discussed the ongoing "rectification process" in Cuba, which has mobilized tens of thousands of people in voluntary work brigades to build sorely needed housing, day-care facilities, schools, hospitals, and other projects. "In the last years, as part of the process of rectification, housing construction has been intensified," he said.

"Today there are neighborhoods in Havana and other cities, for example, where the racial composition is still darker than in other parts of the city," López Valdés pointed out. "This is evidently a legacy from the past. It is a social evil inherited by the revolution from capitalism. Some of these neighborhoods even date back to the colonial period."

López Valdés explained that the process of building new housing is a huge endeavor given the fact that Cuba "is an underde-

veloped country, a country that is the object of an economic blockade" by Washington.

"So it seemed that everything was resolved with respect to the elimination of racial discrimination. And for a while racial prejudice manifested itself only individually. Among some revolutionaries, it came to the surface only under specific circumstances," López Valdés said.

"For example, there might be a case of a person who was very revolutionary and openly voiced his opposition to racial discrimination, but when it came to his daughter he would not like it if she went out with someone with darker skin," he continued.

"And while society fights this kind of prejudice and fully supports mixed couples, it cannot eliminate this prejudice by decree."

Yet over the years, this phenomenon of racial prejudice — and also the prejudice against women — had a social impact, explained López Valdés. "Because when the time came to select a person for promotion on the job or in the leadership, what began to take place was that often a lighter-skinned Cuban would be chosen over a darker-skinned Cuban."

"This led Fidel Castro to bring this question up during the speech he gave on Feb. 7, 1986, at the third congress of the Communist Party of Cuba," said the Cuban anthropologist. Castro was addressing the congress delegates during the selection of the Central Committee of the party.

"The third congress began to implement a policy within the party of priority in relation to darker-skinned Cubans, similar and in line with the priority that had already been established with respect to women," López Valdés explained.

"And when we say party, in Cuba it means an orientation for society as a whole — for all the political organizations, the mass organizations in the country, as well as an orientation for the state itself."

The third party congress elected a Central Committee that included a higher proportion of production workers, darker-skinned Cubans, women, and youth.

'A kind of affirmative action'

"It was a type of affirmative action, but instead of being from the bottom up, it was from the top down," López Valdés added.

A similar process of consciousness-raising took place earlier, he continued, during the second party congress, in 1980, with respect to the situation of women in society. "Measures were taken to incorporate women into the work force in greater numbers and to promote women in leadership positions," he said. "This policy had good results. Proof of this is the fact that today 52 percent of the technical and professional personnel in Cuba are women."

In New York, López Valdés spoke at a meeting in Harlem and an event downtown sponsored by Casa de las Américas.

Regarding his tour of the United States, López Valdés said, "I am very happy with the way the tour has gone so far. There is a genuine interest among people in the United States in what is going on in Cuba. This interest was reflected in the wide range of questions, many of which were very thought-provoking."

"This tour has given me an opportunity to exchange ideas with colleagues in the United States. Because of the blockade and our lack of resources, we are not able to have this type of valuable exchange very often."

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California packinghouse workers solid

Strikers at Harris Beef reject third union-busting offer

BY TAMAR ROSENFELD
AND PETER THIERJUNG

FRESNO, Calif. — Striking slaughterhouse workers here began their March 31 union meeting jeering and chanting, "Vote! Vote! Vote!" Dozens of workers defiantly tore up copies of a proposed settlement to their five-week-old strike.

In a remarkable display of unity, they voted 162-4 to reject the settlement proposal.

This was the third time the workers, who are members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 126, turned down the company's union-busting offer. Most of the packinghouse workers are Chicanos and Mexicans.

Workers at Harris Ranch Beef Co. in Selma, California, are standing firm in what has shaped up as a fight for their dignity, jobs, and union. It is a fight other slaughterhouse and poultry-processing bosses throughout central California are watching closely. Harris is the largest and only union slaughterhouse left in the area.

For nine years workers at Harris have not received a raise. In 1983 some job classification pay rates were rolled back by \$2.25 an hour. Kill-floor wages were frozen. Lump-sum bonuses were offered instead.

In 1986 the boning department was forced to take wage cuts with starting pay substantially reduced. In most skilled classifications the maximum wage was \$8.50 an hour. New hires received no benefits — medical insurance, holiday pay, sick leave, or pension credit — for the first year.

Before the strike, workers killed and butchered around 750 head of cattle a day, up from 300 head a day several years ago. Concessions to modernize the plant have only meant line speedup and worse working conditions.

Back injuries, carpal tunnel syndrome, tendonitis, cuts, and lost limbs are common injuries at the plant. Often workers injured on the job were sent back to work by the company doctor before they healed.

Describing some of the conditions that led them to strike, workers explained that they were timed when they left the line to go to the bathroom. Supervisors verbally abused workers who asked to go home because of illness. "Worse than a concentration camp," one kill-floor worker said.

Because of the bad working conditions and low wages, Harris has a high turnover rate. More than one-third of the work force has less than a year of seniority.

Harris Ranch Beef Co. and its owner John Harris own more than 50,000 acres and a big portion of the town of Coalinga in central California. The Harris Ranch Restaurant, which serves beef provided by the slaughterhouse, has its own airport runway so that monied diners can fly in from Los Angeles and San Francisco for an exclusive meal.

In current and previous negotiations "the company has never pleaded poverty," explained Marc Salcido, president of Local 126.

Prior to the strike the union sought a

modest 2.3 percent pay increase for all job classifications for each year of a proposed three-year contract. Harris rejected the proposal, offering some skilled workers raises and all workers lump-sum bonuses. A profit-sharing plan was proposed by the company to replace pension benefits. The company is also demanding an agent shop, which would make union membership voluntary.

Ten union members crossed the picket line in the first week of the strike. They were joined by management and about 200 unemployed workers to operate the plant during the strike. Union members estimate that from 300 to 500 head of cattle are being slaughtered each day. The union has received reports that the quality level is so low that Harris shipments are being returned by grocery stores in the area.

In the third week of the strike, three of the 10 union members who crossed the line quit work and rejoined the strike. They reported that the accident level is higher and the abusive conditions in the plant are worse.

In the last settlement offer, the company refused to say that the strikers have been fired, but insisted that they have been "permanently displaced." Even if the union were to come to an agreement now, Harris said there would only be about seven job openings for Local 126 members. "What the company wants us to agree on is a proposal for the scabs, not the union," explained one striker.

In an attempt to intimidate strikers, the company announced on March 29 that nine Local 126 members, including some shop representatives on the negotiating committee, have been fired for alleged misconduct on and off the picket line. This move angered strikers, who responded with cheers when negotiating committee member Tom Martinez told the March 31 meeting, "We all came out together, we all go in together."

At a press conference following the strikers' rejection of the proposed settlement, Salcido announced that the union would launch a boycott of Harris Beef products. He also announced that strikers would be sent to other unions, community organizations, and church groups to tell their story and win support for their strike.

A worker with more than 10 years' seniority explained that the decision to strike was not a quick one. It had been brewing for years. "When I decided to walk out, I knew it was do or die. They can't take away my morals," he said. "When you lose your dignity, you become a scab. I'll never let them do that to me."

Tamar Rosenfeld is a packinghouse worker in San Lorenzo, California, and is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 120.

Takeback contract imposed by Morrell

BY CHRIS HOEPFNER

SIoux FALLS, S.D. — At the end of February, John Morrell & Co. imposed a four-year takeback contract on more than 2,000 packinghouse workers at its plant here. Morrell is a meat-packing subsidiary of United Brands Co.

Wages were immediately cut from \$9.75 an hour to \$8. Medical and pension benefits were slashed and work rules imposed that allow Morrell to assign jobs without regard to seniority.

Earlier, workers at the plant — members of United Food and Commercial Workers union Local 304A — voted down the contract overwhelmingly. The previous three-year agreement had expired last November. It was renewed on a day-to-day basis, while negotiations continued until the end of February.

Workers at Morrell's Sioux Falls plant have been forced on strike five times since 1982, including a 12-week strike in 1985 and a 1987 strike that lasted from May to November.

The outcome of the 1987 strike has direct bearing on the recent contract imposition, and the workers' decision not to strike despite their rejection of the contract.

In May 1987 roving pickets were sent to the Sioux Falls plant from the UFCW local at the Sioux City, Iowa, Morrell plant, which was then on strike. All 2,700 workers at the Sioux Falls plant honored the picket line, although their own contract had not expired.

The pickets from Sioux City remained up for several months. Over time, Morrell brought large numbers of scabs into the plant and resumed production. In November 1987 the Sioux City pickets were withdrawn, and the Sioux Falls workers attempted to return to work. The company refused to take back all the workers.

At this point, some 1,000 strikers have been called back to work. Also in the plant are 1,000 replacement workers, and 250 UFCW members who crossed the picket lines. About 1,000 union members are left to be recalled. Given this situation, the workers decided not to strike.

The National Labor Relations Board's Chicago office issued a complaint against Morrell, also at the end of February. The action could cost Morrell \$100 million in back pay.

The complaint deals with Morrell's actions in closing and later opening plants in Arkansas City, Arkansas; Kansas City, Missouri; and Memphis, Tennessee; in 1982 and 1983. It says the company "fraudulently concealed" an "unlawful scheme" to circumvent its master agreement with the UFCW.

Almost 750 UFCW members were employed at a base rate of \$11.07 an hour when Morrell closed the Arkansas City plant in June 1982. The plant reopened the following March with 200 workers at \$5 an hour. There are now more than 500 work-



Packinghouse workers at John Morrell & Co. in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, hold May 1987 rally in solidarity with union members on strike in Sioux City, Iowa.

ers in the plant, and base pay is \$7.60 per hour. The workers there are represented by UFCW Local 340.

A similar situation unfolded at Morrell's plant in Memphis, which closed in July 1982.

The relief sought by the NLRB complaint includes immediate reinstatement of the workers terminated in 1982 at both

plants, compensation for "all losses they suffered," and restoration of the master agreement with the union.

Jim Lyons, president of UFCW Local 304A in Sioux Falls, said the NLRB complaint will put more pressure on Morrell to negotiate in good faith with the UFCW to get union members back to work and to restore wage and benefit cuts.

N. Carolina Indian activist fights extradition

BY DIANE WANG

SAN FRANCISCO — Eddie Hatcher, a Tuscarora Indian who has been active in the struggle for Indian and Black rights in North Carolina's Robeson County, is now in prison here. He is fighting federal charges and attempts to send him back to North Carolina to stand trial for a second time on kidnapping charges.

Hatcher says there is no chance of a fair trial in Robeson County. "They stack the juries and control the courtrooms," he said of officials there in an interview at the jail. "My life is in direct danger."

Hatcher, 31, and Timothy Jacobs, 20, were acquitted last October on federal charges of kidnapping and violating firearms laws. Two months later they were charged again under state kidnapping laws.

Hatcher and Jacobs then went to the Onondaga Indian Reservation in New York state.

Jacobs was arrested after leaving the reservation and extradited to North Carolina March 23 after an appeals court refused to block his return. The next day, a judge in Lumberton, North Carolina, set bail for

Jacobs at \$100,000.

Hatcher went from Onondaga to the Fort Hall reservation in Idaho and then to California. On March 10 he requested political asylum at the Soviet consulate in San Francisco. After leaving the consulate, he was arrested.

The charges against Hatcher and Jacobs stem from their occupation for 10 hours on Feb. 1, 1988, of the offices of the local newspaper, the *Robesonian*.

Hatcher and Jacobs were demanding an end to the racist treatment of Indians and Blacks in Robeson County. They also called for action on charges of corruption and drug trafficking by local authorities.

The occupation of the *Robesonian* came in the midst of civil rights protests stemming from the November 1986 killing of Jimmy Earl Cummings, a Lumbee Indian, by sheriff's deputy Kevin Stone. A coroner's jury ruled the killing was "by accident and/or in self-defense."

Eight days after Lula Mae Cummings, the victim's mother, filed a wrongful death lawsuit, she was arrested on charges of drug possession and assaulting officers.

Julian Pierce, a Lumbee Indian, was murdered on March 26, 1988, while campaigning in the Democratic primary for North Carolina state superior court judge.

Pierce was running against Robeson County District Attorney Joe Freeman Britt, who is renowned for sending people to death row.

At least 18 murders of Blacks and Indians in the county remain unsolved.

Robeson County's population is 40 percent white, 35 percent Indian, and 25 percent Black.

On March 13 a U.S. attorney pressed charges against Hatcher of crossing state lines in flight of prosecution.

"Why am I being treated this way?" Hatcher asked. "The very justice they say they uphold they castigate in dealing with me."

From his cell in San Francisco, Hatcher sent a message of support to unionists on strike against Eastern Airlines. "Don't let the government break you down," he said.

"I've learned a lot in the last year," he said, "about the tactics the government uses against Indians, Blacks, whites, activists, those who speak against it."

Gov't hearings on ending homework ban held in New York

BY MARIA GREEN

NEW YORK — "I would leave my job at 4:30, taking homework with me. By 5:30 I was working again," testified Ana Bencosme at a U.S. Department of Labor hearing here on March 29. The hearing, the last in a series held around the country, is the first step by the Labor Department toward legalizing homework in women's apparel for the first time since 1942. In January, the department lifted a similar ban on homework in six related apparel industries.

Bencosme, who comes from the Dominican Republic and works in New York's garment district, continued, "I lived chained to a chair, trying to finish the piece as soon as possible so I could start another one and in that way make an extra 50 cents. Late at night I would find myself working, glueing sequins on blouses under the light of a desk lamp, because my parents used to live and sleep in the same room, and I did not want to wake them up."

In addition to the 40 hours a week working in the factory, Bencosme labored another 50 hours a week at home. She averaged \$4 an hour for her time in the shop and \$1.30 an hour for the time she spent working at home.

Bencosme concluded, "The ban against industrial homework must continue. . . . We, the workers, work better in a factory.

In a factory you work more efficiently. You have more room, so you make more money. And the employer has less opportunities to deceive the workers and deprive us of our protection under the laws."

Michelle Snyder, a garment worker in Terre Hill, Pennsylvania, testified that a coworker who said she was a "subcontractor" gave her work to do in her home. Snyder said that in addition to her regular work in the factory, at home she "spent about 50 hours working at the sewing machine. I received a total of \$64.28 for this work. . . . My children, ages 8 and 9, helped me. They folded ribbons and cut garments apart."

Many of those testifying at the hearing were trade union and state government officials.

Jay Mazur, president of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, called on President George Bush to fulfill his campaign commitment to "a kinder, gentler America" by taking an active personal part "in this momentous choice" and deciding only after learning the facts about industrial homework.

"Homework is one form — probably the very worst form — of the sweatshop in the women's apparel industry," testified Mazur.

"Sweatshop conditions, including indus-



U.S. government is seeking to end ban on homework in women's apparel.

trial homework," the union official stated, "have been spurred by the intense competition from imports made in Third World countries where workers earn as little as 12 cents an hour and authoritarian regimes crush trade unions. In the face of this threat to decent living standards for American workers, rather than taking stronger steps to protect these standards, the administration appears to be capitulating. Its capitulation takes the form of accepting Third World labor conditions here in America."

U.S. Rep. Major Owens from Brooklyn also testified against lifting the ban on homework. He said, "The short-term gains for employers are not worth wrecking the uniquely American process of generating the middle class out of the working class. Homeworkers without medical benefits will become a burden on the health care system of this country. Legalizing homework will guarantee that the poor remain poor."

Many speakers emphasized that homework, child labor, and subminimum wages are already widespread in the garment industry.

New York State Attorney General Robert Abrams testified that he was "firmly opposed to the certification system that the U.S. Department of Labor proposes as an enforcement mechanism after the homework ban is repealed. Experience shows that only a fraction of homework employers will seek certification. Under the newly created state registration program, for example, an estimated 3,000 apparel industry employers have failed to register with the State Apparel Industry Task Force."

A garment worker who supports James Harris, the Socialist Workers Party's mayoral candidate, testified and read a statement by Harris opposing the proposal to legalize homework. Harris, she said, believes that "legalizing homework will mean the expansion and deepening of superexploitation of women, immigrants, other workers, and even children." This, she stated, is "a serious challenge to garment workers, their unions, and the labor movement as a whole."

The statement, she explained, was addressed to garment workers and other workers and would be distributed in Spanish and English by supporters of the socialist campaign throughout the city.

Socialist candidate condemns homework

The following are excerpts from a statement by James Harris, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of New York. The full statement was presented March 30 to Department of Labor hearings on homework and is being distributed to workers throughout New York.

The threat of reintroduction of legal homework takes place after 15 years of attacks by the bosses against the wages and working conditions of working people in this country. It takes place at a time of economic crisis — marked by the stock market crash, skyrocketing corporate debt, and the Third World debt crisis. As profit rates have declined the bosses are reintroducing the most primitive forms of exploitation, such as child labor and work in the home.

This is already happening in garment and threatens to be extended to other industries as well. It is estimated that thousands of garment workers now work in their

homes in New York City. They work for wages that are frequently under the minimum and in conditions that are substandard. These workers, toiling in the isolation of their homes, are without the elementary protection that comes from working with others in a common factory.

Many of the homeworkers are children under 16, who are not protected because they are isolated. This is parallel to the use of child labor in the factories themselves, where it is estimated that the bosses hire children in 3,000 garment factories in New York City.

The government claims that bosses hiring homeworkers will now be licensed and inspected. However, the government has weakened its enforcement of laws on minimum wage, child labor, and dangerous working conditions in the factories themselves. This is because the government will not enforce laws that protect working people unless it is forced to by the

awareness and actions of working people themselves acting through their unions. Union power along these lines, today, has been revealed to be very weak.

The union movement is suffering a crisis of perspective. Its central campaign — to join with the bosses in a campaign against workers in other countries, under the guise of fighting imports, has left the labor movement disoriented and disarmed.

What is needed is a reorientation of the labor movement to organize all workers under a program of social and political demands that unite us in action against the bosses and their government. To begin dealing with the problem of homework, for example, a massive campaign around a whole set of social programs is needed:

- to enforce and raise the minimum wage;
- for child-care facilities that are affordable and accessible;
- for the complete legal protection of undocumented immigrant workers to enable them to work in this country and to join unions.

New York protest demands city funds for AIDS crisis

BY GEORGE KONTANIS

NEW YORK — Some 3,000 people protested outside City Hall here March 28 to demand that city government provide the funds and health-care resources to meet the growing AIDS crisis.

The demonstration, organized by the AIDS Coalition to Unleash Our Power (ACTUP), drew participants from other groups, including student organizations from New York University, Baruch College, and Columbia University Teacher's College.

The action was the largest yet in the city to demand relief for people with AIDS.

"What do we want? Money for AIDS — When do we want it? Now! Health care is a right, act up, fight back, fight AIDS," the protesters chanted.

The demonstrators charged Mayor Edward Koch's administration with criminal neglect in the AIDS crisis, which has claimed 10,000 lives here since 1981.

Some 10,000 more have AIDS.

Pointing to the epidemic's cold-blooded toll, an information leaflet distributed to

participants and passersby noted that 350,000 men, women, and children are infected with the HIV virus that causes AIDS, 70 percent of the city's 200,000 needle drug-users are infected, and by 1992 an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 homeless people will have AIDS.

The protest demanded that New York City fund a full range of community-based medical care services now and provide more staff and beds in the hospitals to meet badly overcrowded conditions that threaten to lead to a collapse of New York's medical services. They also called for safe and appropriate housing for all people with AIDS, free treatment on demand for drug-users, and preventative education that teaches protection, not morality.

While demonstrators picketed City Hall for most of the morning, many activists took part in a nonviolent attempt to block the Brooklyn Bridge and the streets leading to City Hall. Some 200 were arrested. All but two were released after receiving tickets for disorderly conduct.



Militant/Jon Hillson

Statement by Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of New York, James Harris, was presented to Labor Department hearings. Harris called on labor movement to oppose homework and campaign for social programs needed to protect workers.

El Salvador court reverses release of rightist kidnappers

BY CINDY JAQUITH

SAN SALVADOR — The decision by a judge to drop kidnapping charges against eight men associated with right-wing death squads here has brought to the fore the political crisis El Salvador's rulers face over the issue of human rights.

The "kidnap case," as it is called, involved four military officers and four others who were charged with kidnapping wealthy industrialists in the early 1980s for ransom. The kidnappers often pretended to be members of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN), which is fighting a guerrilla war against the Salvadoran government. All the men charged were supporters of the Arena party, which has just won presidential elections here.

In 1986 several members of the gang were arrested and jailed as part of a U.S.-backed effort to sanitize the image of the Salvadoran government and armed forces. Some of those indicted were never arrested and are believed to have fled to the United States.

One of those jailed was businessman Orlando Llovera Balleste, a close associate of Roberto D'Aubuisson. D'Aubuisson is the founder of Arena and considered the leader of the death squads that assassinated Oscar Romero, the Catholic archbishop who spoke out against their terror, as well as many workers, peasants, and others who sympathized with the FMLN-led struggles against the government.

Another accused in the kidnappings was Lt. Isidro López Sibrián, a former National Guard intelligence officer linked to the 1981 murders of the head of the Salvadoran government's land reform program and two U.S. citizens who were working in El Salvador for the American Institute for Free Labor Development of the AFL-CIO.

Of the others charged, one was an army major, one a colonel, and one a lieutenant. In addition to kidnapping, they were charged with gunrunning and car theft. Several made confessions at the time of their capture.

The case has been in various courts for the last three years, but never came to trial. One of the judges in the case, Jorge Alberto Serrano, was assassinated last May, the day after he refused to grant amnesty to the kidnappers.

Judge Héctor Larios, the most recent judge to get the case, dropped all charges against the eight March 31, saying there was insufficient evidence and that their constitutional rights had been violated.

Reaction was swift, including from capitalists and big landowners who support the Arena party and are anxious to overcome its image as "the party of the death

squads," but who were also embittered by the kidnappings of members of their own class. The National Association of Private Enterprise published a full-page ad in the daily papers denouncing the judge's order. The ad said the kidnap case had produced "a social scandal here and internationally."

A major spokesman for the ruling Christian Democratic Party, Culture and Communications Minister Roberto Viera, also condemned the ruling, blaming it on Arena. If such things continue under the incoming Arena administration, he warned, the population will conclude there is no justice in El Salvador and that "the FMLN is the one favoring human rights."

President José Napoleón Duarte said the ruling "worried" him and could have "grave consequences."

The Arena party responded quickly with a full-page ad urging punishment of Judge Larios and revocation of his ruling. Arena leader Alfredo Cristiani, who takes office as El Salvador's president June 1, called the ruling "surprising" and said he favored "improving the country's system of justice." Arena leader D'Aubuisson made no comment on the case.

Meanwhile, unnamed "sources" in the Arena party told the daily *El Diario* that the kidnappers' release was actually a plot to discredit Arena and Cristiani's upcoming visit to the United States to meet with President George Bush. The sources said that



Victims of death-squad killers in El Salvador. Courts have refused to act in cases where the victims have been workers or peasants.

Judge Larios was in league with the Christian Democrats.

Gregorio Rosa Chávez, auxiliary archbishop of the Catholic Church, addressed the kidnap case in his April 2 sermon. He pointed out that Judge Larios has refused to act on another case before his court, the murder of three peasants in La Puerta del Diablo by the armed forces on Jan. 31, 1988.

Humberto Centeno, an executive committee member of the National Unity of Salvadoran Workers (UNTS), told the *Militant* the case showed how the Salvadoran courts protect members of the death squads

and armed forces, while denying justice to many worker and peasant activists here. Centeno, who has himself served prison time for his union activity, said most of those in the country's jails "are working people, many falsely accused and all being mistreated."

On April 3 the Arena-dominated Supreme Court revoked Judge Larios' release of the kidnappers, removed him from his court responsibilities, and suspended his right to practice law pending an investigation. Two of the gang had already been released from jail, however, and it is not clear if they will be returned to prison.

Communists run for Québec assembly

Continued from back page

ment as a whole to defend the rights of the most oppressed," continued Prairie. "This is crucial to unifying the working class. It means fighting for affirmative action legislation — such as hiring quotas for Blacks and women — designed to overcome the impact of decades of discrimination by the employers."

"The RWL is explaining to workers across Canada why the labor movement as a whole needs to defend the struggle of Québécois against their oppression. Our unions must oppose the efforts of the federal government to roll back Québec's Law 101, one of the most important affirmative action laws yet adopted in Canada," said Prairie.

However, the RWL is also explaining why the March 12 Montréal language-rights demonstration "weakened the struggle against anti-Québécois discrimination and placed obstacles in the path of working-class unity," said Prairie. The central

demand of the demonstration was for maintenance of those sections of Law 101 that ban the use of languages other than French on public and commercial signs. "The idea of French unilingualism," Prairie insisted, "aids Ottawa's efforts to deepen divisions in the working class along linguistic lines because it violates the democratic rights of other workers, including immigrant workers."

Against deportations

"The majority of my coworkers at the garment shop are immigrants and refugees from the Third World," said Dugré. "The government's new restrictions on immigrants and refugees entering Canada aims to terrorize them into accepting the worst jobs at the lowest pay. Every deportation is a blow against the democratic rights of all working people." The RWL explains why it is in the interests of all workers to fight to open Canada's borders to immigrants and refugees.

"Canada's rulers are part of a world system of exploitation and oppression run for the profit of a handful of billionaire and millionaire families in the imperialist countries," said Dugré. "This is why working people here need to fight to cancel the Third World debt that bleeds the semicolonial countries dry and reinforces our class enemies here." It is also in our class interests, he said, to fight to force Ottawa to carry out sanctions against racist South Africa, support the demand of the Palestine Liberation Organization for a Palestinian state, and send massive economic aid to revolutionary Nicaragua."

Workers and farmers should govern

"Québec's Liberal government, and the Conservative federal government in Ottawa defend the class interests of the bosses," stated Prairie. "The Parti Québécois reflects the interests of a sector of the bosses who speak French. Recently the leaders of Québec's main union federations all but called on workers to back the Parti Québécois in the next election."

"We are opposed to that. The RWL explains that we need a government of workers and farmers in order to join the fight for humanity's socialist future."

"This is why the RWL aims to get out the truth about what Cuba's workers and farmers have accomplished through 30 years of their socialist revolution," said Dugré. "Because Cuba's workers and farmers are mobilizing in their millions to build a society without oppression and exploitation, more and more working people will look to Cuba's example as an alternative to the crisis-ridden capitalist system. We will explain why working people in this country need to defend Cuba's revolution as part of the fight to defend and extend the rights of working people in this country."

"Many of the themes of our campaign are summed up in the Action Program to Confront the Coming Economic Crisis that was published by Pathfinder publishers," said Prairie. The Action Program pamphlet "outlines how working people can unite on a world scale against our common class enemies. We will be working hard throughout the campaign to convince those who agree with the Action Program to join the Revolutionary Workers League and the Young Socialists."

Candidate's views on French-language laws

Continued from back page

majority of immigrants to Québec choose English as their second language. To avoid the disappearance of Québec as a distinct nation, the Québec government should control immigration and encourage Québécois women to have more babies.

This documentary is a frontal attack on a woman's right to decide herself if she wants children without interference by the state. It directly buttresses the Canadian government's new laws imposing restrictions on immigrants and refugees.

However, not one leader of the labor movement condemned the program. The three big union federations built the March 12 demonstration by insisting on the importance of imposing French-only signs, in order to "send a clear message" to English-speaking and immigrant workers: "In Québec, everything happens in French."

Two days after the demonstration, the heads of the three main trade union federations all but called on their members to vote PQ in the next provincial elections, in particular because of the PQ's language

policy. This orientation is a deadly trap for working people.

The fight for class solidarity

The source of national and language oppression of the Québécois is the Canadian ruling class, its social and economic system — capitalism — and its federal state and government in Ottawa. They must be the target of the struggle, not women, immigrants, and "English-speaking" people.

As working men and women, immigrants can be won to support the fight of the Québécois for their rights, including the need to learn French themselves, and to apply special measures to overcome the effects of discrimination suffered by those who speak French.

The vast majority of immigrants come from countries dominated by imperialism, including by Canadian imperialism. They are victims of the same class of exploiters who oppress the Québécois.

But these workers cannot be won to the fight against national and language oppression of the Québécois through coercion or repression. The Québec labor movement must convince them politically to do so.

Yugoslavia gov't stages bloody crackdown on Albanian minority

BY FRED FELDMAN

At least 29 people have been reported killed as riot police and troops put down nationalist protest demonstrations in Kosovo, a region in southern Yugoslavia bordering on Albania. The region's ethnic Albanian people, who make up about 85 percent of Kosovo's population of 1.7 million, were protesting constitutional amendments that have stripped the region of almost all of its former autonomy.

Under the 1974 Yugoslav constitution, Kosovo became an autonomous region, while remaining part of Serbia. Serbia is one of the six republics that make up Yugoslavia.

Yugoslavia is an East European country of about 24 million people where capitalism was overthrown after World War II by a popular revolution. It is governed as a federation by the League of Communists.

Now the regime has amended the constitution, turning over control of Kosovo's police, judiciary, civil defense, schools, and political appointees to the Serbian government. The measures allow the Serbian government to introduce at will further changes into Kosovo's status. The amendments also apply to Vojvodina, another formerly autonomous region within Serbia.

Wave of protest

The changes have been greeted with a wave of protest in Kosovo. In November, several days of protest marches took place after the Yugoslav parliament adopted the amendments and party leaders in Kosovo were forced out.

In February a walkout by zinc miners sparked a general strike. The Yugoslav government responded by sending in 15,000 troops; imposing a state of emergency that banned public gatherings.

Azem Vlas, former head of the League of Communists in Kosovo, was among those arrested on charges of instigating the protests. Vlas had been removed from his position in a purge of those regarded as too sympathetic to Albanian demands.

Albanian students

The next wave of revolt began on March

23 when riot police attacked 1,000 Albanian students who were staging a protest on the university campus in the capital of Pristina. Another 20,000 people massed in the town of Urosevac.

The next day, with the parliament building surrounded with steel-helmeted police armed with automatic rifles, Kosovo's parliament voted nearly unanimously to endorse the constitutional changes. They became law on March 28 when the parliament of the Serbian republic endorsed them.

During the next days, the protests continued.

On March 27 police opened fire on crowds of protesters in Pristina, killing at least nine. By the following day at least 21 people had been killed, two of them police.

The police used bullets that expand on impact, maximizing the extent and seriousness of injuries.

Curfew

At least eight more Albanians reportedly died as a result of their injuries over the following days. The regime shut down schools, imposed an 8:00 p.m. curfew, and barred gatherings of more than three people.

No further mass protests have been reported, although police said they dispersed small groups of ethnic Albanian protesters. At least 100 people had been arrested in the town of Urosevac.

A hospitalized 12-year-old said that he and his friends were walking home in the village of Zur "when the police saw us [and] just opened fire." A nine-year-old boy was killed. Others described being shot without warning after throwing stones at police. On March 29 Yugoslav Deputy Prime Minister Aleksander Mitrovic claimed that the police killed only one person, and that antigovernment Albanian snipers had killed the rest. Other officials insisted the police had fired only in self-defense.

The government charged that the government of neighboring Albania was responsible for the unrest. Officials claimed

that the Albanian government had massed troops at the border.

Slobodan Milosevic

Slobodan Milosevic, who heads the League of Communists in Serbia, rallied Serbian nationalist support for ending the autonomy of Kosovo by claiming that the traditionally dominant Serbians there were now being persecuted by ethnic Albanians. He has called for the arrest of Albanians responsible for "terror and genocide" against Serbians.

Albanians are economically the worst-off section of Yugoslavia's population. They are predominantly Muslim, (most Yugoslavs are Eastern Orthodox or Roman Catholic) and the most substantial sector of the Yugoslav population that speaks a non-Slavic language.

Kosovo has been hard hit by the economic crisis that is devastating much of Yugoslavia today. Unemployment in the region stands at 35 percent, and per capita income is one-third the average for Yugoslavia as a whole.



Serbian party head Slobodan Milosevic

—WORLD NEWS BRIEFS—

Workers battle police at S. Korean shipyard

More than 10,000 South Korean riot police, in full battle gear, fired tear gas as they assaulted striking workers at the country's largest shipyard March 30. The workers fought back with stones, gasoline bombs, and sticks.

About 700 strikers were arrested and 20 wounded. According to a state radio report, at least one striker was hospitalized in serious condition. The police have said that only 40 or 50 of those arrested would be charged and that the others would be released. The strike leaders escaped arrest according to the police.

Workers at the shipyard, owned by Hyundai Heavy Industries, have been on strike for more than three months. The company claims that the strike has cost it \$1 billion in lost sales and production.

Earlier this year President Roh Tae Woo used force to break up a strike by 5,000 Seoul subway workers. On March 24 he vetoed a bill providing a shorter workweek and allowing teachers and other government employees to form unions. Roh has also outfitted the police with M-16 rifles, with orders to shoot firebomb throwers.

At the center of these battles have been workers' demands for wage increases. The Federation of Korean Trade Unions is demanding an average increase of 26.8 percent as compared to the 12.9 percent being offered by the companies.

Guatemalan prison uprising ends

An estimated 100 prisoners ended a five-day uprising against conditions in Guatemala's Pavón prison. The revolt began March 26 while hundreds of relatives were paying Easter visits to jailed relatives. At least four guards and three inmates were killed when the prisoners broke into the armory and seized 200 rifles.

The prisoners issued demands for better food, reduction of sentences, changes in prison officials, and improved living conditions. A report by a local radio station that the prisoners had demanded a plane to fly to Cuba was later said to be untrue.

The government of President Vinicio Cerezo signed an agreement with the prisoners to replace officials and the entire guard corps at the prison and to "guarantee the absolute physical integrity" of those who took part in the uprising. The government turned down a demand for a guaranteed pardon for crimes committed during the revolt, saying that

only congress could pardon crimes.

At first the government claimed that some 600 relatives of the inmates, mostly women and children, were being held as hostages. Later, Carlos Ramos Moncada, inspector-general of the National Prison System, told the Associated Press, "They remain there by choice. The family members inside are backing the movement."

Interior Minister Roberto Valle Valdivia and three representatives of the inmates signed the agreement a day after authorities cut off food, water, and electricity at the prison. The Pavón Model Correction Facility, designed to hold 800 persons, had about 1,350 inmates when the revolt took place.

S. Africa to tighten down on detainees

The apartheid regime in South Africa announced that it would impose tighter controls on detainees who have gone on hunger strike. The announcement followed the March 29 escape of detained hunger striker Simon Ntombela, a teacher and leader of the anti-apartheid South African Youth Congress. Ntombela has sought refuge in the U.S. consulate in Johannesburg.

On March 31 South African government officials announced that Ntombela would not be rearrested.

Ntombela traveled 400 miles to the U.S. consulate from the eastern coastal port of Durban after escaping in his pajamas during treatment at Shifa Hospital.

Four other hunger strikers escaped on March 20. The four were undergoing treatment at Hillbrow Hospital in Johannesburg and escaped by walking out and hailing a taxi. They traveled 38 miles to Pretoria and took refuge in the West German embassy. The four left the building after embassy officials were given assurances by the South African government that they would not be arrested.

The four detainees also demanded the release of Sandile Thusi, who began a hunger strike on February 18. Thusi, whose condition was serious, suspended his hunger strike March 26 after a series of meetings between his lawyers; Frank Chikane, general secretary of the South African Council of Churches; and South African Minister of Law and Order Adrian Vlok.

An estimated 800 to 1,000 people were being held in detention without charges at the beginning of the year. Some had been held for three years. On January 23 hundreds of detainees went on hunger strike to force the government to release them. South African officials have said that 580 detainees have been released.

Swedish court restricts Kurds, pins terrorist label on them

BY ANITA ÖSTLING

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — The supreme court here has ruled that nine Kurds living in Sweden will go to prison if they break government-imposed restrictions on their activities.

The case grew out of a December 1984 decision by the Swedish government to expel the nine from the country as "security risks."

But under Swedish law the decision could not be implemented because the Kurds risk death penalties in their home country, Turkey.

Instead, the government placed the Kurds under "community arrest." This has meant severe restrictions. They were not allowed to leave their community and could not switch jobs or change their address. They were also instructed to report to the police three times a week.

The Swedish government has branded the nine Kurds as terrorists according to provisions in the Law on Foreigners. Paragraph 47, the so-called terrorist paragraph, is notorious for a number of things:

- It applies only to non-Swedish citizens — only immigrants can be terrorists and criminalized as a group.
- It brands people as "presumptive terrorists likely to commit violent acts in the future." In other words, a person is sentenced and branded for something they are expected to do and not for anything they have actually done.
- It does not allow for a court trial where the accused can openly defend themselves. Instead, the hearings are carried out behind closed doors and the reports are secret. The decisions following the hearings are made by the government and not by any

court or public jury.

The Swedish government is the only government in Europe to declare the Kurdistan Workers Party a terrorist organization. It is for alleged membership in the party and presumption of future violent acts that the nine Kurds have been sentenced to community arrest. The reasons and evidence for this action are secret.

After four years, the Swedish Supreme Court agreed to try the case of two of the Kurds.

In a joint statement prior to the Supreme Court decision, the nine Kurds said: "Community arrest has been applied in one case only: that of us. Despite four years of community arrest we still have no idea of what we are accused."

"Our only crime is being Kurds," they continued. "Were we terrorists, as the government and the Security Police maintain, we would have carried out some violent international action like assassination of a diplomat, hijacking a plane, bank robbery, kidnapping, or sabotage. And had we committed such crimes we would have been tried in court and sentenced."

"But during those four years none of us has gone to trial. We ask Swedish authorities: How can it be that we who are accused of such a severe crime as being terrorists are not tried for it and that the accusations against us remain secret?"

The Kurds have reported the Swedish government and the "terrorist paragraph" to the European Court in Strasbourg, France, for violation of the Convention of Human Rights.

Only the Swedish government, however, can lift the community arrest and the terrorist branding of the nine Kurds.

ARIZONA

Phoenix

Revolutionary Cuba Today: Advancing a Socialist Society and the International Struggle of Working People. Speaker: Rena Cacoulios, 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

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

African Roots of Cuban Society and the Struggle Against Racism. Speakers: Rafael López Valdés, noted Cuban ethnographer; Yvonne Golden; Don Rojas, press secretary to Prime Minister Maurice Bishop in Grenada's revolutionary government; Coro Folclórico Afro-cubano Kindembo with John Santos. Sat., April 8, 7:30 p.m. Bethel AME Church, 970 Laguna (near Golden Gate). Donation: \$4-\$10. Sponsors: Venceremos Brigade, Committee to Celebrate the 30th Anniversary of the Cuban Revolution. For more information call (415) 431-4617.

The Philippines Today. Speakers: Francis Calputura, Alliance for Philippine Concerns, Coalition for a Nuclear-Free and Independent Pacific; Peter Thierjung, Socialist Workers Party, recently visited Philippines as Pathfinder representative. Translation to Spanish. Fri., April 14, 7 p.m. 3284 23rd St. (near Mission). Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (415) 282-6255.

Concert: Cutumay Camones from El Salvador. Sat., April 15, 8 p.m. York Theatre, 2789 24th St. Tickets \$8 in advance, \$10 at door. For more information call (415) 648-5510.

FLORIDA

Miami

Censorship: A Question of Democratic Rights. Speakers: Sonia Marryshow, Maurice Bishop Patriotic Movement; Ray Moorer, president Black Student Union, Miami Dade Community College; Tim Schmand, Miami Writers Group; Frederick Lerouge, spokesperson for Pathfinder Books, member United Steelworkers of America Local 6694. Translation to Spanish and French. Sat., April 8, 7:30 p.m. 137 NE 54th St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Pathfinder Books. For more information call (305) 756-1020.

Defend Abortion Rights. A report back on April 9 abortion rights march in Washington, D.C. Speakers: Penny Gardner, Dade County National Organization for Women president; Zena McFadden, Socialist Workers Party, and member International Association of Machinists Local 702 on strike against Eastern Airlines. Translation to Spanish and French. Sat., April 15, 7:30 p.m. 137 NE 54th St. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (305) 756-1020.

GEORGIA

Atlanta

El Salvador: The Struggle for Peace. Speakers: Roger Friedman, representative Atlanta Committee on Latin America; Heather Dean, Emory Central America Network; Miguel Zárate, 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.

IOWA

Des Moines

Support the Strikers at Eastern Airlines. Sat., April 15, 7:30 p.m. 2105 Forest Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (515) 246-1695.

MARYLAND

Baltimore

Support the Strikers at Eastern Airlines. Sat., April 15, 6 p.m. 2913 Greenmount Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (301) 235-0013.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

Haiti Today. Speakers: Al Cappe, *Militant* correspondent just returned from Haiti; Yves Isador, Committee in Solidarity with Haiti (COSAH). Sat., April 15, 7:30 p.m. 605 Massachusetts Ave. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (617) 247-6772.

MICHIGAN

Detroit

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

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.

NEW YORK

Brooklyn

Haiti Progrès is Having a Birthday. Come celebrate its 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

El Salvador Post Elections; Nicaragua Post Hurricane. Speakers: Oscar Orellana, executive director, Secretariat for Promotion and Protection of Human Rights in El Salvador; Grethel Vargas, first secretary of Nicaraguan mission to UN; music by Four Parts of the Movement. Sat., April 8, 7:30 p.m. St. Peter's Church, 346

W 20 St. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Chelsea/El Jicara Sister City Project, CISPES, others. For more information call (212) 255-9236.

Support Striking Eastern Workers: Help Stop Union-Busting. Artists meeting with union representatives. Tues., April 11, 7 p.m. Local 1199, 310 W 43 St. (near 8th Ave.). Sponsors: Ventana, Artmakers. For more information call (201) 733-4959.

A Night in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador. Featuring Crowsfeet Dance Collective and Human Condition. 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 door. Sponsor: Central American Refugee Network. For information and tickets call (516) 481-3959, (212) 941-7962, (212) 941-9636.

The Struggle for Women's Equality. A citywide socialist educational conference. 1. Forum: "The Ongoing Fight for Abortion Rights: The Stakes for Working People." Speaker: Estelle DeBates, Socialist Workers Party, member International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union. Sat., April 15, 7:30 p.m. 2. "The Revolution Cannot Triumph Without the Emancipation of Women." A class based on a selection from *Thomas Sankara Speaks*, presented by Andrea Morell, Socialist Workers Party. Sun., April 16, 10 a.m. 3. "The Capitalist Ideological Offensive Against Women Today." A class based on the introduction to *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women*, presented by Sam Manuel, Socialist Workers Party. All events held at 191 7th Ave., 2nd floor. Donation: \$5 for forum, \$2.50 for each class. For more information call (212) 675-6740 or (718) 398-6983.

OREGON

Portland

El Salvador: The Struggle for Peace. Speakers: David Fierberg, Oregon organizer of Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador; Michael Connor, Reed College student deported by Salvadoran police while on fact-finding tour. Sat., April 8, 7:30 p.m. 2730 NE Union. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (503) 287-7416.

PENNSYLVANIA

Pittsburgh

The World Economic and Social Crisis: The Battles Ahead for Working People. Speaker: Jim Little, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor. Sat., April 15, 7:30 p.m. 4905 Penn Ave., Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (412) 362-6767.

TEXAS

Houston

The Alaskan Oil Spill: An Exxon-Made Disaster. Speaker: Chuck Guerra, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., April 8, 7:30 p.m. 4806 Alameda. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum/Foro Perspectiva Mundial. For more information call (713) 522-8054.

What's At Stake in the Eastern Strike. Speakers: Michele McKenzie, president Houston-area National Organization for Women; Katy Karlin, Socialist Workers Party, member Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers. Translation to Spanish. Sat., April 15, 7:30 p.m. 4806 Alameda. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum/Foro Perspectiva Mundial. For more information call (713) 522-8054.

UTAH

Salt Lake City

Behind the Controversy Around Salman Rushdie: Should Working People Support

Censorship? Speaker: Dave Salner, Socialist Workers Party. Translation to Spanish. Sat., April 8, 7:30 p.m. 147 E 900 S. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (801) 355-1124.

A Report Back on March on Washington for Women's Rights/Women's Lives. A panel discussion by local participants in April 9 march. Translation to Spanish. Sat., April 15, 7:30 p.m. 147 E 900 S. Donation: \$2. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (801) 355-1124.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

Ten Years After the Grenada Revolution: The Caribbean and Central America Today. Speaker: Don Rojas, secretary for propaganda and information of the Anti-imperialist Organizations of the Caribbean and Central America, editor of *One People, One Destiny*. Sat., April 15, 7:30 p.m. Kane Hall, Room 210, University of Washington. Sponsors: Young Socialist Alliance and ASUW. For more information call (206) 723-5330.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Demonstration Against Apartheid. Sat., April 22, 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. South African embassy, 3051 Massachusetts Ave. NW. Speaker: D.C. Rep. Walter Fauntroy, founder and co-chair of Free South Africa Movement. Sponsor: National Black Workers Alliance of IBM Employees. For more information call (301) 249-1665 or 320-3329.

BRITAIN

London

Gorbachev and Perestroika: Is This a New Way Forward for Workers? Speaker: Tony Hunt, member Transport and General Workers Union. Fri., April 14, 7:30 p.m. 47 The Cut, SE 1. Donation: £1. Sponsor: New International Forum. For more information call 01-401-2293.

Manchester

Gorbachev and Perestroika: Is This a New Way Forward for Workers? Speaker: Tony Hunt, member Transport and General Workers Union. Wed., April 12, 7:30 p.m. Mechanics Institute, Princess St.

CANADA

Toronto

Grenada: 10th Anniversary of Revolution. Eyewitness report by Margaret Manwaring, Revolutionary Workers League, participated in Pathfinder delegation to Grenada, member United Steelworkers of America. Sat., April 8, 7:30 p.m. 410 Adelaide St. W, Suite 400. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (416) 861-1399.

Corporate Mergers, Takeovers, Plant Closings: Is "Free Trade" to Blame? Speaker: George Rose, Revolutionary Workers League, member United Steelworkers of America. Sat., April 15, 7:30 p.m. 410 Adelaide St. W, Suite 400. Donation: \$3. Sponsor: Militant Labor Forum. For more information call (416) 861-1399.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

Pathfinder Mural Slideshow Launching. Featuring slideshow of the New York mural and presentations by three of the participating artists, Sally Griffin, John Walsh, and Fatu Feu'u. Music by Beaver, Polynesian supper. Mon., April 17, 6:30 p.m. End of arcade in Maota Samoa, 283 Karangahape Rd. Donation: \$10.

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SWEDEN

Stockholm: P.O. Box 5024, S-12505 Älvsjö. Tel: (08) 722-9342.

No hiding place — A new IRS regulation instructs employees that they should be able to resume tax collection within 30 days after a nuclear attack. In a "disaster area," the reg explains, it may be



Harry Ring

difficult to collect delinquent taxes, so the priority should be current bills. In "substantially unimpaired" areas, "enforced collection of delinquent accounts will

continue."

Honest uncle — The IRS said it's dropping a policy that bars employees from notifying people who overpay on their taxes. The action came after an employee publicly exposed the practice. And, it was assured, there will be no reprisals against the whistleblower.

Rules are rules — An official of the Air Line Pilots Association explained why that Delta pilot walked off the plane when he learned Eastern's union-busting prez, Frank Lorenzo, was aboard. Lorenzo travels with armed bodyguards, and pilots have the right not to fly someone who may prove dangerous to passengers. Or, equally per-

tinent, someone he dislikes so intensely that it may affect his flying performance.

Preach, sister — In North Belle Vernon, Pennsylvania, Robin Michael and Nancy Kinik were rejected three times by the all-male volunteer fire company. Said the chief, "When you have women in a fire department, there's the possibility of hanky-panky." Responded Kinik, "I don't know what kind of dirty, sleazy mind he has, but I don't like him saying that."

Not under capitalism — "Being poor is not a legal defense." — Steven Ginsberg, a landlords' lawyer, commenting on

the finding that some 26 percent of New York's homeless lost their apartments through evictions.

"To your health" — Asserting a lack of funds, the Environmental Protection Agency neglected to act on more than 100,000 violations in water systems serving 37 million people. Also, the EPA is not enforcing water-quality regulations on planes, trains, or buses.

Thanks — Based on industry estimates the EPA now finds that the amount of toxic chemicals spewed into the air is three times greater than previously believed — some 2.4 billion pounds of substances that cause cancer, birth defects, and more. The agency says that if it weren't for its efforts, the

situation would be 40 percent worse.

You can always count on cops — The Philadelphia police department is planning to cut off \$13,500 annual benefits for retired police dogs. The money provides dog biscuits and veterinary care.

Thought for the week — "What is going on here is extreme bigotry... as well as absolute hypocrisy about academic freedom. They had Oliver North here, paid him \$50,000, and touted it as academic freedom." — Mary Daly, feminist theologian at Boston College. Twenty years ago, broad protests blocked the Catholic-run school from firing her. Now, for the second time, she's been denied full professorship.

South Africa threatens Namibia independence fight

Continued from front page

that according to reports he received from inside Namibia, 48 SWAPO supporters celebrating the implementation of Resolution 435 were killed in the South African attacks.

U.S. and Britain back South Africa

British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher was in Namibia the day of the South African attacks. She assured South African officials of British support for discussing their claims in the UN Security Council.

U.S. State Department officials backed the South African claims in an April 3 statement. A department spokesman dismissed the possibility that South Africa orchestrated the fighting, asserting that it was incapable of contriving a raid on that scale.

But a South African chief inspector in Namibia, Derek Brune, said his forces had made "contingency plans" for a possible clash with SWAPO fighters. Another chief inspector added that the army and police were attempting to track down SWAPO troops.

Units of SWAPO fighters have operated inside Namibia for more than two decades. The South African government has demanded that a provision of the cease-fire that requires SWAPO troops in Angola to remain some 90 miles north of the Namibian border should also be applied to SWAPO forces operating in Namibia. SWAPO has said that its troops in Namibia should receive the same treatment as South African troops in the country and be quartered in bases under UN supervision.

UN calls on South African troops

Despite a provision in the cease-fire agreement that requires South African army units to be confined to their bases

after April 1, UN officials in Namibia have given South Africa permission to "draw on its military forces if the police are unable to maintain law and order," according to a *New York Times* report. The apartheid regime announced that six battalions of its territorial forces had been activated.

At the UN, SWAPO Foreign Secretary Theo-Ben Gurirab called the UN action "unconscionable. The deployment of South African troops legitimizes their authority to carry out atrocities and run amok," he said. Gurirab noted that as a party to the cease-fire agreement SWAPO should have been consulted on any decision to deploy South African troops.

UN officials justified their decision to call on South African troops because the number of UN troops that had arrived was inadequate. But Gurirab explained that UN forces faced no danger from SWAPO troops. He said SWAPO fighters ambushed in Namibia were acting on orders to seek out the UN forces and ask to be confined to bases.

Only 1,000 of the 4,650 UN troops and 2,500 civilians who are to oversee implementation of Resolution 435 had arrived in Namibia by April 1. No UN forces were deployed in the combat areas at the time of the South African attacks.

"The United Nations should already have had people in place all over the country," Gurirab said. "These incidents prove that we need the full implementation of 7,500 peacekeepers." That was the number of UN troops originally proposed to be sent to Namibia under Resolution 435. It was reduced to 4,650 by the five permanent members of the UN Security Council — the United States, the Soviet Union, China, Britain, and France. Each of the permanent members has a veto on Security Council matters.

The Movement of Nonaligned Countries and the Organization of African Unity, which opposed the action taken by the permanent members of the Security Council, stressed that the South African armed presence in Namibia had increased since Resolution 435 had first been adopted.

Militarization of Namibia

South Africa's militarization of Namibia is extensive. There are 50,000 South African troops in the country. In a move to "Namibianize" the war, the South African government has also built an estimated 24,000-member South West Africa Territorial Force of mostly Black Namibians. There are railway, traffic, and municipal police units, as well as several "tribal home guards." There is approximately one soldier for every 14 Namibian adults and children in the country.

The South African government promised to dissolve its 1,000-member counter-insurgency unit known as Koevoet. But instead, its members were reassigned to regular police units. Koevoet is an acronym that means crowbar in Afrikaans, a language originating from Dutch settlers in South Africa.

Some 750,000 people, more than half the country's population, lives in the "op-

erational" combat zones in northern Namibia. The war has resulted in 11,000 deaths and 100,000 refugees. The cost of the war to the apartheid regime was officially estimated at \$1.5 million a day in 1984-85. Some estimates, however, say the figure is twice that.

The South African-run armed forces also play a weighty role in Namibia's economy. The territorial force, for example, is the country's largest employer.

SWAPO rallies

Although SWAPO has an armed wing, it has not been outlawed as a political organization in Namibia. Some 6,000 SWAPO supporters rallied in Katutura on April 1 to mark the beginning of the independence plan. The liberation group boycotted an assembly to welcome the arrival of the UN special representative in Windhoek, the capital city. SWAPO said that the police had planned a disruption of the event for which SWAPO would be blamed.

A *Washington Post* correspondent reported that many pedestrians were wearing the red, blue, and green colors of SWAPO and were raising their fists in the black-power salute, shouting "Amandla!" (power) and "Viva Namibia, one people, one nation!"

—10 AND 25 YEARS AGO—

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE
April 10, 1979

MIDDLETOWN, Pa., April 1 — Fear and disbelief grip central Pennsylvania as the possibility of a devastating core meltdown at a nuclear plant several miles from here has yet to be ruled out.

And anger. No one told people here that anything like this could happen. And now that it has, no one is telling them what is going on.

All they really know is that at any time they may be evacuated from their homes on two hours' notice. Thousands have already fled, in addition to several hundred pregnant women and children staying in nearby evacuation centers.

The federal government has refused to take any steps to prevent a recurrence of the Three Mile Island accident. There are now 72 nuclear power plants licensed to operate in this country, many of them of a type similar to Three Mile Island. Six are identical to it.

Both President James Carter and Nuclear Regulatory Commission Director of Operations Harold Denton have refused to order the immediate shutdown of a single reactor.

Seeking to shore up Washington's rapidly waning credibility, President Carter visited the facility today and then held a short, no-time-for-questions news conference at Middletown's Borough Hall.

It is "quite safe for all concerned," he told townspeople, who have suffered through a mire of confusing reports and outright lies from plant and government officials.

Unabashedly taking the side of the nuclear industry, Carter proclaimed it "too early yet to be making judgments about the

lessons of this nuclear incident."

"Well, the people of this town are passing judgment," Middletown resident Darlene Snyder told the *Militant* shortly after Carter's appearance here.



The April 1 overthrow of Brazilian President Joao Goulart by a right-wing military coup has been accompanied by a shameless campaign of falsification by the U.S. government and the press of this country. The purpose is to deceive the American people into thinking that what has happened in Brazil is a victory for "moderation." But what has actually happened is that a gang of Brazilian John Birchers have taken over by force and instituted a totalitarian witch-hunt against moderates as well as leftists — and the U.S. State Department is backing them.

Just 12 hours after the elected president of Brazil had been overthrown by the coup of the right-wing generals in collusion with arch-reactionary Gov. Carlos Lacerda of the state of Guanabara, U.S. President Lyndon Johnson sent his "warmest greetings" to the new regime.

Johnson trampled on the truth when he asserted that the overthrow had been made "within a framework of constitutional democracy and without civil strife."

The next day Secretary of State Dean Rusk showed similar enthusiasm for the Brazilian oligarchy that organized the overthrow when he announced that the U.S. government would work "very closely" with the new regime. (U.S. business has \$1.1 billion in direct investments in Brazil.)

Washington's Third World debt plan

Continued from Page 10

been stabilized. But in the continuing climate of instability and uncertainty local capital flight will continue unabated.

By forcing wages down to pay the debt, the purchasing power of working people is reduced and the debtor countries become less viable export markets for U.S. business, which is locked in a battle for world market shares with Japanese and West European capitalists.

Moreover, transfer of billions of dollars to the United States in the form of profits from U.S. corporations doing business in the Third World will be protected under the Brady Plan. This means that locally generated capital needed for development will not be available.

Brazil general strike

The day after Brady spoke in Washington, government leaders from the Group of Eight debtor countries met March 11 in Caracas, Venezuela. President Carlos Andrés Pérez called Brady's initiative "timid," adding that the plan "presupposes that Latin American countries can wait years for a basic solution."

Four days later, Brazil was paralyzed by the largest general strike in its history. Millions of workers walked off their jobs for two days protesting a government austerity program that labor leaders say has slashed

wages to accommodate the IMF and the foreign banks.

They also demanded a moratorium on payments on Brazil's \$115 billion foreign debt, the highest in the Third World.

Encouraging Japan, as Brady has done, to help alleviate the debt problem acknowledges that it is the only developed capitalist country with surpluses and therefore more capable than Washington of pumping huge additional sums of cash into debt relief.

The Japanese government endorsed Brady's speech hours before it was delivered in Washington and pledged to step up lending to debtor countries in amounts reported to be in the \$4.5 billion range.

Summing up his scheme, Brady said March 10, "In the final analysis, our objective is to rekindle the hope of the people and leaders of debtor nations that their sacrifices will lead to greater prosperity in the present and the prospect of a future unclouded by the burden of debt."

The optimistic conclusion notwithstanding, his plan, like Baker's before him, will not work to the benefit of the debtor countries. It will not contribute to their development.

Meanwhile, the seven-year debt crisis will continue to worsen, increasing misery and hardship for millions of poor people in Latin America and the rest of the semicolonial World.

Struggle for a free Namibia

The decision of United Nations officials to use South African-led troops to stop what it claimed to be a massive incursion into Namibia by fighters of the South West Africa People's Organisation (SWAPO) shows the enormous political battle that will have to be fought over the coming months to ensure an independent Namibia.

The UN's use of the South African forces amounted to deputizing Namibia's colonizers in the name of ensuring its independence. It served to legitimize rather than end South Africa's illegal, unjust, and repressive rule in Namibia.

What is at stake in this fight is not simply whether there will be a SWAPO-led government in Namibia but also whether enough international pressure can be built to ensure that UN Resolution 435, which calls for Namibia's independence, is implemented. The apartheid regime's determination to maintain its dominance over Namibia was made clear when it threatened to halt the transition to Namibian independence only one day after it had begun.

The South African government's claim that SWAPO had violated a cease-fire agreement by sending its troops into Namibia from neighboring Angola has been peddled as good coin by UN officials, U.S. and British government spokespersons, and the capitalist press. No reporters have been allowed into the area of the fighting to confirm South Africa's charges.

Pretoria initially claimed that some 5,000 guerrillas had entered Namibia. That figure was later reduced to 750-plus. SWAPO has strongly denied the South African allegations.

The refusal of the UN Security Council to provide a substantial military presence in Namibia only encourages Pretoria to continue to probe for ways to block Namibia's independence. A mere 900 of the 4,650 UN troops to be sent to Namibia had arrived by April 1, the date when the decolonization was to begin.

An enormous victory was won for working people around the world when the South African government was forced to sign an agreement last December to begin implementation of UN Resolution 435. That action was made possible by the military successes of Angolan, Cuban, and SWAPO troops in the spring of last year. An effective mobilization of Cuban internationalist fighters, along with the most advanced military equipment, resulted in the decisive defeat of South African forces at the Angolan town of Cuito Cuanavale.

In a March 31 address to its troops on the Angola-Namibia border, SWAPO President Sam Nujoma said that together with Angolan and Cuban soldiers, SWAPO fighters had changed the balance of forces in southwest Africa. He explained that some of them would now have to return to Namibia as civilians to carry out a political mobilization to ensure a vote for SWAPO and to consolidate the country's independence.

Cuban President Fidel Castro, addressing Namibian students in Cuba at the end of January, described the unsuccessful fight by member countries of the Nonaligned movement to prevent the reduction of UN troops for Namibia from the original figure of 7,500.

However, referring to the UN troops and Namibia's fight for independence, Castro added, "Indeed I say it won't depend so much on them as on the Namibians themselves. It is the Namibians themselves who must mobilize and unite to wage this last battle, the political battle. It is necessary to mobilize the whole people, everywhere, and explain to them as often as necessary what the struggle is all about, what the interests of the Namibian people are, what the Namibian people ought to do."

That is also the task of working people around the world who support the struggle for a free, independent, and nonracial Namibia.

Were Soviet elections 'freest' in 70 years?

BY DOUG JENNESS

It's almost uncanny how daily newspapers and television broadcasters often come up with virtually identical formulas. In nearly the same words, for example, they all reported that the March 26 elections in the Soviet Union "were the freest in more than 70 years."

Many of these voices for the capitalist ruling families didn't bother to explain what happened seven decades ago, simply assuming readers would, or at least should, know. A few, however, added some details. *New York Times* correspondent Bill Keller reported from Moscow

LEARNING ABOUT SOCIALISM

that the "voting was the first nationwide, competitive election since the autumn of 1917, when Lenin's Bolshevik party was outpolled by the Socialist Revolutionaries."

What's missing from Keller's cryptic explanation is the popular workers' and peasants' revolution that swept Russia in 1917, and the many democratic elections organized in the next few years. In February 1917 the tsarist monarchy was toppled in a massive upsurge. Workers, peasants, and soldiers set up elected councils (called *soviets* in Russian) to carry on the struggle to extend their rights and improve their living and working conditions.

At the same time, antimonarchical liberals and other procapitalist forces established a provisional government that promised to hold elections for a constituent assembly.

At first the majority of the leadership of the soviets, dominated by reformist-led Mensheviks and Socialist-Revolutionaries, supported the provisional government. But this government failed to meet the demands of the big majority of people — to abandon the imperialist war aims of the monarchy, support the peasants' confiscation and redistribution of the landlords' holdings, and honor the right of oppressed nations to determine their own affairs.

The result was that by October the Bolsheviks won a majority of the working class to their position that the soviets should assume power and establish a government of workers, peasants, and soldiers deputies. This was registered in the elections to the second All-Russian Congress of Soviets that convened October 25.

The provisional government had called for constituent assembly elections based on universal suffrage and secret ballot to be held November 12. The lists of candidates were submitted by the parties in early October.

The Soviet government that took power at the end of October permitted the elections to take place as scheduled, but working people were confronted with old lists of candidates. This was highlighted shortly after the elections by the split in the Socialist-Revolutionary Party, which had won a majority of representatives to the constituent assembly. The left-wing majority of that party, with more influence among the peasantry than any other party, joined the Bolsheviks in the new Soviet government.

When the constituent assembly met in January 1918, it had been bypassed by the fast-moving events and big advances in workers' and peasants' political consciousness. In no way could it be considered a representative body of the Russian people. When its delegates refused to support the Soviet republic, which did have broad popular support, it was dispersed.

To this day the apologists for capitalism still cite this as proof that the Bolsheviks, under Lenin, opposed "democracy." But it actually shows the opposite. The form of government instituted by the workers and peasants was many times more democratic for the big majority than capitalist parliamentary democracy.

The structure of the Soviet republic in its first years gave working people an effective means of organizing and administering the state themselves. Each factory or workplace, as well as unions, elected one delegate for a certain number of workers to citywide soviets. In a similar fashion soldiers and peasants elected delegates. Delegates were usually elected according to party, and in the early years of the revolution several parties fielded candidates.

Every six months the city and provincial soviets elected delegates to the All-Russian Congress of Soviets, which elected a Central Executive Committee and a Council of People's Commissars. All soviet representatives were subject to immediate recall.

With the rise of a privileged bureaucratic caste that consolidated its hold over the USSR in the late 1920s and early 1930s, the soviets were stripped of their democratic content. From organs of workers' and peasants' power, they became instruments of the bureaucratic usurpers.

The recent elections in the Soviet Union had nothing to do with resurrecting workers' democracy, but were aimed at channeling discontent behind Mikhail Gorbachev's policies and reinforcing his position within the bureaucracy.

Region's wars 'Made in USA'

President George Bush, Congress, and Costa Rican President Oscar Arias Sánchez are all heaping praise on Washington's intervention in Central America and blaming Havana, Managua, and Moscow for the armed conflicts taking place in the region.

In a bipartisan statement, the Republican administration and the Democratic-controlled Congress called on the Soviet and Cuban governments to "end all aid that supports subversion and destabilization in Central America."

Speaking at the Carter Presidential Center in Atlanta, Georgia, U.S. Secretary of State James Baker said, "Together we must send a clear message to others outside this hemisphere: This is not a dumping ground for their arms or their failed ideologies. We are looking for signs of new thinking. The Soviet Union now has an opportunity to demonstrate it in Central America."

These statements point the finger in the wrong direction. The source of the wars in Central America is the military and economic domination of Washington, not Moscow. It is the U.S. government that is funneling arms to back every reactionary regime and movement in the region, not Havana and Managua.

The revolutionary governments in Cuba and Nicaragua, from their inception, have both fought to have normal diplomatic and trade relations with Washington. But they have been frustrated at every turn by the U.S. government. The White House and Congress, instead, have imposed economic embargoes, carried out military invasions — directly and by proxy — and surrounded both countries with hostile regimes, armed to the teeth.

To this day, in fact, Washington occupies Guantánamo Bay, where U.S. soldiers carry out provocative military maneuvers on Cuban soil.

And as far as destabilization is concerned, what could be more destabilizing than the ballooning foreign debt that the governments of Latin America owe to the imperialist bankers? It was this, and not "communist subversion," that led to the recent revolt by working people in Venezuela, who simply could not tolerate further price hikes and belt-tightening.

And under the highly touted "Brady Plan," only a very small portion of that debt will be written off, the better to try to wring the rest of it out of the already impoverished workers and farmers of the southern half of the Americas.

Nicaragua's right to self-determination is being subverted, there's no doubt about it. But "going to the source" in this instance will land you on Capitol Hill.

Presidential press secretary Marlin Fitzwater perhaps said it most baldly: "We would like to see the Soviet Union withdraw its resources and support in Nicaragua."

But as a sovereign nation — which represents no military threat of any kind to the people or government of the United States — Nicaragua has the right to receive military and economic aid from anybody it wants to. And as a sovereign nation, the Soviet Union has the right to give aid to whomever it chooses.

In addition, every government has a moral responsibility to send the maximum aid possible to Nicaragua, to help it rebuild in the wake of the seven-year-long, U.S.-run contra war and last year's hurricane.

And no government has more of a responsibility than Washington, which is culpable for decades of economic underdevelopment in Nicaragua as well as the devastation of the contra war and its economic embargo.

Costa Rican President Arias has praised Bush's Central America policy. "This is a very happy day for me," he said in a press interview in Washington, D.C. "All we got from the Reagan administration was lip service to the peace plan. Today, the new administration is telling me it wants to give diplomacy a chance, which is precisely what I asked the Reagan administration to do two years ago. What the Americans are now saying to me is: 'Our policy didn't work. Your approach was right.'"

Is it true that the Bush administration has said farewell to arms and is now pursuing a policy of peace and negotiations in the hemisphere?

The evidence is overwhelmingly in the other direction. The latest joint Democratic and Republican plan to provide \$4.5 million in aid to the contras every month until February 1990 is proof positive. The contras have been militarily defeated by the Nicaraguan army, but they are being maintained as a battering ram against the Nicaraguan government, to try to maximize the political concessions Washington can force out of Managua.

This grossly violates the agreement signed by the governments of Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, and Nicaragua at their mid-February meeting in Tesoro Beach, El Salvador. Under that pact, the five governments are supposed to prepare a plan for "the voluntary demobilization, repatriation, and relocation" of the contras living in Honduras by May 16.

But Bush and many members of Congress opposed that plan, so they pressured the governments of Honduras and Costa Rica to back more aid for the contras, ostensibly to make sure the Nicaraguan government carries out its promise to hold democratic national elections next February.

The Nicaraguan people should be left alone, to decide their domestic and international policies as they see fit and in peace.

There should be no U.S. aid to the contras, Washington should pull all its soldiers, advisors, covert agents, and military hardware out of Honduras and El Salvador, and it should end its economic embargo against Nicaragua and normalize relations with both Cuba and Nicaragua.

In response to the bipartisan contra aid plan, Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega urged that those funds be used instead to aid the victims of last year's hurricane, as well as purchase milk for the country's children, wipe out malaria, and pay for urgently needed medicines.

This is what working people in the United States and other countries should be demanding as well.

Fight for gov't funding crucial to abortion rights

BY MARGARET JAYKO

(First of two parts)

On March 17 a Michigan judge upheld the legality of last November's referendum cutting off public funds for abortion except in those cases where the woman's life is endangered.

The challenge to the referendum had been brought by a 15-year-old Detroit woman who became pregnant after

THE FIGHT FOR WOMEN'S RIGHTS

being raped by three men in mid-January.

The American Civil Liberties Union, which represented the young woman, said she lives with her family on public assistance and cannot afford to pay for an abortion.

Judge John Hausner ruled that the state restriction on public financing for abortions does not violate her rights; and he rejected the ACLU's argument that the ban discriminates against Blacks, who are a disproportionately high number of the women in the 13-40 age group receiving Medicaid benefits.

Officials of the right-wing Right to Life of Michigan have intervened in the case against the young woman. The ACLU is appealing the ruling.

Ever since the 1973 Supreme Court ruling striking down state antiabortion laws, the battle over abortion rights has largely revolved around government funding for abortions and the right of pregnant minors to abortion — two issues that are closely related as the Michigan case illustrates.

It's not hard to see why those who are totally opposed to legalized abortion would press for restrictions along

these lines as the opening wedge in the attack on all abortion rights.

Government funding and the rights of young women are two areas that raise questions on which the ruling class has been more successful in confusing and dividing working people than on the issue outlawing abortion outright.

On Sept. 30, 1976, Congress approved Rep. Henry Hyde's amendment to a proposed budget for the Department of Labor and what was then the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. The rider restricted the use of federal money to finance abortions for Medicaid recipients.

Four years later, on June 30, 1980, the Supreme Court ruled, in a 5-to-4 vote, that the federal government and individual states have no legal obligation to pay for even medically necessary abortions. The only exception was instances of promptly reported rape or incest or "where the life of the mother would be endangered if the fetus were carried to term."

The majority's argument, while recognizing that women have the constitutional right to freedom of choice when it comes to abortion, argued that there is no "constitutional entitlement to the financial resources" that would make it possible for an impoverished woman to "avail herself of the full range of protected choices." In other words, if you have the money, you can have the rights.

The court ruling, written by Judge Potter Stewart, also argued that the government *should* discriminate against abortion.

"By subsidizing the medical expenses of indigent women who carry their pregnancies to term while not subsidizing the comparable expenses of women who undergo abortions (except those whose lives are threatened)," Stewart wrote, "Congress has established incentives that make childbirth a more attractive alternative than abortion for persons eligible for Medicaid."

"These incentives bear a direct relationship to the legitimate Congressional interest in protecting potential life. Nor is it irrational that Congress has authorized Federal reimbursement for medically necessary services gen-

erally, but not for certain medically necessary abortions. Abortion is inherently different from other medical procedures, because no other procedure involves the purposeful termination of potential life."

The Hyde amendment cut off funds for some 250,000-300,000 abortions a year. The Alan Guttmacher Institute estimates that 20 percent of poor women carry unwanted pregnancies to term because they cannot afford abortion services.

The cutoff in government funding came with the bipartisan consensus in U.S. ruling circles on the need to drive through austerity measures as the world crisis of the capitalist system deepened, and as the U.S. rulers tried to preserve their edge over foreign competitors. Cutting off Medicaid funding was put forward as both a necessary belt-tightening measure, as well as a way to partially get around the 1973 ruling legalizing abortion.

Through the Hyde Amendment, foes of abortion rights were able to substantially restrict access to abortion for those women who are the most oppressed, a disproportionate number of whom are Black and Latino due to racial discrimination that is an integral part of U.S. capitalist society.

By attacking abortion from this angle, the rulers were able to prevent the broader outcry that has been sparked by more recent threats to criminalize abortion outright. The amendment's backers played on race and class prejudices against the most impoverished working people.

Today, when the attacks on abortion rights have intensified, the demand to repeal the Hyde Amendment, so that every woman who wants an abortion can obtain one, must be at the center of the fight to defend women's right to control their own bodies. Fighters for women's rights must forthrightly combat the ruling class' view that the lives of working-class women — especially those who are Black and Latino — are worth less than those of other women.

Democratic rights for the most oppressed can only lead to a bettering of their lives and a lessening of inequalities if they are able to exercise those rights. This is crucial if we are to unify working people and others in a powerful defense of abortion rights.

(Part Two: Teenagers and the right to abortion)

LETTERS

Sweat lodges

On March 16 a U.S. district judge in Salt Lake City struck down a Utah State prison ban prohibiting Indian inmates from having sweat lodges for religious purposes, ending a two-year battle.

Sweat lodges are structures made of willow poles and blankets, and heated with rocks. They have been used by Native Americans for the past 40,000 years. The sweat is the central step taken to prepare for other religious ceremonies, from the vision quest to the sun dance.

Since 1975 when the first case was won, 19 states west of the Mississippi have sweat lodges in use at correctional facilities.

There were more than 100 Native Americans and their supporters present at the March hearing, filling the courtroom and spilling out into the hallway. Lawyers Dan Quintana and Leander Bergan from the Navajo Nation and Mike O'Brian from the American Civil Liberties Union argued that Native Americans, who make up a disproportionate percentage of the inmate population, are guaranteed the right to practice their religion

under the First Amendment.

Nancy Boyasko
Salt Lake City, Utah

Spotted owl

This is on Robbie Scherr's article "I defend spotted owl against timber monopolies" in the March 17 *Militant*.

The Pacific Northwest news media has portrayed woodworkers as being antienvironmental. Some woodworkers get caught up in the antienvironmental hype generated by the big timber corporations, but not all of us are so easily taken in, especially those of us who are on strike against Roseburg Forest Products, and others who have had past experience with the deceit and greed of the timber operators.

The spotted owl issue is very complicated, and the timber operators are very successful in generating support when they threaten us with job losses. They've even induced us to engage in letter-writing campaigns to support their forest-cutting plans for Douglas County. Our reward for this was to be steady jobs for the next 10 years and a free T-shirt.

They scream that jobs will be lost. Yet they export up to 50 percent of all raw logs cut from the state forest and all the very best timber from their own property.

Then they modernize their mills and cut jobs even more. Through modernization Oregon lost 55 percent of the jobs lost in the wood industry. Export accounted for 25 percent, and reduced harvest accounted for another 20 percent. At the same time they have greatly increased productivity.

The spotted owl is a smoke screen to cover the issue of modernization and the "cut and run" tactics of the big timber monopolies. From 1850 to 1890 the Weyerhaeuser corporation and other timber barons cut more than 57 million acres of timber from the Great Lakes states. That's more than 89,000 square miles cut in 40 years. They used primitive saws and axes, and there were no environmentalists to stop them.

The timber barons "cut and ran" from the Great Lakes states, leaving behind wrecked towns, unused railroads, rampant unemployment, and depleted forest that they didn't bother to replant. Some went South, others to the Pacific Northwest. Now where do they run once they cut all there is to cut?

Gene Lawhorn
Sutherlin, Oregon

Linder suit

Oral arguments were heard February 7 in U.S. Federal Court here on a motion by the U.S.-backed contra leadership to dismiss a \$50 million federal lawsuit brought against them by the family of slain antiwar activist Benjamin Linder.

The Linder family lawsuit was originally filed on April 20, 1988, charging the contra leaders with responsibility for the murder of their youngest son while he was building mini-hydroelectric plants in the mountainous towns of northern Nicaragua.

Basically, the contras are claiming that since the U.S. government supports the contra war, the courts have no legal right to interfere on behalf of their victims. In other words, they argue, political matters determined by the executive branch of government should not be judged in civil courts.

Serious moral questions are raised on this issue. Are torture and killing of innocent civilians always above the law?

Lawyers from the Center for Constitutional Rights representing the Linder family eloquently maintained that Ben's murderers should be judged on the facts of this case. They argued that the contras are falsely seeking protection from punishment for their crimes through political maneuvers.

Edith Georgi
Miami, Florida

'Sechaba'

Militant readers can find an invaluable source of information in the monthly magazine *Sechaba*, the organ of the African National Congress of South Africa.



The articles and discussion pieces explain in depth developments in southern Africa, international support for freedom for Nelson Mandela and other political prisoners, and the activities of anti-apartheid groups worldwide.

The most recent issue features articles on the discussions in the ANC on mass political work, union and popular organizing, and the role of the ANC in the democratic revolution. It also has a review of the Cuban-produced video on the battle for Cuito Cuanavale, Angola, which is distributed by Pathfinder publishers in London.

Subscriptions are \$25 per year and can be ordered from the ANC, 801 Second Ave. Room 405, New York, N.Y. 10017.
Mark Friedman
Detroit, Michigan

Eastern strike

"The labor movement in this country has really come alive" in the strike at Eastern, said Deen Leonard at a recent meeting in Boston.

Leonard, a member of Local 553 of the Transportation Workers Union, explained to the standing-room-only audience at the Militant Labor Forum how "three years of Frank Lorenzo, his lunacy and manipulation" brought pilots and Machinists to solidarize with one another.

"Tell your friends and loved

ones not to fly Eastern," said Robert Turcotte of Local 1726 of the Machinists' union. "They're using pilots who have had maybe two years' experience — they're right out of school."

Kip Hedges, also of Local 1726, said, "The old way of dealing with labor: go ahead and strike and we'll replace you, has been broken up a little in this strike."

All of the speakers praised the solidarity demonstrated by unionists across the country. "Whether you're in a union or not, you've got a stake in this fight," Hedges added.

Mark Alper
Boston, Massachusetts

The *Militant* special prisoner fund makes it possible to send reduced-rate subscriptions to prisoners who can't pay for them. Where possible the fund also tries to fill prisoners' requests for other literature. To help this important cause, send your contribution to: Militant Prisoner Subscription Fund, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.

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.

Corrections

In the article "Nicaraguan leaders commemorate 30th anniversary of Cuban revolution" (*Militant* March 24), the date of Sandinista National Liberation Front leader Carlos Fonseca's death is given as 1978. He was killed in 1976.

In the article "White House, Congress set contra aid plan" (*Militant* April 7), the amount of aid to the Nicaraguan contras in the Bush administration bipartisan plan is listed as \$4.5 million. The aid is \$4.5 million per month.

Montréal communists run for Québec Nat'l Assembly seats

Discuss how workers can defend themselves in era of capitalist crisis

BY JOHN STEELE

MONTRÉAL — The Revolutionary Workers League announced here March 29 that it will run two candidates for the Québec National Assembly in the upcoming Québec provincial elections.

The two candidates are Michel Dugré, a member of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union in Montréal, and Michel Prairie, the editor of the monthly magazine *Lutte ouvrière*. Dugré is the candidate in the Montréal constituency of Laurier and Prairie the candidate in Bourget, also in Montréal. Québec Premier Robert Bourassa hasn't set the date for the elections yet, but is expected to soon.

"Our campaign comes on the eve of a recession that will be even more devastating for workers and farmers than the 1981-82 recession," Dugré explained in an interview with the two communist candidates.

"The world has changed a lot since then," Dugré said. "Because of the mounting corporate debt and the unprecedented debt of Third World countries to the major banks in imperialist countries such as Canada, the world capitalist banking and credit system is becoming pretty shaky." He predicted that a deep international recession could trigger a collapse of the banking system and precipitate a worldwide economic depression.

Assault on workers

"Since the 1981-82 recession," Dugré added, "the bosses have worked hard to force our unions to accept concession contracts, and restructure industry to increase productivity and profits. Today, fewer workers produce more wealth for the employers while the share working people receive is dropping and our standard of living is falling.

"Long-term unemployment is on the increase," the Laurier candidate noted. Across Canada, 20 percent of the population as a whole lives on either unemployment insurance or government welfare. "More than 48 percent of Montréal's population lives below the official poverty line," he said, "and old buses are being turned into soup kitchens for the growing numbers of hungry and homeless workers."

The RWL campaign will explain that "the problem we face is not the U.S.-Canada free trade agreement, corporate mergers, or a U.S. takeover — but capitalism." "Working people," he said, "need a strategy and program to unite us on an international level against the effects of the crisis. For example, to fight unemployment we have to wage an international campaign to force governments to reduce the workweek without reducing pay."

Growing resistance

Michel Prairie explained that the RWL campaign will not restrict itself to Québec. "We will champion the struggles of the growing number of workers who have learned that it is better to fight back against the bosses' drive rather than accept concessions."

The best example of this is the strike of the Eastern Airlines workers, said Prairie. The Eastern workers, some of whom work in Montréal and Toronto, "are showing the way forward for all working people in their willingness to reject concessions and take on the airline bosses.

"Equally important," he added, "is the tremendous sympathy and organized solidarity the Eastern workers are receiving from working people throughout North America. We will be campaigning to help

build solidarity with the strike.

"Working people here are drawing similar conclusions," Prairie continued, pointing to the lengthy strike against concessions conducted by the Voyageur busline maintenance and office workers, and the recent demonstrations of tens of thousands of teachers in Québec and Ontario demanding wage hikes and improvements in working conditions.

Prairie pointed to the four mass demonstrations that have taken place in Québec over the past two-and-a-half years in defense of the right of Québécois to learn, work, and live in the French language. These are another expression of the growing resistance of working people, he said. The most recent demonstration, held March 12 in Montréal, attracted more than 60,000 people.

"The breadth and size of these actions," he explained, "show the determination of Québécois to resist the efforts of the rulers to roll back gains won over decades of struggle against national oppression."

"The deepening crisis of the capitalist economy is intensifying the national oppression of the Québécois. It is also expressed in efforts by Canada's rulers to roll back rights won by women and to re-criminalize abortion. It can also be seen in the rise in cop violence against Blacks and Native people."

"One of the central themes of the RWL campaign is the need for the labor move-

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Militant/Jim Upton

Crowd at the March 12 demonstration for a French-language-only Québec. Revolutionary Workers League candidates explain that while many came to action as protest against oppression of French-speaking Québécois, its demands did not advance fight for language rights.

Candidates' views on French-language laws

The following statement was released on March 29 by Michel Dugré and Michel Prairie, the Revolutionary Workers League candidates in the upcoming Québec provincial elections.

On March 12, some 60,000 people participated in a demonstration in Montréal called by the Mouvement Québec français (MQF-Movement for a French Québec). The demonstrators denounced the Québec government's new Law 178 that allows the use of other languages, along with French, on indoor commercial signs. Law 178 continues to require that all outdoor signs be in French only, as specified in Law 101.

Law 101 was adopted in 1977 after years of struggle by the Québécois against the oppression they suffer because of the language they speak. Law 101 aims to guarantee the rights of French-speaking people, 80 percent of Québec's population, to work, study, and receive services in French.

Last December the MQF began organizing a sustained campaign for French-only signs. This followed the Canadian Supreme Court's decision to invalidate the section of Law 101 dealing with signs and the subsequent adoption of Law 178 by Québec's Liberal Party government headed by Premier Robert Bourassa.

The MQF includes Québec's three main trade union federations, the farmers' union, and many artistic and nationalist groups and organizations.

The March 12 demonstration showed the determination of the Québécois to fight against their oppression. Many understood the Supreme Court ruling to be an attack against Law 101 as a whole, and against the gains made over the past 12 years.

Despite its size, however, the March 12 demonstration did not advance the struggle for the rights of French-speaking people in

Québec or in the rest of Canada. The demand for French-only signs is undemocratic. It divides the working-class. The majority of Québécois — in particular working people — do not agree with this demand.

Affirmative action measure

The Québécois are the most numerous among the oppressed nationalities in Canada. Along with other French-speaking people in Canada, they are victims of systematic oppression.

In 1986 those of French ethnic origin in Canada earned 20 percent less than the average income of the whole population.

A little more than 25 percent of the Canadian population lives in Québec, but in 1987, 30.5 percent of the unemployed in the country lived in Québec. In 1986, 32.3 percent of all those living under the poverty line and 36.6 percent of all those on welfare lived in Québec.

For the ruling class, this system of discrimination and oppression is an important source of superprofits and a key tool to divide workers and farmers among themselves.

For these reasons, the entire Canadian labor movement should defend Law 101 against the attacks on it by the ruling-class and its government in Ottawa, including the Supreme Court ruling which is a blow against the right of Québec to adopt its own language policies.

Law 101 is the most important affirmative action measure ever adopted in Canada. The law begins with the principle that it is not adequate to proclaim formal equality of the oppressed and that special measures are required to reverse discrimination and oppression.

Law 101 is an important weapon in the fight to unify the working-class within Québec and across Canada.

The law has helped to reduce gaps in wages and working and living conditions that divided Québécois workers from those in the rest of the country. And it has contributed to increasing confidence among Québécois workers in their ability to fight for their rights.

French-only signs not defensible

However, the sections of Law 101 that deal with the language on signs is not defensible.

It is necessary to have a law which requires French on all signs in Québec. Refusal to post signs in French is one form of discrimination and contempt for the French-speaking majority. But, banning the use of other languages along with French, as both Law 101 and Law 178 stipulate, is something totally different and undemocratic.

The working class cannot fight one form of language discrimination by supporting another one. This can only divide us into working people who speak French and those who do not — not only in Québec, but throughout Canada.

One month before the March 12 demonstration, Radio-Canada (the French-language wing of the publicly owned Canadian Broadcasting Company) broadcast a television documentary called "To Disappear".

Financed by the federal government, the program was written by Lise Payette, a former Parti Québécois cabinet minister at the end of the 1970s. The PQ is a capitalist party that advocates more sovereignty for Québec. The PQ politically leads the movement that organized the March 12 demonstration.

According to Payette, the Québec nation is threatened today. Québec's birth rate is one of the lowest in the world. The vast

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