

## UN takes up colonial status of Puerto Rico

BY LUIS MADRID  
AND DOUG JENNESS

UNITED NATIONS — Representatives of more than 50 organizations, including political, labor, and human and civil rights groups testified August 12-13 before the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization on the status of Puerto Rico. The hearings were opened by Ricardo Alarcón, Cuban ambassador to the United Nations.

Nearly everyone who spoke during the hearings urged that Puerto Rico's status as a U.S. colony end. The two main proposals submitted for decolonizing the Caribbean island were independence and statehood. Each time a proponent of one of these positions spoke, their supporters among the nearly 100 observers clapped.

In 1972 the United Nations adopted a resolution in support of the island's right to self-determination and independence from U.S. colonial rule. Similar resolutions have been approved every year since 1976. U.S. domination of Puerto Rico began in 1898, following more than 400 years of Spanish rule.

Several speakers noted that despite denials that Puerto Rico is a colony, many U.S. officials talk as if it is. José Milton Soltero, president of the Committee for Puerto Rico at the United Nations, explained that while U.S. President George Bush and members of Congress have stated that Puerto Ricans are free to choose whatever political status they want — independence, statehood, or the commonwealth status quo — U.S. Attorney General Richard Thornburgh has been more candid about official policy.

During hearings before the Senate's Committee on Energy and Natural Resources last February, Thornburgh stated, "We consider it imperative that it be made clear beyond peradventure that the Commonwealth is and must remain under the sovereignty of the United States."

Ronald Fernández of Justice for Puerto Rico noted, "Less than two months ago a U.S. government report suggested that committees stop using the word 'possession' to refer to Puerto Rico. The Interior Department suggested 'synonyms' like territory or commonwealth because they were 'less

Continued on Page 6

## Justice Dept. sides with Wichita rightist assault

BY PETER THIERJUNG

The U.S. government is openly siding with right-wing mobilizations in Wichita, Kansas, that physically assault, intimidate, and threaten women seeking to exercise their legal right to abortion.

Organized by an outfit called Operation Rescue, rightists from around the country descended on Wichita in mid-July and began blocking three abortion clinic entrances and harassing anyone seeking access to them. More than 1,900 Operation Rescue followers have been arrested so far.

Saying Wichita is the opening battle of a larger campaign, Operation Rescue has vowed to carry on its vigilante actions until it succeeds in closing down the clinics.

The effort to reverse abortion rights "will be decided street by street, town by town, village by village," Operation Rescue spokesman Patrick Mahoney, a Presbyterian minister, declared July 31. "Wichita embodies what we will see in the next 3 to 4 years."

On July 23, Federal Judge Patrick Kelly issued an injunction prohibiting Operation Rescue and its followers from obstructing clinic entrances and physically harassing

Continued on Page 6



Wichita cops remove rightist blocking abortion clinic

## Curtis resists prison moves to break him; authorities transfer him to Anamosa jail

BY TED LEONARD

DES MOINES, Iowa — In a move to bolster their case for keeping Mark Curtis in prison, Iowa authorities transferred him to another jail after failing to force him to admit guilt and submit to a "sex offenders" program.

"This morning, Mark Curtis was transferred from the Mount Pleasant Correctional Facility to the Iowa Men's Reformatory in Anamosa," John Studer, coordinator of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, reported to a defense committee meeting here August 6. Curtis, a political and union activist who is serving a 25-year sentence on frame-up charges of rape and burglary, had been at the Mount Pleasant prison less than three weeks.

"This move is a challenge to Curtis' fight for release on parole," Studer told the meet-

ing. "We must respond by stepping up our campaign to press Iowa authorities to free him at his hearing in November."

Curtis had been transferred to the Mount Pleasant state prison July 17 from the John Bennett facility in Fort Madison. He was told that he was being sent there because of increased overcrowding at Bennett.

Mount Pleasant houses two voluntary treatment programs run by the Iowa Department of Corrections, as well as "general population" units for prisoners on a variety of charges. One of the voluntary programs is called the Sex Offenders Treatment Program.

To participate in the program, a prisoner must admit he was guilty of a sex crime — called "owning your own crime" by prison authorities — and agree to forgo any legal

appeal of his conviction. In exchange, successful completion of the program is given weight by the state parole board.

Before transferring Curtis to Mount Pleasant, prison authorities raised the Sex Offenders Treatment Program with him. They told him that since he maintains his innocence and is campaigning both legally and politically against his conviction, he could not be a candidate for the program. He could not fight his conviction and also "volunteer" to "own his crime." His counselor, Mike Cutler, called Mount Pleasant to make sure that there was space for Curtis in the general population before he was transferred.

"For more than three years I have been

Continued on Page 3

## 500 at Young Socialist fusion convention



Tladi Ditshego of African National Congress Youth League presents greetings at Young Socialist Alliance convention in Ohio. For coverage, see pages 8-9.

## Int'l circulation effort to win new 'Militant' readers begins August 31

BY SETH GALINSKY

OBERLIN, Ohio — Supporters of the *Militant* attending the 27th National Convention of the Young Socialist Alliance here decided to put a nine-week international subscription campaign at the center of their political work.

Members of the YSA, socialist workers who belong to industrial unions, students, and others at the event aim to get socialist publications into the hands of working people, opponents of apartheid, defenders of the right to choose abortion, and others who are beginning to question capitalism.

The worldwide goal is to sell 3,660 subscriptions to the *Militant*, 800 to the Spanish-language monthly *Perspectiva Mundial*, and 140 to the French quarterly *L'Internationale*.

The Marxist theoretical magazine *New International*, and *Nueva Internacional* and *Nouvelle Internationale* in Spanish and French, will also be a prominent part of the drive. The first issue of *Nueva Internacional* was published in June, adding the Spanish-

language magazine to the circulation drive for the first time. Supporters plan to sell 1,600 copies of the magazines, bringing the total to 6,200 new readers for all the publications.

In cities across the United States, Australia, Britain, Canada, France, Iceland, New Zealand, Sweden, and elsewhere supporters will be taking goals toward the drive. Communist workers in industrial unions in many countries will also take goals for distribution of the socialist press to fellow unionists. These will be published in the issue of the *Militant* that comes off the press August 27.

YSA leader Derek Bracey explained to convention-goers that the drive will begin August 31 and go until November 2.

In the United States the start of the campaign coincides with Solidarity Day, an AFL-CIO-sponsored demonstration in Washington, D.C. Bracey encouraged supporters to plan now to attend the August 31 rally in order to participate in the event and sell subscriptions to the tens of thousands of

Continued on Page 13



# Houston oil worker enters mayoral race

## Planks against apartheid, Third World debt draw media attention



Militant/Dave Wulp

Socialist candidate Willie Mae Reid

BY JACOB FRANK

HOUSTON — "The brutal experience of the last decade underscores that both the Democratic and Republican parties serve as twin parties of war against workers abroad and depression for workers at home," said newly announced Socialist Workers candidate for mayor Willie Mae Reid at a July 30 news conference here.

Reid is an oil refinery worker at the Shell Oil Deer Park complex, and member of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union. She is known here as a militant trade unionist and socialist. She, along with running mate Steve Warren, Socialist Workers candidate for city controller, publicly launched an ambitious petition drive to place Reid on the ballot in the November election.

The news conference was attended by reporters for the ABC-TV and FOX network affiliates here, one of the major daily newspapers, an all-news radio station, and a weekly Black newspaper. Coverage of the conference was extensive.

In a July 31 article headlined, "Worker to run for mayor," the *Houston Chronicle* said,

Reid's "platform consists of some issues not usually associated with city government, such as maintaining abortion rights and canceling the debt of Third World countries."

Reid told the press, "We know the economy has not recovered from the instability signaled by the 1987 Wall Street crash. In the last few weeks big layoffs have been announced by major corporations in Houston, including Shell, Arco, and Compaq computers."

"That's why we need to unite the army of the unemployed with overworked employed workers by reducing the workweek with no cut in pay to spread the work around," Reid said. "That's why we need to form our own party, a party of labor that could help us fight against the new wars Washington has in store. A party that could fight to defend the rights and living standard of working people here and around the world. My campaign for mayor will help champion the idea of such a party."

### Questions from reporters

Reid was challenged by one reporter to explain what Socialist Workers campaign planks such as opposition to apartheid in South Africa and cancellation of the Third World debt had to do with the mayoral campaign.

"Everything," the candidate replied. "Politics in the real sense — the things that affect the lives of working people who make up the overwhelming majority of this city — disappears almost entirely from the campaigns run by the capitalist politicians."

Reid called the Third World debt a worldwide loan-sharking operation whereby massive transfers of wealth are made from semi-colonial countries to the big banks in the United States and other imperialist countries.

"Workers here are under constant attack," the socialist candidate said. "We urgently need to link up with workers and farmers like us around the world. The demand to cancel the Third World debt helps to build strong ties across national borders that have the potential to stop the warmongers and robber barons who dominate the globe."

Steve Warren, a sugar refinery worker and member of the International Association of Machinists, also responded. "The freedom struggle in South Africa is supported by

millions around the world and millions here in Houston," he said. "A victory in South Africa would give a boost to the fight against racism, oppression, and social injustice everywhere."

### More police?

Reid was asked her opinion of the call for more police by all the other candidates for mayor. "More police is the last thing we need," Reid said. "When more police come into my neighborhood I don't feel safer. In fact, it's more likely that I or someone else in my neighborhood is going to be the victim of police violence and brutality."

"The police don't stop crime; that's not what they're for. Their purpose is to protect the property of the capitalist rulers of Houston and, most of all, to keep the 'law and order' of the status quo intact."

Supporters of the Socialist Workers campaign fanned out across Houston to gather signatures on nominating petitions and to distribute campaign literature.

"The response has been excellent," Warren said. "More than 500 signatures were collected during the first weekend of the drive."

Pieter Clayton, an Austin, Texas, member of the Young Socialist Alliance, said, "Many students were willing to sign because they liked the ideas of the socialist campaign. Others signed because they support democratic rights and thought workers should have a chance to run for office."

After petitioning, campaign supporters attended a two-day educational conference on the Cuban revolution, featuring John Hawkins, a union coal miner and SWP candidate for mayor of Birmingham, Alabama. Hawkins recently visited Cuba.

## First copy? Subscribe and get 12 weeks for \$10!



## Don't miss a single issue...

For coverage of the central political issues facing working people resisting the employer-government assault at home and abroad, you need the *Militant* every week. From the picket line to protests against police brutality; from the battle to abolish apartheid in South Africa to events in revolutionary Cuba — you need the facts, news, and analysis in the *Militant*.  
Subscribe today!

### 'Militant' staff on one-week vacation

The *Militant* will not publish the week of August 20, so that our staff can take a one-week vacation. We will resume publication with issue no. 31, which will be printed Tuesday, August 27.

## Court ruling hits noncitizen rights in Los Angeles case

BY CAROL LESNIK

LOS ANGELES — In a blow at the rights of noncitizens, a federal appeals court reversed a lower court decision that noncitizens have the same democratic rights as citizens.

The July 26 ruling came in the case of the Los Angeles 8, Palestinian solidarity activists whom the government has been trying to deport since 1987.

In a landmark 1988 decision, U.S. District Court Judge Stephen Wilson had ruled that noncitizens were entitled to the same constitutional rights as citizens and that immigrants could not be deported because of their beliefs.

In reversing Wilson, the appeals court used a Catch-22 dodge. Since the government has refused to disclose its claimed evidence against the eight, the judges decided that the First Amendment challenges of the defendants "are not ripe for review." There are, the judges said, "many unknown facts."

Since they were arrested in 1988, the eight — seven Palestinians and the Kenyan wife of one — have been battling an unrelenting government drive to deport them. They have won significant civil liberties support and have registered a series of gains on the legal front.

The government has used various sections of the immigration law to try to establish that the eight should be deported as "terrorists."

No evidence has been offered except the claim that they are supporters of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, an affiliate of the Palestine Liberation Organization. The Israeli and U.S. government have branded the PLO and its affiliates "terrorist."

Meanwhile, the offices of the committee defending the eight were ransacked July 19.

The committee said no valuables were taken except an answering machine, a radio,

an old adding machine, and some checks. A computer, fax machine, laser printer, and signed blank checks were left behind. Contents of file cabinets and desk drawers were strewn on the floor.

Break-ins also occurred that night at the Central American Refugee Center and the People's College of Law, both of which have offices in the same building.

### Bush administration retains discriminatory immigration policy

The Bush administration has decided to maintain its policy of excluding immigrants from the United States who test positive for the AIDS virus, HIV. Earlier this year the Health and Human Services Department recommended the restriction be dropped, but action was blocked by the Justice Department.

Activists and defenders of civil liberties fighting discrimination against immigrants and people with AIDS have pointed out that the decision has no sound medical justification.

The discriminatory measure was first enacted by Congress four years ago, when it included HIV infection in a list of diseases that can be used to exclude immigrants from the United States.

The *Washington Post* reported August 2 that the final decision to uphold the exclusion policy capped months of debate in the administration. Officials now argue that the high costs of treating immigrants who enter the country infected with HIV would be prohibitive.

## The Militant

Closing news date: August 12, 1991

Editor: GREG McCARTAN

Business and Circulation

Director: RONI McCANN

Editorial Staff: Seth Galinsky, James Harris, Cindy Jaquith, Roni McCann, Janet Post, Judy Stranahan, Peter Thierjung.

Published weekly except for one week in June, one week in July, one week in August, and the last two weeks of December by the Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014. Telephone: (212) 243-6392; Fax 727-0150; Telex, 497-4278.

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to The Militant Business Office, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.

Second-class postage paid at New York, N.Y., and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant,

410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014. Subscriptions: U.S., Latin America: for one-year subscription send \$45, drawn on a U.S. bank, to above address. By first-class (airmail), send \$80. Canada: send Canadian \$75 for one-year subscription to Société d'Éditions AGPP, C.P. 340, succ. R, Montréal, Québec H2S 3M2. Britain, Ireland, Africa: £35 for one year by check or international money order made out to Militant Distribution, 47 The Cut, London, SE1 8LL, England. Continental Europe: £50 for one year by check or international money order made out to Militant Distribution at above address. New Zealand, Asia, Pacific Islands: Send New Zealand \$75 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand. Australia: Send Australian \$75 to P.O. Box 79, Railway Square Post Office, Railway Square, Sydney 2000, Australia.

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



# Bias charged in Milwaukee cops' failure to halt killings

BY SUSIE WINSTEN  
AND LENORE HOLYON

MILWAUKEE — An August 5 candle-light vigil and march of nearly 1,500 people was the largest to date of the continuing protests against the racist, brutal, and negligent actions of the police department here, a small part of which came to light in the aftermath of the discovery of 11 murdered men July 22.

The victims' bodies, eight of them Black, two white, and a 14-year-old Laotian boy, were found in the apartment of Jeffery Dahmer.

Several days after the grisly discovery, Glenda Cleveland, a resident of the area who is Black, revealed that two months earlier both she and her daughter, Nicole Childress, had repeatedly phoned police to have them check on a Laotian boy whom they had seen — naked, bleeding, and dazed — trying to escape from a white male adult.

The three cops who responded to the women's calls picked up the boy, Konerak Sinthasomphone, and returned him to Dahmer's apartment, which they entered. The cops claim they did not notice any evidence of wrongdoing and did not check to see if Dahmer had a police record.

Dahmer, 31 and white, was on probation for the 1988 sexual assault of Sinthasomphone's brother. He reportedly told investigators that the body of another victim was in an adjoining room when the police forced Sinthasomphone to return. The *Milwaukee Journal* also reported that photos of Dahmer's previous victims were strewn on the floor of the apartment.

Cleveland's revelation forced the city's top cop, Philip Arreola, to suspend three police officers with pay. He was also compelled to make public partial transcripts of 911 and police radio transmissions.

In a section of a transmission one of the cops told his dispatcher that "an intoxicated Asian, naked male was returned to his sober

boyfriend." The remark is followed by laughter. In follow-up calls by Cleveland to the police department, an officer who had been at the scene repeated the remark and insisted the boy was an adult.

At a packed July 31 meeting of several hundred people at Fellowship Baptist Church, Childress pointed out that "they weren't listening to what I had to say. They thought it was like a joke. That little boy could still be alive today." At least four others found dead in Dahmer's apartment were murdered after that night.

The transmissions confirmed what Cleveland and Childress had reported and verified what is common knowledge for many in this city — that there is a double standard of police treatment for working people, especially those who are Black, Latino, Asian, or gay.

A viewpoint expressed by several Black teenagers here, who discussed the regular mistreatment they suffer at the hands of the cops, was that the outcome would have been far different if it were alleged that a Black man chased or molested a white child.

"When I was stopped for speeding a few weeks back, the cop repeatedly asked me where I got my truck — as if being a Black youth meant I stole it!" one 18-year-old said. "The cops routinely follow me and many of my friends, sometimes for weeks at a time," chimed in another, "but they wouldn't even spend a half hour to protect that child or listen to the two women who phoned 911 just because they were Black."

Gay rights groups here have also ex-

pressed outrage that the cops did not help the child because of Dahmer's alleged statement that it was merely a "spat" between homosexual lovers. The cops laughed and said they needed to get "deloused" after leaving Dahmer's apartment.

"Racism exists in many of the city's institutions. It's easy to see racism in the police department, in the work force and everywhere," Queen Hyler, executive director of Stop the Violence told the August 5 rally participants.

She added, "Blacks are treated as second-class citizens and we must do everything possible to erase racism." Other speakers included Jeannetta Robinson of Career Youth Development, Scott Cunkel of Lambda Rights Network, and Alderman Paul Henningsen. Henningsen was loudly booed when he said, "We can't condemn the police without a fair hearing." Some shouted back "Konerak didn't get a fair hearing."

Leaders of local civil rights and gay rights groups are demanding that the three still-identified cops be fired and that there be an



Milwaukee protest against cops, who rejected calls by area residents to aid Laotian boy, and forced him to return to alleged killer's apartment.

independent investigation from outside the state into the Milwaukee Police Department in answer to Mayor John Nordquist's convening of a local "blue-ribbon" panel.

On August 7 the International Union of Police Associations called for Police Chief Arreola's resignation for suspending the three officers.

## Curtis resists prison move to break him

Continued from front page

vigorously contesting my conviction on charges of rape and burglary," Curtis told Studer on the phone the day before being sent to the prison in Anamosa. "My defense has been joined by many prominent individuals, unions, and human rights organizations in Iowa and around the world."

After Curtis arrived at Mount Pleasant, he was assigned to meet with Dudley Allison, the assistant director of the Sex Offenders Treatment Program, and Andrea Wright, who was assigned to be Curtis' counselor. They pressed him at length to reverse his position, abandon his fight, and enter the program.

"Fourteen hundred men have been sent here to this program and they all claimed they were innocent," Allison told Curtis.

Curtis told the prison administrators that he was morally, politically, and legally incapable of participating in a program that required him to confess to a crime he did not commit.

Allison insisted that meant Curtis was refusing the "treatment" and abruptly terminated the meeting.

Curtis then was placed in the general population unit and put on a waiting list for both a job and educational classes at Mount Pleasant.

He met several friends at the Mount Pleasant prison, inmates he had known at the men's reformatory in Anamosa when he was assigned there from November 1988 to May 1990. Some of them were readers of the *Militant*. One was a former coworker at the Swift (Monfort) plant where he worked at the time he was framed and beaten by Des Moines police. Another had attended one of the large Des Moines rallies held on Curtis' behalf prior to his 1988 trial.

On July 31, Curtis was called to a meeting with his counselor. Wright told him he would shortly be transferred out of Mount Pleasant to Anamosa. She told Curtis he was being moved because he had "refused" to undergo treatment and they needed his bed for someone else who would agree to the program.

### Dangling hope of release

Wright told Curtis that the administration at Mount Pleasant was completely aware of the fact that he is campaigning against his frame-up when they agreed to accept him. She said that they knew he was unable to participate in the Sex Offenders Treatment Program. They accepted his transfer to press him to change his position, Wright informed Curtis.

"Entering a program whose requirement for participation would be renouncing my innocence is impossible and would invalidate my constitutional right to appeal my conviction in court," Curtis told Studer over the phone the day before he was moved out of Mount Pleasant.

Curtis was transferred to the prison in Anamosa the next day. This is his second time at Anamosa. According to prison records Curtis recently received as part of his parole fight, he had been transferred out of Anamosa in 1990 because the authorities there felt he had become "too powerful" as a political leader.

"This set of moves is a political attack on Mark," Studer told the defense supporters. "The authorities hoped that they could use prison to break Mark, to get him to give up the fight for justice, to dangle the hope of release as pressure to force him to enter the treatment program and call off the defense campaign."

"Mark didn't refuse to enter their program, he just refused to stop fighting," Studer added. "So they transferred him to Anamosa, charging that he was 'refusing treatment,'

hoping to sabotage his eligibility for release on parole."

### Parole letters campaign.

The defense committee is coordinating an international campaign to gather letters urging the Iowa State Board of Parole to release Curtis. His next parole hearing is scheduled for November.

"We need to redouble our efforts — to show that Curtis is more eligible for freedom today, not less," Studer said. "When we explain to people how prison authorities worked to set Curtis up, to press to break him, or to put a black mark in his file against his release, it will help demonstrate how he has been singled out because of his political activities."

"We have already gathered 150 letters from union leaders, proponents of Black and women's rights, and supporters of political rights," Studer said. "Now we should step up our campaign and get hundreds more."

Letters supporting parole addressed to the Iowa State Board of Parole and contributions can be sent to the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa 50311.

## Pathfinder and Paris publisher issue works of Sankara in French

The works of one of Africa's foremost revolutionary leaders, Thomas Sankara, are now available in their original language — French.

Pathfinder Press has announced the appearance of *Oser inventer l'avenir* (Dare to invent the future), a French edition of the Pathfinder book *Thomas Sankara Speaks*.

Thomas Sankara was the central leader of a revolution in Burkina Faso, a country in West Africa. Although he was murdered in a counterrevolutionary coup in 1987, the influence of his ideas has grown, spreading across Africa since his death.

*Oser inventer l'avenir* has been published in Paris as a cooperative venture between Pathfinder and a publisher in France, L'Harmattan. It is Pathfinder's first full-length book published in French. The 290-page book, edited by David Gakunzi, will be available in North America in quantity by October 1.

Included in this edition are four important speeches by Sankara that were not available when the English edition went to press in 1988.

These include "Liberation Comes Only through Struggle," Sankara's address when French President François Mitterrand visited Burkina Faso; "For a United Front against the Debt," a speech to a conference of the Nonaligned Movement; "French Must Accept Other Languages," which calls for more respect for the languages of Africa; and an important address on the problems of the revolution given just two weeks before Sankara's assassination.

The volume also includes a 10-page photographic section. The new book sells for \$35 and may be ordered from Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.



## Los Angeles cops gun down 19-year-old Chicano youth

BY JUAN VILLAGÓMEZ

LOS ANGELES — There is a lot of anger in the Ramona Gardens housing project. Nineteen-year-old Arturo Jiménez was killed there by a deputy sheriff on Saturday night, August 3.

The cops claim Jiménez was shot when he assaulted a deputy, but eyewitnesses flatly contradict that story.

In the wake of the killing of Jiménez, Los Angeles County deputy sheriffs and members of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD), with drawn shotguns, surrounded the approaches to the 500-unit development and for several hours barred people from entering or leaving.

Jiménez was killed while attending a lawn birthday party. The cops claimed they stopped after someone threw a beer bottle at their patrol car and that when they got out, Jiménez assaulted one cop with a bottle, grabbed his flashlight, and knocked him unconscious with it.

Ramona Gardens, a mainly Chicano hous-

ing project, sits on the border of East Los Angeles, an unincorporated area policed by the sheriff's department. They have no jurisdiction in the project but, residents say, they enter it frequently to harass people.

The night of August 3, the deputies claimed they had followed a speeding car into the project and then a confrontation occurred in which Jiménez was killed.

Ismael Aponte, one of six people arrested in the wake of the killing, told the *Militant* a different story.

He said the deputies were not chasing anyone; they came in slow, with their lights out.

Apparently assuming someone directed a remark at them, they stopped their car and got out. One of them demanded of Jorge Gonzales, "Is there something funny?" and began to hit him.

Arturo Jiménez protested what they were doing. "And then the cop shot him three times in the chest," Aponte said.

Continued on Page 10



# Capitalist economic and political crisis grows in Nicaragua

## U.S. holds back aid to regime

BY SELVA NEBBIA

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — Five months after the government of Violeta Chamorro implemented a "shock treatment" austerity program, working people in this country of some 3.8 million face severe unemployment, declining wages, and drastically reduced social services.

The situation marks a deterioration of the already depression-like conditions that arose in the last years of Sandinista rule, when the government began shifting more and more of the burden of the capitalist economic crisis onto workers and peasants, while increasing concessions to the country's big landowners and businessmen.

"Things are pretty bad," said Gelsomina Sánchez, 52, a mother of six from Chinandega. "I bake and sell bread to help feed my family, but so many unemployed people are doing the same thing that there are more sellers than buyers."

Miguel Ruiz, 28, is a leader of the Sandinista Workers Federation (CST) in Carazo, a coffee growing and processing region. He estimated that unemployment now stands at about 50 percent, with 600,000 people without work.

"Let me give you an idea of what this has meant where I come from," he said. "Of the 5,000 permanent workers who live in Carazo, this year only 1,400 had employment."

The daily wage for many industrial workers is around 10 córdobas, with workers in some industries making way below that amount. A garment worker makes about 85 córdobas a month, according to the Sandinista daily *Barricada*. Farm workers earn

about 150 córdobas a month.

These wages are far below the needs of an average family of six, which according to government figures would require an income of at least 635 córdobas a month to buy basic necessities. At the Eastern Market here, a pound of rice and a pound of beans, the main staples of the Nicaraguan diet, sell for 2 córdobas and 1.9 córdobas respectively.

In the many shantytowns that have sprung up in Managua and other cities in the last half decade, little safe drinking water is available and there are generally no sewage systems. This makes the outbreak of cholera here nearly inevitable, said the Nicaraguan Ministry of Health.

"Shock treatment" economic measures were approved by the National Assembly in March. They were aimed at controlling skyrocketing inflation of 13,000 percent and at getting the green light from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other international creditors for debt relief programs. Nicaragua has a total foreign debt of \$10.5 billion, 27 times its annual exports.

The centerpiece of the austerity plan was the devaluation of the córdoba by 500 percent. Prices tripled or quadrupled overnight, but the plan called for an average wage increase of only 200 percent.

The economic plan also included laying off several thousand public employees, giving them \$2,000 to set up "their own business" in a shrinking economy where tens of thousands of small peddlers and shopkeepers are already competing.

The Chamorro plan was approved with the backing of all the deputies of the Sandinista



Militant/George Buchanan

**Eastern Market in Managua, where a pound of rice sells for 2 córdobas. Daily wage of many industrial workers is 10 córdobas.**

National Liberation Front (FSLN) in the National Assembly, with the exception of Dámaso Vargas, leader of the Managua CST. He abstained.

"Certain aspects of this plan have similarities with IMF programs," said Sergio Ramírez, former vice president of Nicaragua and the head of the FSLN caucus in the National Assembly. "They do not differ from those we applied when we were in the government," he explained in a March 25 interview in the daily *Barricada*. "However, our disadvantage was that we had no access to foreign resources to support our plan."

But despite the fact that Chamorro was elected on a coalition ticket organized and financed by Washington, little international aid has been forthcoming.

A month after the austerity plan was put into effect, Chamorro went to Washington to request aid. While she was given the customary standing ovation when she entered the House of Representatives to give a speech and make her appeal for money, only a fourth

of the legislators were present. The Bush administration did not make any commitment for new aid to Chamorro's government.

"I'm not sure things are developing in the way some of her strongest supporters here would like," said Sen. Robert Dole. "I don't think we should prejudice anything but she's not over the hump." Legislators complained about the continued presence of FSLN leaders in the army and police, and the slow pace of privatization in Nicaraguan enterprises that were nationalized during the revolution.

Chamorro was elected president in February 1990 on the ticket of the National Opposition Union (UNO), a tenuous coalition of 14 parties that opposed the FSLN, ranging from right-wing to liberal capitalist formations, and including the Nicaraguan Socialist Party and the Nicaraguan Communist Party. The Bush administration convinced them to form an electoral bloc despite their sharp differences, in order to defeat the FSLN.

None of the UNO groups had much of a popular base at the time, and that remains the case today. Although Chamorro won the presidency, the FSLN won the biggest single share of the votes and is still the only political party with a mass base, including substantial working-class support.

In line with this relationship of forces, Chamorro retained long-time FSLN leader Humberto Ortega as head of the army. Sandinistas were kept on in many top police posts as well.

The UNO coalition is sharply divided over the role of the FSLN in the armed forces as well as over the pace of returning confiscated property to capitalist owners and reviving the stricken economy. A substantial layer of UNO favors overturning land grants made by the FSLN to workers and peasants and a tougher stance toward labor demands and strikes than the Chamorro regime has adopted thus far.

### Renewed contra activity

The political crisis is reflected in renewed military activity by some contras who had been disarmed following Chamorro's election victory but who in recent months have carried out armed assaults in northern Nicaragua. Estimates of the number of *recontras*, as they are called, range from 500 to 1,000.

The bands have attacked a hydroelectric plant, farms, and police stations. Their demands are for removal of Ortega as army chief and are often for the firing of Antonio Lacayo, Chamorro's minister of the presidency, whom the contras accuse of being conciliatory to the Sandinistas. The aim of the attacks is to shift the relationship of forces in the Chamorro government further to the right.

These demands echo those being made by leading members of the governing UNO coalition, particularly Vice President Virgilio Godoy.

"The brashest critic of the administration's soft policy on the Sandinistas is its own Vice President," an article in the June 24 *Time* magazine pointed out. "Godoy remains outraged that General Ortega held on to his army post and has repeatedly called Chamorro and Lacayo 'prisoners of the military.'"

"Lacayo pounces on such overheated rhetoric," the magazine said. "'How much accommodation with the Sandinistas is too much?' he asks. 'If we're too generous, that's better than not being generous enough. The gains we've made by negotiating with the Sandinistas are enormous.'"

# Sandinista National Liberation Front congress sets 'stability' as key goal

BY GEORGE BUCHANAN

MANAGUA, Nicaragua — In the midst of a growing economic and political crisis in this country, the first congress in the 30-year history of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN) took place here July 19-21.

The FSLN leadership presented no perspectives for organizing working people to struggle in defense of their class interests; rather, the goal of the gathering was to further consolidate the organization as a bourgeois opposition party. Progress was registered in this process with little disagreement voiced.

### Early FSLN

The FSLN led the massive struggle that toppled the dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza in 1979, replacing it with a government of workers and peasants. In the early years of the revolution the new FSLN-led government responded to the massive mobilizations and expanding organization of working people in the city and countryside by carrying out measures against capitalist property and prerogatives, including expropriation of some industries and recognizing the seizure of land by poor peasants and rural workers.

The government led the mobilization that defeated the contras, the Washington-backed mercenary force that sought to destroy the revolution.

By the second half of the 1980s the FSLN leadership had begun to abandon its anti-capitalist course, relying more and more on the workings of the capitalist market. The course of forging a fighting worker-peasant alliance was replaced by that of seeking a long-term social pact based on "national unity" with the capitalist businessmen and landowners of Nicaragua. The FSLN's public face became more and more modeled on that of a radical bourgeois party.

This reversal undermined the workers' and farmers' government, which had eroded away before the retreat of the revolution was registered in the defeat of the FSLN in the presidential elections of February 1990.

The congress reaffirmed the leadership's political perspective of aiding the capitalist government of President Violeta Chamorro in trying to stabilize Nicaragua's economic and political situation, while looking to the presidential elections in 1996 as the opportunity to once again lead the government.

This perspective was laid out most clearly at the final session, at which all the speeches were strongly applauded. The speakers were Gen. Humberto Ortega, a central Sandinista leader and head of the Nicaraguan army; Joaquín Villalobos, a central leader of the Farabundo Martí National Liberation Front (FMLN) of El Salvador; Antonio Lacayo, minister of the presidency in the Chamorro government; and Daniel Ortega, former Nicaraguan president and newly elected FSLN general secretary.

Humberto Ortega recalled his days in the guerrilla struggle 22 years ago, as one of a group of "dreamers," when "revolutionary flags inspired us with zeal, with a great sense of sacrifice to accomplish all our objectives."

The reality of today's world, Ortega said, means working "side by side with those with whom we fought in the past." He stressed that the "unity of all responsible, patriotic and nationalist forces" of Nicaragua was vital for achieving social stability and economic recovery.

The FMLN's Joaquín Villalobos hailed what he saw as the "neutralization" of the state's coercive power in Nicaragua. Because of this, he said "consensus, reconciliation, and the establishment of a broad national project is possible."

The theme of "conciliation" was repeated by government leader Antonio Lacayo, who told delegates he was "pleased with the policy of national reconciliation and your pledge to work for a social and economic pact" between contending classes.

Daniel Ortega gave the closing address, in which he said that strikes by workers are inevitable because of the economic crisis, but that the FSLN cannot be responsible for

them. "Instead, the causes for the strikes must be found, to then avoid the strikes, to avoid more tension," he said.

Ortega said that the FSLN supported the privatization of industries it had once nationalized, as long as these were not turned over to Somozaists, and as long as workers had a share in their ownership.

Repeating the theme of "reconciliation," Ortega urged FSLN members to go out and "incorporate people from different economic classes and social sectors . . . so that we turn the FSLN in this new phase into a political force that is capable of representing . . . all the social sectors and all the economic sectors in our country."

Delegates chanted, "Stability!" and "Unity!" throughout the final rally. The chants underscored the lack of any political perspective on the part of the FSLN for how to meet the devastating toll of the capitalist economic crisis or to defend Nicaraguan toilers in the face of renewed military attacks by re-grouped contra forces.

### Composition of delegates

Almost 600 delegates were seated at the congress, chosen by 18 regional conferences. Also present were 186 observers from Nicaragua, including a delegation from the Chamorro government, and 170 guests from 41 countries. The biggest proportion of delegates were professionals, white collar employees, or FSLN staff. A tiny percentage were industrial workers, farm workers, or peasants.

(A rally to celebrate the 12th anniversary of the Nicaraguan revolution was held July 19. Organized by the FSLN on short notice, it drew a crowd of tens of thousands of enthusiastic workers and youth from the barrios of Managua, in a strong display of the support for the FSLN among workers because of the revolutionary role it once played.)

Several international guests presented greetings to the conference. Luis Inacio Lula da Silva, leader of the Brazilian Workers

Continued on Page 12



# Fiji miners, cane farmers force concessions from government

BY JOAN PHILLIPS  
AND PETER BRADLEY

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Fijian workers and farmers won some important gains in July. Fiji, with a population of 750,000, is a group of islands in the South Pacific.

Under threat of a July 16 national strike called by the Fiji Trades Union Congress (FTUC), Fiji President Ratu Sir Penaia Ganilau agreed July 12 to suspend two repressive antiunion laws, to facilitate negotiations to resolve a long-running strike by gold miners, and to address grievances that led to a boycott by sugar-cane farmers of this year's harvest.

With these moves by the government, the FTUC issued a statement calling off the planned national strike.

The mounting pressure of determined struggle by unionists and cane farmers began to produce deep divisions among central leaders of the regime, forcing the government to make concessions.

Major General Sitiveni Rabuka was increasingly critical of the government's handling of the crisis and at one point called on it to resign. Rabuka led the May 1987 military coup that installed the present government. With a national strike pending, he was instrumental in setting up discussions between the government and FTUC.

Rabuka recently entered the government for the first time, becoming deputy prime minister. The present prime minister, Sir Ratu Kamisese Mara, announced he will retire soon.

## Issues in miners' strike

Meanwhile the strike by gold miners continues. It began February 23, with 700 miners employed by the Emperor Gold Mining Co. in Vatukoula in the north of Fiji's main island, Viti Levu. The mine is run by an Australian company, Western Mining Corp. Before the strike US\$560,000 of gold ore was extracted each week from the mine, making gold Fiji's second biggest export earner.

The Fiji Mine Workers Union (FMWU) has demanded improved wages and conditions, as well as union recognition. Until recently, both the company and the government refused to recognize the miners' union, claiming it has the support of less than 50 percent of the work force.

The miners, who work as deep as 3,000 feet underground, are entitled to a minimum hourly wage of 60 cents. Sometimes, at the end of two weeks work, they get a zero net wage.

The Fijian Department of Health has described company housing as unfit for human habitation. The residential area is exposed to heavy doses of toxic industrial pollution.

Miners are calling for improved health and safety facilities underground and improved toilet facilities. They work in extreme heat and sometimes in waterlogged tunnels because of poor drainage.

On April 3, the company sacked 420 of the striking miners. It recruited scab labor in an attempt to keep production going.

The strikers responded with mass picketing, including sit-ins. At one point they managed to close down ore-milling and crushing operations for a week with a picket of more than 500.

Several demonstrations were held, including one in support of the strike by 400 miners' wives.

Eighty police, including a riot squad, were sent to the mine, along with "security guards" recruited by the company. On May 9 — following a fire that gutted one mine shaft and some earth-moving equipment — more than 100 sit-in strikers and other strike supporters were arrested by riot police, some carrying rifles. Some strikers were hauled before the courts. Injunctions against picketing were handed down.

The company has now issued dismissal notices to 400 workers.

## Unity among strikers

Ninety percent of the miners are indigenous Fijians. An important element of the strike has been unity between them and Indo-Fijian miners, many of whom are descendants of indentured laborers brought from India during British colonial rule in the last century. Today, slightly less than half Fiji's

population is of Indian descent. In 1977, the company was able to defeat a 10-week strike by miners, and later smash the union after successfully driving a wedge between Fijian and Indo-Fijian workers.

The current government of Fiji, installed by the 1987 military coup, is itself based on an aristocratic layer of traditional Fijian chiefs. The coup deposed a newly-elected and multiracial Labour Party-led government, which was backed by the unions.

The present regime carries out policies that bolster the position of Fiji's own ruling rich and that of imperialist interests in the country. The government claims to stand for the interests of all indigenous Fijians and supports measures that discriminate against Indo-Fijians.

## Farmers boycott harvest

Alongside the gold miners' strike, 20,000 small landholders who grow and cut sugar cane were involved in a harvest boycott beginning in early May. Sugar accounts for about 60 percent of Fiji's export earnings.

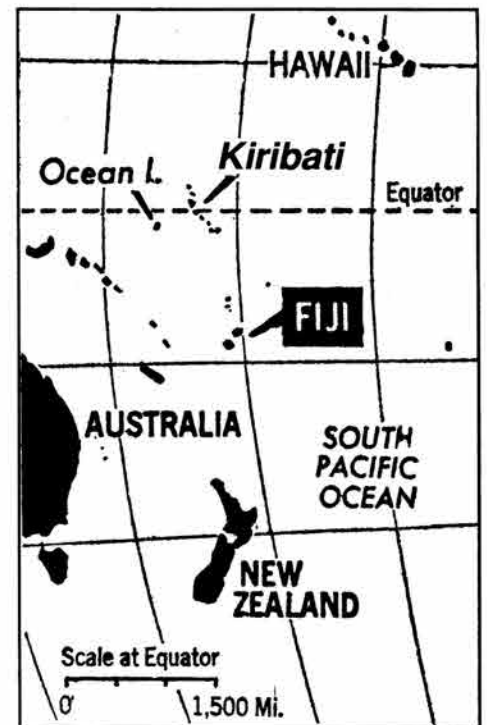
In late April, the government-controlled Fiji Sugar Corp. announced that farmers

would not receive the usual final payment on their 1990 crop. Based on the forecast price for 1990, growers had been expecting this payment to be \$US4.97 per ton. The National Farmers Union (NFU), called a boycott to demand final payment be made immediately, that elections be held to the Sugar Cane Growers Council, that fertilizer prices be reduced, and that changes be negotiated in the contract, called the Master Award, for cane growers.

The big majority of cane growers are tenant farmers with an average 10 acres of land. Most are Indo-Fijian.

Fiji's government responded to the harvest boycott with repression. A 100-strong contingent of riot police was deployed to the cane districts in west Viti Levu. Some NFU officials were taken in for questioning by police and authorities refused to issue permits for mass meetings. President Ganilau threatened to mobilize the army to harvest the sugar cane.

The government handed down two draconian decrees May 28. The first made it an offense to advocate or support any action which hindered sugar production, under pen-



alty of up to \$6,500 and 14 years jail.

The second decree imposed the same penalties for advocating or supporting any action which threatened the smooth functioning of major industries, such as transport, mining, copra production, tourism, aviation, or communications.

President Ganilau suspended the decrees in his July 12 agreement with the FTUC.

# Newark forum discusses cop brutality

BY MAREA HIMELGRIN

NEWARK, New Jersey — Nearly 200 people participated in a forum held at the Newark Public Library July 31 to discuss different strategies for organizing against police brutality.

"We have a very serious problem here in New Jersey — a problem of the use of excessive force, a problem of racially related violence," said Larry Hamm, organizer of the meeting. Hamm is president of the People's Organization for Progress and chairperson of the New Jersey Statewide Rainbow Coalition.

Four Black and one Latino youth have been shot dead by New Jersey police in less than two months. Demonstrations have been organized by the victims' families nearly every week during this period. The actions and the July 31 forum have received extensive press coverage as has a counter-campaign by city and police officials to portray the victims as the criminals.

Carlton Mayse spoke at the forum. He is the uncle of 16-year-old Tasha Mayse, who died in a hail of bullets fired by police chasing an allegedly stolen van in which she was a passenger.

## 'Countless other victims'

Mayse listed more than a dozen New Jersey victims of police brutality. "And these were just the ones who were in the spotlight," he said. "There are countless other victims out there. We have to find out about all these incidents that have been swept under the rug."

A woman from Jersey City explained that her son was shot by the police a year ago and she hadn't been able to focus any public attention on the murder at the time. She said the recent mobilizations around other killings were an opportunity to demand justice for her son.

Mayse concluded, "What we need is a collective body to police the police. The police will not police itself. They take care of their own."

Kabili Tayari of Jersey City, who introduced himself as the president of the National Black Independent Political Party, faulted Blacks for becoming too secure in "our little jobs" and not responding to police brutality. He urged that community pressure be put on elected officials and Black police officers to force them to "take a stand."

Tayari also suggested creating a defense fund "to help families go to court."

Roxanne Gregory of the National Conference of Black Lawyers agreed with Tayari on the need for a defense fund. She said, "Police feel they have no constraints. They feel they can do whatever they want. If we bring a number of lawsuits, I do believe a number of them will be won."

John Jones of the All People's Congress of Jersey City called for the right to hire and fire cops.

"There needs to be a transfer of power," he said. "The police are hired and paid to



Militant/Marea Himelgrin

Demonstrator carries picture of 16-year-old Tasha Mayse, gunned down by cops in June. To her right is Sharon Mayse, Tasha's mother.

serve us. They must be responsible to us. The government is not going to prosecute their own agents."

"I don't think it's possible to reform the police," responded Al Duncan, the Socialist Workers Party candidate for State Assembly in the 29th District.

"We must demand that these officers pay the price for the things they've done. A clarity on demands is important," he said. "I don't think the cops have the right to act as judge, jury, and executioner in this city or any other city."

Duncan suggested that protests be organized around the September 9 trial in Hackensack of police officer Gary Spath, who shot and killed 16-year-old Phillip Pannell, in Teaneck in 1990. Other activists at the forum announced that plans are under way for a September 8 rally, a vigil, and a protest at the courthouse.

## Protest in Plainfield

A recent internal investigation by the police department in Plainfield exonerated cops involved in an incident that occurred several months ago.

In March of this year, 14-year-old Uriah Hannah was put in a choke-hold by Plainfield police outside his home. When the young man began to pass out, his parents Venus and Al intervened, trying to pry the night-stick from their son's neck. (The Hannah's eldest son, Santana, died in the custody of Plainfield police a year earlier.)

As Uriah Hannah's parents sought to protect him from the cops, more police arrived on the scene. After physically abusing the parents, they arrested them for "interfering with a police officer."

The police found that any "complaint of police brutality was not sustained."

Venus Hannah termed the report an "outright lie." She said, "A terrorist act by the police was carried out against myself and my family. The police didn't even interview 30 witnesses to the incident."

To protest the police finding, Hannah organized an August 4 march of some 75 people in Plainfield. Marchers included members of the families of other victims of police brutality. Supporters of Socialist Workers Party candidates for state assembly participated. Leonora Fulani of the New Alliance Party and Albert Sharpton and a busload of their supporters also marched.

A rally on the steps of City Hall was chaired by Carlton Mayse and included the mothers of three youth killed by New Jersey police — Venus Hannah, Sharon Mayse, and Thelma Pannell.

Pannell told the rally, "I didn't think this day would come, that I would be speaking out at public protests. But I know that sitting and crying and praying in the house isn't going to do it. I know I can't bring my son back, but perhaps I can help prevent another child's death. As long as we stick together we can beat this."

Hannah responded to a middle-aged Black woman from Plainfield who interrupted the speakers, exclaiming that the police in Plainfield "are doing a good job" and that the problem in the Black community is public drunkenness. Hannah replied, "Sure they're doing a good job — they're spending \$200,000 a month in this town on police brutality. They're generating the crime — they'd rather give us more police to beat us upside the head than school books!"



# UN takes up colonial status of Puerto Rico

Continued from front page

demeaning' to America's insular areas." Fernández told the UN committee, "The U.S. government can use whatever 'synonym' it wants but the reality of Puerto Rico's relationship to the United States is a century-long constant: It was a colony in 1900, a colony in 1952, and it is a colony on August 12, 1991."

Two speakers spoke in favor of the UN Security Council's recent recommendation that the Republic of the Marshall Islands and the Federated States of Micronesia be accepted as UN members. They said this underlined the urgency and relevance of Puerto Rico's case for independence, which has been before the United Nations since its founding in 1945.

## Repression of independence fighters

Many speakers referred to the "victimization and harassment" working-class activists and independence fighters have historically been subjected to by the U.S. and colonial authorities.

Speaking on behalf of the Unity Committee Against Repression and for Defense of Political Prisoners, Rafael Cancel Miranda said, "U.S. prisons have become a key political weapon whose primordial function is to politically dissuade by means of exemplary punishment." The jailed Puerto Ricans, he continued, are "in their majority anticolonial fighters and pro-independence activists who are sent to places located as far as possible from their families and communities. . . . They are subjected to physical and sexual assaults, denied medical treatment, and denied their fundamental human rights."

Cancel was himself in prison for some 25 years because of his proindependence activities.

Currently, 18 Puerto Rican political prisoners are in U.S. jails. "These prisoners are subjected to inhumanely long sentences,"

said Seiichi M. Yasutake, director of The Prisoners of Conscience Project, an association sponsored by the National Council of Churches representing some 32 U.S. Christian organizations.

The average sentence for 13 of the 18 Puerto Rican prisoners, Yasutake noted, "is 71.6 years."

Along with Cancel, several speakers referred to the uncompromising example of Pedro Albizu Campos, noting that the 100th anniversary of the Puerto Rican independence fighter's birth will be celebrated September 12.

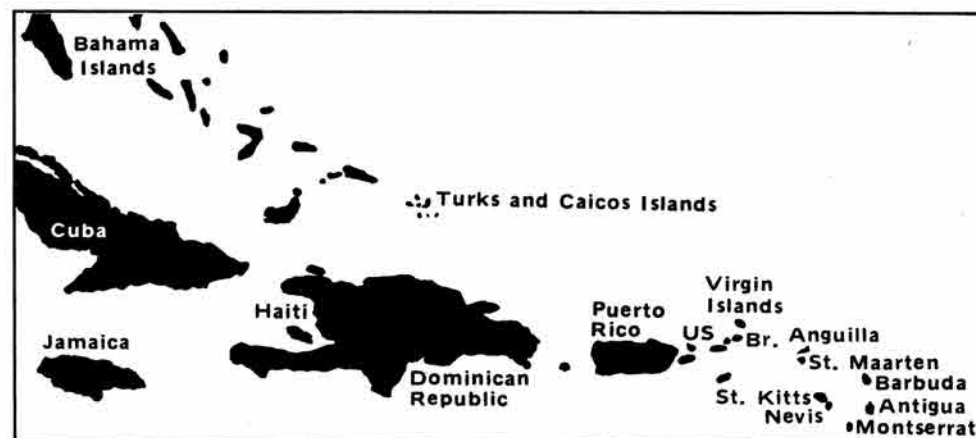
Albizu Campos was for many years the central leader of the Puerto Rican Nationalist Party. In 1950 he was sentenced to 53 years in prison after a Nationalist Party revolt was crushed. Three years later he was pardoned and released. The pardon was revoked in 1954 when several members of his party launched an attack on the U.S. Congress.

Albizu Campos served most of the rest of his life in jail in bad health. As a result of an international protest campaign, he was released four months before his death on April 21, 1965.

Cancel and others referred also to the First Ibero-American Summit recently held in Guadalajara, Mexico, and attended by heads of state from 19 countries in Latin America plus Spain and Portugal. Puerto Rico could not attend because of its status.

Steve Clark, who testified on behalf of the Socialist Workers Party, pointed to Cuban President Fidel Castro's statement at that conference (see facing page). Castro stated, "As long as a representative of independent Puerto Rico is not seated amongst us" the Ibero-American family will not be complete.

At the decolonization hearings other presentations noted that several international gatherings recently adopted posi-



tions in support of self-determination for Puerto Rico. Forty-four members of the Permanent Conference of Political Parties of Latin America (COPPPAL), meeting in Valparaíso, Chile, in June had requested that the Latin American presidents attending the Mexico summit issue a call for Puerto Rico's "definitive reintegration into Latin America as a sovereign, Latin American and Caribbean people."

Similarly, the nearly 170 delegates and observers attending the Second Conference of Movements and Political Parties of the São Paulo Forum, also held in Mexico in June, adopted a resolution reaffirming their "firm support to the inalienable right the Puerto Rican people have to self-determination and independence."

At that conference, Puerto Rican Socialist Party leader Rafael Anglada López explained, "The struggle for the defense of the Puerto Rican nationality and its integrity as a Latin American nation deserves the active support of the other peoples of our Latin America. After all, to support the self-determination and independence of Puerto Rico is to strengthen that of each of the peoples of the region."

Steve Clark, in his testimony before the UN committee, pointed out how the ruling class seeks to divide workers and explained that working people in the United States need to see "working people in Puerto Rico as part of the same struggle against a common enemy."

Juan Mari Bras, one of the most prominent independence fighters in Puerto Rico and chairman of the Common Cause of Puerto Rican Independence, stated that President Bush's "new world order" can't really be new if it includes colonialism. It's really "the same moth-eaten disorder."

Carlos Gallisá, general secretary of the Puerto Rican Socialist Party, denounced the U.S. and colonial governments for their insistence on using Puerto Rico "as a launching pad for aggression against sister countries, as a center of war training, as a source of recruitment as was imposed during the recent war in the Persian Gulf."

Among some of the other groups and individuals testifying in support of Puerto Rico's independence were Laura Albizu de Meneses from the Nationalist Party and Pedro Albizu Campos' daughter; William Kunstler for the National Lawyers Guild in the United States; Fernando Martín García for the Puerto Rican Independence Party; Center for Constitutional Rights; Puerto Rican Bar Association; Puerto Rican Institute for Civil Rights; and Committee of Labor Organizations.

## 51st state?

Several groups and individuals related to the New Progressive Party (PNP) of Puerto Rico were among the main supporters of the island becoming the 51st state of the United States.

Puerto Rican senator and PNP member Rolando Silva said, "Puerto Rico is a colony of the worst kind . . . the only solution to the colonial problem of Puerto Rico is statehood."

The draft resolution before the UN committee, introduced by Venezuelan Ambassador Diego Arria, reaffirms Puerto Ricans' inalienable right to "self-determination and independence."

It adds that "the United States Congress will continue the legislative process to enable the people of Puerto Rico to exercise their right to self-determination through popular consultations."

Just prior to the hearings on Puerto Rico, the Special Committee on Decolonization heard petitioners on the U.S. Virgin Islands, Guam, Trust Territory of the Pacific Islands, Malvinas Islands, and New Caledonia.

# Justice Dept. sides with rightists in Wichita

Continued from front page

staff and patients, or advocating others to do so.

The order was the result of a lawsuit by two clinics against the antiabortion forces. Thousands of working women use the clinics, including many from other states where abortion is not available.

In an interview with *The New York Times*, Kelly said the issue was "simple. I have a duty to carry out the law, and Roe is the law." In citing Roe, the federal judge was referring to the 1973 U.S. Supreme Court decision, *Roe v. Wade*, which legalized abortion.

The judge also cited an 1871 civil rights law enacted to protect freed slaves from harassment by the Ku Klux Klan. The law makes it illegal for two or more people to conspire "for the purpose of depriving any person or class of persons" from exercising rights guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution.

With the Justice Department's authorization, U.S. Attorney Lee Thompson filed a brief August 6 backing Operation Rescue's moves to overturn Judge Kelly's injunction.

The Justice Department brief challenged the use of the 1871 civil rights law, arguing that it cannot be used to protect women seeking abortions. The Justice Department has also challenged Kelly's jurisdiction in the lawsuit by the clinics' owners and his orders to federal marshals to enforce the law. The department claimed the judge should not have imposed the injunction, because the plaintiffs would not ultimately prevail in their lawsuit.

Kelly called the federal government's action "illegal" and said U.S. Attorney General

Richard Thornburgh had "given an imprimatur to what, in my view, is a license for mayhem." Kelly argued that, if his order were overturned, "there will be bloodshed."

The day after Washington's intervention in the battle, Kelly reported receiving "very serious death threats." Federal marshals were ordered to protect him.

The battle unfolding in Wichita, which has nearly a quarter of its police force assigned to the abortion clinics, has sharply polarized the city and state of Kansas. Operation Rescue and its followers have been supported by the governor and the Catholic Church hierarchy.

The downtown Wichita Plaza Hotel has rented at least 40 rooms at a discount to antiabortion forces and several churches have converted basements into dormitories for the round-the-clock vigilantes.

But despite the backing, polls conducted by *The Wichita Eagle* and KAKE-TV surveying surrounding Sedgewick County residents show 78 percent are opposed to the assaults on the abortion clinics. Picket lines in support of abortion rights have been held in Wichita and activists organized to safely escort patients and staff into the clinics.

Women's rights advocates nationally condemned the Justice Department's action in backing Operation Rescue. "Here we have a mob surrounding a clinic, and the Justice Department is siding with the mob," Helen Neuborne, executive director of the Legal Defense and Education Fund of the National Organization for Women (NOW), told the press. "It's a dramatic indication of the federal government's willingness to fight abortion, no matter where or how."

NOW Vice-President Patricia Ireland led a picket of more than 50 defenders of abortion rights outside the Justice Department August 9 to protest the Bush administration's "green light to all who would take the law into their own hands."

U.S. President George Bush, questioned during a golf game at his Maine retreat, said his administration's actions were not "a matter for the president to be concerned about, especially on the first day of his vacation."

The rightist assault in Wichita comes in the context of legal moves aimed at winning

a Supreme Court decision to overturn *Roe v. Wade* and the right to abortion.

A Louisiana federal judge ruled the state's recently enacted antiabortion law unconstitutional August 7. But in speedily striking down the antiabortion law, the judge said he disagreed with *Roe v. Wade*.

The state's attorney general is pressing an appeal and is asking for expedited review by the U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals to quickly get the issue before the Supreme Court. Other legal challenges to *Roe v. Wade* are also on their way to the High Court.

# Monfort shuts two packing plants

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS AND TED LEONARD

MARSHALLTOWN, Iowa — Monfort Pork "temporarily" shut down the night shifts at its Worthington, Minnesota, and Marshalltown, Iowa, pork plants July 22.

Claiming "unfavorable market conditions in the hog industry," the company laid off 327 workers at the Marshalltown plant and 479 at the Worthington plant. Another 22 workers were laid off at Monfort's St. Joseph, Missouri, plant while its operation in Louisville, Kentucky, was unaffected.

"The price we pay for hogs and what we receive for the finished product is the basis for the production discontinuance," said Gene Meakins, vice-president for public relations.

Monfort, a division of ConAgra, Inc., had been slaughtering and processing about 45,000 hogs daily at its four pork plants. The layoffs will reduce production to 30,000 hogs daily, according to Monfort.

Local 50N of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), which represents the production workers in the Marshalltown plant, called a special union meeting to discuss the layoffs. Some workers disputed the company's claim about high hog prices and "farmers getting rich."

On July 3, Monfort unilaterally imposed a contract on workers at its plants in Worthington and St. Joseph.

A week earlier, the workers in St. Joseph,

members of UFCW Local P-58, had rejected the company's take-it-or-leave-it contract offer by a vote of 441-1.

In Worthington, members of UFCW Local P-1161 had also rejected the contract by a vote of 615-5.

The contract forced on the workers by Monfort, one of the big three meat-packing bosses in the country, offers a 25-cent raise over 3 years, a \$250 ratification bonus, and a \$150 bonus the second year. Starting pay for new employees would drop from \$7.50 to \$7. Workers at both plants have an hourly base wage of \$9.

The company has demanded that workers begin making copayments on health insurance and announced it would start deducting the insurance copayments August 1.

Maurice Williams and Ted Leonard are members of UFCW Local 50N at Monfort in Marshalltown, Iowa.

## Correction

In the article "Bank scandal exposes capitalist dealings" in the August 16 *Militant*, Clark Clifford was identified as U.S. secretary of state under President Lyndon Johnson. Clifford was the U.S. secretary of defense.

## —CALENDAR—

### BRITAIN

#### Sheffield

**Fund-Raising Barbecue for Communist League Expansion Fund.** Speaker: Ruth Haswell, recently returned from 48th ANC National Conference in South Africa. Slide Presentation. Fri., Aug. 16, 7:30 p.m. 70 Elmhurst Road, Darnall. Donation: £5. Tel: 0742-729469.



# Puerto Rico independence and U.S. labor

## Statement by Socialist Workers Party at UN hearings on decolonization

The following statement was presented by Steve Clark for the Socialist Workers Party to the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization on August 13. Clark was one of a few dozen representatives who testified or presented written statements during two days of hearings on Puerto Rico.

Distinguished Chairman,  
Members of the United Nations Special Committee on Decolonization,

The U.S. government challenges and attempts to camouflage the fact that Puerto Rico is a colony of the United States. Testimony here has once more documented beyond a shadow of a doubt, however, that Puerto Rico is indeed subject to colonial domination.

The evidence so richly presented underscores once again the urgency of wiping human history clean of this disgraceful blot. The struggle for the defense of the Puerto Rican nationality and its integrity as a Latin American nation deserves the active support not only of the other peoples of Latin America, but of all the Americas, including the United States. To support the self-determination and independence of Puerto Rico is to strengthen the hand of all those fighting for a world in which all nations are able to make their own social and economic decisions free of imperialist coercion.

### 500 years of colonial domination

To grasp the full burden of 500 years of colonial domination of Puerto Rico is to understand why the fight to free Puerto Ricans from this yoke must be of the utmost concern for working people and all fighters for social justice in the United States.

Colonial rule means the Puerto Rican people are subject to glaring inequality and abuse. They have no equal hand in making the U.S. laws that govern them. They are subject to U.S. courts, cops, and military authorities over which they have no control.

Protection under the Bill of Rights is not among the paltry rights offered by citizenship. Puerto Ricans were made citizens of the United States in 1917 so that thousands of men from the island could be drafted into the U.S. army to fight and die for the few dozen ruling families of the United States. Ever since, Puerto Ricans have served as cannon fodder for their colonial masters — in World War II, Korea, Vietnam, and most recently in Iraq.

Some 15,000 Puerto Ricans were involved in Operation Desert Storm. Using troops from this colony in the Caribbean, which is not permitted to determine its own affairs, the U.S. government underscored the hypocrisy of its claim that it was fighting to defend self-determination and the sovereignty of countries in the Middle East.

The Pentagon also occupies 13 percent of Puerto Rico's most arable land with army and naval bases where it trains military personnel, tests new weapons, and conducts large-scale surveillance operations. From these outposts Washington has staged military attacks on Puerto Rico's neighbors in the Caribbean and Central America, including Cuba, Guatemala, the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, Grenada, and Panama.

### English language imposed

During its 93 years of domination over Puerto Rico, the U.S. government has systematically attempted to displace Spanish as the language of the island's inhabitants by making English mandatory. The Official Languages Act of 1902, adopted by the U.S.-dominated legislature, made both English and Spanish official languages.

This "bilingual" policy of many U.S. administrations — both Democratic and Republican — was unambiguously articulated in the 1930s by President Franklin Roosevelt in a letter to his new appointee for commissioner of education in Puerto Rico. "Bilingualism," Roosevelt wrote, "will be achieved only if the teaching of English throughout the insular educational system is entered into at once with vigor, purposefulness and devotion, and with the understanding that English is the official language of our country."

English remained the exclusive language of the public schools in Puerto Rico until 1948, when Spanish was again established as the language of instruction.



1989 proindependence rally in San Juan, Puerto Rico. "Colonial rule means Puerto Rican people are subject to U.S. courts, cops, and military authorities over which they have no control," SWP statement explains.

The colonial rulers attempted to extend the English language throughout Puerto Rican society. This imperious policy, however, met fierce resistance from a people who refuse to be told what language they must speak.

Just four months ago the Puerto Rican legislature revoked the 1902 law and established Spanish as the sole official language. Even with this conquest, Puerto Ricans still confront the insult that the procedures in the

these attacks, the colonial oppression of Puerto Rico reinforces all efforts to keep the working class in the United States divided, and to keep its most oppressed and combative layers nonunion.

The colonial status is used to bolster prejudice and chauvinism, the employers' main weapon with which to keep workers in the United States from seeing working people in Puerto Rico as part of the same struggle

**“If labor movement in United States accepts subjugation of another people and does not unconditionally oppose it, political consciousness, a sense of justice, and elementary human solidarity will be sapped.”**

U.S. federal courts in Puerto Rico are still conducted in English despite the fact that most jurors, prosecutors, and judges, are Spanish-speakers.

### Economic and social conditions

The fight in Puerto Rico against colonial oppression today is intertwined with the struggle against the economic and social conditions the big majority of people face as a result of the massive social transformation on the island over the past 45 years.

The economy has gone from being predominantly agricultural to heavily industrial. A majority of producers today are wage workers in manufacturing and other industries. Puerto Rico is one of the most industrialized countries in the Caribbean. This working population faces the same problems as workers in other countries, including the United States — deteriorating wages, high unemployment, speedup and safety hazards on the job, industrial pollution, assaults on the unions, and cop and goon violence against strikes.

The inequalities resulting from colonial subjugation combined with imperialist exploitation have made these conditions substantially worse in Puerto Rico. For example, unemployment is far higher and the per capita income on the island is half what it is in the poorest states in the United States.

The struggle, then, by the working class for social advances against the designs of the employers and the government goes hand in hand with the fight against colonial oppression. The fight by working people to free themselves from these onerous conditions will become even more pronounced as the world capitalist economic crisis deepens and the employers step up their drive to squeeze even more out of Puerto Rican workers and try to crush their unions.

### Working class in U.S.

A similar assault by the employers is underway in the United States. And as working people attempt to unite in a fight to resist

against a common enemy. In particular it nurtures racism and discrimination against Puerto Ricans who move to the United States in search of work.

If the labor movement in the United States accepts the subjugation of another people and does not unconditionally oppose it, political consciousness, a sense of justice, and elementary human solidarity will be sapped. Progress in our struggles here is consequently weakened, the fighting strength of the labor movement drained.

### Repression against independence fighters

One example of this is the long history of repression against working-class activists and independence fighters in Puerto Rico. U.S. police agencies such as the FBI have played a notorious role in this. Recently expanded powers given to local cops and courts are being used to spy upon, criminalize, and imprison militants. As part of these stepped-up attacks, the U.S. government employs the use of federal grand juries as secret inquisitorial bodies to imprison without specific criminal charges many independence fighters.

The FBI and federal courts' free hand to crack down in Puerto Rico only encourages violations of the political liberties of all those subject to U.S. law.

### Cuba's example

A few weeks ago, 23 heads of state or government, from 19 Latin American countries plus Spain and Portugal, met in Mexico in the First Ibero-American Summit. Significantly, the unprecedented gathering did not include the United States. But in his message to the summit conference Cuban President Fidel Castro also noted that "as long as a representative of independent Puerto Rico is not seated amongst us" the Ibero-American family will not be complete.

The government of Cuba has been the most consistent and uncompromising international voice in support of Puerto Rico's independence. Cuba has shared a brutal co-

lonial history with Puerto Rico and for many decades fighters for social justice and independence in both countries have been closely joined.

U.S. imperialism's domination of Cuba ended in 1959 and since then the Cuban people have shown what can be accomplished when national sovereignty is truly conquered. One of the reasons for U.S. imperialism's unremitting efforts for more than 32 years to destroy the Cuban revolution and return that island's people to the yoke of neocolonial domination is the fear of that revolution's example for the people of Puerto Rico.

Distinguished Chairman,

As you and the other members of the committee well know, the White House and the U.S. Congress have consistently opposed the efforts of international organizations like this one to place their moral weight behind the fight for Puerto Rico's independence.

In the aftermath of World War II, the anticolonial revolt that was sweeping the world and the significant independence struggle in Puerto Rico led the United Nations to declare Puerto Rico a "non-self-governing territory."

### 'Commonwealth' status

In response to this pressure, Washington created the "Commonwealth" status in 1952, claiming this decolonized the island. The following year the State Department got the United Nations to remove Puerto Rico from the list of non-self-governing countries.

The Commonwealth status, however, has been used by the U.S. government to obscure Puerto Rico's continued colonial oppression, which has been clearly shown by the testimony here. The resurgence of the independence movement in the 1960s was proof that colonial rule remained, and in 1972 this committee decided to again take up Puerto Rico. Since 1976 this question has been on your agenda every year, and you have affirmed "the inalienable right of Puerto Rico to self-determination and independence."

The great majority of people living under colonial rule earlier in this century have broken from their masters and established scores of independent countries. Hundreds of millions of people in Asia, Africa, the Middle East, Oceania, and the Americas successfully fought to get rid of their colonial oppressors. Puerto Ricans, however, remain one of the peoples living under direct colonial rule. They face the same plight as several millions of others in Hong Kong, New Caledonia, Martinique, Guadeloupe, Guam, Curaçao, and other colonies.

The Movement of Nonaligned Countries and the United Nations have proclaimed the final years of this century as the decade of total elimination of colonialism. The recognition and condemnation by the members of this committee of ongoing colonial rule over Puerto Rico will encourage all fighters for this country's independence. The perpetuation of 500 years of colonial domination is contrary to the interests of the people of Puerto Rico, the people of the United States, and indeed of all the world's people.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman and members of this committee for the opportunity to appear before these hearings.

### from Pathfinder

NEW INTERNATIONAL no. 7

### Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's Assault on Iraq

By Jack Barnes  
333 pp. \$12.00

### Puerto Rico: U.S. Colony in the Caribbean

By José G. Pérez  
23 pp. \$2.00

### One People, One Destiny

THE CARIBBEAN AND CENTRAL AMERICA TODAY  
Edited by Don Rojas  
115 pp. \$10.95

Available from Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014. \$3.00 shipping and handling.



# Young Socialist Alliance holds convention

## Fusion with younger Socialist Workers Party members fortifies organization

BY GEORGE BUCHANAN

OBERLIN, Ohio — More than 500 delegates and observers gathered here for the 27th National Convention of the Young Socialist Alliance (YSA) August 9–11.

This was a historic occasion, as YSA delegates voted to combine their ranks with a layer of young members of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP), in what was described as the “fusion convention.” Forty-three SWP members below the age of 33 joined the YSA, 18 of them taking seats as delegates after the opening report.

The delegates enthusiastically welcomed the fusion proposal because it qualitatively strengthens the YSA. Coming out of the convention the YSA will have more chapters, politically stronger ones, and more experienced members on its national leadership. Its functioning as a national organization is qualitatively advanced as a result.

This move flows from the political strengthening of — and collaboration between — the YSA and SWP during the working-class campaign against the U.S.-led onslaught on the people of Iraq.

In addition to the delegates elected by YSA chapters, convention participants included members of the Young Socialist Alliance and of the Socialist Workers Party, representatives from sister Young Socialists groups in Canada and New Zealand and from other organizations of co-thinkers around the world, and supporters of the communist movement. The program was an intensive one, combining reports, discussions, debates, panels, classes, film and slide presentations, and socials, all packed into two and a half days.

### Fusion proposal

YSA National Executive Committee member Roni McCann presented the opening report, explaining the reasons for the fusion.

Today's world is one in which U.S. imperialism will drag more working people into wars such as the slaughter against the people of Iraq; it is a world where the employers will continue their drive against the rights and living standards of workers, she said. A stronger YSA is needed to effectively act in this world.

McCann said that, above all, sharpening class lines characterize politics in the United States today — from the proposed appoint-



More than 500 people attended August 9–11 YSA convention in Oberlin, Ohio, which featured eyewitness reports from Cuba and South Africa; classes on Malcolm X, Marx and Engels, fight for Puerto Rico independence.

ment to the Supreme Court of another reactionary judge (who happens to be Black) to the current attacks on working-class women's access to safe, legal abortion.

“The YSA should learn from our movement's strengths during the war against Iraq,” said McCann. “When U.S. imperialism went to war we explained that there was nothing the U.S. military could do in the world that would be in the interests of our class; we sided with the *people* of Iraq who were directly facing the brutal imperialist onslaught. The industrial fractions of the SWP carried out a campaign in the heat of the war to explain the facts to workers. We didn't bend to any patriotic pressure or wear yellow ribbons.” Party and YSA members explained to coworkers, students, and other youth that the only way to end imperialist war once and for all was for workers and farmers to take power out of the hands of the warmakers.

“The party produced the literature, the weapons we needed, and we went out and used them,” McCann said. “We campaigned

with the *Militant*, with the *International Socialist Review*, and with Pathfinder books such as *U.S. Hands Off the Mideast!*”

### Not ‘our army’

“We said that although the soldiers are indeed workers in uniform, the U.S. army is not ‘our army,’ because we don't deploy it. If it was our army we would deploy it against the apartheid regime in South Africa!”

She described how SWP branches reached out to work with antiwar action coalitions, seeking to hold discussions, debates, and street protests around the war. The party worked closely with the YSA in the antiwar campaign.

The YSA joined with other youth to form the National Student and Youth Campaign for Peace in the Middle East, which sponsored conferences to organize protests against the war. The YSA helped lead the move to get the February 21 day of student protest called, and worked to build it across the country. Leaders of the SWP joined with

the YSA in helping to make the protest meetings a success.

On February 21, SWP members in industry took off work to reach out and participate in the day of campus activities against the war. “We sold 400 *Militant* subscriptions on that day — together,” said McCann.

The fusion flows from this joint work to fight the war, McCann said.

### Internationalists in action

McCann described how YSA leaders traveled to many parts of the world over the past year, meeting up with fighters at meetings in Mexico, Cyprus, Israel, the Philippines, South Africa, and Cuba. Struggling youth around the world are attracted to the political perspectives of the YSA and what it does as a revolutionary organization inside the United States, the YSA leader said. “They know what the U.S. government means in the world: it is the bastion of support to reaction and dictators everywhere.” The YSA needs to be able to continue this international work, she said.

Strengthening the YSA through the fusion will make possible the relaunching of the *Young Socialist* as a regular publication, McCann said to applause. Publication of the *Young Socialist* was suspended in 1988.

The reason for the fusion is not to shore up an organization with declining membership, said McCann. “This is not what is in fact happening. The numbers joining the YSA in past months have increased. Many young people have joined, but because of the small number of functioning chapters and the fact that many YSA members are themselves very new, many of those who joined left before they had a chance to be integrated into the organization.”

McCann proposed that the YSA delegates immediately amend the organization's constitution to allow people of 32 years of age or less to join.

When this motion carried, the new YSA members were introduced to the convention to strong applause. A standing ovation greeted McCann's announcement that SWP member Mark Curtis, who is 32 years old and resides “against his will, in Anamosa, Iowa,” was also rejoining the YSA as an at-large member.

In a message to the convention, Curtis, who is serving a 25-year prison sentence on frame-up rape and burglary charges, said he would be introducing young fighters in prison to the *Militant* and the *Young Socialist*, and that he was proud to once again be a YSA member.

That evening, a slide and film presentation gave a graphic picture of the dynamic history of the YSA since its founding in 1960. A film about the 1970 YSA convention showed how the YSA attracted many hundreds of young people to its banner during the upsurge against the Vietnam War and the fight for women's and Black rights.

Following this presentation, members of the crew reconstructing the offices in the Pathfinder building in New York were introduced. The building houses the offices of the Socialist Workers Party, the *Militant*, and Pathfinder Press, as well as the party printshop. The crew consists of volunteer workers, most of whom are YSA members. At the convention 20 more people signed up for a stint on the project in the months ahead.

### Objective weight of YSA

SWP National Secretary Jack Barnes brought greetings to the convention on behalf of the SWP National Committee.

Barnes said that the fusion convention was important for the entire working-class political vanguard in the United States. The YSA must understand its objective weight in the world, he said. “You affect the world today; and what you do affects other organizations in the world.”

He described the YSA's efforts to reach out to fighters around the world and the forces it is working with more and more, from African National Congress (ANC) youth to the Union of Young Communists (UJC) in Cuba. This, he said, is a convergence toward an international communist movement, that, as the struggle against the capitalist system of exploitation deepens, will confront and overcome the obstacle of Stalinism which has blocked revolutionary struggles for decades.

“Without clarity and a clear program,

## Cuban, South African, Philippine youth send greetings to national convention

BY SELVA NEBBIA

OBERLIN, Ohio — “Today we are more convinced than ever that only socialism is able to offer a real solution to the difficult problems that face humanity,” read the greetings sent by the Union of Young Communists of Cuba (UJC) to the 27th National Convention of the Young Socialist Alliance.

Restrictions imposed by Washington on travel between Cuba and the United States “prevent us from physically sharing the work of the event, nevertheless our message and our support will be with you,” the greetings said.

“Cuban youth appreciate very highly the struggle that the Young Socialist Alliance is carrying out in defense of the political, economic, social, and civil rights of the working class in the face of the difficult conditions of U.S. society,” the UJC statement said.

Cuba is living through difficult times, explained the UJC, including pressures from the U.S. embargo against the island in an attempt to “economically strangle the revolution and use hunger to make our people give up.”

But the imperialists seem to be unaware that the dignity of the Cuban people “is not negotiable,” the statement said. “We are the children of a genuine revolution and part of a people that, through its own will, chose socialism. We are willing to give our own lives to defend it, and we will never back down.”

### ANC Youth League salutes YSA

Representatives from the African National Congress Youth League and the League of

Filipino Students and its affiliate in the United States, the League of Philippine Action, attended the convention and brought greetings on behalf of their organizations.

“At a time when the struggle against apartheid in South Africa did not enjoy the support of the majority of the American people,” said ANC Youth League member Tladi Ditshego, “the YSA consistently ensured that the question of apartheid was always on the agenda. Indeed, you have become our first line of defense in this country. Our knowledge is reinforced when we also learn from your example that indeed the struggle for liberation is ultimately a struggle for peace.”

Ditshego is a representative of the ANC in Washington, D.C. Greeted with a standing ovation, he thanked the participants at the gathering “for declaring for all to know, throughout this convention, that your freedom and ours cannot be separated.”

Explaining the current stage of the struggle against apartheid, Ditshego said that ending the “violence and clearing remaining obstacles so that real negotiations can start in earnest,” is the most important fight in South Africa today. An “impartial multiparty interim government of national unity is necessary,” he said, “otherwise worse [violence] will happen as the National Party and its allies try to secure their power against the ANC and the other democratic forces in our country.”

### Greetings from Filipino Students

The convention participants also gave a warm welcome to Rene Laya, representative of the League of Filipino Students.

“We as Filipinos in the United States, who

are part of a progressive struggle for a just, democratic, and sovereign Philippines, realize the common ground between our forces and the YSA,” said Laya in greetings from the student organization.

“We stand with you as you fight for the liberation of the oppressed from U.S. imperialism and domination. The government which exists in the Philippines today,” continued the message, “is not of a truly democratic nature nor are its people truly free. If it was, we would not see the masses marching in the streets in peaceful demonstrations demanding better working conditions only to be answered by bullets from the military.”

Laya invited convention participants to join in a September 14 demonstration in New York to denounce the proposed treaties for the extension of the leasing of U.S. military bases in the Philippines.

“If this treaty becomes law the Filipino people face at least 10 more years of an imperialist power in our land, ensuring at least a full century of U.S. bloody dominance in the Philippines,” he said.

In closing, Laya said, “I would like to express how truly inspired I've been by the militant energy of this conference.”

Several written messages from other organizations from around the world were read at the convention. Greetings to the convention were also received from the Sudanese Youth Union; the Asian Students Association, based in Hong Kong; the South African International Student Congress; and the Central Committee of the Socialist Working Youth League of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.



fighters with the most admirable fighting courage cannot wipe out capitalism," Barnes emphasized. "The question of leadership is the key question."

Barnes said that, as a result of events in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union, many more fighters can now see much more clearly that Stalinism is not a revolutionary force.

Many revolutionary fighters in the past have been influenced by Stalinism, he said. Today, revolutionists can more easily find their way to Marxism. "That's what is new, and that is what the YSA can contribute to in the world today."

Capitalism produces its own gravediggers, said Barnes, noting that "Marxism understands that the gravediggers can only solve the problems they face by common, collective activity."

#### 'Second rise of YSA'

Barnes described the progress represented by the fusion convention, coming out of the YSA's campaigning against the war, as the "second rise of the YSA." This second rise should be seen in its connection with the results of Washington's third major militarization drive, he said. The U.S. rulers began that drive in the late 1970s in response to revolutionary upheavals by the toilers in a number of countries — Nicaragua and Iran in particular. It is directed against working people, women, and oppressed nationalities in the United States pressing for their rights as well.

The emergence and rise of the YSA in the 1960s and 70s, he said, was part of the response to the results of Washington's *second* great militarization drive. That drive began after World War II, in reaction to the revolutionary upsurges in Yugoslavia, Albania, and Greece. It culminated in the attempt to dominate Korea and the failed effort to



Militant/Rose Ana Berbeo  
**YSA National Secretary Roni McCann (left) gave report on fusion of younger Socialist Workers Party members with youth group. Derek Bracey, YSA national organizational secretary, reported on proposals for YSA's political work in next months.**



push back the revolution in Vietnam.

"That was an effort to slow down history, to hold back the inevitable for a few more years by using colossal military force," said Barnes. "That second drive ended in failure, including the failure of the FBI and CIA's attempt to destroy the YSA with their disruption programs."

The results of U.S. imperialism's third militarization drive are producing the new YSA. Barnes noted one crucial difference today: the capitalist economic crisis drives the employers to assault working people, rather than being able to offer concessions to at least a section of the working class as they do during an extended period of prosperity. This drive against the rights and standard of living of the working class pushes fights into the streets earlier and polarizes society faster, he said. "It's this that brings the class questions to the fore more rapidly in every situation."

Despite the retreat of the labor movement

during the 1980s, said Barnes, "we should take note of what the party accomplished in that decade. We reached out in the world to link up with revolutionary fighters, in a way that the communist movement had been unable to do since the degeneration of the Russian revolution in the 1920s."

#### Marxist continuity

*New International* magazine, which the communist movement started in the 1980s, reaffirmed the YSA and SWP's Marxist continuity, said Barnes. The first major piece which launched that magazine, "Their Trotsky and Ours: Communist Continuity Today" was a talk given at a YSA convention.

The latter part of the 1980s saw the audience for Pathfinder books multiply, said Barnes, pointing to a big increase in orders from universities and major book chains for revolutionary literature.

Barnes underlined how in the 1980s the

communist movement deepened its proletarian orientation, through the building of the industrial fractions of the Socialist Workers Party, and their participation in class battles, from the packinghouse fights of the mid 1980s to the Eastern Airlines strike.

Barnes concluded by making four pledges from the SWP to the YSA: he promised that the SWP would not finance the YSA, which should aim to be completely self-financing.

He said that the SWP would not publish pamphlets as "YSA pamphlets"—that the YSA would produce all its own material, just as it was going to earn its own newspaper, the *Young Socialist*.

He invited the YSA to make maximum use of the institutions of the SWP, such as the weekly Militant Labor Forums, socialist election campaigns, the *Militant*, and Pathfinder bookstores.

Finally Barnes pledged that the SWP would continue to make every effort to recruit YSA members to the SWP.

#### YSA tasks

YSA Organizational Secretary Derek Bracey presented a report outlining the YSA's tasks in the period ahead. "Every day the future of capitalism is becoming more visible to young people," he said. "After the war against Iraq, people can see that the so-called 'new world order' is simply defense of the old, crumbling, imperialist world order through force and violence."

Bracey pointed to the potential for recruitment to the YSA: "Many young fighters are looking for the YSA, although they don't know yet that it's us they are looking for."

The YSA has been a part of fights against police brutality from Los Angeles to Newark, he said. "When we explain our perspective of not only struggling against each instance of police brutality but of getting rid of the capitalist system and the cops who defend it, that is a liberating perspective for young fighters."

Bracey stressed the YSA's goal of having chapters strong enough to join in political struggles, to reach out to fighters, and bring the YSA's working-class perspectives to those involved in political discussion and debate.

For example, in the New York and Newark area there are about 50 YSA members. YSA members there plan to build strong chapters that can intervene confidently in the political activities of youth in these cities, said Bracey. Saturdays will center on taking literature tables into the districts within easy reach of the YSA's meeting rooms, engaging in political discussions, and encouraging young people to visit the Pathfinder bookstores, attend the Militant Labor Forums on Saturday evenings, and join the YSA.

#### Four campaigns

Bracey presented four nationally centralized campaigns for discussion and vote by the convention.

Continued on Page 10

## Panel shows YSA work to defend democratic rights has strengthened civil liberties of all

BY JUDY STRANAHAN

OBERLIN, Ohio — For anyone attending the "Defend the Rights of Fighters! Defend the Rights of All" panel at the Young Socialist Alliance convention here, one political fact became clear: through championing fights of those targeted by the employers and the government, the YSA helps defend and extend the democratic rights and civil liberties of all.

The event, chaired by YSA leader Shellia Kennedy, featured a panel of young fighters who are in the middle of several important battles in defense of democratic rights.

Kate Kaku, a national leader of the YSA and Socialist Workers Party, opened the presentations. She is leading an international defense campaign for her husband, Mark Curtis.

Curtis, a union and political activist, is serving a 25-year jail term in Iowa after being framed up by police and convicted on false charges of rape and burglary. A member of the YSA and SWP, he was brutally beaten by the cops after his arrest.

Cops will be increasingly used to victimize working people, Kaku said. "The cops are there to discipline us, to make sure we don't get out of line," not to arrest violators of capitalist laws, she said.

"The daily brutality of cops in this country is getting more and more exposed," the YSA leader said. Fights against police brutality from Los Angeles to Plainfield, New Jersey, help show the true character and purpose of the cops as enforcers for the wealthy rulers of the United States.

Curtis, she said, was involved in fighting for the rights of immigrant workers at the Swift packing plant in Des Moines, Iowa, where he worked.

Kaku explained the campaign by the Mark Curtis Defense Committee aimed at winning parole for the jailed unionist. Trade unionists, students, political organizations, and others involved in the fight for human rights are sending letters to the parole board urging them to release Curtis. "No matter how long it takes, we will win," Kaku concluded.

Bob Miller, a member of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 27, explained his fight to the 500 people attending

the panel discussion. Miller was fired from his job at Mash's, a meat-packing house in Maryland, for defending immigrant coworkers against discrimination and harassment by the company.

Miller said the firing took place last March after he began to discuss with his coworkers the need to fight the company's practice of forcing workers who "looked foreign" to show identification papers to security guards.

With the help of the state chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU), Miller said he would be filing charges with the U.S. Department of Justice against the company. He said that by firing him, Mash's violated a law that states workers cannot be victimized for lodging a complaint of discrimination against immigrant workers.

Panelist Sara Lobman, who is the SWP's mayoral candidate in Des Moines and a leader of the YSA, described efforts by the Iowa Campaign Finance Disclosure Commission to force her campaign to disclose names of contributors and those doing business with the campaign committee.

Lobman, also a member of UFCW Local 431, explained the commission's demands are an attack on the right to privacy, with high stakes for working people. No SWP campaign had ever turned over names and would not begin now, she said. Because of a long history of illegal government spying on the SWP and YSA, the party has won exemption from federal and many state campaign disclosure laws.

#### Rights of citizen-soldiers

Jason Coughlin, stationed at Offutt Air Force Base, part of the Strategic Air Command network in Omaha, Nebraska, is a member of the YSA. He related his fight against attempts by the brass to intimidate him from exercising his constitutional rights as a citizen-soldier.

The GI met YSA members selling the *Militant* in downtown Omaha, after which he attended a video showing on Malcolm X at the local Pathfinder bookstore. Another GI, Jeffrey South, attended the Omaha YSA program that night.

Both are now members of the YSA on

leave of absence, which is the socialist youth group's practice for its members in the armed forces.

After Coughlin discussed his socialist views with fellow GIs, the brass told him to stop. He then faced an interrogation by military security officials about his political beliefs. This led him to retain a lawyer.

Through both the YSA's successful efforts to win community support for Coughlin's rights and the work of his lawyer, Coughlin said the brass has "backed off since then."

He concluded by saying his goal is "to spread the news about my case," so other GIs interested in politics will learn they too can exercise their rights to discuss, debate, and learn about the fight for socialism.

## New members panel discusses why they joined socialist youth group

BY GEORGE BUCHANAN

OBERLIN, Ohio — A highlight of the YSA convention was a panel discussion by several new members on "Why I joined the YSA." The panel included Anna Lee, from Minneapolis, James, from Newark, and Daphne, attending from Montréal.

Thirteen new members joined the YSA at the convention.

Anna Lee said she had been a university student, but had since decided to give that up and get a job in industry. "I joined other organizations, but they didn't care about what their members learned and did," she said. "I joined the YSA because I was struck by the humanity and integrity of the YSA and SWP members I met. Joining is a chance to learn through being active."

"I joined two weeks after the U.S. slaughter in Iraq," said James. "I had been in the Black Consciousness and December 12 Movements, but I got interested in the YSA when I saw Malcolm, Che, and Mandela on sale in the bookstore. I thought it is important that the YSA is not about a 'white' thing or a 'Black' thing, but about a *class* thing."

Daphne had helped set up several organi-

zations — Vancouver Against Apartheid, a group for Native rights, and others. "Then I decided I needed an organization that supports *all* these things," she said. "I met the Communist League at the celebration of Mandela's release. I joined because they are part of the labor unions, and because they fight the system that breeds all of this."

Others then talked about why they had joined the YSA. Kim said she had read about Marxism years before, but only really learned what it was through becoming politically active. "Then I understood what Marxism as the 'line of march of the working class' really meant," she said. "I had been involved a bit in some political movements such as the anti-apartheid fight. I knew there was an underlying source for these problems, though I didn't understand how it worked." Then the Gulf War came, and "I was thrown into combat against what the capitalists were doing. The YSA was established on campus; they were the only people who could demonstrate continuity, integrity, and humanity, and had a programmatic vision encompassing all struggles. I ran out of excuses not to join."



# Young Socialists hold 27th National Convention in Ohio

Continued from Page 9

First is campaigning with the *Militant* in the paper's subscription drive beginning on August 31. The YSA will participate, with literature tables and other activities, throughout the nine-week campaign and YSA chapters will take their own goals as part of the drive.

"The YSA should aim to set the pace on winning new subscribers in this drive," said Bracey.

Secondly, the YSA places getting out the truth about and defending the Cuban revolution as a top priority. A big opportunity to do this, the YSA leader said, is the forthcoming U.S. speaking tour of Cuban communist author Carlos Tablada, which is being sponsored by Pathfinder Press. Tablada, the author of *Che Guevara: Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism*, previously toured the United States in 1990. Thousands of students and other young people attended the meetings he spoke to.

YSA chapters should organize local events in advance of Tablada's visit, explaining the Cuban revolution and its place in the world today, said Bracey. Chapters can also prepare discussion classes which can be advertised at Tablada's presentations, so that young people finding out about the Cuban revolution for the first time can learn more.

The YSA's work around Cuba is not simply solidarity, but essential to building a revolutionary socialist youth organization in the United States, he said.

The continuing fight for the release from prison of Mark Curtis is "picking up steam," Bracey said of the third central priority of the YSA coming out of the fusion convention. The campaign is now centered on winning support for Curtis' parole, a demand which has gained worldwide backing from a widening range of unions and other democratic rights organizations. Mark is a young fighter who jumped into the discussions and struggles on the job and elsewhere, Bracey said. "This is why he was framed up."

The YSA will be producing an updated version of the international youth appeal in support of Curtis' fight, and campaigning with it around the world, he said.

The fourth priority campaign for the YSA is solidarity with the struggle in South Africa. Bracey explained that "this is our battle," noting that the YSA would be taking up the invitation of the ANC Youth League to participate in their coming convention.

## Delegates' discussion

Convention delegates participated in a lively discussion of all the reports presented to the conference.

Many speakers addressed the challenges in building the YSA coming out of the fusion convention. Rene, from the New York chapter, looked forward to Saturday political campaigning efforts there, with the maximum number of YSA members participating.

Many of the YSA chapter members in New York and Newark are members of the volunteer construction crew at the Pathfinder building, where they have been working six-day weeks. It was announced at the convention that the team would be freed up to participate in political activities on Saturdays.

Argiris from Newark pointed to the campaign being waged by four families in that area against police attacks. Through the YSA joining this campaign, he said, four young people have become YSA members in the previous few weeks, and central fighters in it have become keen supporters of the defense effort for Mark Curtis.

Naomi, from Greensboro, North Carolina, said that the key to the difference between the YSA and other socialist-minded youth groups is the YSA's relationship with the SWP: "Some YSA members are in the SWP's industrial union fractions; we can participate in sales of the *Militant* to workers at plant gates; we are able to bring our ideas to workers in struggle; we represent a link between students and workers."

Delegate Jackie, from Miami, looked forward to the fact that Carlos Tablada's speaking tour would include a visit to her city, long considered a stronghold of the Cuban revolution's opponents. "Getting a feel for the colossal strength of the class struggle in the United States will be a huge advantage" for Tablada and other Cuban revolutionists, she said.

## Cuban revolution today

A report on "The Cuban Revolution Faces a Changing World" was given by Mary-Alice Waters, the editor of *New Internationalist*.

Waters said the YSA had been born out of the Cuban revolution, and "for 32 years we have lived every moment of the Cuban revolution; its advances as well as its retreats." The fact is, she emphasized, "Cuba lies only miles from the shores not only of its greatest enemy in the world — U.S. imperialism — but also of its greatest potential ally — the working class of this country."

Cuba is the one place in the world where a communist leadership in power is fighting to chart a way forward, said Waters. "They are fighting for the world that Marx and Engels fought for; they insist they will never go back to capitalism."

Waters recently spent three weeks in Cuba. She described the harsh economic conditions the country now faces. Because trade with Eastern Europe has collapsed, and imports from the Soviet Union are arriving only sporadically, shortages are rife.

Rationing is now universal, but this is basically a popular measure, because everything is fairly shared. Government officials who could formerly get such things as extra rations of gasoline and greater access to housing have found that this has



Militant/Arthur Hughes

One quarter of convention delegates were attending their first YSA national gathering

been ended by conscious decision, Waters reported.

## Solidarity and polarization rise

The crisis has elevated the level of mutual generosity and solidarity among Cubans. People tend more to share what little they have. But the crisis has also sharpened the polarization in society, Waters explained. The number of government functionaries and cultural figures defecting to imperialist countries has gone up.

The Cuban government has launched three programs to cope with the economic crisis: an effort to attain self-sufficiency in food, using large volunteer agricultural work brigades; an attempt to gain much-needed hard currency through export of vaccines and other biotechnological products; and a massive expansion of organized tourism. "This expenditure of effort on tourism is very controversial," said Waters. "Nobody says it is good although most believe it is necessary to obtain hard currency." It has brought the reappearance of prostitution, greater scope for corruption, and a larger black market, as well as widespread resentment at the fact that while Cubans are rationed down to very little, all the things they cannot get — including Cuban products and facilities such as rum, tobacco, and seats at restaurants — are available in quantity in the tourist hotels.

Waters said that the economic situation would worsen in the next period.

Long-held illusions that the bureaucratic regime in the Soviet Union played a progressive role in the world are coming apart, said Waters. The crisis in the USSR is seen by many as the same as that in Eastern Europe. And with this, the influence of Stalinism in Cuba has been shaken.

Wide-ranging political discussions are going on in Cuba, said Waters. Much of this focuses on Cuba's own anti-imperialist traditions, from the time of José Martí to the internationalist experiences of recent decades in Africa and elsewhere. This is one of the great strengths the revolution can draw on today, she said.

Another of the most important things

about Cuba now is the ferment among youth, Waters said. They grew up in a different world from that of capitalism, and they reflect the momentum of the huge changes that have swept Cuba in the past 30 years. They respond to Cuban President Fidel Castro's insistence that the "heroic days" of the Cuban revolution are not over.

The challenge of the young communist leaders in the UJC is to respond to this ferment and point the way forward, Waters said.

"What the YSA says and does has an objective weight in the process going on in Cuba," she added, underlining the impact of the YSA's activities in the class struggle on Cuban revolutionists who visit the United States. Seeing that, Cuban fighters "leave more confident and determined" in what they are doing.

The final talk given to the convention was on "National Liberation, Stalinism and Communism: ANC Fighters Face the Coming Struggles," by *Militant* editor Greg McCartan. McCartan attended the July ANC conference in South Africa.

McCartan said that events in South Africa now posed not a peaceful transition from apartheid, but a titanic struggle. The revolution that is underway in South Africa will affect the entire world.

He pointed to the fight for a constituent assembly and a democratic republic, which the ANC is demanding, focusing on deepening the revolutionary mobilizations in South Africa and using the hard won political space it has gained to draw millions of people into revolutionary struggle.

## Work with ANC fighters

McCartan said the YSA should work with young ANC fighters, discussing and debating international issues, from the question of Stalinism's counter-revolutionary role in the working-class movement, to the place of U.S. imperialism and the class struggle in the United States.

The final task of the convention delegates was to elect a new National Committee of 28 members. The NC leads the organization between conventions and elects national officers. Roni McCann was elected the new national secretary, and Derek Bracey organizational secretary. Two national chairpersons were also elected: Estelle DeBates and Argiris Malapanis.

The convention Credentials Committee reported that 100 of those attending were at their first YSA convention. Of the 81 elected delegates 44 were female; 6 were students and 36 were industrial workers; 9 were Black, 5 Latino, and 2 Asian; and 22 were attending their first convention.

More than \$1,600 worth of literature was sold to convention participants.

The YSA members emerged from the fusion conference determined to make progress in taking out their politics and building the organization in the United States, one that can reach out in the world and link up with fighters who are confronting imperialism and capitalism, from Cuba to South Africa to the Philippines. They reflected a new confidence in being part of the "second rise of the YSA."

# Los Angeles cops gun down Chicano youth

Continued from Page 3

When Jiménez was killed, some beer bottles flew at the two cops and at that time one of them was knocked unconscious.

Residents said an ambulance arrived in five minutes to take away the injured cop. But no ambulance arrived on the scene for Jiménez for a full half hour. Police reports indicate they kept the ambulance from entering the project.

Later, Arturo's mother, Elva Jiménez, told reporters that the cops refused to inform her where her son had been taken. For two hours, she and Arturo's brother, Javier, went to the different hospitals in the area trying to find her son.

Only then did she learn he had been pronounced dead at the scene and taken to the coroner's office.

There is a videotape of the confrontation that followed the shooting. Deputies seized the video from Salvador Salas, who filmed

the incident. The cops arrested Salas and his brother for resisting turning over the video.

Later the video, which does not show the actual killing, was returned. It contradicts the cops' claim that a "mob" of 300 ganged up on them after the shooting. The video shows a dozen cops trying to keep 20 to 30 people away from Jiménez's body.

In the wake of the killing, it was disclosed that Jason Mann, the cop who shot Jiménez, was one of five deputies who were transferred from their previous station last year amid charges that they were involved in a racist group organized among the deputies.

Calling themselves "Vikings," these white supremacists had gang symbols and systematically victimized workers who are not white.

They had been transferred out of the Lynwood sheriff's station. Notorious for its brutal practices, this station is currently the target of a court action by civil rights groups.

Harassment at Ramona Gardens continued even after the killing of Jiménez. When residents gathered at a gym to raise money for the Jiménez family, a police helicopter hovered overhead.

Cops patrolling the area taunted residents with obscene gestures, apparently trying to start more trouble.

The residents have held a number of meetings discussing what they can do to win justice in the killing of Jiménez.

One man bitterly said the cops "treat us like animals because we are Mexicans and poor."

A younger man added, "The police don't care about us. They protect the rich, the businessmen. They don't care if there are drugs in this community."

What would he want to see happen about the death of Jiménez? "For the two cops responsible to go to jail."

Samuel Farley and Virginia Garza contributed to this article.



# Behind '88 cop raid in Los Angeles

Police were ordered to make dwellings on Dalton Avenue 'uninhabitable'

BY BRUCE VALDE

LOS ANGELES — Cops who commit crimes in "the line of duty" are rarely held accountable in a court of law. This past June was no exception when three Los Angeles cops went free on charges of vandalism and conspiracy to commit vandalism in the notorious 39th and Dalton case.

The 1988 raid at 39th Street and Dalton Avenue, in a predominantly Black community of South Central Los Angeles, was an unrestrained rampage.

Eighty-eight cops descended on four apartments which they claimed were used by heavily armed, drug-dealing gang members. The cops smashed in the doors and proceeded to trash the apartments. The order from their commanding officer, according to court testimony, was to make the dwellings "uninhabitable."

While some of the cops were smashing up the apartments, others swept through the neighborhood, rounding up young people who were then handcuffed and beaten.

Next to the beating of Rodney King, the raid at 39th and Dalton represents one of the clearest examples of police brutality in this city. Four apartments trashed; four families left in such need of emergency food and shelter that the Red Cross was called in; more than 40 young people beaten.

In an interview, David Lynn, former director of the Police Misconduct Lawyer Referral Service, charged that it was not just the issue of the four apartments that were hit.

Equally criminal was the sweep through a four-square-block area. They grabbed every young person, he said, branded them "gang members" and beat them.

## Axes and battering rams

In the wake of the acquittal of the three cops, two *Militant* reporters spoke with residents who witnessed the raid. A woman living directly across the street from the corner of 39th and Dalton recalled how cops with axes and battering rams jumped from

vans and smashed down apartment doors.

More cops hustled young people into the yard in front of the building. The woman watched from a window as 40 to 50 young men and women were handcuffed, beaten, and made to lie face down in the dirt.

A pregnant woman was held to the ground with a foot in the back. Cops ignored pleas to let her stand.

One man said he was not surprised the cops got off. He had been on the way to the store the night the police arrived. "They walked right past me and grabbed my son. They were after all the young people," he said.

John Hall, 18, was driving near Dalton Avenue when patrol cars swooped down on him. While he lay in the street on a policeman's orders, officers kicked him in the groin, two stood on his back and one on his head — eight or nine cops were involved in all.

Meanwhile, inside the apartments, cops used axes to chop plaster from large sections of wall. Windows were broken, furniture and appliances destroyed, TVs and VCRs smashed. Clothes were piled up and doused with bleach. Toilets and bathroom fixtures were ripped away from the plumbing.

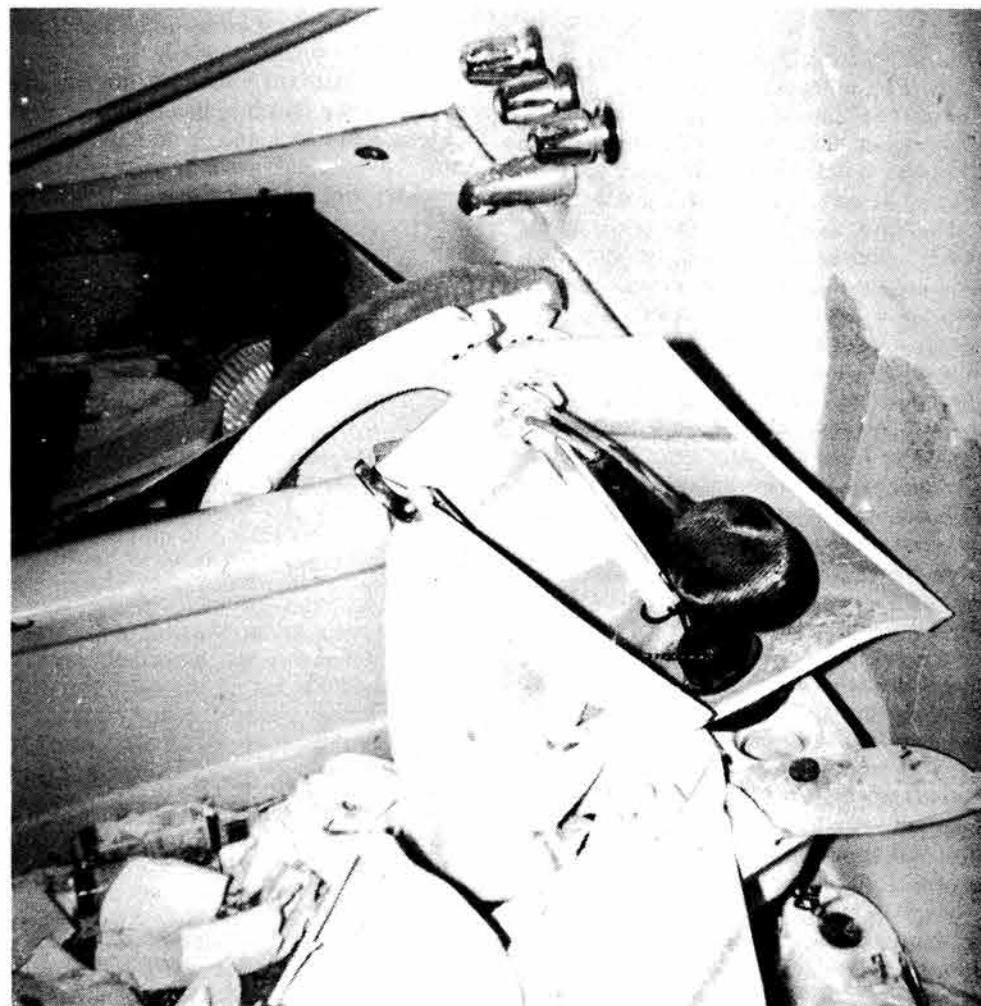
An outside staircase leading to the second story of one building was chopped down. Pro-police graffiti was spray painted on the side of the building.

Those held in the yard were shoved into police vans and taken to the station where, according to John Hall, "they had us in these back rooms threatening to beat us again if we didn't write in these papers that we weren't kicked or beaten in any way."

Less than an ounce of cocaine and six ounces of marijuana were assertedly found during the raid. Seven people were booked on suspicion of crimes; none were ever charged.

## Cops 'flat-out lying'

Following the acquittal verdict in the June trial of three of the cops involved,



Bartholomew Pratts

Scene in bathroom of apartment devastated in 1988 Los Angeles police rampage. Four cops were charged in case. One made a plea bargain and three others were acquitted.

jurors said they believed police caused the damage, but that the conflicting testimony and evidence presented during the trial failed to prove any specific officers were directly responsible.

One member of the jury, which included

six Blacks, said they were certain that some police officers who testified were "flat-out lying."

Following the trial, an attorney for the 39th and Dalton building owners was awarded \$30,000 when a federal judge ruled that city officials concealed evidence by withholding two secret internal police reports on the raid.

The district attorney knew of the reports but made no attempt to use them in the trial. When the prosecutor rested his case an attorney for one of the cops observed, "My feeling was he just threw in the towel."

Suppressed police reports reveal that the raid was organized and search warrants for drugs obtained after an initial investigation failed to implicate residents of the apartments in an alleged drive-by shooting.

The reports attempt to sidestep the issue of who signed the "warrant affidavit." But the Christopher Commission report — compiled in response to the beating of Rodney King — notes that the detective who signed the affidavit made false statements to obtain a search warrant.

## 20 cops promoted

The verdict appears to end criminal proceedings against the police in the case. Of the 88 cops who were in on the raid only 4 faced criminal charges. One made a plea bargain for a suspended sentence. He testified against the other three.

Twenty of the cops who participated have since been promoted, including the detective who reportedly made false statements in the warrant affidavit.

A civil suit against the city filed by attorneys working with the Police Misconduct Lawyer Referral Service has resulted in an out-of-court settlement of \$3.4 million to 52 victims of the raid.

A suit against the city by the apartment owners is slated to go to trial in September. Attorney Stephen Yagman, who represents the owners, said he intends to go to trial with more than 100 defendants, including 77 police officers, along with city officials.

Yagman rapped the district attorney for failing to use information from the police reports in the criminal trial against the cops.

"The existence and content of these memos are shameful and shocking, and it's mind boggling the contents weren't used as evidence against the defendants," he said in an interview.

# Farm labor union holds convention in Ohio

Continued from Page 16

buy 95 percent of the pickle cucumbers grown in northern Ohio and southern Michigan, according to Velásquez. Once all farms growing for Dean come under FLOC contracts, an additional 1,200 farm workers will be covered.

Big processors already under contract have put pressure on Dean to accept similar agreements in order to secure a "level playing field" among the competitors.

The three-way agreements were pioneered by FLOC in 1986 in its agreement with Campbell Soup and tomato growers. Those contracts came after an eight-year campaign of strikes, national consumer boycotts, cross-country marches, and rallies. They drew into the negotiating process the giant processing corporations, which hold the predominant economic weight in the industry.

## Sharecropping in Midwest

The goal of FLOC's agreements with each of the three big pickle producers is to phase out the system of "independent contracting," which amounts to a form of sharecropping, and replace it with hourly wages by 1993.

The first resolution adopted by the convention called for pressing ahead "with the aim of eliminating the system of independent contractors throughout the country" and continuing the "campaigns to educate the workers and the public at large regarding the injustices brought about by the current system."

Most pickle cucumbers in this region are grown by migrant families who arrange with a farm owner to tend a certain parcel of his or her land, usually about an acre per family. The workers receive half the value of the crop, which the farmer has already contracted to sell to one of the processors.

This arrangement puts many of the risks of production on the backs of the workers. If the harvest is poor due to weather conditions, workers' incomes fall and may not even cover the costs of their living and travel expenses. One worker explained that, due to low rainfall in the past month, the landowner decided to irrigate his corn fields but not his

cucumbers, so the worker expects a reduced yield and lower income.

Because these sharecroppers are classified as "partners" of the farmers rather than employees, they are ineligible for unemployment benefits and compensation for on-the-job injuries. They pay more in Social Security taxes because they do not have an "employer" to contribute a portion of the tax.

Other laws like minimum wage and child labor restrictions are also avoided on the grounds that the laborers are "independent producers."

Incomes for farm workers fluctuate greatly. One worker said that so far this season she and her husband's combined earnings have ranged from a high of \$390 in one week to a low of \$130 in another.

## Growers attend convention

Several growers' association leaders attended this year's FLOC convention and were given special recognition by Velásquez and the delegates. In introducing Wally Wagner, president of the association of tomato growers who contract with Campbell, Velásquez pointed out that a few years ago growers were calling the cops on FLOC organizers. "See how much has changed," he commented.

Wagner, who owns 300 acres of tomatoes and 50 acres of pickle cucumbers, noted that he has had no grievances on his farm in the past two years. "To me, that is very positive," he said.

The head of the Vlasic growers' association told the convention, "Farmers and farm workers used to be adversaries. Now, along with the processors, we are partners."

In spite of Wagner's praise of a "partnership," studies of 247 Ohio farm worker families in the 1974-78 period and 1987-88 show average income per worker per season falling from \$1,136 in the first period to \$751 in the latter.

## Mississippi farmers join FLOC

Another goal discussed at the FLOC convention is organizing producers everywhere pickles are grown. This has led FLOC to

reach out to exploited family farmers, especially Black farmers in the South, and to workers across the border in Mexico.

Velásquez explained in his president's report to the convention, "It does not matter if Dean Foods grows pickles in Ohio or Michoacán, Mexico. As Americans and Mexicans alike, we are less citizens of the nation in which we are born, and more citizens of the company for whom we work. This makes us common and equal. We must insist that this equality be reflected in our paychecks, our work conditions, our living conditions, our environmental conditions — for which the common company is responsible."

Since some food processors, especially Vlasic, have shifted production to small family farms in the South, FLOC has been deepening its relations with farmers' organizations there.

Three Black farmers from Mississippi attended the convention. They are also members of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives (FSC). Ben Burkett explained that this was the first FSC delegation to attend a FLOC convention, although the two organizations have been in touch for several years.

Of the approximately 600 cucumber growers in Mississippi, Burkett said, about half now belong to FLOC. Even though their relationship to Vlasic is different, since they employ no labor but do all the work themselves, these farmers hope to be able to sit in on FLOC's negotiations with the company, so all the producers will have a stronger hand.

"This year," said Mississippi farmer Byron Travis, "Vlasic withdrew all its contracts with FSC members because the very mention of FLOC or 'union' scares them." But he said he isn't worried. "It will help us in the long run," he observed, "because pretty soon Vlasic won't have anywhere else to go."

Burkett noted that uniting with farm workers in FLOC "is logical for poor farmers" since their standard of living is very similar. Government programs that supposedly help farmers, he explained, really only benefit the biggest farmers and agribusiness corporations.



# 'Stability' goal of FSLN congress

Continued from Page 4

Party (PT), noted that his party was formed just after the Sandinista victory in July 1979. "Starting in 1979, the Sandinista revolution meant an awakening in millions of youthful hearts," he said.

Da Silva said that in the semicolonial world "millions and millions of people are subjected to capitalism. They cannot buy 10 percent of what they see advertised on TV. There is a world of hunger, prostitution and delinquency. . . . I don't believe we can solve the problems of the world within the capitalist system. We need a new, just, and fraternal regime and way of life."

Da Silva pointed toward coming elections in Brazil and Nicaragua, as opportunities for the FSLN and PT to implement changes in society.

Greetings were received from representatives of governing parties in Cuba, Korea, Vietnam, Libya, the Soviet Union, and Haiti, and from the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Gerard Collomb of the Directorate of the French Socialist Party gave greetings. He praised the cooperation between European and Latin American social-democratic parties, and urged the FSLN to become more involved in the Socialist International, in which it currently has observer status.

Vinicio Cerezo, former president of Guatemala, praised the FSLN's policy of collaborating with the Chamorro government, in his comments to the gathering.

## Historic Program

The congress discussed and adopted three major reports: a report on the history of the FSLN, a new program, and new organizational statutes. The program and statutes had been circulated in advance for discussion and amendment by local and regional gatherings.

The "Principles and Program" document officially discarded the Historic Program of the FSLN, drawn up by FSLN founder Carlos Fonseca in 1969. The Historic Program was a revolutionary, democratic, and anti-imperialist program for a workers' and farmers' government, aimed at using state power to further organize and mobilize workers and peasants to make deeper inroads on the power and prerogatives of the exploiting classes, pointing in the direction of socialism.

In its final years in power the FSLN acknowledged that it had abandoned the Historic Program, often justifying this with the false claim that the program's relevant aspects had already been implemented.

The new program replaces the revolutionary road of the Historic Program with an emphasis on bourgeois elections as the means of changing the government and on the priority of achieving class peace and stability "with the participation of all social sectors."

While the program supports many social reforms, it is based on fostering collaboration between exploiting and exploited classes in Nicaragua. Socialism is presented as a distant goal.

FSLN National Directorate member Tomás Borge chaired all the congress sessions. There was little political debate on the program, although on one or two occasions some uneasiness was expressed.

For example, one section of the program states opposition to "anarchistic actions" and "illegal seizures," referring to factory occupations and peasant land takeovers. A minority of delegates proposed eliminating these phrases. Opposing "illegal seizures," would preclude many of the actions taken by FSLN supporters in the course of the struggle against the Somoza dictatorship, they explained, measures it might be necessary to use again in the future.

The statutes document provides for a congress every three years, an elected Sandinista Assembly of 120 members, and a 10-member National Directorate as the day-to-day leadership. Prior to this, all FSLN posts at every level were appointed.

With the exception of Gen. Humberto Ortega, who declined due to his post as head of the Nicaraguan army, all of the outgoing members were elected as a slate to the National Directorate. Former Nicaraguan vice president Sergio Ramírez and René Nuñez, longtime political secretary of the directorate, were also elected to the body.

## MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

The Militant Labor Forum is a weekly free-speech meeting for workers, farmers, youth, and others. All those seeking to advance the fight against injustice and exploitation should attend and participate in these discussions on issues of importance to working people.

At the Militant Labor Forum you can express your opinion, listen to the views of fellow fighters, and exchange ideas on how to best advance the interests of workers and farmers the world over.

## CALIFORNIA

### Los Angeles

**Report from Young Socialist Alliance 27th National Convention.** Panel discussion. Sat., Aug. 17, 7:30 p.m. 2546 W. Pico Blvd. Donation: \$3. Tel: (213) 380-9460.

### San Francisco

**Garment Workers Under Attack.** Speaker: Jim White, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of San Francisco, member International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, recently returned from fact-finding visit to garment workers' strike in El Paso, Texas. Translation to Spanish. Thurs., Aug. 15, 6 p.m. 3284 23rd St. (near Mission). Donation: \$3. Tel: (415) 282-6255.

## FLORIDA

### Miami

**The Cuban Revolution Faces a Changing World: Rectification at a Crossroad.** Speaker: Susan Zárate, Socialist Workers Party, member Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Aug. 17, 7:30 p.m. 137 NE 54th St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (305) 756-1020.

**Defend Immigrant Workers' Rights.** A panel discussion. Translation to Spanish. Sat., Aug. 24, 7:30 p.m. 137 NE 54th St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (305) 756-1020.

## GEORGIA

### Atlanta

**Cuba: Example for International Freedom Fighters.** Speaker: Maceo Dixon, Socialist Workers Party, member International Association of Machinists. Sat., Aug. 17, 7:30 p.m. 172 Trinity Ave. S.W. Donation: \$2.50. Tel: (404) 577-4065.

## Sandinistas Speak

Documents, speeches, interviews  
Contains the 1969

**Historic Program of the Sandinista Front**  
160 pp., \$12.95.

Order from Pathfinder bookstores listed on page 12 or by mail from Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014. Please include \$3 for postage and handling.

## IF YOU LIKE THIS PAPER, LOOK US UP

Where to find Pathfinder books and distributors of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, *New International*, *Nouvelle Internationale*, and *L'Internationale*.

## UNITED STATES

**ALABAMA:** Birmingham: 111 21st St. South. Zip: 35233. Tel: (205) 323-3079, 328-3314.

**ARIZONA:** Phoenix: 1809 W. Indian School Rd. Zip: 85015. Tel: (602) 279-5850.

**CALIFORNIA:** Los Angeles: 2546 W. Pico Blvd. Zip: 90006. Tel: (213) 380-9460. **San Francisco:** 3284 23rd St. Zip: 94110. Tel: (415) 282-6255.

**CONNECTICUT:** New Haven: Mailing address: P.O. Box 16751, Baybrook Station, West Haven. Zip: 06516.

**FLORIDA:** Miami: 137 NE 54th St. Zip: 33137. Tel: (305) 756-1020. **Tallahassee:** P.O. Box 20715. Zip: 32316. Tel: (904) 877-9338.

**GEORGIA:** Atlanta: 172 Trinity Ave. Zip: 30303. Tel: (404) 577-4065.

**ILLINOIS:** Chicago: 545 W. Roosevelt Rd. Zip: 60607. Tel: (312) 829-6815, 829-7018.

**IOWA:** Des Moines: 2105 Forest Ave. Zip: 50311. Tel: (515) 246-8249.

**KENTUCKY:** Louisville: P.O. Box 4103. Zip: 40204-4103.

**MARYLAND:** Baltimore: 2913 Greenmount Ave. Zip: 21218. Tel: (301) 235-0013.

**MASSACHUSETTS:** Boston: 605 Massachusetts Ave. Zip: 02118. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

**MICHIGAN:** Detroit: 5019 1/2 Woodward Ave. Zip: 48202. Tel: (313) 831-1177.

## MASSACHUSETTS

### Boston

**Cuba, South Africa, and the U.S. Working Class: The Fight for Revolutionary Leadership Today.** Speaker: Neil Callender, chairperson, Boston Young Socialist Alliance. Sat., Aug. 17, 7:30 p.m. 605 Massachusetts Ave. Donation: \$3. Tel: (617) 247-0662.

## MINNESOTA

### Austin

**World Politics Today: New Opportunities for Building a Party of Socialist Workers.** Speaker: Amy Husk, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., August 17, 7:30 p.m.; reception at 6:30 p.m. 407 1/2 N. Main. Donation: \$2.50. Tel: (507) 433-3461.

### St. Paul

**Report from Young Socialist Alliance 27th National Convention.** Sun., Aug. 18, 4 p.m. 508 N. Snelling Ave. Donation: \$2. Tel: (612) 644-6325.

## NEW JERSEY

### Newark

**Free Trade and Protectionism. What Stand Should Working People Take?** Speaker: Holly Harkness, Socialist Workers Party. Translation to French, Spanish. Sat., Aug. 17, 7:30 p.m. 141 Halsey St., 2nd floor. Donation: \$3. Tel: (201) 643-3341.

## NEBRASKA

### Omaha

**Youth, the Working Class, and the Crisis of Capitalism. Report from the Young Socialist Alliance 27th National Convention.** Speakers: Michelle Allen, Young Socialist Alliance, anti-war activist; Jeffrey South, Young Socialist Alliance. Sat., Aug. 17, 7 p.m. Translation to Spanish. 140 S. 40th St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (402) 553-0245.

## PENNSYLVANIA

### Pittsburgh

**The 1945-46 Revolution in Yugoslavia and the Class Conflict There Today: A Working-Class Perspective.** Speaker: Sandi Sherman, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Aug. 17, 7:30 p.m. 4905 Penn Ave. Donation: \$3. Tel: (412) 362-6767.

**The Debate on Supreme Court Nominee Clarence Thomas: Defending Privacy, Democratic Rights, and Affirmative Action.** Panel discussion. Sat., Aug. 24, 7:30 p.m. 4905 Penn Ave. Donation: \$3. Tel: (412) 362-6767.

## TEXAS

### Houston

**Youth Speak Out for Socialism.** Panel of students and young workers who attended Young Socialist Alliance 27th National Convention. Sat., Aug. 17, 7:30 p.m. 4806 Alameda. Donation: \$3. Tel: (713) 522-8054.

## UTAH

### Salt Lake City

**Class Conflict in Yugoslavia Today. Lessons of the 1945-46 Revolution.** Speaker: Paul Mailhot, Socialist Workers Party National

Committee, member United Steelworkers of America. Sun., Aug. 18, 4:30 p.m. 147 E. 900 S. Donation: \$3. Tel: (801) 355-1124.

## WASHINGTON

### Seattle

**The FBI Frame-Up of David Sohappy, Sr.** Video, *The River People*, on struggle for Indian fishing rights on the Columbia River. Presented by: Wilbur Slockish, Jr., convicted "Salmon-scum" frame-up victim; Chief Johnny Jackson, Cascade-Klickitat. Sat., Aug. 17, 7 p.m. 1405 E. Madison. Donation: \$3. Tel: (206) 323-1755.

## BRITAIN

### London

**Germany after Reunification.** Speaker: Pamela Holmes, Communist League. Fri., Aug. 16, 7:30 p.m. 47 The Cut, SE 1. Donation: £1. Tel: 71-401-2409.

### Manchester

**Who Can Solve the Crisis in the Soviet Union?** Speaker: representative Communist League. Fri., Aug. 16, 7:30 p.m. Unit 4, 60 Shudehill. Donation: £1. Tel: 061-839 1766.

## Government bills bring no relief for working farmers

Continued from Page 16

working farmers produce products that have great value for society, especially given the extent of hunger and malnourishment in the world today. And farmers work many hours to accomplish this. All they ask is that they get back from the value they create an amount sufficient to meet their costs, repair and replace their equipment, and care for themselves and their families.

Working farmers are not looking for a free ride; that is a more accurate description of the big bankers and owners of the trusts who rob independent producers and wage workers.

The big challenge facing exploited farmers and all working people is organizing a revolutionary movement that can remove the political rule of the robber class and replace it with a government of the exploited classes. The struggle for immediate relief must be placed within the framework of forging an alliance between farmers and workers to accomplish this. Otherwise the illusion will be fostered that legislation from the Democratic and Republican-dominated Congress can patch up or reform capitalism to serve the interests of working people.

Even price supports at 100 percent would end up giving a profit windfall to relatively few capitalist farmers at the expense of working family farmers. The problem is that all capitalist price support policies are rigged against exploited farmers.

(To be continued)

## AUSTRALIA

**Sydney:** 19 Terry St., Surry Hills, Sydney NSW 2010. Tel: 02-281-3297.

## BRITAIN

**London:** 47 The Cut. Postal code: SE1 8LL. Tel: 71-401 2293.

**Manchester:** Unit 4, 60 Shudehill. Postal code: M4 4AA. Tel: 061-839 1766.

**Sheffield:** 2A Waverley House, 10 Joiner St., Sheffield S3 8GW. Tel: 0742-729469.

## CANADA

**Montréal:** 6566, boul. St-Laurent. Postal code: H2S 3C6. Tel: (514) 273-2503.

**Toronto:** 410 Adelaide St. W., Suite 400. Postal code: M5V 1S8. Tel: (416) 861-1399.

**Vancouver:** 1053 Kingsway, Suite 102. Postal code: V5V 3C7. Tel: (604) 872-8343.

## ICELAND

**Reykjavik:** Klappartíg 26. Mailing address: P.O. Box 233, 121 Reykjavik. Tel: (91) 17513.

## NEW ZEALAND

**Auckland:** 157a Symonds St. Postal Address: P.O. Box 3025. Tel: (9) 793-075.

**Christchurch:** 593a Colombo St. (upstairs). Postal address: P.O. Box 22-530. Tel: (3) 656-055.

**Wellington:** 23 Majoribanks St., Courtenay Pl. Postal address: P.O. Box 9092. Tel: (4) 844-205.

## SWEDEN

**Stockholm:** Vikingagatan 10. Postal code: S-113 42. Tel: (08) 31 69 33.



**Not to mention the ground water** — In California's Ventura County, officials voted that Ron and Nancy can be buried at his presidential library there. Environmentalists argued vainly that the two-plot cem-



Harry Ring

etery would mean more visitors and more air pollution.

**No such problems here** — The *Los Angeles Times* reported on a

Cuba visit by U.S. doctors and health experts. They agreed Cuba has one of the best medical systems in the world, but found a significant flaw — "inefficient use of medical manpower" and "overutilization of medical services." Like, at a rural day care center, each of the youngsters are examined by a pediatrician once a week.

**Tell it like it is?** — In Monterey Park, a mainly Latino and Asian community, a recruiting ad for the Los Angeles police advises, "Asian and Hispanic police officers will be available to discuss their personal experiences while working for the LAPD."

**For instance** — From transcript

of computer messages between LAPD patrol cars — Cop A. "I heard he was looking for a few good men, no Puerto Ricans." Cop B. "No Nicaraguans, Cubans, El Salvadorians."

**Just an old-fashioned capitalist** — "A pimp is a bastard who preys on women and takes their money. I just take enough from my girls to pay expenses and make a small profit." — Joseph Conforte, owner of the Mustang Ranch, Nevada's biggest legal brothel. In nine months last year, he cleared \$2 million on a \$5 million gross.

**Kind of like an S&L** — Readers may recall that the Mustang was auctioned off by the feds last

year because of a \$13 million tax debt. It was purchased for under \$2 million by a freshly created corporation composed, apparently, of Conforte friends and relatives.

**They're working** — "Analysts unfazed by round of weak economic reports" — News headline.

**À votre santé** — Testing found that more than 600 domestic and imported wines contain high levels of lead, mainly from the lead foil around the corks. The feds said the lead-laced wine posed no "short-term" threat to consumers except, perhaps, pregnant women and women in their child-bearing years.

**And probably without a drink** — In a six-month test, four stocks selected by tossing darts at a stock list outpaced the selections of four investment professionals. The dart-board picks rose 28.7 percent as against 7.5 percent for those chosen by the pros.

**Sharing the tax burden** — Members of the North Carolina legislature raised the tax on the sale of boats and planes from 2 percent to 3 percent, meanwhile upping the sales tax from 5 percent to 6 percent. The cap on the boat and plane tax remains \$1,500. So, buy yourself a \$300,000 yacht and the tax bite will be a fast half percent.

## California train wreck poisons Sacramento River

BY KATHLEEN DENNY AND HEATHER RANDLE

**DUNSMUIR, California** — On July 14 at 9:45 p.m., a Southern Pacific train derailed just north of here. Thirteen thousand gallons of metam-sodium spilled from a tank car into the upper Sacramento River.

The chemical, related to the one responsible for the disaster in Bhopal, India, immediately formed a toxic plume and washed 45 miles south to Lake Shasta, California's largest reservoir, from which most of the state draws its drinking water.

Within hours of the spill, prized wild river trout were floating dead in the Sacramento, totalling 100,000. Jim Pedri, chief engineer of the Regional Water Safety Control Board, told the *San Francisco Chronicle*, "Thirty seconds after the accident, that river was a goner." One 50-gallon drum of metam-sodium alone would have stripped the river of all life.

People living in the area were not told about the spill until nearly 12 hours later. More than 100 local residents were treated in the next days for poisoning from toxic fumes.

**'Don't worry'**

Juanita Jiménez, who lives alongside the river, tells how she suffered from headaches, dizziness, nausea, and itching skin rash. Her husband is an operator for the Southern Pacific. An estimated half of the 2,300 people living in Dunsmuir are present or former railroad workers. Many moved to the area drawn by its pristine beauty and sport fishing.

Mike Moody, who lives along the river bank, describes how the authorities kept information from local residents. "We were told that it was just a voluntary evacuation to the high school," he says. "No big deal. But at the same time the Highway Patrol was



Militant/Kathleen Denny  
Sign announcing Lake Shasta, California's largest drinking water reservoir, is closed due to toxic chemical spill.

routing traffic around the area and telling people to keep their windows closed. It's like the message is: 'Don't worry, be happy.'"

Moody points to wilting plants along the river. "See, no mosses. Everything is dead." The Department of Fish and Game had scooped up the dead fish, but no one knows what will happen to the bald eagles, osprey, and bears who feed on the fish.

The Southern Pacific has set up a claims office in the offices of the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. Some residents are

planning a class-action lawsuit against the railroad.

Metam-sodium is widely used in agriculture to kill insects, weeds, and fungus. Many farm workers are exposed to it over long periods, but no studies exist of the chemical's long-term effects.

The U.S. Coast Guard considers metam-sodium to be among the chemicals most toxic to water life, but the Department of Transportation (DOT) does not list it as "hazardous." Thus the rail crew was not informed that it was hauling a toxic material, which led to further delay in pumping the pesticide from the tank car before more spilled into the river.

**Tank burst on impact**

The National Transportation Safety Board, an industry watchdog with no regulatory authority, states that chemical spills would be prevented if toxins were transported in thicker tanks with head shield protection. The DOT refuses to issue more guidelines. The single-walled tank car holding the metam-sodium burst on impact.

The amount of toxic materials transported by rail has increased 66 percent since 1985, to 1.5 million car loads.

The site of the derailment is known as the Cantara Loop, a dangerous uphill grade with sharp curves where forty-one rail accidents have occurred in the last 15 years. In 1976 a similar derailment spilled 22 tons of bleach and detergent into the river, killing 6,500 fish. Before it was named Dunsmuir, this town was known as Pusher, because an extra locomotive was needed to guide the trains through the dangerous Cantara curves. No pusher engine was on the train the night of

July 14. In previous years, helper engines were standard on loads exceeding 3,900 tons.

The Southern Pacific had stopped using helper engines on trains less than 4,500 tons, to avoid paying the extra crew. The derailed train on July 14 was 4,295 tons. The locomotives in use also had a history of electrical problems, causing uncontrolled power surges just prior to derailment, according to a Congressional hearing July 31.

The August 2 *San Francisco Chronicle* cited "sources close to the railroad crew" saying that the unexpected power surges had occurred all day, and that the locomotives should have been pulled out of service. According to federal investigators, Southern Pacific has been cited repeatedly for locomotive problems. On July 14, the cars were distributed so that the rear of the train was weighted with heavy cargo, creating drag on the curves. Speedup on the railroads has left railyard crews scrambling to get a train together, without time to distribute loads safely.

Theresa Crippen lives across the street from the river. She is hypersensitive to chemicals, and moved to Dunsmuir recently from San Francisco to escape the pollution. She has suffered headaches and vomiting ever since the spill.

**'It's going to happen again'**

"The Department of Fish and Game said it was okay to eat food from our gardens," she says, "but I don't know anyone who will. My neighbor's radishes are rotting. Grape leaves are falling off, and lilacs are curling up. And there are six more tank cars with the same stuff sitting at the station, waiting to go. A lot of us are afraid it's going to happen again."

## —25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

### Int'l circulation effort to win new 'Militant' readers begins Aug. 31

Continued from front page

unionists who will converge on the city that day.

To make the *Militant* even more attractive than usual, the paper's front page will be in color for sales at Solidarity Day.

Young people, workers, farmers, students, and all those who want to fight the injustices they see around them need the *Militant* and other socialist publications.

The *Militant* carries articles by workers around the world on labor and union battles. It exposes police brutality from Los Angeles to Houston to Newark, New Jersey.

The *Militant* is part of the international fight against war and oppression. Recent highlights of the *Militant* have been special reporting trips: to South Africa to cover the historic conference of the African National Congress, to Cuba to learn more about the challenges facing the Cuban revolution today, and to Mexico and Jamaica to report on the tour of ANC leader Nelson Mandela.

Last spring the *Militant* sent reporters to Israel to get out the truth about the Palestinian uprising. This issue features coverage from a reporting team in Nicaragua that attended the convention of the Sandinista National Liberation Front.

Getting a subscription to the *Militant* is the best way to learn from others in struggle,

to get out the truth about resistance to the employer-government offensive against the rights and standard of living of working people, and to follow battles around the world against the wars, economic crises, and oppression of the declining capitalist system.

A big part of the campaign will be regular Saturday sales, when supporters set up literature tables on street corners, go door-to-door in working-class neighborhoods, and get out the socialist press at movie lines, parks, and wherever they can get a hearing.

Organizing regular sales along these lines during the campaign and using the paper to reach out to struggles and to those involved in political discussion and debates is the best way to regularize sales on a year-round basis.

By getting a good start right off the bat August 31 and maintaining a campaign effort for nine weeks, supporters can establish a weekly rhythm to their long-term sales efforts.

If you want to help out with the campaign to get out the truth, expose the workings of capitalism, and defend the struggle of working people around the world, order your own bundle of the *Militant* today. Join other supporters at Solidarity Day August 31!

Bundles cost \$1.05 per copy. Write to the *Militant* at 410 West Street, NY, NY 10014 or call (212) 243-6392.



Cleveland, Aug. 14 — Negro reaction to the Cuyahoga County grand jury report on the recent Hough ghetto uprising was angry and negative.

Reaction to the report was precipitated by its ignoring the basic problems of police brutality, jobs, and housing in Hough. Instead, it attempted to place the blame on outside agitators and Communists. The report stated:

"This jury finds that the outbreak of lawlessness and disorder was both organized, precipitated and exploited by a relatively small group of trained and disciplined professionals at this business."

"They were aided and abetted, wittingly or otherwise, by misguided people of all ages and colors, many of whom are avowed believers in violence and extremism and some of whom also are either members of or officers in the Communist Party."

On Aug. 11, Fred Giardini and Jessie Thomas, two police plants, reported their "findings" on the Hough riots to the grand jury.

Police Chief Wagner introduced the two agents to the newspaper and television reporters by saying that the police department, in its "mission" to protect life and property, maintains a subversive activities unit which

conducts activities on "either end" of the political spectrum. The two agents worked for 13 months in the Communist Party and W.E.B. DuBois Club of Cleveland.



August 23, 1941

The Soviet Union was not represented at Roosevelt-Churchill's war council. The Soviet Union, like China, is a junior partner in the Anglo-American alliance. And Stalin is, for the most part, a silent partner.

Stalin's war aims do not reach beyond the defeat of Hitler and a reversion to the pre-war status quo. His war aims, like the rest of his policies, are determined by a single consideration: the enhancement of the power, prestige and privileges of the Soviet bureaucracy and the salvation of their rotten regime. The Stalinist bureaucracy hopes only to emerge unscathed from the war. Beyond this they do not care or dare to look.

Stalin's foreign policy is a direct extension of his reactionary domestic policy. To maintain the power of the bureaucracy, he relies upon the benevolence and self-interest of capitalist allies. Yesterday Hitler, today Roosevelt and Churchill. He leaps from one insecure point of support to another like a hunted man crossing an ice-broken stream. He subordinates his war aims and adapts his international program to the demands of the imperialists.



## Labor's stake in Wichita battle

Encouraged by the U.S. government, right-wing antiabortion forces throughout the United States have mobilized in Wichita, Kansas, to deal a setback to women's right to abortion by physically blocking access to abortion clinics in that city. Every working person, youth, supporter of women's rights, and supporter of democratic rights has a stake in beating back this challenge.

Operation Rescue, the organization spearheading the rightist assault, declares its intention to physically deny women their constitutional right to seek abortions and to forcibly prevent other patients, doctors, nurses, and staff from entering the clinics. The goal is to take back in the streets what the antiabortion forces have been unable to win in the courts and legislatures.

Operation Rescue has announced it sees Wichita as a test; it plans to mobilize its supporters to launch similar attacks in other cities.

In the face of this open violation of the law, the federal government has come down squarely on the side of the lawbreakers! The Justice Department has issued a brief that challenges an injunction against the clinic blockades. The brief supports Operation Rescue's demand that the injunction be lifted.

The government's brief is also in favor of weakening the 1871 law, passed during the Reconstruction period, that makes it illegal for two or more people to conspire "for the purpose of depriving any person or class of persons" from exercising their democratic rights. If this protection is nul-

lified for women, then it can more easily be taken away from strikers on picket lines and protesters against police brutality.

A victory for the anti-abortion forces would be a signal to other anti-working-class elements that they can take more in their battles against working people. It would embolden employers in their deployment of scabs and professional strikebreakers and racist forces of all kinds.

The labor movement has a responsibility to respond to the challenge in Wichita and the Justice Department's complicity with it. The unions should condemn the Operation Rescue attacks. Labor should throw its weight and numbers behind any protest actions that are called to support the right of women to choose and to organize a countermobilization to Operation Rescue.

The legalization of abortion in 1973 was a big victory for the labor movement. It helped unify the working class and increase the self-confidence and independence of working-class women. Without the right to control their own bodies, women continue to be second-class citizens on the job, in the unions, in school, and in every sphere of social and political life. They are less able to participate in the fights the labor movement must wage to defend itself from attacks by the employing class.

The labor movement and all supporters of women's rights should demand that the government uphold the law of the land, insure that women have full access to abortion facilities, and keep the clinics open.

## Solidarity Day: an opportunity

Tens of thousands of working people will converge on Washington, D.C., August 31 for the AFL-CIO sponsored Solidarity Day. The rally provides an opportunity for unionists to discuss how best to fight the employer-government offensive against their organizations, standard of living, and democratic rights.

We encourage *Militant* supporters to join in the event and participate in our effort to get the socialist press, *New Internationalist*, and Pathfinder books into the hands of as many unionists, youth, and others at the rally as possible. This is the best way to kick off the nine-week international subscription drive and widen the discussion and debate on the steps the labor movement must take to effectively combat the effects of the world capitalist economic crisis.

The march and rally at the Capitol will be the Labor Day event for unionists in many cities. The AFL-CIO officialdom says the mobilization will focus on demanding legislation banning company hiring of "replacement workers" during strikes, extending government health care coverage to more working people, and defending collective bargaining rights, especially those of government employees.

Solidarity Day takes place at a time of deepening class polarization in the United States and continuing probes and attacks on the labor movement by the employers and their government. The effects of the capitalist economic crisis are hitting the already worst-off sections of the working class the hardest.

The anemic recovery from the recession, sharpening interimperialist competition, and the drive toward more bloody war such as the one waged against the Iraqi people show the depth of the crisis facing the outmoded and declining system of world capitalism.

Police brutality, union-busting, breakdowns in social services and infrastructure, right-wing attacks on the oppressed

and working-class organizations, and war are what Washington and the billionaire handful of families it serves have in store for the working class and its allies — both at home and abroad.

In order to press this drive, aimed at restoring the profit rate of the employing class, the rulers must deepen the divisions between working people on the basis of race, sex, country of origin, and between the employed and unemployed.

By charting a course of struggle aimed at breaking down these divisions, the labor movement can play the only decisive role in unifying working people both at home and abroad in a common struggle against a common enemy. This must begin with an elementary program of action against the mounting effects of the economic crisis, especially on the worst-off sections of the working class.

Demanding the cancellation of the onerous and unpayable debt that imperialism uses to bleed working people in the semi-colonial world; defending and strengthening affirmative action programs; and fighting to reduce the work week without a cut in pay are three fundamental axes around which the labor movement must fight.

Advancing this perspective means mobilizing the enormous potential power of the unions in the United States to reach out with effective solidarity in action to struggles that break out — from strikes and social protests at home to defending the Cuban revolution and championing the fight against apartheid in South Africa.

Joining other *Militant* supporters at Solidarity Day can help advance this perspective. Help sell hundreds of subscriptions to the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and *L'internationaliste* to the unionists and other fighters who attend.

## Cop indifference and brutality

The 1,500 people who demonstrated in Milwaukee against the racism, brutality, and indifference of the police revealed in the Jeffery Dahmer case are confronting the truth about police functioning under capitalism.

Called repeatedly by Black residents about the brutalization of a 14-year-old Laotian boy, Konerak Sinthasomphone, the cops finally arrived on the scene only to return the youth to Dahmer, now indicted for Sinthasomphone's murder. The cops failed to even conduct a rudimentary investigation into the incident. Taped radio transmissions of 911 calls reveal the cavalier racist and anti-gay remarks of the cops as they discussed the event.

Revelations in Boston show the police organized the frame-up of William Bennett, who is Black, for the killing of Carol Stuart, a white woman who was pregnant. The big-business press and ruling-class politicians promoted a racist hysteria campaign around the Stuart murder. Far from conducting an objective and thorough search for the murderer, the cops set out to "prove" that a Black man committed the crime. They assaulted the Black community of Boston with a massive dragnet, collaring "witnesses," who were then coerced and coached to lie on the witness stand in order to create a case against Bennett.

The frame-up fell apart when Stuart's husband committed suicide and it was discovered he had actually killed his wife.

Mark Curtis, a meat-packer from Iowa, was framed on charges of rape and burglary and beaten by the Des Moines

police. He is in prison not because of the crimes he supposedly committed, but because he stood up alongside fellow meat-packers to defend immigrant coworkers at a Swift meat packing plant in Des Moines. Curtis' real crime was shouted at him by the police as they arrested him, when they said he was a "Mexican lover, just like you love those coloreds."

The ruling-class media portrays cops as heroes who daily defend the helpless against crime and violence.

In fact the opposite is true. Police indifference to crimes against working people is the flip side of their brutality and collaboration in frame-ups.

Cops defend and protect the capitalist system that breeds every form of crime against workers and farmers, from the violence on the street, to farm foreclosures, to rent-gouging landlords, to employers' attacks on workers' wages and living standard. They can be relied on for nothing else.

The only defense working people have against police crimes is to build a working-class movement that is strong enough to defend itself and mobilize working people to fight in their own interests against those of the ruling rich.

The working people of Los Angeles won an important victory when they forced Police Chief Daryl Gates to announce his resignation. They won by banding together, refusing to be intimidated, speaking out, and holding public demonstrations. Their victory proves that something can be done about police abuse. It should be studied by all those fighting against this type of violence.

## Los Angeles and the role of cops under capitalism

BY HARRY RING

The proposal by the Christopher Commission that Police Chief Daryl Gates step down clearly reflected a consensus among the bankers and wealthy businessmen who run the city. They decided the chief had to go in order to stem the political crisis triggered by the videotaped police beating of Rodney King.

Seething public anger centered on the demand for the ouster of Gates and dealt a heavy new blow to the credibility of the Los Angeles Police Department (LAPD).

The Christopher Commission was created to dissipate public anger and to polish up the image of the LAPD. A *Los Angeles Times* editorial noted with satisfaction that the commission members' credentials were impeccable — "all of them from the Establishment, and none of them remotely with an anti-police reputation."

When the commission recommended that Gates withdraw, the chief — supported by ultrarightists in the city, particularly

## LEARNING ABOUT SOCIALISM

among the cops — initially resisted yielding his post. Boxed in, he finally accepted the offer to step down "gracefully."

The commission carefully avoided any condemnation of Gates, who has blatantly egged on the cops in their abusive and violent conduct. Instead, the commission baldly asserted that this notorious, racist right-winger had "achieved a noteworthy record of public service in a stressful and demanding profession."

In releasing the commission's report, Warren Christopher insisted that "the vast majority of officers are working with skill and dedication — and without excessive force — to protect and serve us."

That's the heart of the cover-up of the LAPD by the Christopher Commission.

Police brutality does not stem from a minority of rogue cops. It is inherent in the nature of the police force, a force whose function is not to protect and serve "us."

We live in a class-divided society — a capitalist society where the function of the police is to protect the interests, the profits, and the property of the ruling rich.

The role of the cops is to police working people, to intimidate and oppress working-class communities by subjecting them to abuse and violence. Where there are union battles against employers, they herd scabs, victimize strikers, and otherwise aid the employers.

That kind of force requires cops who begin with, or quickly develop, the capacity to brutalize people. This, in turn, nurtures a reactionary political outlook.

In 1954, at the time of the McCarthyite witchhunt, James P. Cannon, a founding leader of the Socialist Workers Party, wrote a letter to the *Militant* on the question of American fascism. (The letter is included in a book of Cannon's writings, *Notebook of an Agitator*, available from Pathfinder for \$19.95.)

Cannon warned that those concerned with the threat of fascism not keep their eyes glued exclusively on fascist gangs modeled on the German or Italian examples of the 1920s and 1930s.

Perhaps an even bigger danger, Cannon warned, are the police.

Noting the danger of the Nazi-type gangs, he wrote: "But what about violence that is technically illegal and unconstitutional, but carried out nevertheless by duly constituted officials clothed with legal authority? What about such things as the breaking up of meetings and picket lines by official police?"

"This kind of illegal violence under the outward forms of law," he adds, "has a distinctive American flavor."

Cannon then recalls what Leon Trotsky wrote in the 1930s about Frank Hague, then mayor of Jersey City. Hague used his police force as a battering ram in a brutal but vain effort to prevent the newly established CIO from organizing industrial workers in the city.

Recalling Trotsky's estimate of Hague, Cannon writes, "Trotsky, by the way, considered Hague an American fascist. He described his unconstitutional assaults on free speech and free assembly, through the medium of official police, as a manifestation of incipient American fascism."

To this Cannon adds, "The truth of the matter is that American fascism, in its own specific form, already has a considerable army of storm troopers at its disposal in the persons of lawless prosecuting attorneys and official policemen who don't give a damn what the Constitution says."

In the days ahead, as the social and economic crisis continues to deepen, this country will be the scene of fierce battles between workers and bosses.

It is realistic and necessary to anticipate that in these class battles the employers will not hesitate to use the cops as a fascist-like club against the workers.

The Christopher Commission report and the slated ouster of Chief Gates are the products of the angry outcry by the countless victims of LAPD abuse and violence.

That deep-going protest will help to curb cop violence. It will also help working people to better understand the threat that the police, all police, represent — today and tomorrow.



# Canadian secret police spy on union members

BY JOE YOUNG

TORONTO — Using the pretext of "airport security" and protecting passengers from "terrorists," the Canadian government and the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS) — its political police — are carrying out a campaign of harassment against airport workers and systematic surveillance of legitimate trade union and political activities.

This harassment confirms the justice of the International Association of Machinists' 1987 court challenge to the

## UNION TALK

Airport Restricted Area Access Clearance Program. The IAM charged that the security clearance program violated the right to work, the right to privacy, and other democratic rights as defined by Canada's Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

I am one of the hundreds of IAM members who is a victim of this cop harassment. As a member of IAM Lodge 2323 at Air Canada in Toronto, I was active in organizing solidarity with the 22-month Eastern Airlines strike at the Toronto Airport, as well as in the fight of my local against contracting out and massive layoffs. I am also a long-time political activist. At the present time I am the Communist League candidate for mayor of Toronto.

I have been working at the Toronto International Airport since Nov. 7, 1989. But I have yet to receive a security clearance from the Ministry of Transport. I am required to wear a temporary security pass marked with a highly visible red dot and to work with an escort at all times.

At the request of the Ministry of Transport I am under investigation by CSIS. If, on the basis of the CSIS report the Ministry of Transport refuses to give me a security clearance, I could lose my job.

Last March 12, Bill Shipman, president of IAM Lodge 2323, wrote a letter to Huguette Labelle, deputy minister of transport, demanding action on my pass. Labelle replied April 4, saying action would be taken "as quickly as possible." Four months later, a decision has yet to be made.

On Sept. 12, 1990, I was interrogated by two CSIS agents in the presence of Tom Huston, an officer of IAM Lodge 2323. I agreed to do this because it is legally required of airport workers if they want to hold a job at the airport. However, I refused to legitimize this illegal political interrogation by answering any questions concerning my personal life, political views, or union activities.

I was asked about my sexual orientation, debts, gambling, and use of drugs or alcohol.

The agents also asked if I was in favor of the system of government in Canada. When I asked for clarification, CSIS Agent J.R. Fera replied: "You could very well be the adherent of a policy or system of government which is

foreign to the one we enjoy here. . . . If that were the case your security relative to this airport would come into question."

Agent Fera let the cat out of the bag here. Through the Ministry of Transport and CSIS, the federal government proclaims the right to decide whether my political views and activities in support of my union and the fight for social justice make me a threat to "security" at airports and ineligible to work there. Other workers have been asked whether or not they have ever traveled to "Sino-Soviet bloc countries" or whether or not they support Third World liberation movements. Our neighbors, coworkers, and former employers have been visited and questioned as well.

This political loyalty "field investigation" is reminiscent of the McCarthyite witchhunt against union activists in the United States in the 1950s.

The government mandate to CSIS to defend "Canada's national security" is designed for only one purpose: to defend the capitalist system and its government by closing the political space working people need to speak out and organize against the injustices of the profit system.

The Airport Access Clearance Program is simply another version of this ruling-class weapon aimed at the IAM, the labor movement as a whole, and all working people. Through this program the government not only has a tool to harass airport workers. It can also decide — by means of denying security clearances — who is or is not a member of unions like the IAM, Teamsters, Canadian Auto Workers, and Canadian Union of Public Employees, all of which organize airport workers.

### 'Passenger safety' smokescreen

To conceal the character of the attack, the rulers raise the smokescreen of "passenger safety" and the alleged threat of "terrorism." With a straight face the CSIS agents justify their interference in our private lives by claiming that workers who drink, are homosexuals, have debts, or are politically active are "unreliable" because they could be blackmailed by terrorists into carrying out violent actions against airline passengers. But why should such workers be more open to blackmail than any other?

Meanwhile, the government cannot point to a single example of any terrorist action by any airport worker under any circumstance. The fact is that CSIS itself was created in 1984 in the wake of revelations on illegal Royal Canadian Mounted Police activities, including arson and bombings against the labor and Québec national movements.

Thousands of airport workers are subjected to security clearance checks and hundreds are interrogated by CSIS agents.

In Montréal, one Air Canada employee was interrogated by CSIS agents during the confrontation between the army and the Mohawk Indians last summer solely because he was

Native. A CSIS agent noted in files made available under the Privacy Act that Al Cappe, who also worked at Air Canada in Montréal, had "openly" signed a petition in favor of the Mohawk fighters.

A coworker of Carole Caron, an aircraft cleaner at Aeroservice, was asked by a CSIS agent if Carole was a lesbian or involved in pornography.

In Toronto, Trevor Bickerstaff, who is today the vice president of IAM Lodge 2754 at Canadian Airlines, was unable to work for 10 months because he refused to sign forms required for security clearance on grounds that to do so meant "giving up all your rights."

In 1989, another Canadian Airlines worker, IAM Lodge 2754 shop steward Chris Trolley, was visited at his home by two CSIS agents and subjected to a political interrogation. "I felt violated, raped by this kind of interrogation," he explained.

In another instance an aircraft cleaner at Air Canada in Toronto was called in for a CSIS interrogation because she failed to declare a personal bankruptcy.

A worker at Canadian Airlines in Vancouver was interrogated because he had been detained but never charged by police in connection with a break-in. And the list goes on.

### Whole labor movement targeted

The CSIS targets the labor movement as a whole, not just airport workers. A CSIS agent, Marc Boivin, who had infiltrated the Confederation of National Trade Unions in Québec for 12 years, was jailed in 1987 for having planted bombs in an effort to discredit the union. The Canadian Labour Congress is currently fighting to get access to CSIS secret files on thousands of union leaders and activists.

The fundamental aim of the airport security pass system is to strengthen the rulers' drive to weaken the unions in two ways: by legitimizing the increasing interference of the government, employers, and cops into the personal and political lives of working people and their unions, and by intimidating airport and other workers from being active in their unions or in working-class politics.

The IAM court challenge to the pass system in 1987 strengthened the struggle of working people. But within a week of a federal court decision giving some credit to the IAM position, the Canadian government amended the Aerodrome Security Regulations in order to reimpose the pass system in full force.

Today, local IAM leaders are demanding an end to the delays and that passes be granted to those who have been waiting up to a year or two without a decision. The labor movement as a whole, along with the IAM and all defenders of civil liberties, needs to launch a broad challenge to this systematic attack on the rights of airport workers and our unions.

## LETTERS

### Swedish bakery workers

In the packinghouse of the San Remo bakery in Stockholm, especially among those workers who do a lot of handpacking, there have been complaints to management about speed-up and increased forced overtime.

The workers here are among those hardest hit by injuries in the neck and arms. Recently published statistics from the national union (LO) say that these kinds of injuries have already increased by about 50 percent from 1980 to 1989.

More than 47 percent of the workers have to retire before pension at 65 because of deterioration in health. Recently 7,000 retired workers rallied in the pouring rain against the government and deteriorating health care.

At a union meeting in June the overtime was reported to be running up to the maximum allowed—200 hours a year—for more and more workers.

Every worker is already forced to work overtime every sixth Saturday night. The company tried last year to do the same thing on Sundays as well. Workers are demanding the



company make replacement hirings. This would also benefit unemployed workers.

After the union meeting, one worker compared the "powerlessness" of the union leadership to the strike among the coffee roll workers, who unanimously held a sitdown during a whole nightshift because of indoor air pollution in the department.

The strike resulted in better air conditioning in the whole bakery. Lars Erlandsson, Stockholm, Sweden

### Israel myths punctured

Michel Warshawski, a prominent Israeli fighter for Palestinian rights, spoke in the Detroit area July 11, as part of a North American tour. The meeting of about 60 people was sponsored by the Palestine Aid Society and Palestine Solidarity Committee, as well as the Socialist Workers Party and Solidarity.

Warshawski began his talk by puncturing the myth of Israeli "non-involvement" in the recent Gulf war. Actually, he said, Israel was active on the "Palestinian front" during the war, dealing blows to the Palestine national movement in Lebanon, renewing threats to take more Palestinian land inside Israel, and imposing barbaric unlimited curfews in the West Bank and Gaza which cut off families from food for weeks at a time.

Unfortunately, the Israeli peace movement, which had previously shown sympathy for the Palestinian intifada, politically collapsed during the Gulf war. It fell in step with the war drive and chose to ignore the repressive actions of the Israeli re-

gime against the Palestinians.

Many Palestinians from different currents in the PLO are discussing what lessons to draw from the war and how to strengthen the intifada, he added.

Peter Link  
Detroit, Michigan

### More than we realize

The movement to free jailed unionist Mark Curtis enjoys broader support than many of us realize. I just started a new job at a valve factory in Missouri City, Texas. I was looking forward to explaining Mark's case and winning support from our union, Local Lodge 1303 of the International Association of Machinists.

But when I asked the union officers to review the facts behind Mark's frame-up, they told me, "We know all about it. We've been supporting him for two or three years. As a matter of fact, we took up a collection for him at our November union meeting."

The union is planning to show

The Frame-Up of Mark Curtis video at our next membership meeting.

Mike Chamberlain  
Houston, Texas

### One day

Your paper in some ways eases my tensions. I realize that there are people who are less fortunate than me.

But one day socialism will smash capitalism and all will share a piece of the pie!

Please print more on how the ruling rich are getting the laws changed in order to oppress the working class even more unfairly.

A prisoner  
Tennessee Colony, Texas

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.

## Militant Prisoner Fund

Enclosed is my contribution \$ \_\_\_\_\_ to help defray the costs of providing *Militant* subscriptions to prisoners.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Clip and mail to the *Militant*, 410 West St., New York, N.Y. 10014.



## Government farm bills provide little relief for working family farmers

BY DOUG JENNESS

(Second in a series)

As conditions for working farmers worsen, many look to the federal government for relief. The difficulties they face in making enough income to meet their costs and feed and clothe their families are not ones of their making. These are the result of farmers' laziness, poor administration, or even natural calamities. They flow from social relations outside of their control.

For decades Congress has adopted legislation related to agriculture, much of which its supporters claim will provide assistance to the worst-off farmers. In recent times a new omnibus farm bill has been adopted every five years carrying a wide range of provisions directly or indirectly related to agriculture.

The most recent, the Food, Agriculture, Conservation, and Trade Act of 1990, was adopted last November. Like all previous farm bills this act does not offer much help to working farmers. Many of its provisions, in fact, will lead to many farmers more rapidly being forced off their land.

A bill whose supporters claim will alleviate the problems of farmers in general should be suspect from the outset. Farmers are not a homogeneous economic and social class sharing common interests. Farmers are a set of classes that include both exploited and exploiters with sharply conflicting class interests.

There is much overlapping among the different social layers in the countryside and extensive interconnections. Consequently, there are no "pure" categories into which rural families can be neatly fitted. Keeping this limitation in mind, however, a general description of the class structure of the countryside can be made.

At one end of the spectrum is a very small number of large capitalist farms and ranches owned by some of the country's largest corporations. Wage workers are the exclusive source of labor.

There is a larger layer of small capitalist farmers, most of whom live on the land and consider themselves "family farmers." This includes farmers who exclusively use wage labor; those who exploit both wage labor and family labor; and those who use predominantly family labor, but depend on wage labor, at least during certain times of the year.

The big majority of farmers are exploited independent producers who employ little or no wage labor. More than half of them depend on off-the-farm jobs as wage workers to make ends meet.

### Capitalist farmers have more clout

On Capitol Hill capitalist farmers have far greater clout than exploited farmers. Their money and organizations help get politicians elected to Congress to safeguard their interests. Their lobbyists aggressively push and shove their way to the government trough to get as much as they can for their clients.

In addition, the giant food processing and trading monopolies exercise substantial weight, not only in influencing capitalist markets, but in the halls of Congress and the Department of Agriculture.

These profit-hungry interests dominated the hearings and the wheeling and dealing that took place in preparing the final draft of the 1990 farm bill. The bill's provisions on commodity price supports, deficiency payments, export subsidies, credit and loan policies, forests, range lands, water supplies, and so on are stamped by big business. Benefits that may trickle down to working farmers are incidental.

The 1990 bill, like other farm legislation since the 1930s, has a series of programs to "support" prices. In one program the government makes deficiency payments to offset the difference if the price farmers receive for their wheat, corn, or other commodities falls below a set "target price." Other programs make low-interest loans available to farmers to place their crops in storage until prices rise



Dairy farmers' protest in upstate New York. Working farmers are not looking for a free ride; that more accurately describes the bankers and big trusts who rob independent producers.

Militant/Jon Flanders

or guarantee that the government's Commodity Credit Corp. will purchase some portion of farmers' output at a set price.

The Democratic and Republican legislators who approved the 1990 farm bill either froze or reduced the target prices on most of the commodities covered by government programs. Moreover, under new rules 15 percent of a farmers' crop grown under government programs will be ineligible for payments. The idea is to try to convince farmers to cut back production of their major cash crops in order to reduce "surpluses" and urge them to use the ineligible land for other crops.

These programs disproportionately aid capitalist farmers. The amount of support granted is proportional to the amount of sales, so the farmers with the largest sales benefit the most. This remains true with the reductions and limits imposed by the 1990 law. In fact, the largest capitalist farmers are in a better position to weather these changes.

Schemes to curtail production, including the new 15 percent rule, especially benefit the largest capitalist farmers with the most land and the most hired labor. It is easier for them to cut back or switch to other crops.

Although government statistics emphasize income and farm size rather than class structure based on the form of labor used, some figures from the U.S. Bureau of the Census help show how the best-off farmers are the principal beneficiaries of government support programs.

In 1987, farmers of 1,000 acres or more received an average of \$36,028 from the government in direct cash or payments in kind. Those with less than 1,000 acres averaged only \$9,400.

In the same year, farmers with more than 1,000 acres participating in the Commodity Credit Corp. loan programs averaged \$57,405 in guaranteed loans. Farmers with less than 1,000 acres averaged \$16,954.

Another way of looking at this is that 7.2 percent of farmers with more than \$250,000 annual income and participating in the deficiency payment programs received 24 percent of the payments. Some 9.4 percent of farmers with more than \$250,000 annual income in the Commodity Credit Corp. loan programs received 28 percent of the government loans.

### A new tax

The new farm bill includes other provisions that fall harder on working farmers. A

1 percent "service fee," actually a tax, will now be imposed on producers of sugar, tobacco, peanuts, honey, wool, and mohair at the time they bring their commodities to market. A similar tax is to be collected from dairy farmers.

Another measure will cut nearly \$300 million in direct loans from the Farmers Home Administration. Under pressure from working farmers in the 1930s, this agency was set up to provide credit to farmers cheaper and with more lenient terms than loans offered by private bankers. The FmHA was often referred to as the "lender of last resort."

Over the years, however, capitalist farmers and businesses, some of them not even related to agriculture, have been soaking up the lion's share of these loans. This latest move takes another big step in this process by moving away from direct loans in favor of "guaranteed" loans. With the latter, the government backs up loans farmers seek from private bankers or lending agencies. These

loans require greater "credit worthiness" and are more difficult for farmers in distress to obtain.

The bipartisan farm bill has been praised by its supporters for its measures on conservation and use of pesticides and herbicides. A close reading, however, shows the most touted provision is for \$80 million each year for research.

One of the principal debates on this issue was over whether to ban exports of hazardous pesticides outlawed for use in the United States. An early draft of the bill included the ban, but Congress, the White House, the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of Agriculture dropped it after heavy lobbying by the giant chemical corporations.

### 100 percent of parity

The 1990 farm bill doesn't come close to guaranteeing what the great majority of farmers need — an income sufficient to meet production costs and provide a decent living. Working farmers know that, and one of the demands they most often raise is to set prices at 100 percent of parity.

Parity is a calculation used to describe the relationship between prices farmers receive for their commodities and their production costs and living expenses. The index used to determine this relationship is based on the years 1910 to 1914, when there was a relationship between costs and prices supposedly favorable to farmers.

According to this index, a farmer who sold an equivalent amount in 1988 as farmers marketing the same commodity during the base years would have only 54 percent as much purchasing power.

The "target prices" that are used to determine government price supports of wheat, corn, milk, and other commodities are well below what the price would be if 100 percent of parity were used to calculate the base price.

The demand for 100 percent of parity is an immediate demand to provide relief to working farmers from declining commodity prices, worsening living conditions, and the threat of dispossession and ruin.

Democratic and Republican politicians and the big food trusts argue that if working farmers can't make it farming there must be something wrong with them, and consequently they deserve to go under. Providing adequate government assistance to working farmers, they argue, is to finance freeloaders.

Far from being freeloaders, however, **Continued on Page 12**

## Farm labor union holds convention in Ohio

BY STEVE CRAINE

PERRYSBURG, Ohio — The Fifth Constitutional Convention of the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC), held here August 3, reflected the accomplishments as well as the challenges still ahead for the Toledo-based union of 5,000 agricultural workers, most of them migrant.

Since its founding 24 years ago FLOC has grown in membership and geographical influence, winning contracts that can help strengthen the hand of farm laborers.

FLOC founder and president Baldemar Velásquez said, "We want to see the day when a worker can spend the summer working in the fields of Ohio under a collective-bargaining agreement, go to Florida and work under a collective-bargaining agreement, and even move to Mexico and still have a collective-bargaining agreement to protect his income and working conditions."

This year's convention, held in a cavernous country-western dance hall, was attended by more than 200 delegates and observers.

Since most FLOC members are Latinos, the convention was conducted primarily in Spanish. Close to half the delegates were women.

The great bulk of the members were from northern Ohio and southern Michigan, but a vanload of farm workers made the trip from central Florida, and there were a few from North Carolina and other states. From its base in the Midwest, FLOC organizers have migrated with the workers, and some now spend winters organizing in the South.

### Pickle processor to negotiate

The convention celebrated the union's recent breakthrough at Dean Foods, where the company has agreed to negotiate three-way contracts with FLOC members and the owners of the farms where they work.

Dean is the last of the three major pickle processors in the region to negotiate with FLOC. The company markets under the brand names Aunt Jane's and Green Bay Foods. Together, Heinz, Vlasic, and Dean

**Continued on Page 11**