

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
Workers debate way forward
for Cuban revolution

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Workers in Canada protest budget cuts

BY ROGER ANNIS
AND MICHEL PRAIRIE

MONTREAL — Thousands of angry workers have joined union-led demonstrations in recent weeks against cuts to Canada's unemployment insurance program imposed by the government of Prime Minister Jean Chrétien, as well as against accelerating cuts to social services by provincial governments.

Four thousand fishery workers demonstrated February 27 in St. John's, Newfoundland, against the \$5.5 billion reduction in unemployment insurance announced days earlier as part of the federal government's budget. The number of weeks of work per year required to be eligible for unemployment insurance will rise from 10 to 12. Benefits will be reduced from 57 percent of average salary to 55 percent — down from 60 percent a year ago.

Ottawa also announced cuts to a special fishery workers unemployment insurance program that began in 1992. Tens of thousands of workers in Quebec and Atlantic Canada have lost their jobs since 1992 as a result of the destruction of fish stocks caused by the overfishing of large fishing companies in Canada and Europe.

For those who do find work, their jobs are often seasonal. The increases in the number of weeks of work needed to qualify for unemployment insurance have also increased.

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Right-wing parties win elections in Italy

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

An alliance of rightist parties swept to victory in Italy's March 27-28 parliamentary elections. The win ended 46 years of rule by 52 successive coalition governments led by the Christian Democrats and the Socialist Party.

The right-wing coalition, led by Silvio Berlusconi and his three-month-old Forza Italia party, won 366 seats in the 630-seat Chamber of Deputies, an absolute majority. This coalition also won a plurality of 155 in the 315-seat Senate.

Italy is in the midst of an economic and social crisis that has included high unemployment and periodic financial crises. A major corruption scandal has also shaken the government. One-third of the outgoing members of Parliament face corruption or related charges.

Forza Italia emerged as the largest single party, winning 21 percent of the vote and 155 seats in the lower house of Parliament. Other members of the rightist bloc are the Northern League led by Umberto Bossi, which took 8 percent of the vote and 106 seats; and the fascist National Alliance party led by Gianfranco Fini, which claimed 105 seats, almost three times its previous share.

The National Alliance, which traces its roots to the Italian Fascist Party, has a long history of racism and anti-Semitism.

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French gov't caves in to wave of youth protests

Paris abandons implementation of subminimum wage

BY NAT LONDON

PARIS — Stunned by the unexpected depth of opposition to its plan to establish a subminimum wage for young people, the French government caved in to an avalanche of protests by students and workers.

On March 30, Paris announced that it had abandoned the decree establishing a lower minimum wage for youth. The law, which went into effect March 22, allowed employers to pay workers aged 25 and under 80 percent of the minimum wage of about \$1,000 per month.

As late as March 25, Prime Minister Édouard Balladur swore that the government would make no further concessions to the tens of thousands of demonstrators. Yet, only two days later, Balladur announced he would adopt a series of measures to reestablish dialogue with youth.

The next morning, he met with representatives of student groups and of the three major trade union federations — the General Confederation of Labor (CGT), the French Democratic Confederation of Labor (CFDT), and Workers Force (FO). The prime minister said he was suspending the wage decree, known by its initials CIP, for one week to work out alternative measures.

After discussions with Balladur, Cécile from the high school students federation said, "We raised three demands: withdraw the CIP, drop the arrests and trials linked to the demonstrations, and bring back the two



Youth demonstrating in Marseilles against French government plan to lower minimum wage for those under 25. Avalanche of protests forced Paris to back down.

young Algerians who were deported.

"The prime minister," the student leader continued, "said no to withdrawing [the wage plan] and claimed he was powerless regarding the other two issues. In any case, it's useless to waste our time. We reiterate our call for the national demonstration March 31."

One hour later, the government announced suspension of the wage decree. But student and trade union leaders did not back off from plans to organize further marches and rallies to press for all their demands. Paris abandoned the law altogether the day before the March 31 national march on the capital.

These national demonstrations have been organized by the student and trade union movements. They are expected to draw thousands of participants from across the country.

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ANC gains ground in fight against opponents of a democratic S. Africa

BY GREG ROSENBERG

The African National Congress launched a mass action campaign to win space for free political activity in South Africa's Natal province March 25. Some 100,000 people marched through the streets of the port city of Durban. Bloody attacks on ANC supporters and other working people in Natal and other parts of the country by supporters of the Inkatha Freedom Party left more than 150 dead between March 19 and 28.

Gun battles broke out in the streets of Johannesburg March 28 as thousands of Inkatha supporters, many of them armed with spears and automatic weapons, converged for a march backing the demand for an autonomous kingdom in the KwaZulu Bantustan. Many of them broke off from their announced route to march on the ANC's offices.

At least 31 people died in fighting, including eight shot outside the ANC headquarters at Shell House. An ANC statement (see page 7 for text) charged that Inkatha assailants attacked the building. It also blamed the

police for ignoring warnings of probable attacks.

ANC secretary-general Cyril Ramaphosa explained that the mass action campaign in Natal "is going to escalate for as long as [Inkatha leader Mangosuthu] Buthelezi and his government do not finally agree that they will give space to political parties to operate freely, and unless he agrees the KwaZulu government will cooperate with the IEC [Independent Electoral Commission] in as far as the holding of free and fair elections is concerned."

The turnout for the Durban march "should be a clear indication that the people of Natal think the time has come for them to vote and to put in the government of the people," said ANC leader Jacob Zuma.

Buthelezi says Inkatha will boycott the April 26-28 elections. In an effort to retain the privileges accompanying his rule, the KwaZulu chief minister has led his supporters in increasingly violent assaults to intimidate working people throughout the region and prevent free political activity.

The ANC has called for the multiparty Transitional Executive Council (TEC) to take over the administration of KwaZulu. The Bantustan is divided into 44 pieces dotting the province. Ramaphosa and other ANC leaders are demanding the deployment of South African army troops in the region to protect residents from the terror campaign organized with the cooperation of the KwaZulu administration. Buthelezi said the introduction of troops "could be seen as an invasion."

In an effort to prevent ANC-organized meetings from taking place, supporters of Inkatha have occupied two stadiums in Natal.

Fighting flares in Johannesburg

Widespread Inkatha attacks, to which ANC supporters responded, left at least 49 people dead in Natal over the March 25-26 weekend alone. On March 26, gunmen ripped a baby from her mother's arms and flung the child into a burning house. Three people died when attackers burst in on an

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Israeli army uses hospital in Hebron for military operation

The Israeli army used a children's hospital as a military base of operation in its battle with Palestinian protesters in the West Bank city of Hebron on March 23. Groups of Palestinian and Israeli doctors accused the soldiers of "terrorizing patients and staff" at Mohtaseb Hospital during this 18-hour confrontation, which involved hundreds of troops firing anti-tank rockets and automatic rifles.

The army's action was criticized by the International Committee of the Red Cross as a violation of international law. Two other groups, the Association of Israeli-Palestinian Physicians for Human Rights and the Union of Palestinian Medical Relief Committees, blasted the army for having sealed off the hospital grounds, confining staff members and "32 terrified children." In a joint statement, the two groups condemned "the cynical use of a children's hospital as cover for a military offensive."

Israeli authorities have imposed a virtual nonstop curfew in Hebron since the February 25 massacre of dozens of Palestinians by Israeli settler Baruch Goldstein.



Cambodian gov't troops on their way to attack Khmer Rouge forces in Pailin

EU, Ukraine reach trade pact

In its first pact with a former Soviet republic, the European Union (EU) signed a trade accord with the government of Ukraine. Under the agreement, the 12-member EU will grant Ukraine favorable trade status and eliminate quotas on Ukrainian imports. In exchange, Kiev will remove hurdles to EU imports and investment. The pact also allows EU companies operating in Ukraine to use hard currency. The agreement doesn't offer the former Soviet republic the prospect of membership, but it provides for an eventual free-trade zone with the EU.

New job openings in Britain

Britain is adding an average of about 100,000 jobs every three months, compared with quarterly losses of about 50,000 jobs at this stage in previous recoveries, according to some economists. In Glasgow, Scotland, for example, the Kvaerner Govan Ltd. shipyard has added 300 new employees. Claremont Garments Ltd., after forcing workers to take a 20 percent pay cut, has hired 100 new workers and may take on 200

more. In Nottinghamshire, a coal mine is reopening with 200 workers.

This occurs as large companies continue to cut costs by laying off workers. Over the past decade, this restructuring of industry has wiped out hundreds of thousands of jobs in the coal, steel, auto, and banking industries. Unions and workers' rights have been weakened, minimum wages struck down, jobless benefits cut, and wages reduced. This has led to a rise in labor productivity at an average of 4.5 percent annually since 1979 — the fastest rate of any major industrialized country.

Clinton orders new secrecy rules

The Clinton administration March 25 extended to National Security Council documents the same broad protection from public scrutiny that is reserved for White House papers. The council's records will no longer be subject to the Freedom of Information Act, which has allowed U.S. citizens to gain access to some government documents. Individuals denied access to security council documents will not be allowed to appeal this decision in the courts. The National Security

Council, which was established in 1947, operates next door to the White House with a staff of 150 people.

U.S. banks raise interest rates

Many of the largest U.S. banks — including Chase Manhattan, Chemical, and Citicorp — raised their prime rate from 6 percent to 6.25 percent March 23, the first general increase in bank lending rates in five years. This move occurred the day after the Federal Reserve decided to raise short-term interest rates on federal funds to 3.5 percent from 3.25 percent.

The prime-rate increase will mean higher interest rates for millions of individuals and businesses as the rates on many mortgages, credit cards, and small-business loans are linked to the prime. As the U.S. economy continues to grow, long-term interest rates have risen more than a percentage point since last fall.

2,000 rally against Klan in Ohio

Some 2,000 people demonstrated March 7 in Painesville, Ohio, to protest a public rally by 15 members of the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). The city's downtown park was split in half by about 350 police brought in from surrounding cities and towns. One-half was given to the KKK and the other half to the 1,500 counterprotesters. Another 500 anti-Klan activists participated in a unity rally organized by area churches and held at a local community college.

Deportation of unionist halted

Overruling an asylum review board decision, a federal appeals court in early March ordered a halt to deportation proceedings against Guatemalan union leader Vicente Osorio, who sought political asylum in the United States after receiving numerous death threats in his native country. Osorio and his wife, who currently live in New York City,

were forced to leave their three children behind when they fled Guatemala in 1989.

Workers demonstrate in Brazil

On March 23, workers in major Brazilian cities demonstrated against wage losses under the government's so-called anti-inflation plan. More than 5,000 government workers marched in Brasilia; in São Paulo, a work stoppage by bus and subway conductors left thousands of commuters stranded during the morning rush hour. Protesters oppose a new government plan, backed by major business groups, that links wages to a new price index.

Wage offers decline in Japan

Major Japanese corporations are offering their employees the smallest wage increases since World War II. The offers were made to members of the Japan Council of Metal Workers' Unions, covering the steel, electrical appliance, automotive, and shipbuilding industries.

Labor unions representing the employees of electrical appliance makers have rejected offers of 3 percent wage increases. Last year, these workers got raises of 3.6 percent. The main steel employers proposed a rise of 1.6 percent, down from 2.7 percent last year. The shipbuilding industry proposed increasing wages by 3.3 percent and the auto bosses offered only 3 percent.

Protests in Western Samoa

In the biggest protest in Western Samoa in a decade, 15,000 people marched for five hours through Apia, the capital city, in early March. Numbering almost 10 percent of the population of 164,000, the demonstrators had gathered from throughout the Pacific Island country to demand abolition of a new sales tax, which adds 10 percent to the price of all goods and services.

Several days later in a special radio broadcast to the nation, Prime Minister Tofilau Eti said that the sales tax would remain. He announced, however, a reduction in import duties on liquefied petroleum gas and some food items, including rice, flour, sugar, and salt. About 1,000 people continued to protest outside the government offices for the next two weeks.

Cambodian gov't takes key base

Cambodian soldiers in mid-March captured the town of Pailin, a major stronghold of the Khmer Rouge forces battling the government near the border with Thailand. At least 10,000 government troops supported by heavy artillery and helicopter gunships were involved in the assault. At least 5,000 people fled from villages nearby as government troops advanced on Pailin. Many are former refugees who resettled in the area after spending up to 15 years in camps in Thailand.

— BRIAN WILLIAMS

Colin Parker from Auckland, New Zealand; and Don Mackle and Roni McCann from Cleveland, Ohio, contributed to this week's column.

THE MILITANT

Cooperatives and state farms in Cuba

Next week's issue will feature an eyewitness report on the process of reorganization of most state farms in Cuba into smaller cooperative units. Don't miss a single issue!



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U.S. businessmen dismiss White House rhetoric on human rights in China

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

While U.S. corporations are pushing full speed ahead on expanding trade with and investments in China, the Clinton administration has been attempting to cast itself as a crusader for human rights of the Chinese people. This stance was at the center of U.S. secretary of state Warren Christopher's mid-March trip to Beijing, for example. But U.S. businessmen, especially those with growing investments in China, have dismissed the hue and cry by the White House and spoken out in favor of maintaining and expanding trade with Beijing.

Christopher received a frosty response from Chinese government leaders to his demand that Beijing must make "significant overall progress" on human rights as a condition for renewing its most favored nation (MFN) trading status when the current agreement expires in early June. This status, which has been up for debate in Washington each year since Beijing's military crackdown on student protesters at Tiananmen Square in 1989, entitles China to export to the U.S. market on a low-tariff basis like most other trading partners of the United States.

At a meeting with Christopher, members of the American Chamber of Commerce in Beijing, who have been rapidly expanding their investments in China, openly criticized the Clinton administration's public relations stance linking MFN to human rights. "It was like we were on completely different wavelengths," commented one U.S. businesswoman attending the meeting. "A few more weeks like this one could trash the business climate here beyond repair."

Ending the MFN agreement would boost tariffs on Chinese products entering the United States from an average of about 5 percent now to more than 50 percent on the average, pricing many of these goods out of the U.S. market. The Chinese government would in turn retaliate against major U.S. products and investors.

U.S. corporations exported \$8.8 billion in goods to China last year, while importing \$31.5 billion worth of products. Direct U.S. investments in China for 1993 were estimated at \$4.8 billion, and rising.

Big stakes for Boeing

The Boeing Company, with orders from China for \$3.9 billion in new airplanes, has led the charge against any change in China's trade status. According to Lawrence Clarkson, Boeing's corporate vice president for planning and international development,

China will need 800 airplanes worth \$40 billion during the next 15 years, making it the world's third-largest aviation market.

Officials of both the Treasury and Commerce departments have publicly argued against the human rights oratory of Christopher and other State Department officials. At a meeting of Asian finance ministers in Honolulu, Hawaii, March 19-20, Treasury Secretary Lloyd Bentsen said that Washington needed to "explore alternatives" and avoid "disengaging" from China.

"The U.S. government isn't speaking in unison," complained a March 22 article in the *Wall Street Journal*. In early March prior to Christopher's visit, John Shattuck, assistant secretary of state for human rights, went to China threatening to revoke their favored trading status unless Beijing improved on human rights.

"But at the same time as Mr. Shattuck was threatening to cut off trade relations," stated the *Journal* article, "a top Commerce Department official, Jeffrey Garten, was in the Chinese capital trying to strengthen those ties. He was discussing arrangements for a trade meeting that will bring more than 100 Chinese officials to Washington [in April]. His visit was paving the way as well for a planned trip by Commerce Secretary Ron Brown and two dozen U.S. corporate chiefs to Beijing in August — two months after the deadline for China to show progress on human rights."

In the face of mounting criticism, Christopher wrote a column that appeared in the March 22 *Washington Post* aptly entitled "My Trip to Beijing Was Necessary."

"My purpose was to inform China's leaders of the urgent need to make further progress on human rights," Christopher claimed, "and to reaffirm our intention to engage China constructively on the many issues where our interests coincide."

But the U.S. secretary of state made it clear that the White House has no intention of walking away from openings for capitalist investment in China. The hue and cry over human rights is about striking a harder bargain with Beijing.

"Our economic interests are also converging," Christopher said. "China's explosive growth is increasingly attractive to American exporters and investors. We are determined to expand American participation in the Chinese market." A senior State Department official, Winston Lord, stated March 29 that if a change in China's MFN trade status was to occur, it might only be applied

to state-owned enterprises there.

Responding to the Clinton administration's mixed signals, Chinese finance minister Liu Zhongli said, "I think in the U.S. Congress there are different views, and I think in the U.S. administration there are different views. I think it is the view of U.S. business to solve this issue once and for all."

The week after Christopher's visit to China, Japanese prime minister Morihiro Hosokawa went to Beijing to cement business ties. After Hong Kong, Japan is China's biggest trading partner. Japanese loans amount to one-third of official development aid to China. Japan's investments there are surging. "This bilateral relationship is one of the most important pillars of our external relations," commented Hosokawa, whose approach toward China has none of the hoopla around human rights that the Clinton administration publicly promotes.

South Korean companies have also been pouring capital into investment projects in China, from car plants to amusement parks. Canadian prime minister Jean Chrétien is also pushing to expand trade ties with China, which is currently Canada's sixth-largest trading partner.

Expanding capitalist investment is leading to big changes in China's cities and countryside, planting the seeds for massive social explosions. According to Agriculture Minister Liu Jiang, 50 million Chinese farmers abandoned farming last year, migrating to the cities in hopes of finding better-paying jobs.

A senior official of China's State Land Administration said that the country had been suffering a net annual loss of nearly 659,000 acres of farmland since 1991 because of "the overheated boom in real estate development." More than 20 golf courses, for example, are under construction on former farming land. According to Agriculture Ministry statistics, farmland used in 1993 to grow the country's basic grain crop had shrunk by 4.3 million acres and was 5.5 percent below the 1992 acreage.

A front-page cover story in the *Far Eastern*



Peasants clear stones from a Beijing golf course on land they used to farm. Millions are being forced from the countryside to factories in cities as foreign capitalist investment continues to grow.

Economic Review at the end of March succinctly summarized the social crisis shaping up in China. "Job and income security are in tatters, while savings and pensions have diminished," the magazine stated. "Crime stalks the towns and highways. So do hundreds of millions of migrant peasants. Fake products poison and maim consumers, miners die in cave-ins and sweatshop workers burn in factory fires as managers cut corners in pursuit of quick profits."

'Ambient discontent'

A researcher working for the Chinese government remarked to the *Far Eastern Economic Review*, "There's a lot of ambient discontent out there."

For the past two years, the Chinese economy has been growing at a 13 percent annual rate. Inflation for the first two months of 1994 surged 20 percent nationwide — seven percentage points higher than for all of last year.

To slow this inflationary outburst, the Chinese rulers are hoping to reduce gross domestic product growth to just 9 percent this year.

Despite China's high economic growth rates, capitalist economists point to what they term the lack of productivity growth. "Much of the capital that has been invested in China has been poured into so-called nonproductive areas — real-estate or standard-of-living improvements — rather than industrial efficiency," commented a February 8 article in the *Wall Street Journal*. "During the hectic growth period from 1985 to 1990, higher output-per-worker accounted for less than a fifth of growth; the economy grew about the same amount just from the addition of new workers to the labor force."

In response, the March session of China's National People's Congress vowed that wage increases must lag behind productivity increases. In addition, Beijing plans to begin restructuring state-owned companies, cutting subsidies to many. Large state enterprises will be made responsible this year for their own profits and losses.

According to Miron Mushkat, a senior vice president and chief economist for Lehman Brothers Inc. in Asia, as many as 30 million workers could be idled this year through such restructuring, bringing the ranks of China's unemployed to 160 million.

50,000 protest racist attacks in Britain

BY RICH PALSER

LONDON — Fifty thousand people marched here March 19 to protest a spate of racist attacks in Tower Hamlets, East London. Organized by the Trade Union Congress (TUC) in collaboration with Black rights and antiracist organizations from the Tower Hamlets area, the demonstration drew hundreds of trade union and student contingents from throughout Britain.

Chanting "Nazis off our streets" and "We are Black, we are white, together we are dynamite," the marchers received a good response from many who stopped to watch the procession. Two youth of Indian descent, who travel into the area each day to work at their family's shop, welcomed the march from the roadside. "It's about time we had a mixed march like this," their uncle said. Several Bengali workers who joined the action said everyone's family in their community had experienced racist harassment or violence. One passerby demonstratively ripped up a leaflet handed to him by the marchers. But some workers at a garment factory came out into the street or waved from the windows as the procession passed.

Trade union officials, politicians, and relatives of those who have recently suffered racist assaults spoke at the rally as the march wound up. "One alone cannot fight racism, but together we can win — and today we have proved that," a relative of Qudus Ali

told the crowd. Ali recently regained consciousness but remains hospitalized as a result of a racist attack last September.

Nine Bengali youth were arrested on charges of rioting following a police attack on a vigil shortly after Ali's beating. They are now known as the "Tower Hamlets Nine."

"Although it's a magnificent turnout it's important that people know what we are marching for," Adel Rehman of the Tower Hamlets Nine Defence Campaign said in an interview. "It is both because of the racist attacks in Tower Hamlets, and because of the response of the police who criminalize the Black community," he said. "The Tower Hamlets Nine are an important test case because if they go to prison the police will intimidate a whole generation." The defense campaign forced the cops to drop the riot charges against all nine. But six of the youth still face public disorder charges. Activists in the campaign have appealed for a strong show of support outside the court hearing March 29.

John Monks, general secretary of the TUC, told the crowd that a TUC survey revealed that Black workers were 11 times more likely to be made redundant (laid off) than the general population. He called on the unions to face up to the challenge that racist discrimination presents.

"Young people in Tower Hamlets say don't come here to lecture us, come to follow our

lead," said a representative of Youth Connection, an alliance of Bengali youth groups in the Tower Hamlets area. "We are fighting back, come and help, don't dictate to us."

A representative of the African National Congress of South Africa addressed the rally and read a message from ANC president Nelson Mandela. "As we approach South

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1993 'Militant' index

Organized by country and author, the *Militant* index makes it easy to find coverage from the past year on:

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The 1993 index is being mailed to all *Militant* subscribers this week. It can also be purchased separately from the *Militant* business office.

The 1993 bound volume, including all 46 issues and the index, will soon be available. To order a copy of the index, send \$1.50 to the *Militant*, 410 West St., New York, NY

Young socialists sell 'Militant'

BY SARA LOBMAN

Teams of young socialists and their supporters from Chicago set up tables at colleges and universities in Illinois and Indiana this past week to build the April 1-3 socialist educational conference there. The young activists found many people interested in the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and *New International*.

A front-page picture box in the *Daily Student*, newspaper at the University of Indiana in Bloomington, reports on one of the teams under the headline "Socialist butterflies."

"The sign stating, 'Can't stop the revolution in South Africa,' displays the topic political activists Robin Kissenger, Ray Parsons, and Brian Taylor discuss with students," the caption reads. "The activists want to build a new socialist youth group here."

Taylor reports that the team to Bloomington and DePauw University sold four subscriptions to the *Militant* and four copies of *New International*. Four *Militant* subscriptions were sold to students at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana, and two at the University of Illinois in Champaign.

Johanna Ryan, also of Chicago, reports that four subscriptions — two each to the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* — have been sold at the LTV Steel mill there. One of the new *Militant* readers is a 23-year-old worker who just started in

the mill. Until recently, he was a student at the University of Indiana at Bloomington.

Albert Gregorian, of Los Angeles, reports *Militant* supporters staffing the Pathfinder bookstore there got a call from Las Vegas this past week. A young man explained that he had bought a subscription to *Perspectiva Mundial* last year when distributors from Los Angeles had traveled to Las Vegas to set up a table at a conference of hotel workers. He had just run into a steelworkers' strike and had been showing his copy of the magazine around.

"The politics in the paper is excellent," he said. "But I only have my one copy." He renewed his subscription and suggested a second follow-up sales team to Las Vegas. Los Angeles supporters are planning to take him up on his offer.

Ilona Gersh joined a five-day team of supporters from Salt Lake City, Utah, that visited campuses and mine portals in New Mexico and Arizona. Eight copies of the *Militant* were sold to miners at the McKinley coal mine near Windowrock, Arizona, on the Navajo Reservation.

At the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque a new student organization called the Progressive Student Union sponsored a table for the team. Four people bought subscriptions to the *Militant* and one to *Perspectiva Mundial*. One student bought a copy of *New International*.

A team of *Militant* sales people from Pittsburgh and Morgantown, West Virginia, went to Shadyside, Ohio, to introduce the paper to coal miners at the McElroy/Fish Creek mine there. Sixteen papers were sold and one subscription to a member of the United Mine Workers of America.

Distributors in 14 cities have decided to raise their goals for sales of *New International* in anticipation of the April 1 release date of issue no. 9 of the Marxist magazine, which will feature "The Rise and Fall of the Nicaraguan Revolution." Several areas are still discussing new targets so the international goal will not be changed until next week.

As readers can see, we have slipped a little more behind as we enter the fourth week of the drive. We encourage supporters around the world to make every effort to get back on schedule by the end of week five so we can enter the second half of the drive in top form. We also recommend that distributors in each city make sure that subscriptions are sent to the business office in a timely way.

Finally, keep those reports, stories, and photographs of sales teams coming in. Your experiences can be helpful to readers trying to introduce others to the socialist periodicals.

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Christchurch	22	45	49%	1	2	2	20*
N.Z. total	65	130	50%	3	8	6	60*
AUSTRALIA	9	25	36%	3	8	1	15
SWEDEN	14	40	35%	9	18	5	20
BRITAIN							
Manchester	18	60	30%	0	5	0	25
London	22	50	44%	0	2	6	18
Sheffield	7	35	20%	0	2	0	10
Britain Total	47	145	32%	0	9	6	53
CANADA							
Toronto	24	80	30%	4	15	3	40
Vancouver	25	75	33%	8	10	4	25
Montreal	18	70	26%	4	15	8	40
Canada Total	67	225	30%	16	40	15	105
GREECE	3	10	30%	0	1	1	5
UNITED STATES							
Detroit	36	90	40%	1	10	12	28
Los Angeles	68	200	34%	19	95	15	90
Albuquerque, NM	1	3	33%	0	1	0	1
Atlanta	26	80	33%	8	13	9	35*
Miami	38	120	32%	4	50	27	95*
Houston	20	65	31%	3	12	0	15
Washington, D.C.	23	75	31%	5	25	3	17
Greensboro, NC	15	50	30%	0	5	4	22*
Salt Lake City, UT	27	90	30%	1	15	1	55*
Chicago	38	130	29%	8	30	0	30
Boston	32	120	27%	10	30	6	45
San Francisco	33	135	24%	10	32	13	105*
Twin Cities, MN	25	110	23%	3	17	6	25*
Des Moines, IA	18	80	23%	12	35	3	55*
Birmingham, AL	16	75	21%	1	5	0	17
Cincinnati, OH	3	15	20%	3	2	0	8*
Denver	2	10	20%	0	2	0	3
New Haven, CT	3	15	20%	0	3	0	10*
Brooklyn	25	130	19%	6	35	11	45*
Cleveland	16	85	19%	2	10	0	17
Pittsburgh	18	100	18%	1	10	1	40*
New York	24	135	18%	4	35	44	110*
Seattle	13	75	17%	3	12	3	20
Philadelphia	19	115	17%	3	30	11	65*
St. Louis	10	70	14%	2	8	0	35*
Newark, NJ	17	130	13%	2	35	0	45
Morgantown, WV	3	50	6%	0	2	5	30*
Albany, NY	0	5	0%	0	1	0	4*
Edinboro, PA	0	10	0%	0	0	0	3*
Portland, OR	0	6	0%	0	0	0	2*
U.S. Total	569	2,374	24%	111	560	174	1,072
BELGIUM	0	2	0%	0	2	0	1
FRANCE	0	10	0%	0	2	0	12
GERMANY	0	10	0%	0	4	0	10
PUERTO RICO	0	2	0%	4	8	4	12*
TOTAL	781	2,985	26%	146	661	212	1,371
SHOULD BE	900	3,000	30%	195	650	204	1,000

Newark socialist fights ballot exclusion

BY CANDACE WAGNER

NEWARK — M.J. Rahn announced his candidacy for mayor of Newark at a city hall press conference here March 17 and explained, "The Socialist Workers Campaign against economic depression, racism, and war." He then handed in 2,010 petition signatures to the city clerk — more than double the 904 required to place his name on the ballot in the May 10 municipal election.

Rahn's announcement and his platform were reported in the March 21 *Star-Ledger*, the largest-circulation newspaper in New Jersey. Later that day city clerk Robert Marasco ruled Rahn off the ballot saying only 470 signatures were valid. The socialist candidate immediately announced his intention to fight the city's ruling, which he called "an outrageous violation of democratic rights — and not just my own."

"Socialist campaigners talked with thousands of working people and youth on the streets of Newark these past several weeks," Rahn explained. "We said working people need unity, to fight together against the ravages of the capitalist economic crisis."

"We said, defend immigrant workers, defend the right to abortion. We said, look to the struggle against apartheid in South Africa, and to the socialist revolution in Cuba as examples for working people here."

"More than 2,000 people signed petitions to put that program on the ballot," continued Rahn. It's their right, and the right of everyone in Newark, to hear and consider these ideas that city clerk Marasco is attacking."

Newark is the largest city in the state; its population of 275,000 is overwhelmingly working class and 75 percent Black and Latino. The socialist campaigners who fanned out with petitions across the city engaged in lively discussions and debates about their program.

A vendor on downtown Broad Street, for example, devoted himself to discouraging potential signers. "Look at the guy!" he would



Militant/Candace Wagner
 Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Newark, M.J. Rahn (left), and campaign supporter turn in signatures required for ballot status.

yell, pointing to a picture of Rahn, who is white. "We don't need no cracker on the ballot!" Many people, however, proceeded to sign the petition, and a few shouted back. The perspective of building unity among all working people — regardless of skin color, sex, or nationality — through a fight for jobs, affirmative action, and support for working people internationally made sense to many.

"Sure. I'll sign," said a young Black woman walking on Broad Street. "I'm on my way to the Pathfinder Bookstore." The campaign offices are located at the bookstore. Her brother, a student at nearby Kean College, had met socialist campaigners on campus and bought the *Militant*, which he passed along to her. She visited the bookstore that day and attended a socialist educational conference in New York the following weekend.

"Socialist? That's my party!" said a political science student who met petitioners at a grocery store in the Ironbound section of Newark and bought a subscription to the *Militant*.

On Saturday, March 12, socialist petitioners Phil Duzinski and Marty Pettit were assaulted in the Ironbound area by five right-wing Cuban-Americans, who yelled that socialist candidates don't have a right to run for office. The socialists recognized two of the attackers as having been ringleaders of the group of people who had tried to disrupt a February 25 meeting to support the U.S.-Cuba Friendship caravan.

Rahn, a garment worker and member of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union, and his campaign supporters are demanding the police defend their right to distribute literature.

The socialist candidate's supporters successfully campaigned in Ironbound the following weekend, selling a subscription to the *Militant* and gathering signatures for other socialist candidates running in the November general election.

By the time Rahn filed his petitions March 17, campaigners had sold 15 subscriptions to the *Militant* and three to the Spanish-language *Perspectiva Mundial*.

IN THE UNIONS

UNITED STATES							
UTU	22	72	31%	1	3	0	22
USWA	9	70	13%	0	8	0	21
ACTWU	1	—	—	4	—	2	—
IAM	12	—	—	1	—	1	—
ILGWU	2	—	—	3	—	0	—
OCWA	8	—	—	0	—	1	—
UAW	25	—	—	5	—	5	—
UFCW	8	—	—	8	—	1	—
UMWA	1	—	—	0	—	0	—
U.S. Total	88	—	—	22	11	10	43
AUSTRALIA							
AMEU	0	4	—	0	—	3	—
FPU	0	2	—	0	—	2	—
NUW	0	2	—	0	—	1	—
Australia Total	0	8	—	0	—	6	—
BRITAIN							
AEEU	0	0	—	0	—	0	—
NUM	0	0	—	0	—	0	—
RMT	9	0	—	0	—	0	—
TGWU	3	0	—	0	—	0	—
Britain Total	12	0	—	0	—	0	—
CANADA							
ACTWU	0	0	—	0	—	0	—
CAW	1	0	—	0	—	0	—
IAM	4	0	—	0	—	0	—
USWA	0	0	—	0	—	0	—
Canada Total	5	0	—	0	—	0	—
NEW ZEALAND							
EU	5	9	—	1	—	0	2
MWU	1	4	—	0	—	0	1
UFBGWU	5	6	—	0	—	0	1
N.Z. Total	11	19	—	1	—	0	4
SWEDEN							
Food workers	0	3	—	0	—	0	2
Metal workers	0	3	—	0	—	0	2
Transport workers	0	2	—	0	—	0	1
Sweden Total	0	8	—	0	—	0	5

*raised goal

ACTWU — Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union; AEEU — Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Workers Union; AFMEU — Automotive, Food, Metals and Engineering Union; CAW — Canadian Auto Workers; EU — Engineers Union; FPU — Food Preservers' Union; IAM — International Association of Machinists; ILGWU — International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union; MWU — Meat Workers Union; NUM — National Union of Mineworkers; NUW — National Union of Workers; OCAW — Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers; RMT — Rail, Maritime, and Transport Workers; TGWU — Transport and General Workers Union; UAW — United Auto Workers; UFBGWU — United Food, Beverage and General Workers Union; UFCW — United Food and Commercial Workers; UMWA — United Mine Workers of America; USWA — United Steelworkers of America; UTU — United Transportation Union

'You are continuing a gross injustice'

Letters to Iowa parole board call for release of framed-up union activist

Mark Curtis is a union and political activist who has served more than five years in Iowa state prison on frame-up charges of rape and burglary.

The Mark Curtis Defense Committee has launched a campaign to urge the Iowa State Board of Parole to grant Curtis a hearing and release him. Printed below are excerpts from a few of the letters sent to the parole board on Curtis's behalf.

Larry Ginter

Rhodes, Iowa

As a longtime supporter of Mark Curtis, it has come to my attention that your desire to send Mark for psychiatric evaluation at Oakdale has been rejected by the Oakdale staff!

We supporters have told you repeatedly, that the mental state of Mark Curtis was never an issue, that the charge of rape was false and the whole trial was a classic frame-up from the word go.

Now that Mark has served his sentence with extreme honor, courage and exhibiting great patience don't you think it's about time that Mark was allowed to go free? Justice is not being served by incarcerating him any longer. I urge you to hold a hearing for Mark as soon as it is possible.

Larry Ginter is a farmer in Iowa.

Lawrence Younger

Atlanta, Georgia

It's time to parole Mark Curtis. I've been following this case for years now. Read many materials, seen an important video, which explained the case further, read more materials, and followed the actions of the parole board. It appears to me you've reached quite an impasse, that cannot escape giving an appearance of continuing a gross injustice.

If I understand it correctly, the Parole Board offered consideration for parole for Mark Curtis if he went to the Iowa Men's Correctional Center. However, the center has declared Mark Curtis mentally fit and has indicated they do not share your sentiments and chose not to admit him.

Not only has your own licensed psychia-

trist judged Mark Curtis to be mentally fit, Mark Curtis also meets all other requirements for parole: he has community support, including job offers waiting for him; he has served adequate time; and he has an excellent prison record.

So let's move the thing forward. I encourage you to meet with Mark right away, and parole him. I am anxious to see justice prevail, and this is the only way to begin a just course. I must also say that I am equally anxious to meet this man, Mark Curtis, who has stood strong, made such valuable use of his time while in prison, and been a real inspiration to many of us outside the walls that separate us.

Lawrence Younger is sergeant-at-arms for United Auto Workers Local 882.

Terrence Shulman

Detroit, Michigan

I am writing as a member of the legal community and as a greatly concerned citizen on the matter of Mark Curtis. I just attended a presentation of Mr. Curtis' case and I strongly believe that Mr. Curtis must be paroled immediately! I have known about his case for a year and a half and it is a travesty of justice that Mr. Curtis ever was convicted. Unfortunately, we cannot undo the past and Mr. Curtis has served over five years in prison. He has therefore, fulfilled his sentence and it would be yet another injustice to detain him any longer. Outrage is the only word which seems to describe my feelings at this point. Please release this man!

Terrence Shulman is an attorney.

Susan Taylor

Christchurch, New Zealand

As a member of Amnesty International and deeply concerned with issues of justice, I am constantly distressed to hear of the

Μάρκ Κέρτις
ΑΜΕΡΙΚΑΝΟΣ ΑΓΩΝΙΣΤΗΣ ΚΑΤΑ ΤΟΥ
ΠΑΤΡΙΣΜΟΥ ΕΚΤΕΙΛΕΙ ΠΟΙΝΗ ΚΑΘΕΙΡΣΗΣ 25
ΕΤΩΝ

Το παρακάτω δημοσίευμα είναι απόσπασμα εντύπου της Επιτροπής Υπεράσπισης του Μάρκ Κέρτις, στην πόλη Des Moines, στην Αϊόβα των Ηνωμένων Πολιτειών. Ο Κέρτις, υπερασπιστής των δικαιωμάτων των μεταναστών και συνδικαλιστής, εκτελεί ποινή φυλάκισης 25 ετών στις φυλάκες της Αϊόβα.

Ο Μάρκ Κέρτις δούλεψε στη φυλακή της Αϊόβα κατά τη διάρκεια της φυλάκισης του. Ο Κέρτις, υπερασπιστής των δικαιωμάτων των μεταναστών και συνδικαλιστής, εκτελεί ποινή φυλάκισης 25 ετών στις φυλάκες της Αϊόβα.

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Mark Curtis
U.S. Anti-racist Fighter Serving 25 Years in Jail

Reprinted below are excerpts from brochures published by the Mark Curtis Defense Committee in Des Moines, Iowa, in the United States. Curtis, an immigrant rights' advocate and a trade unionist is currently serving a 25 year sentence in the Iowa penitentiary.

"Mark Curtis was a packhouse worker at the Swift plant in Des Moines, Iowa, and an active member of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 831. He had helped build solidarity among meat-packers who were resisting an employer drive to slash wages, speed up production and impose dangerous working conditions.

"Just a few hours before his arrest, Curtis had spoken at a meeting held to protest a federal immigration raid on workers at the Swift plant where he worked. Seventeen coworkers, from Mexico and El Salvador had been seized and threatened with jail and deportation. He spoke about the need for unity among all packhouse workers against the bosses' offensive, and called on fellow unionists to defend the immigrant workers who had been arrested.

"During the interrogation that followed Curtis' arrest that night, Des Moines cops brutally beat him in the city jail, calling him a 'Mexican lover, just like you have those coloreds'.

"In a grossly unfair trial, a Iowa court convicted Curtis on rape and burglary charges in September 1988 and sentenced him to 25 years in prison. Curtis was a federal civil rights lawyer against the cops who beat him. U.S. District Judge Charles Wolfe ruled that the police version of events was not credible and awarded Curtis over \$60,000 in damages and attorneys' fees. The U.S. Court of Appeals upheld the ruling in May 1993. Yet Mark Curtis remains in prison, the target of a police frame-up.

ΠΟΛΙΤΙΚΑ ΚΑΙ ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΚΑ ΔΙΚΑΙΩΜΑΤΑ ΣΤΟΥΣ ΠΡΟΣΦΥΓΕΣ

Article about Mark Curtis's defense case as it appears in Greek and English in new bilingual magazine, *Without Borders*, published in Athens.

continuing incarceration of Mark Curtis in the John Bennett Correctional Center in Fort Madison, Iowa.

He has completed his sentence for sexual assault and is being held on a later, obviously connived, charge of entering private property to commit a crime.

Please have Mark Curtis given a parole hearing and the possibility of justified freedom.

Mario Consoli

Lawrence, Massachusetts

Once again we are writing to urge you to grant a hearing and immediate parole to Mark Curtis. You ordered that Mark be eval-

uated by a prison psychiatrist. Mark met this request. The psychiatrist says there are no psychological issues in Mark's case. We can see no reason for you to deny him parole any longer.

Our union and many of our members have followed Mark's case for a long time. We respect the work he did to defend immigrant workers and strengthen his union. He has been in prison far too long. As we wrote you last fall, any further delay in granting Mark parole cannot be justified. Simple fairness calls for his release.

Mario Consoli is president of Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union Local 187.

Antiracist meeting in Greece demands equal rights for immigrant workers

BY GEORGES MEHRABIAN

ATHENS, Greece — Close to 300 people attended the first Multicultural Solidarity evening here February 19. This event was the first time several organizations of immigrant workers and students in Greece had joined forces to host a public antiracist meeting to demand equal rights for foreign-born workers.

The overwhelming majority of the participants were immigrant workers, coming from the Philippines, Turkey, Ghana, Liberia, Ethiopia, Pakistan, Iran, and other countries. The event was organized by the Union of Filipinos in Greece (KASAPI-HELLAS), the Pan African Association in Greece, and the Refugee Solidarity Movement (RSM).

In another first, the event was held at the headquarters of the Construction Workers Union. The construction industry has been employing tens of thousands of undocumented workers. Many union officials have demanded the restriction or exclusion of immigrant labor from the country.

The Athens Labor Center, however, donated funds to publicize the event. The center printed 2,000 posters and organized to paste them up throughout central Athens. Many major street corners were covered with posters in English and Greek saying "No to Racism — Solidarity with Immigrant Workers!"

Thomas Patrikiou, a member of the executive council of the Labor Center and chair of its Foreign Workers Task Force, gave greetings to the event. The vice president and general secretary of the Labor Council also attended.

Debbie Valencia, a member of KASAPI, read a speech in English on behalf of the organizers. She was followed by Hussein Bobrek, a Turkish member of RSM, who presented the same speech in Greek.

"Immigrant workers today in Greece face numerous problems," Valencia said. "We are confronted by a lack of fundamental human rights; the right to live here free of fears of

deportations; the right to work as equals; the right to social security, health care, and education; and the right to join union and political organizations.

"Mostly the right not to face daily insults to our integrity because of our origins," Valencia continued. "Ours is a daily life of discrimination and insecurity fostered upon us by the bosses, the state, and official institutions that use us as scapegoats for their social crisis.

"We are here to announce our decision to join together, immigrants of different nationalities, to campaign for the rights due us as human beings and to join with Greek-born working people in this effort," she said.

The event was covered by major television stations and the English-language daily *The Athens News*.

At the meeting, members of the RSM unveiled the group's new bilingual (English and Greek) magazine, *Without Borders*. People crowded around the RSM table,

snatching up 67 copies at \$2.00 each.

The RSM was formed last year by mainly Turkish and Kurdish immigrant workers as an antiracist organization dedicated to the struggle of immigrants in Greece.

"The victims of racism must be able to express themselves," stated the magazine's editorial, "to be heard and to influence decisions that affect their lives, which have been taken until now without them."

Also appearing in the first issue of the magazine is an article entitled "Foreign Workers in Kos" — the story of a successful union-organizing drive by Filipino garment workers on that Greek island; the story of Mark Curtis, a framed-up unionist and political activist in the United States; and excerpts from a speech presented by African National Congress president Nelson Mandela in Havana.

Georges Mehrabian is a member of the Refugee Solidarity Movement in Athens.

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Canadian soldier is convicted in murder of Somali teenager

BY KANURU NDERI

TORONTO—One of nine Canadian soldiers charged with the torture and death of a Somali youth was convicted March 16 by a military court.

Pvt. Elvin Brown, 25, of Edmonton was sentenced to five years in prison for causing the death of Shidane Arone. Arone was killed in March 1993 by Canadian troops in Somalia after they had taken him into custody.

The trials of the other eight soldiers charged with involvement in Arone's murder, including a former officer of the Canadian Airborne Regiment, are scheduled to start soon.

The evidence and details that came out during Brown's trial showed an attempted cover-up of Arone's murder by the Canadian government and widespread participation in the atrocity by a considerable section of Brown's army unit.

The conviction of Brown is the first of its kind in the Canadian military. According to evidence presented at the trial, Arone was dragged into the Canadian forces' encampment after being accused of thievery. Arone maintained that he had been looking for a child who was a relative.

Several Canadian soldiers then beat and kicked him. They burned his feet with cigarettes and forced him to scream "Canada! Canada!"

Witnesses testified that the screams could be heard across the compound and that several officers knew about the beating and torture and some even participated in it.

Brown testified that when he had tried to stop the torture and beating, an officer told him the platoon commander wanted detainees to be beaten. "He said to me: 'I want to kill this fucker.' [Captain Michael] Sox told me he wants the prisoner beaten." Brown added that another soldier told him, "You should have seen the soccer kick Warrant Officer Robert Murphy gave him to the head." Murphy was second in command of the platoon. Neither Murphy nor Sox have been charged with the murder.

'You can beat them'

A sergeant testified that Sox told him beating intruders was permissible. "If you have to, you can beat the shit out of them," he quoted the officer as saying. Later in the trial, Sox himself testified that a senior officer instructed him his soldiers could rough up any intruders.

As a souvenir of the event, several soldiers took turns posing for photographs with the

trussed, bloodied, and dying youth. One photograph shows a thick wooden stick jammed into the Somali teenager's mouth, forcing it wide open. Another shows a soldier pointing a 9mm pistol at Arone's face. The trial judge ordered a media publication ban on the photographs, even forbidding court artists' sketches.

At least 16 soldiers actually witnessed the beatings and torture, and most of the camp heard what was going on.

The Canadian defense department kept Arone's murder secret for more than two weeks. Even then it only announced that a Somali youth was found dead after contact with Canadian soldiers.

Master Cpl. Clayton Matchee was arrested in connection with Arone's death the same day as the announcement. Matchee was later found hanging unconscious in a detention cell in what is being called a suicide attempt.

"We will be going through a difficult situation in the next few months," Canadian defense minister David Collette told Parliament. He denied that the evidence in the trial indicated widespread criminal brutality by the Canadian armed forces during their participation in the United Nations-sponsored



Militant/John Steele

September 1993 protest in Toronto against U.S. and Canadian military occupation of Somalia. Conviction of soldier for murder of Somali youth shows real face of "peacekeepers."

invasion and occupation of Somalia. More than 1,000 Canadian troops were part of the U.S.-led occupying force. Collette stuck to the government's position that only a few "bad apples" were involved in such acts.

But government officials' assertions that such actions are an aberration took further blows last year even before Brown's trial began.

During the months of February and March 1993, Canadian soldiers killed four civilians in the town of Belet Huen in west-

ern Somalia. None of these deaths were made public until a Canadian army doctor wrote his wife a letter describing one of the incidents as an execution. The letter later made its way to the press. The news of the killings, the arrests, and the suicide attempt created a major scandal just as then-defense minister Kim Campbell was in the midst of running for the leadership of the governing Conservative Party. She was elected prime minister of Canada, but lost that post a few months later.

Workers in Canada protest budget cuts

Continued from front page

employment insurance thus hit especially hard. During the prime minister's March 17 visit to Bathurst, New Brunswick, 1,200 workers took to the streets to protest the cuts. They burned effigies of Chrétien and his finance minister, Paul Martin.

The next day, some 300 construction workers confronted the Liberal Party prime minister face-to-face in his home town of Shawinigan, Quebec. Scenes of Chrétien being jostled by the angry workers were broadcast on television that night across Canada. Chrétien tried to ridicule the action, saying those participating were not unemployed but were "workers with jobs."

A few days later, Transport Minister Doug Young was confronted by an angry crowd of 1,000 in the small fishing town of Shipagan, New Brunswick.

Some 1,500 workers in Sydney, Nova Scotia, protested the unemployment insurance cuts March 24, again burning federal politicians in effigy and briefly occupying a

government unemployment office.

Two days later, in Montreal, up to 200 youth and unemployed workers participated in a demonstration protesting the attack on jobless benefits. This action was organized by the Quebec Unemployed Association.

In spite of an upswing in the economy, unemployment rates remain at 11.4 percent across Canada. Rates are much higher in the Maritimes and Quebec provinces, where the protests occurred. These regions are also the worst hit by the government's cuts. Sixty percent of next year's cuts in unemployment insurance will occur in these areas, for example.

Protests against spending cuts

While protests against unemployment insurance cuts are on the rise, workers in the provinces of Newfoundland, Ontario, and Alberta are organizing protests and possible strike actions against provincial government spending cutbacks.

On March 19, more than 3,000 workers, high school and university students, and elderly people marched in Edmonton, Alberta, in the latest protest against draconian cuts to health, education, and social service programs being imposed by the provincial government. The unions of government employees played a central role in organizing the march.

The more than 30,000 government workers in Newfoundland voted on the weekend of March 19-20 to strike if the provincial government there carries out threatened cuts of \$50 million to education, health care, and other social services. Part of the cuts will take the form of forced unpaid holidays, a measure already imposed on workers by other provincial governments.

Two thousand angry Ontario Hydro workers demonstrated March 21 in front of the provincial legislature in downtown Toronto. They were demanding job security and protesting concession demands of \$300 million in the new contract under negotiation with the state-owned corporation. Ontario Hydro cut 6,000 jobs during the last few years. An undisclosed tentative agreement was reached March 28 between the officials of the 14,700 member Power Workers' Union and Ontario Hydro.

Attacks on social welfare

At the same time as they deepen their attacks against unemployment insurance, Canada's federal and provincial governments are waging a concerted campaign aimed at replacing the right of working people to social welfare, once they are no longer eligible for unemployment benefits, with a

so-called "social workfare" program.

The March 26 *Globe and Mail* reported that the government of Nova Scotia will soon require all social welfare recipients to perform menial work in order to receive the money they are currently entitled to. This is presently illegal under the Canada Assistance Plan. Ottawa has made clear, however, that it supports such programs.

The same week, the federal and New Brunswick governments announced a program that will provide a "guaranteed minimum salary" of \$12,000 to older unemployed New Brunswick workers in exchange for planting trees, cleaning up beaches, and other community work.

In Ontario, the New Democratic Party government of Robert Rae announced March 28 that it will hire inspectors to intrude into the private lives of welfare recipients in the name of reducing "welfare fraud." Quebec has had such a program in place for many years.

Changes to unemployment insurance rules in recent years as well as increases in the numbers of workers who remain without jobs for a long period have already netted the federal government big savings in insurance payouts. In spite of the fact that the unemployment rate has remained more or less constant, the value of payments to unemployment insurance recipients in Canada dropped by 5.2 percent in 1993 compared to 1992. The number of total claims dropped by 12.7 percent in that same time.

Antiracist activist sentenced to jail

BY GARY KETTNER

TORONTO—More than one hundred chanting and singing supporters overflowed the courtroom and spilled into the hallways as Dudley Laws was sentenced here March 14.

Laws, who runs a consulting business that advises immigrants and refugees on citizenship and immigration matters, is one of the best-known antiracist activists in Canada. He was sentenced to nine months in jail and fined \$5,000. Laws was convicted in February on three counts of conspiracy to "smuggle aliens" between Canada and the United States. The charges stemmed from a police entrapment operation in 1991.

Laws spent the night in jail and was released the next day on \$25,000 bail, pending an appeal of the sentence and conviction.

During the sentencing hearing, defense lawyer Peter Rosenthal argued for an absolute discharge. He presented a large number of letters of support from groups and individuals in the Black community.

Before being sentenced, Laws told the court that he was the target of police entrapment because of his work in the fight against racist police violence. He recalled the many cases of Blacks shot by police in Toronto and Montreal in recent years.

His jailing would not prevent him from struggling for justice, human rights, and



Militant/Cliff Mack

Dudley Laws at 1990 protest

freedom, Laws said. "The struggle is not mine alone... I have never stood alone—not today, not yesterday, not tomorrow."

As he concluded his speech the courtroom erupted in a standing ovation.

Laws will return to court in April. He also faces a possible new trial on two counts where a mistrial was declared.

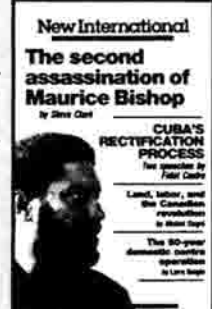
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IN NEW INTERNATIONAL NO. 6

By Michel Dugré

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ANC statement on Johannesburg violence

Printed below is a March 28 statement from the African National Congress Department of Information and Publicity on the violence in central Johannesburg. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

The Central Business District of Johannesburg today, March 28, 1994, was the scene of terrible tragedy. A large number of people were killed and scores have been injured in bloodletting that could easily have been avoided.

The African National Congress extends its condolences to the families that have been bereaved as a consequence of today's events. Our best wishes for a speedy recovery also goes out to the injured.

According to the information presently at our disposal the course of events was as follows.

A rally, to take place at the Library Gardens between President and Market Streets in Central Johannesburg, was called by the Inkatha Freedom Party (IFP) for this morning. The ANC received indications on Sunday March 27 that the rally would be accompanied by an armed demonstration which would target our regional offices on Jeppe Street and our national offices at Plein Street. The PWV [Pretoria-Witwatersrand-Vereeniging] regional commissioner of police was informed and a formal request was made that requisite security measure be taken to minimise the possibilities of violence. Police Commissioner Johan van de Merwe was contacted on Sunday, March 27 and advised of the dangers and he undertook to ensure that adequate measures were taken to protect life and property.

Inkatha supporters fire on ANC leader

At about 8:30 a.m., Comrade Penuel Maduna, a member of the National Executive Committee of the ANC, was fired on by a crowd of IFP supporters as he was driving to work. He fortunately was able to evade his attackers and escaped unscathed. On arrival in his office at Shell House, he telephoned Comrade Cyril Ramaphosa, advising him of the attack and requesting that he contact the commissioner of police.

Beginning at 7:30 a.m., armed demonstrators, some carrying firearms, began parading through the streets of Central Johannesburg. This march was being coordinated by Messrs. Themba Khoza, recently implicated by the Goldstone Commission as a key figure in gun smuggling operations for the benefit of the IFP, and Humphrey Ndlovu, a regional IFP leader.

At around 8:10 a.m., the armed demonstration passed by the ANC regional office on Jeppe Street, marching from east to west. Pedestrians and other people not involved in the march were being assaulted with sticks and clubs and some fled into the ANC offices. Despite our earlier requests to the SAP [South African police], no police had been deployed to protect the building at that time. ANC security personnel on duty at the regional office were compelled to fire warning shots in the air. It appears that at least one person was injured during this incident. Shortly thereafter the police entered the building with a view to

ascertaining what arms the ANC security personnel had. The officials of the ANC assured them that all the guns in our possession were licensed shotguns. The police withdrew leaving no visible presence to protect the ANC premises or to monitor the situation.

At 9:14 a.m. the armed IFP demonstration appeared from the direction of Von Welligh Street and attempted to enter the garage at Essanby House where the ANC regional offices are located. ANC security personnel once again repelled them by firing warning shots. At the same time, Comrade Paul Mashitile, the ANC's secretary for the PWV region, telephoned General Callitz of the SAP to advise of developments at the regional office. General Callitz undertook to deploy personnel on Jeppe Street to deter further attacks. We have been unable to determine whether anyone was injured during this second incident.

Police officers on duty withdraw

At 12:55 p.m. there was firing on windows of offices of the PWV region. ANC security personnel returned the fire. No one was injured as far as we can determine.

At around 9:30 a.m. Comrade Joe Nhl-anhla, was in telephonic contact with General Beukes of the SAP in Pretoria requesting that urgent action be taken to secure the ANC's offices in Johannesburg. He specifically requested that approaches to the ANC head office on Plein Street be cordoned off and that police be deployed to secure the building. General Beukes undertook to take the necessary measures. Ten police officers, under the command of a sergeant were duly deployed at Shell House at around 10:15.

At around 11:20 a.m. the armed IFP demonstration approached Shell House from the west. At the head of their column was a man armed with an AK-47 assault rifle. ANC security personnel requested the police on duty to try to divert the march away from Shell House. As the marchers reached the intersection of Wanderers and Plein Street, a section was seen to break away in the direction of De Villiers Street. The rest proceeded towards Shell House. On reaching the block between King George and Klein Streets, the marchers assembled on the pavement opposite the ANC building and advanced towards it, arms in hand. The ANC's security personnel fired warning shots and the advancing armed group retreated. At that moment a large contingent of armed men, led by one carrying an AK-47 assault rifle, appeared adjacent to the ANC building from the direction of King George Street firing as they came. The ANC's security personnel once again fired warning shots and the advancing group retreated.

It would appear that at this point the police officers on duty withdrew because not one was visible after for the following 30 minutes. Shots, evidently from automatic weapons, were heard from the direction of King George Street and a group of armed men advanced from around the same corner to be joined by another from across the street with the obvious intent of storming the ANC head office. The ANC's security personnel then fired into the advancing groups, inflict-



Spears and clubs lay among bodies on pavement outside the ANC headquarters in Johannesburg March 28 after Inkatha protesters attempted to storm the office.

ing a number of casualties. The groups broke up and those that were able to fled down King George and Plein Streets.

Shortly after this shooting incident, other participants in the IFP march returned and retrieved the weapons of their injured comrades. This was done in full view of police officers who now returned to the scene. ANC security personnel also reported that two mini-buses, one located on De Villiers Street, another at Wanderers, were unloading automatic weapons and handing these to IFP demonstrators.

'Extreme provocation'

The ANC deeply regrets the shootings that occurred. Our security personnel behaved with impeccable forbearance and patience in the face of extreme provocation, firing only when their lives were threatened. Those who must bear full responsibility for the violence and loss of life today, are the regional leaders of the IFP who orchestrated the demonstration and incited the violence. A rally billed to take place at the Library Gardens had as its chief focus not the announced venue, but rather the offices of the ANC in the PWV region and its head office. Equally blameworthy are the SAP, espe-

cially its regional commissioner and the officers serving under his command. The ANC made every conceivable effort to obtain adequate policing measures around its premises from the earliest hours of today in order to avert clashes and to avoid any loss of life. What is puzzling is the complacent attitude of the police who refused to cordon off streets or divert armed demonstrators away from possible flash points.

The African National Congress is of the view that these incidents are not fortuitous. They are part of a general campaign to destabilise the PWV region and to revive the climate of terror and violence that plagued this region over the past four years. The purposes of its perpetrators are crystal clear — to make it impossible to hold free and fair elections which will clearly demonstrate whom the people of South Africa want as their government.

The timing of this fresh campaign of violence, so shortly after the exposure of the Third Force, is also uncanny. The prominent role played in all these by regional leaders of the IFP cannot be seen as accidental. The spoilers and the purveyors of violence shall not be permitted to thwart the people's struggle for democracy.



PATHFINDER AROUND THE WORLD

Duane Stilwell

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on the books that are available.

M.W.T.
Standerton, South Africa

Thank you very much for the catalog and the material you have sent me, it has helped me a lot.

M.J.M.
Nairobi, Kenya

ANC gains ground in South Africa

Continued from front page

ANC-organized voter education workshop in the Gezibuso township south of Pietermaritzburg March 27. Inkatha attacks have forced hundreds of working people to flee KwaMashu township outside Durban.

The shooting that erupted March 28 in Johannesburg began when several gunmen tried to gain access to the ANC's headquarters. ANC guards opened fire on the would be marauders after firing warning shots into the air.

"A lot of Inkatha people were marching towards Shell House, then the very next moment shots were fired from various buildings, including the ANC headquarters," said police Gen. Koos Calitz. Police reported three more died in the swank Carlton Center shopping mall when shooting broke out.

In Soweto, the sprawling Black township outside Johannesburg, Inkatha supporters rolled boulders onto the main road to enforce a work stayaway call. They attacked commuters there as well. According to a spokeswoman for Soweto's Baragwanath Hospital, 51 people were brought into the hospital for treatment March 28. All but 10

were treated for bullet wounds.

Thabo Mbeki, the head of international relations for the ANC, made a radio announcement calling on ANC supporters to stay home and steer clear of the fighting. "There's no need for any confrontation," he said.

ANC presses negotiations

The ANC, while demanding strong TEC action in Natal, is pressing for negotiations to defuse the crisis in the province. ANC representatives met with those of the government of F.W. de Klerk, Buthelezi, and King Goodwill Zwelithini, a traditional leader of Zulus, March 28. The meeting initiated preparations for a summit between the four.

The Congress of South African Trade Unions announced March 27 that it will organize marches in major cities throughout the country April 11 to back the campaign for free political activity in Natal. Blade Nzimande, a regional spokesperson for the ANC in the Natal Midlands region, said that "the next two weeks are absolutely critical," predicting that unless "drastic measures" are taken there might be "full-scale civil war."

Pathfinder's best-seller, *Nelson Mandela Speaks: Forging a Democratic, Non-racial South Africa*, was reviewed by Chris Hayden in the February issue of *Take Five*, a monthly entertainment newspaper in St. Louis.

"A refreshing contrast to politicians who tailor their remarks and positions to fit the audience and the situation," says Hayden. "Refreshingly candid, too, his remarks in a speech at the University of Natal on March 13, 1993, when he said, 'It is comparatively easy to gain political power, to win an election. But when you do you merely hold political office. You don't have political power. Because to gain political power means you have to control the civil service, you have to control the army, the police.'"

From our mailbox:

Dear Sir/Madam: I have read the book on Thomas Sankara and found it very interesting. Please send me a catalogue

Titles published and distributed by Pathfinder continue to be adopted as required classroom texts. At the University of Delaware, *Socialism: Utopian and Scientific* by Frederick Engels will be read by students taking a political science course titled "Communism, Fascism and Democracy." At Cleveland State University, students will be reading *The Struggle is My Life* by Nelson Mandela for a class titled "Philosophy and Black Social Thought." At the University of Washington in Tacoma, the article "Che Guevara, Cuba, and the Road to Socialism" in *New International* no. 8 will be read by students taking a class titled "The Caribbean Basin."

The Pathfinder book *The Eastern Airlines Strike* was reviewed in the February issue of *Wisconsin Bookwatch*.

"Drawn from firsthand reports," the article states, this book "is an excellent labor history and analysis and not to be overlooked."

Workers debate way forward for Cuban

(Second of three articles)

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS
AND AARON RUBY

HAVANA, Cuba — Expressing dismay over the outcome of the December meeting of the National Assembly, Cuba's parliament, and the reluctance of the deputies to embrace economic and social measures being urged on them by the International Monetary Fund and other champions of capitalism, a February 8 article in the *Wall Street Journal* whined, "Some analysts wonder whether Mr. Castro's deep fear and hatred of capitalism will end up strangling the reforms."

Instead of voting, the newspaper complained, the Assembly postponed action and began organizing "thousands of highly orchestrated, tightly controlled debates in workplaces across Cuba."

In January and February, a team of *Militant* reporters participated in four of these *parlamentos obreros* (workers parliaments or assemblies) and interviewed workers who talked to us about several other meetings. The *Journal* notwithstanding, the assemblies we saw were far from tightly controlled and highly orchestrated.

As reported in last week's *Militant*, the workers assemblies began in January at the initiative of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC), and with the agreement of the National Assembly. Meeting at the end of December, Cuba's parliament deferred decisions on a series of proposed measures aimed at reviving industrial and agricultural production, which has declined drastically since the sudden loss of aid from the former Soviet Union beginning in 1989.

During the previous six months, the government had already taken a number of steps, such as decriminalizing the possession of dollars and opening state-owned stores where Cubans can buy scarce goods using dollars or other hard currency, legalizing self-employment in some 140 occupations, and beginning the process of reorganizing most of the country's state farms into smaller cooperative units.

Additional measures under consideration by the Assembly include raising prices on some basic necessities today sold at subsidized rates; charging for sporting and cultural events, which are now free; and implementing some form of income tax.

Since any of the measures under debate would have an impact on the living standards of Cuban workers, the deputies decided to first discuss the country's economic crisis in every factory and let the workers express their opinions on steps being considered by the National Assembly.

A special session of the country's parliament will then be convened to vote on a package of measures.

In a few places the workers assemblies have lasted a short time. Amongst the staff of *Bohemia* magazine, for example, the workers parliament did not exceed 40 minutes, we were told. But in some factories the meetings have gone into a second day.

Workers parliaments generally begin with a report from the plant manager on the condition of the facility, financial performance of the factory from last year and projections for 1994, and proposals on how to increase efficiency and productivity. The floor is then opened on two points, first on the manager's report and on how to improve productivity in the plant and second on the broader economic difficulties Cuba is facing and the measures debated at the National

Assembly. Local and often national leaders of the CTC participate in the meetings.

Confrontation between manager, workers

At the José Díaz Colina cigar factory, a real confrontation between the plant manager and the workers ran throughout the meeting. The workers challenged the manager over tobacco that disappeared last year with no explanation, equivalent to 750,000 cigars out of a total of 4.3 million produced.

The meeting took place February 1 while the 580 employees worked, cutting and rolling tobacco leaves at their benches, on three different floors. But everybody could listen to the discussion through speakers and could



Tobacco worker speaking during workers parliament meeting at José Díaz Colina cigar factory in Havana February 1. Employees there confronted manager over tobacco that disappeared with no explanation last year, equivalent to 750,000 cigars.

participate through microphones set up on every floor.

After the opening report, workers demanded to know details of the factory's finances. "You can count on your hands the workers who have knowledge of the economic figures," said Alfredo Pérez, a 49-year-old employee who has worked in the plant since 1960. "The workers have to have control over the data and the economic figures."

The manager's report had been a real attack on the workers, blaming them for the missing tobacco and implying that the plant was burdened by excess production personnel.

"I don't like this idea that we're at fault," responded angrily Hildalina Rodríguez, another production worker, to resounding applause. "We have more than enough leaders. The number of administrators has increased and each one with a secretary," she said. "How come we have a transport chief with a helper and a secretary and all we have is one broken down truck!"

Pedro Ross, secretary general of the CTC, who participated in the meeting, later proposed a reduction in the size of the administrative apparatus of the plant.

"You are not speaking to the macetas," Rodríguez told the manager. Many Cubans use the term *macetas* (flower pots) to describe much-hated traders and black marketeers. "We're the ones living on a bad salary," she said. "We need some more money. The helpers live off 118 pesos per month and that's not easy."

"The problem is from the top down and the solution is to be found in the workers directly involved in production," Rodríguez concluded. Workers began banging their blades on the benches to show their approval, in the classic fashion of expression by tobacco workers in the plants.

At this particular meeting, discussion on the economic measures debated at the National Assembly did not last a long time. Some workers proposed that if prices of goods are raised there should be an increase in salaries. Others demanded that steps be taken to penalize black marketeers.

Ahmed Girón, a 21-year-old worker, held up a cigar and said, "This is worth \$20 in

Spain. But I don't come here to work for the money. I'm doing this for the good of all. My brother is going to school for free. Medical care is free. My sister can leave her child at a day care center for free and with the confidence that another worker will take good care of the kid."

"We're not going to return to capitalism," added Pedro Ferrer Fornaris, another production worker. "Once we reached a level of consciousness where we can view each other as equals, no one can take that from us."

Workers confident of finding solutions

During a workers parliament meeting on January 31 at a dairy products plant outside Havana, there was a more extensive discussion on the economic measures discussed at the National Assembly. Several workers spoke sharply against the idea of income taxes. Those with relatively lower family incomes also opposed proposals to raise prices on basic necessities, pointing to the impact it would have on their families.

A heated discussion about theft of machinery and other resources from the factory took place as well.

"We all see this happen," said an older production worker speaking of theft. "It happens everyday but we often look the other way because we figure it is someone who is having a hard time and needs a little something for their family. But this is wrong. It has to be confronted."

"Of the people accumulating money," noted Caridad Cruz, an assembly line worker, "those who are ironing, cleaning, or doing other work on their own time are very few. Most of those who make big bucks are macetas who steal products and machinery from the state."

"But we are letting them do it," she emphasized. "And then we organize events such as the *Festival del Sabado* [Saturday flea market] where they bring the stuff to sell. The government doesn't do anything, the Party doesn't do anything, the union doesn't do anything, and we know who those people are and where they live."

Ross, who was participating in the meeting, asked, "So, what are you proposing, that we confiscate them?"

Without hesitation Ruiz responded, "Yes, that's right."

In meeting after meeting workers demanded that action be taken to confiscate stolen goods and deal with management corruption. According to a report in the February 7 *Trabajadores*, that was one of the main concerns workers expressed during an assembly at the Lenin Repair Shop, a large maintenance facility for machinery and sugarcane-cutting combines in Camagüey.

Workers also discussed what to do about skyrocketing prices on the black market. As we reported in last week's article, prices of goods on the black market, which most Cubans now use to buy much of their food and other necessities, have jumped 30-fold in the last three years.

During an assembly at the University of Camagüey, *Trabajadores* noted, a professor who reported that the monthly income of his family was 600 pesos had proposed that the government impose price ceilings on what traders charge on the black market. He considered the existence of such a market to be inevitable.

Workers from the Lenin Repair Shop, however, where the average monthly salary is 181 pesos, found the professor's suggestion at best unrealistic. "The only way to wipe out this abusive market," one argued, "is to increase production and utilize the full potential of the workforce."

"The workers want to find ways of eliminating the theft and diversions that are driving up costs, demoralizing the collectives, and enriching money hoarders and traffickers," said an editorial in *Trabajadores*, drawing conclusions from the initial round of meetings. "They demand that the authorities take drastic measures that will set an example at all levels."

Solving problem of employment

Low productivity and underemployment was a problem addressed by workers in many assemblies.

Elmer Durán, a young worker in the soy milk products department of the Havana

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From Cuba to South Africa, Ireland, and Mexico, *Militant* reporters traveled throughout the world in January and February to give our readers the best, most accurate news and analysis of major international events.

A team of *Militant* reporters, including Martin Koppel, Argiris Malapanis, Francisco Picado, Michel Prairie, Aaron Ruby, Mike Taber, and Mary-Alice Waters spent more than four weeks in Cuba. These reporters contributed to the series of articles that continues this week.

The cost of these trips exceeds \$20,000. The *Militant* depends on the generous contributions of workers, students, and others who value the coverage they can find nowhere else to make such reporting possible.

As we go to press readers have sent in \$4,760.



December 1993 national defense day rally in Cuba

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revolution

dairy plant, took it up concretely. "We obviously have a lot of excess workers in the plant," he said. "In my department we'll probably have to cut 60 of the 260 on the payroll."

Milk production in the factory fell from 700,000 tons in 1989 to 300,000 last year. Powdered milk, the main raw material, was imported from East Germany at \$650 per ton back then. In fact, most milk Cubans consumed came from East Germany in powder form. Now the state enterprise has to buy powdered milk at \$1,900 per ton using hard currency on the world market. Several workers said that there hadn't been any fresh milk processed at the factory for more than two years, which they attributed to lack of nutritious fodder that used to be imported from Eastern Europe as well.

At the same time, the number of employees at the plant has remained just above 1,300, virtually the same as in 1989. That means many workers end up sitting around most of the day with little or nothing to do, which causes demoralization, said Durán.

"I know I might be one of those laid off," Durán stated. "What am I going to do? I don't want to go out and steal a bicycle from somebody to put food on the table for my family and my kids. But I honestly can't guarantee you I won't ever do that if it comes down to it. We have to find a solution to this problem of excess personnel. I want to be productive."

Durán proposed that workers who are not needed in the plant be allowed to clear land adjacent to the factory and form a cooperative to grow badly needed food. Similar suggestions are being raised in other workplaces.

During the staff assembly at the University of Camagüey, Guillermo Guevara, from the department of veterinary medicine, said that his department alone could tackle the task of setting up a farm on nearby fallow land to grow food for teachers and students at the school.

To a burst of applause, Guevara added that the only obstacle in the past had been the lack of "precision, and clear ideas and direction on how to overcome problems." The assembly put Guevara in charge of starting up the farm right away.

When Lázaro Valdez Monte, supervisor of the bottling division of the dairy plant, complained that workers in his unit were breaking too many bottles, several workers objected strongly.

"The fact of the matter is that the way the con-



Roberto Bejo (right, speaking) responds to accusations by Lázaro Valdez Monte (left), supervisor of bottling unit of factory, that workers are responsible for an excessive amount of broken bottles. During the workers assembly at this dairy products plant near Havana, Bejo and other workers proposed changes in the organization of their departments to reduce waste and increase productivity.



Militant photos by Argiris Malapanis

veyor belts are set up is totally faulty," said Roberto Bejo, a production worker. "We, in the bottling process work very hard," he added. Bejo explained that workers had to literally yank cases of bottled milk off the belts, resulting in many broken bottles. He then proposed changes in the organization of his unit in order to reduce waste.

A considerable amount of discussion focused on workers making suggestions to improve productivity under the adverse conditions they face.

This was one of the main themes of discussion during a workers assembly at the Heroes of Moncada cigar factory in Havana. Workers insisted that basic conditions in the plant — from the worn-out tables to the leaking roof — be improved to allow them to maximize their productive efforts. Several said the high-quality cigars they produce are an important source of hard currency. "We are not asking for a raise," one worker said. "We want better attention to our conditions so we can

work more effectively."

A sailor, who visited the Havana book fair in February, told *Militant* reporters there that many of his shipmates expressed the conviction during their assembly that Cuba could become less dependent on fish imports by repairing some of its existing fishing trawlers. "We are an island surrounded by fish. People [at the meeting] said, 'We can make a big contribution towards our country becoming self-sufficient.'"

Not everybody who participated in the workers assemblies we attended thought something positive would come out of them. Several workers at the dairy plant, for example, said they had attended similar meetings in the past, had pointed out many of the same problems before, and nothing changed.

There was a real difference, however, between the attitudes of most workers we talked to about the economic crisis and many Cubans who are part of the professional and administrative layers. Among those isolated from production, it was much

more common to hear expressions of desperation and helplessness about the shortages and other problems.

But that was not the mood among factory workers we met at these assemblies. Instead, most who spoke expressed confidence in their capacity to change the objective conditions they faced, take Cuba's destiny in hand, and collectively alter it. Over and over workers raised concrete proposals on what they can do to increase productivity, minimize waste, put an end to theft of state resources, and take more direct control of the production process.

Journalist Soledad Cruz reported in *Juventud Rebelde*, newspaper of the Union of Young Communists, that workers at more factory assemblies are now demanding that they participate directly in the drafting of production plans. According to Cruz, workers at several meetings have also proposed that production employees should elect their own plant managers — the way that members of the new cooperative units, which are replacing state farms, are now electing their administrators.

As a Havana port worker put it at the end of one of these assemblies, "Now is not the time for weeping and wailing. We have the capacity and the strength to get ourselves out of this hole."

An article in next week's issue will report on the new cooperatives set up on state farms and on the voluntary work brigades and contingents in agriculture.

Cuban youth leader visits Philadelphia

BY JOE KLEIDON
AND DEBORAH LIATOS

PHILADELPHIA — "Six and a half years ago it was my turn to go to Angola to fight the South African racists along with other youth from Cuba," said Pável Díaz Hernández in his opening remarks to the regional Student Anti-apartheid Conference here. "Together with my love for internationalism, I felt hatred for racism. To be able to fight them in this territory was a duty to humanity."

Díaz, a Cuban youth leader, addressed the 150 participants at the March 18-19 gathering at Temple University at the beginning of his tour in the Philadelphia area. His visit is part of a nationwide campus speaking tour. Díaz shared the platform with Madala Mthembu, assistant chief representative of the African National Congress mission to the United States.

"The joy that you celebrate today with the anticipated triumph of the ANC [in the April elections] is also ours and is why we feel committed to the coming struggle," the Cuban youth said. "We agree that the most difficult struggle lies ahead. In the Cuban revolution, you will have an eternal friend."

At a meeting at the University of Delaware, sponsored by the Student Environmental Action Coalition and the Progressive Student Union, participants asked Díaz about his experiences as a volunteer in Angola.

"What impressed me," he stated, "was the reaction of the Angolan people when they saw someone was prepared to offer their life for them. When Cuba came, 70 percent of Angola was occupied by South Africa. We wanted to stop South African expansionism." Díaz said that his experiences in Angola led him to "conclude that the South African army is a morally defeated army like apartheid South Africa itself." The total defeat of the white minority regime's army at

the battle of Cuito Cuanavale in Angola, along with ANC-led activities inside South Africa, led to the freedom of Nelson Mandela, the unbanning of the ANC, and the upcoming nonracial elections. "We say we've contributed our grain of sand in South Africa," the youth leader said.

At another meeting at the University of Pennsylvania, sponsored by the Penn Central America Solidarity Alliance and the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador, an auto worker in attendance asked Díaz what he thought about the chances of economic development in South Africa after the elections.

"What comes after the elections is a bigger challenge," Díaz responded. "The economic infrastructure is dominated by whites. To give economic opportunity to all, the current structure, including the Bantustans, has to be broken. You need patience to transform the situation in South Africa and the ANC has it. We [in Cuba] set up an interest office in South Africa two months ago. We have doctors there and people working on education and health."

La Casa Hispanica at Haverford College, held a meeting for the Cuban youth, which was also attended by students from Swarthmore College and other area campuses.

"There's no myth about the Cuban revolution," Díaz said in his presentation. "It was a revolution of the people. It didn't come with a Russian tank. That's why it couldn't fall like a domino when Russia did. We were dependent on the USSR [Soviet Union] economically. We made some errors in this. We face three blockades, the first by the U.S., second by the USSR because of the cut off of aid, and the third blockade was because of our own errors."

In all, Díaz spoke to about 350 people, including a meeting at Lasalle University. He was interviewed by WRTI radio, the

Temple University station, which is aired regionwide, and by a columnist for *The Student Vanguard*, the Community College of Philadelphia newspaper. The Cuban youth also met with the editor of the *Philadelphia Daily News*, one of the two largest daily papers here.

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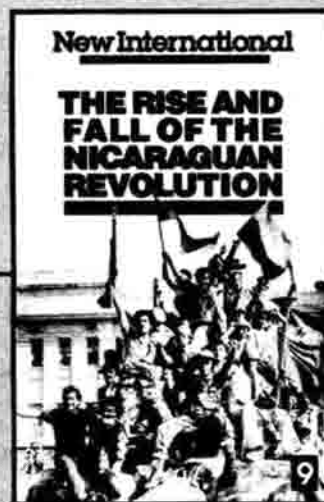
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New Jersey pipeline blast levels several apartment buildings

BY STEVE MARSHALL
AND MARTHA PETTIT

EDISON, New Jersey — Shortly after midnight on March 24, a 36-inch natural gas pipeline exploded here, hurling an orange fireball 2,000 feet into the air. The blast sent a wall of flames sweeping across a field, railroad tracks, a parking lot and into the Durham Woods apartment complex. Eight buildings out of the 63 in the complex were leveled by the firestorm. Two thousand people had to be evacuated from their homes.

The explosion blasted open a crater 125 feet long, 50 feet wide, and 75 feet deep.

Officials are surprised that no residents were killed. A 32-year-old woman from a neighboring complex died of a heart attack after she came to the scene following the blast. Hers was the only death. One hundred and five people were treated for minor injuries.

"This was no miracle. We saved ourselves," 22-year-old Taneese Jackson told the *Militant*. "My husband helped mothers throw babies over the fence. We all helped each other." The residents had several minutes

between the explosion and the fire to escape. Carol Riccardi, 37, said, "The blast knocked me out of bed. It was like the sun was on the ground." Others reported that they thought a nuclear bomb had exploded.

"People were walking down the railroad tracks with bare feet. They were like refugees," said Barry Idell, captain of the Metuchen First Aid Squad. "We saw burns on the bottom of their feet, and they had cuts on their feet. It was incredible." One man handed out tube socks in front of his house as people rushed past him.

Sixth explosion in three months

While the Edison blast was the largest natural gas explosion in the history of the state, it was the sixth such accident in New Jersey in the last 90 days. The most recent was on February 15 when a gas line ruptured, leveling a house in Edison. The occupants had been evacuated just 30 minutes prior to the blast after local residents complained of natural gas odors and called the gas company.

Eighteen days earlier, a leaking natural



Militant/Steve Marshall

Militant reporter Martha Pettit (with notebook) interviewing residents of Durham Woods housing complex in Edison, New Jersey, shortly after gasoline explosion there.

gas pipeline ignited into a fireball, ripping through two stores and damaging four others in the Ramapo Shopping Center in Wayne. That same day, a similar explosion leveled seven stores and damaged three others in South Plainfield.

Several Durham Woods residents told the *Militant* that they had called the local gas company Sunday evening, March 20, to

complain of gas odors, and that Edison fire trucks responded between 8:00 and 9:00 that night. The city's fire officials dismissed residents' claims as "just rumors."

Texas Eastern Transmission Corp., the company that built, owns, and operates the natural gas pipeline that exploded in Edison, has been faulted by the federal government in several fatal pipeline explosions in the last decade.

An improperly installed gas line installed and operated by the firm ruptured and exploded near Jackson, Louisiana, in 1984, killing five people and injuring 23. Five months later, another of the company's lines exploded in Kentucky, killing five people and injuring three. In that blast, federal inspectors found the company had failed to detect corrosion during routine inspections. And on Feb. 10, 1973, fumes inside a Texas Eastern Transmission Corp. natural gas storage tank ignited in the Bloomfield section of Staten Island, New York, killing 43 people.

The 36-inch wide carbon steel pipeline that ruptured in Edison was built in 1961. It carries about 900 pounds of gas per square inch. The pipeline was last inspected by the federal Transportation Department in 1992. Officials claim it was in good shape at the time.

According to Harry Fritz, supervising engineer for the Board of Regulatory Commissioners' Bureau of Pipeline Safety, the company was operating at pressures running above 72 percent of the yield strength of the pipe. He said the higher pressure could have put unanticipated stress on the system. Fritz noted that the company was allowed to operate at such levels and that gas lines are tested for twice their top pressure.

"Every time you double the pressure, you get twice as much gas into the same amount of space," John Erickson, vice president of engineering at the American Gas Association, said. "For these long-distance, high-pressure pipelines, the more they can transport, the more economical it is."

After the explosion, it took workers more than two hours to shut off the gas rushing through the severed pipeline. Workers spent an hour just trying to reach two valves on the pipe, which they then had to shut manually. This delay made it difficult to get the fire under control.

Two hundred left homeless

Some 200 tenants of the eight destroyed apartment buildings were left homeless. The other 1,300 tenants still had not been allowed to return to their homes three days after the blast when *Militant* reporters interviewed them outside the newly set up relief center in Edison. Panhandle Eastern Corp., the partner company of Texas Eastern, agreed to pay to temporarily house those displaced by the fire and to provide those who suffered major losses with up to \$2,000.

Governor Christine Whitman declared a state of emergency. Some private and governmental agencies offered loans, and other relief effort.

Steve Marshall is a member of the United Transportation Union and the Socialist Workers candidate for Congress in New Jersey's 13th district. Martha Pettit is a member of the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union.

Pro-choice activists defend Alabama clinics

BY JEANNE FITZMAURICE

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama — "The clinic stayed open, all the patients who were scheduled were seen," Denise McNerney reported to a cheering crowd of pro-choice supporters who had been defending the Summit Medical Center since 5:00 a.m. Saturday, March 26. McNerney is a coordinator of the Emergency Coalition for Choice. She was joined by Diane Derzis, the clinic administrator, who told the activists, "Without you, we couldn't have done it."

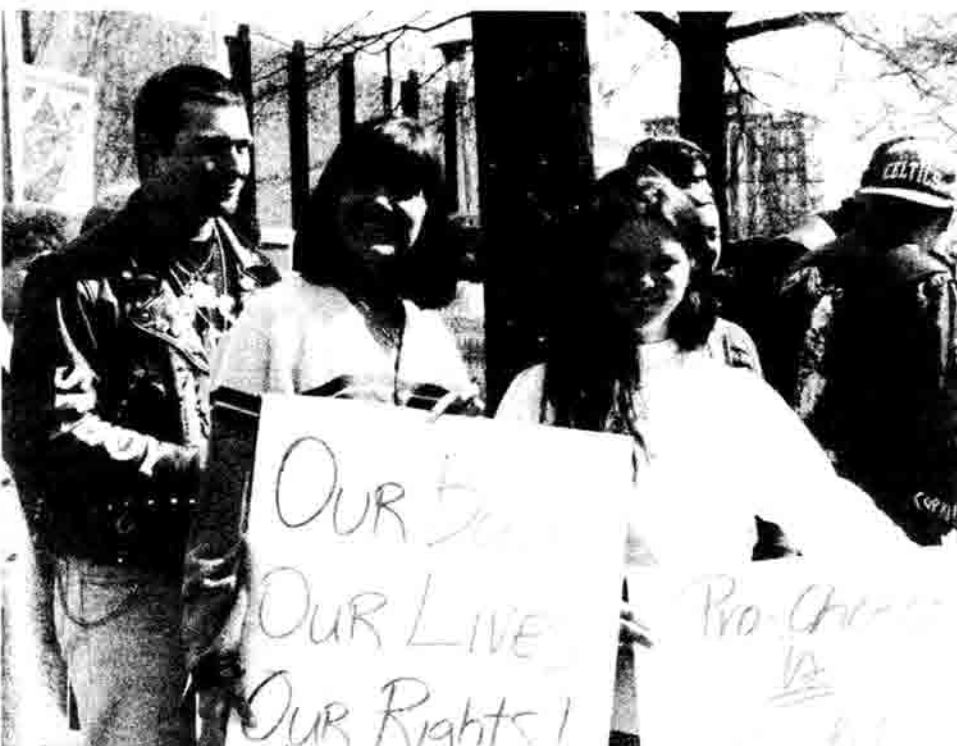
The right-wing antiabortion rights outfit Operation Rescue had projected its assault on the four abortion clinics here as a national action. But only 150 people showed up on the first of two Saturdays in their "Passion for Life Week." That is fewer than the last attempt to blockade the clinics here in 1988.

The rightists were outnumbered by the young people and others who turned out to defend the clinics. Among the students on the front lines of the defense was David Gunn Jr., whose father Dr. David Gunn was murdered one year ago outside a Pensacola, Florida, clinic. Organizers of the antiabortion rights action have tried to distance themselves from the murder and other violent assaults.

"If I acted like none of their activities had anything to do with what happened to my dad, that would be another victory for them," Gunn said.

On Saturday, the antiabortion rights forces made a lot of noise, but they never rallied their forces to attempt to block a single clinic entrance.

The following day Rev. Pat Mahoney, a na-



Abortion rights activists defend Birmingham clinics in April 1993.

tional leader of Operation Rescue and the director of the Christian Defense Coalition, spoke to a rally of about 200 at the Central Park Baptist Church. Operation Rescue is not giving up, Mahoney said. "We came to Birmingham because of the rich tradition of the civil rights movement. This is where fire hoses and Bull Connor were," he said, in an attempt

to claim the heritage of the massive struggle that toppled Jim Crow segregation in the southern United States in the 1950s and '60s.

Becky Dobrinski, a coordinator of the Emergency Coalition for Choice, refuted this claim in an interview with the *Birmingham News*. "The civil rights movement was fought to secure rights for people whose rights were in jeopardy. We are protecting women's right to choose and the right to privacy. We are defending women's rights," she said.

On Monday, clinic defenders gathered at 5 a.m. in the pouring rain at two clinics. About 75 antiabortion rights protesters marched to the Planned Parenthood clinic and organized a picket on the sidewalk. Another group attempted to lie down in front of Dr. Thomas Tucker's car as he entered his nearby clinic. Four people were arrested, including a woman who had followed Tucker onto clinic property.

The rain took its toll on the rightists. At one point, the Operation Rescue national leaders took shelter on the porch of a building across the street. The clinic defenders made up a new chant directed at these men, who included Flip Benham, the new national director of Operation Rescue.

"Flip, Flip, share the pain. Off the porch and into the rain," they chanted. The leaders were shamed into rejoining their lines. Then the clinic defenders chanted, "Let it rain, let it pour. We'll defend the clinic door!"

Outlining plans of the Emergency Coalition for Choice for the rest of the week Dobrinski said, "We will not back down. We will ensure that there is access to every clinic for every appointment."

from PATHFINDER

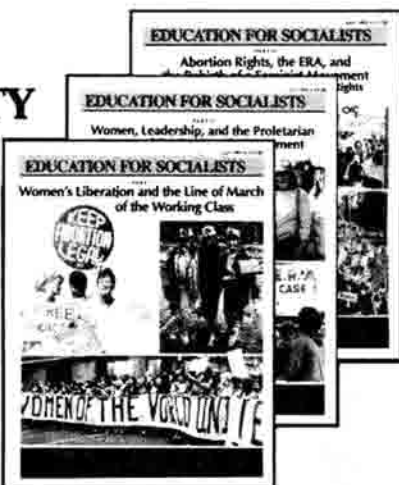
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Documents of the
Socialist Workers
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Edited with an
introduction by
Mary Alice Waters

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Garment workers wage fight for severance pay

BY GEOFF MIRELOWITZ

LAWRENCE, Massachusetts — Members of Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) Local 187 here recently waged a successful battle for a severance package. Polo Clothing announced plans December 2 to close the factory here in early 1994 and shift production of its expensive men's suits to a company near Syracuse, New York. Workers also twice rejected requests to help another company buy the plant by giving up the severance pay.

In the course of the three-month fight, workers organized

UNION TALK

a series of union meetings. The union ranks took the initiative in these assemblies. We overcame language divisions to discuss and decide on action that maximized unity and effective use of union power. This included a ban on overtime honored by every union member.

At one point, some workers proposed everyone wear red the next Monday in a show of unity. That day it was hard to find a single worker not wearing a red shirt — or pants, shoes, or hat. When Polo's lawyer arrived for negotiations, he found a different group representing the union. Workers had voted to add five members to the committee of stewards and officials.

The company soon gave in. It agreed to pay two weeks severance for every year of service.

Workers approved the plan unanimously.

The possibility that the plant might be sold — instead of simply closed down — emerged as the fight got started.

A custom clothing maker, the Individualized Apparel Group (IAG), wanted to buy the factory and employ 150 workers. It agreed to recognize the union and proposed a three-year contract that included a wage freeze, some changes in work rules, the loss of two holidays and a two-tier

wage scale. It offered a better pension plan. The condition that provoked the most anger, however, was that anyone who wanted the new job had to forfeit severance pay.

This prospect set off a burst of unexpected protest. "I want my money from Polo," explained one worker. "If I go to work for a new company, they could lay me off. They could say I'm not fast enough or that my quality isn't good. Then I'll have nothing." Another ACTWU member said, "We are not slaves. They can't sell us along with the plantation."

Workers made unconditional severance pay for all the central demand. This is what we thought we had voted for on January 26.

'I am not a farm animal'

Discussion raged in the factory. Some workers used the meetings with IAG to express dissatisfaction. "Why do you want our money?" many asked. One garment worker wrote "For Sale," on the back of her union T-shirt. "I am not a farm animal," she said. Some said they would not "pay for a job."

Others pressed for promises of job security. When operators learned IAG would not make large orders for stores but rather custom suits for individuals many saw a danger of short workweeks or frequent layoffs.

On February 7 less than 100 workers agreed to take IAG's offer. Disappointed union officials announced the plant would close as planned.

Eight days later IAG was back. Workers received a letter offering a \$200 bonus for each year of Polo service to be paid at summer vacation. It promised if the plant closed within two years workers would be paid the difference between the bonus and what they would have received in severance. But even with these sweeteners, only 41 percent — 91 workers — agreed to the new deal. IAG ultimately decided not to buy the plant.

This whole experience has led to some thoughtful discussion about the situation facing working people in the world and how to use union power against employer

attacks.

At the outset the union was in a weak position. This wasn't a fight for a contract, for the future. The aim was more limited — to get what we could as the company left town.

Few workers had ever attended a union meeting and most did not see how they could effect the union's course. After we won severance pay many workers expressed pride in our ability to make the union our own organization and use it to fight. As union meetings grew many agreed this was needed from the beginning. It took time to see that no one was going to do it for us.

"First we cried. Now we fight," said one woman. "I didn't know I could contribute to something like this," said another.

While some workers are discouraged with the final outcome of the fight — severance pay but no job — others are discussing the broader implications. "It's really true what it says," said one young worker reading the Pathfinder Press pamphlet, *An Action Program to Confront the Coming Economic Crisis*. "What we are going through at Polo is going to happen to all other workers in this country."

Despite disappointment among some workers we won a real victory. Lots of garment shops close. Lots of workers don't get severance pay. Some Polo workers will get \$5,000-\$10,000 or more.

The employers thought the largely immigrant workers in our factory were so "hungry," as one worker put it, that we would accept whatever they offered to keep working. They were wrong.

We've been hit hard the past 20 years — for one worker this is her fourth plant closing. But when the opportunity arose to put up resistance many workers jumped in. In the future many of us will join other fights and we'll bring to them what we have learned from this one.

Geoff Mirelowitz is a member of ACTWU Local 187 and served on the union committee at Polo.

Corporations put squeeze on poultry, hog farmers

BY JOSÉ ALVARADO

DES MOINES, Iowa — PrairieFire Rural Action organized a two-day rural women's conference here March 5-6 titled "Harvesting Our Potential." Among the 60 participants were seasoned farm activists plus a peppering of young farmers looking for discussion and solutions to the crises facing them.

Joan Blundall, a volunteer at PrairieFire and a mental health counselor, opened the conference by describing family farmers as "being stretched and broken in the last decade." What used to be the "land of plenty," said Blundall, has turned into "plenty of debt" and a "cash of crises."

One of the biggest discussions at the conference was on vertical integration — where the processing or packing company owns the animals and contracts farmers to raise them. In this way the corporation owns the product from the bottom all the way up to retail. This allows the processor to have complete control over the supply of chickens or hogs, while placing the risk for raising the animals on individual farmers.

Poultry farmers at the conference explained how the corporations and the banks encourage farmers to become part of this operation. Based on a contract program schedule from the processor the banks quickly loan the farmer an average of \$225,000 to build the confinement facilities. This is pitched by the companies as a simple way for a farmer to supplement his income or for young farmers to get started in farming.

Once the money is borrowed, however, the grower is at the mercy of the "integrator." There are no long-term contracts. These are on a per-batch basis, with the interval between batches at the discretion of the company.

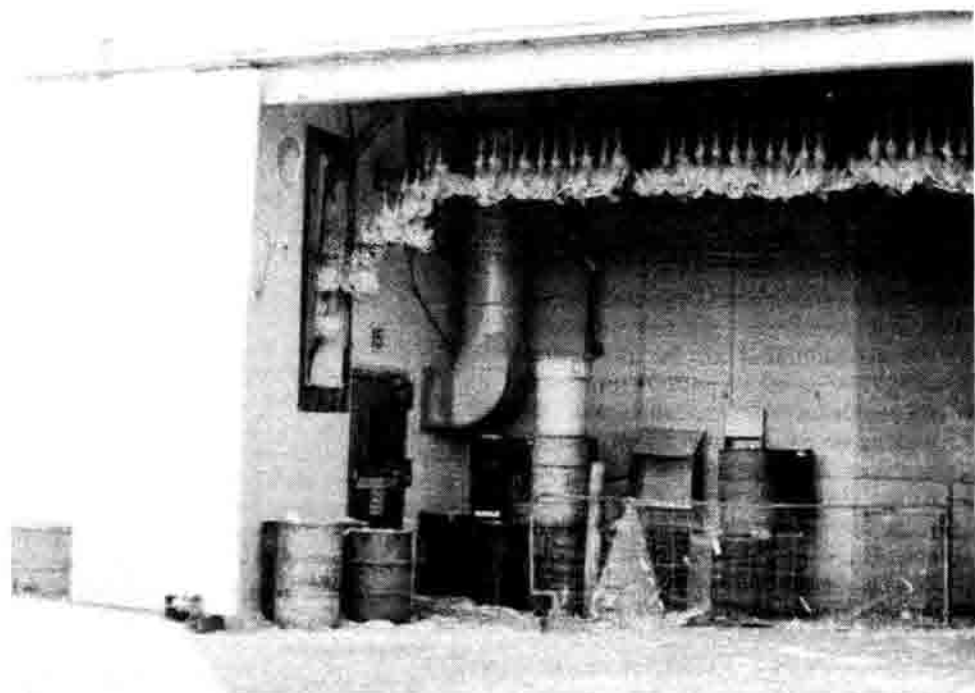
The processor can at any time compel the

grower to use a different technology, the grower is bound to comply. It is not even uncommon for the processor — under the pretext of protecting the animals from disease — to tell growers that their long time neighbor and friend cannot come on their property any more. One of the founders of the National Contract Poultry Growers Association, called this system "like being under serfdom."

Hog growers in Kansas have also formed an organization, the Kansas Swine Growers Association (KSGA). Raye Sprague, one of its leaders, was among the youngest farmers at the conference. She is 30 years old. As a central leader of the KSGA she sees the swine growers association as a "way to give family hog producers a voice in decisions that concern them, its an organization that works to educate farmers on contract farming," she said.

In Kansas the pork processors are pushing to get legislation passed that would make vertical integration legal. The KSGA is working to keep it out.

José Alvarado is a member of the International Association of Machinists Local 264 in Des Moines, Iowa.



Militant Poultry processing plant. Vertical integration — where some corporations own hogs or chickens from birth to processing — threatens the livelihood of many working farmers.

IBP threatens to close Iowa packinghouse

BY JOANNE MURPHY

DES MOINES, Iowa — "IBP's black-mailing the union, the town, and the farmer," said Larry Ginter. The Iowa farmer was speaking at a March 6 Militant Labor Forum here titled "Packinghouse workers under attack: How can working people defend themselves." Ginter was joined on the platform by Cleve Andrew Pulley, a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1149 at the IBP plant in Perry, Iowa.

Pulley denounced the company's January 28 announcement to close the packinghouse in Perry as a "union busting move."

"Like Caterpillar," Pulley said, where United Auto Workers members are working without a contract, "IBP doesn't even pretend to be poor." Two days after announcing the plant closing, IBP, the world's largest pork processor, reported a \$90 million profit for 1993. The company claims that the Perry plant and two others in the state, in Waterloo and Council Bluffs, are not profitable, Pulley reported. The Waterloo contract comes up in June.

The contract in Perry expired last June. The company first pressed for a \$1-an-hour wage cut. Local papers report the "base wage" as \$8.35 an hour, but the majority of

workers are not in higher paid jobs and don't last the three years needed to attain that rate. In a production workforce of 630, dozens start each month at \$6.50 an hour to replace those fired, injured or worn out.

Pulley explained how since June 1993 union members have repeatedly rejected the company's demands for concessions. In early December, "only six workers voted for the 'last, best offer'," which tied any possible raise in a four-year contract to wage increases at large non-IBP pork slaughtering plants.

"The union should oppose IBP's other demands, as well," the packinghouse worker said. IBP, for example, successfully prevented the Perry City Council from annexing the land where the plant stands. Currently, IBP is outside the town limits, enabling the company to avoid paying taxes. IBP convinced a few workers from the plant to join the company in lobbying the council — saying they would definitely move if the land was annexed.

The city council agreed to drop the annexation and to seek a \$500,000 federal grant for IBP, Pulley reported.

"There are no Perry or Iowa solutions to corporate blackmail," Pulley said, citing re-

cent demands from other companies like Lennox, John Morrell, Dico, and IPSCO. "The union movement should champion the rights of immigrant workers and demand a massive public works program and a cut in the workweek from 40 to 30 hours with no cut in pay to ensure jobs for all."

Ginter explained how IBP is going after family farmers as well. He said part of the giant meatpacking company's aim in threatening to close the hog slaughtering plant in Perry is "to change corporate agriculture laws and eventually environmental laws."

Corporate agriculture laws in Iowa currently bar meatpacking companies from raising hogs. This is not true in states like Missouri or North Carolina, where corporate hog production in huge facilities means acres of sewage lagoons resulting in groundwater contamination and stench. The big corporations drive down the prices that farmers get for their hogs, Ginter said.

"These companies want cheap hogs from me and cheap labor from you," added Ginter, who is a past vice president of the American Agriculture Movement in Iowa. "We've got to get together and stop this. Workers and farmers are going to have to form alliances."

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Paris caves in to youth protests

Continued from front page
come weekly affairs since they began March 3. After the first actions, Balladur made some minor concessions, hoping to defuse the movement. But after demonstrations throughout the country of 230,000 March 17, he announced that there would be no more concessions.

Minister of the Interior Charles Pasqua made increasingly threatening remarks concerning student demonstrators. Hundreds of young people were arrested during local and national marches, which became a daily occurrence throughout France.

Deportation of immigrant students

Two high school students, 18-year-old Mouloud Madaci and Abdel Youbi, 19, were arrested at a demonstration in Lyons, the day the decree was enacted, and expelled from the country.

Their alleged crime was throwing stones and breaking windows during the action. Since neither of them had a criminal record, the judge released them along with dozens of other young people to be tried at a later date. Police, however, arrested the youth again as they came out of the courtroom and quickly hauled them away. The press reported the cops took the students to Marseilles and put them on a ship bound for Algeria.

Both of the youths were legal residents in France. Madaci came here when he was six years old. The Algerian government has so far refused to permit the youths into the country. They are currently being held in a transit center at the port of Algiers.

The return of the two students has become a central rallying cry of the youth protests. Bellecour Square in central Lyons has turned into a site of daily demonstrations of up to 10,000 people. Violent clashes have occurred as riot police attacked protesters with water cannons and tear gas.

"We want to show that our intentions are peaceful," said Sébastien, a 16-year-old demonstrator. "We don't want to confront the [police] or commit vandalism. We organize marshalls so there won't be infiltration by casseurs [people who are there deliberately to vandalize stores and clash with the cops]. Violence tarnishes our movement in the eyes of the public."

The government has organized a major campaign about the casseurs, claiming they have infiltrated all the demonstrations. Following many protests, groups of young people have engaged in violent confrontations with the police. In some cases, as in Lyons and Nantes where there has been the most violence, some of the casseurs have been identified as police agents in civilian clothes. Some student leaders are demanding an official investigation of the cop's role in instigating the violence.

As the students prepared for the next national demonstration called for March 25, Pasqua announced he was moving 3,200 riot police into Paris. During the demonstration, helicopters hovered overhead and thousands of cops in combat gear blocked side streets. Police arrested more than 300 demonstrators in Paris alone that day.

But the intimidation did not dampen the protesters' determination. More than 200,000 people participated in anti-government marches and rallies March 25, roughly the same number as a week earlier. Two days later, the government began its retreat.

Many young protesters argued that the subminimum wage is an attack on the entire working class. When a boss can replace older workers with youth paid 80 percent of the minimum wage, they'll go ahead and do it, intensifying divisions among workers.

Many students argue that if they accept a lower wage for youth, they'll never be able to fight for any raises. Some link the government's attempt to lower the minimum wage with attacks on social programs.

"What scares me is that now there are moves that threaten all social gains," said Michel, a high school student from Paris. "It's not just a problem with the current government or with the right or the left, but a basic problem that is starting to unfold. They want to throw everything out the window with the excuse that we must find solutions to the problem of unemployment."

Nat London is an auto worker at Renault near Paris and a member of the CGT.

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50,000 protest racist attacks in Britain

Continued from Page 3

Africa's first democratic election for which our people have struggled so long, we send our support to our brothers and sisters fighting racism in Britain," Mandela said.

Bill Morris, general secretary of the Transport and General Workers Union, told the rally that Britain's racist immigration laws must be scrapped and replaced by "fair treatment for immigrants and asylum seekers whatever their color." He also called for support for a demonstration outside Campfield House detention center where 130 of the center's 200 asylum seeking detainees have been on a hunger strike since March 11. There are currently around 250 immigrants in 10 or more institutions taking part in hunger strikes. More than one in 10 asylum seekers remain in detention for up to six months; some have been held for two years while they await the government's decision on their case.

Morris also called on London to ban the British National Party (BNP), a rightist organization that recently won a council seat in Tower Hamlets and is vying to win two more in the May local elections.

Thirty-five demonstration participants came to a Militant Labor Forum later that evening at the Pathfinder bookstore. The forum was called to protest attacks by rightists on bookstores selling socialist and antiracist literature. Speakers included Ross Bradshaw of Nottingham's Mushroom Bookshop, which was targeted by 30 rightist thugs who attacked customers and staff and wrecked the shop; Charles Crute, of Freedom Bookshop in Tower Hamlets, which had books and equipment destroyed; and Ian Grant of London's Pathfinder bookstore, which has received telephone threats from rightists.

"These attacks are designed to intimidate

us. It is part of the fascists' war on the streets," Bradshaw told the meeting. Following the assault on the Mushroom bookstore 1,000 people marched through Nottingham in protest. "The attack has allowed us to draw other people into activity against the fascists," Bradshaw said.

Working people should not advocate banning the BNP, Grant said, but answer the rightists politically.

"When the BNP got elected in Tower Hamlets I had the same discussions with

several workmates," Grant stated. "They were not fascists, nor were the vast majority of those who voted for the BNP in East London. They are workers who became increasingly disillusioned with what's happening in society and who have swallowed the rightist demagoguery."

"It's not enough to label groups like the BNP as racist. We have to answer the rightist's arguments and show that it's the capitalist system that is breeding racist discrimination and attacks on immigrant workers."

Right-wing parties win Italy election

Continued from front page

roots to the Italian Social Movement founded by dictator Benito Mussolini before World War II, emerged as the third biggest political party after winning 13.5 percent of the vote. Mussolini's granddaughter, Alessandra Mussolini, who is a member of the National Alliance, was reelected to parliament from Naples.

When Fini greeted some 2,000 of his supporters March 28 celebrating their election triumph in Piazza del Popolo in Rome, hundreds of youths in the crowd gave straight-arm fascist salutes and chanted "Duce! Duce!" — the rallying cry for Mussolini.

Billionaire Berlusconi, who owns Europe's largest private media empire and made a fortune in real estate investments, proclaimed that he would guarantee the values of "freedom, family, business, free markets, profits and competition but also solidarity and values of the Christian tradition."

Forza Italia has been pushing a program calling for tax cuts and selling off Italy's state-owned industrial sector. The Northern

League focuses on demanding greater autonomy for the more affluent north of Italy. The National Alliance calls for a strong central government and has called for reclaiming some territory in the former Yugoslavia.

The Progressive Alliance, headed by former Communist Party leader Achille Occhetto, finished a distant second in the voting with 213 seats in the Chamber of Deputies. Prior to Berlusconi's entry into the race, this alliance, led by the Democratic Party of the Left (PDS) — formerly the Communist Party — appeared to be heading for an electoral victory. Among individual political parties, however, the PDS did come in second with 20.4 percent of the popular vote.

The biggest losers were the Christian Democrats and Socialists, many of whose leaders face criminal charges of corruption. The Pact for Italy, led by former Christian Democrats Mario Segni and Mino Martinazzoli, won only 46 seats. The Socialist Party was decimated, failing to win the 4 percent of the votes needed for parliamentary representation.

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NORTH CAROLINA: Greensboro: 2000-C S. Elm-Eugene St. Zip 27406. Tel: (910) 272-5996.

OHIO: Cincinnati: P.O. Box 19484. Zip: 45219. Tel: (513) 221-2691. Cleveland: 1863 W. 25th St. Zip: 44113. Tel: (216) 861-6150.

PENNSYLVANIA: Philadelphia: 1906 South St. Zip: 19146. Tel: (215) 546-8218. Pittsburgh: 4905 Penn Ave. Zip 15224. Tel: (412) 362-6767.

TEXAS: Houston: 6969 Gulf Freeway, Suite 250. Zip: 77087. Tel: (713) 644-9066.

UTAH: Salt Lake City: 147 E. 900 S. Zip: 84111. Tel: (801) 355-1124.

WASHINGTON, D.C.: 1802 Belmont Rd. N.W. Zip: 20009. Tel: (202) 387-2185.

WASHINGTON: Seattle: 1405 E. Madison. Zip: 98122. Tel: (206) 323-1755.

WEST VIRGINIA: Morgantown: 242 Walnut. Mailing address: P.O. Box 203. Zip: 26507. Tel: (304) 296-0055.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney: 19 Terry St., Surry Hills 2010. Mailing address: P.O. Box K879, Haymarket, NSW 2000. Tel: 02-281-3297.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

The Unfolding Revolution in South Africa. Speakers: Steve Dixon, CFMEU organizer, who recently returned from a union delegation to South Africa; David Adams, Communist League. Sat., April 16, 6 p.m. Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre, corner of Norton and Collins Streets. Donation \$3. Tel: (02) 281 3297.

BRITAIN

Manchester

Socialist Alternative to Racism, War, and Depression. Come hear the Communist League candidates for the local elections in Manchester put forward the socialist alternative to capitalism. Sat., April 9, 6 p.m. First Floor, 60 Shudehill. Donation: £2. Tel: 061-839-1766.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

Maoism and the Chinese Revolution — Its Meaning for Today. Sat., April 9, 7 p.m. 203 Karangahape Rd. Donation: \$3. Tel: (9) 379-3075.

BRITAIN

London: 47 The Cut. Postal code: SE1 8LL. Tel: 071-928-7993.

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

Sheffield: 1 Gower St., Spital Hill, Postal code: S47HA. Tel: 0742-765070.

CANADA

Montreal: 4581 Saint-Denis. Postal code: H2J 2L4. Tel: (514) 284-7369.

Toronto: 827 Bloor St. West. Postal code: M6G 1M1. Tel: (416) 533-4324.

Vancouver: 3967 Main St. Postal code: V5V 3P3. Tel: (604) 872-8343.

FRANCE

Paris: 8, allée Berlioz 94800 Villejuif Tel: (1) 47-26-58-21

ICELAND

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

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland: La Gonda Arcade, 203 Karangahape Road. Postal Address: P.O. Box 3025. Tel: (9) 379-3075.

Christchurch: 199 High St. Postal address: P.O. Box 22-530. Tel: (3) 365-6055.

SWEDEN

Stockholm: Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St Eriksplan). Postal code: S-113 42. Tel: (08) 31 69 33.

The caring society — "Fewer than half the babies in the nation's major cities get all their vaccina-



Harry Ring

tions by the age of 2... and those who are up to date on immunizations do not receive them at recommended intervals." — News item.

5% for the Clintons? — James McDougal and Chris Wade, who still own a piece of Whitewater, are selling souvenir dirt for \$19.95 a cubic

foot. You have to dig it yourself, but, Wade says, the local hardware store will sell you a shovel. He didn't mention if he owned the hardware store.

A few bad apples — In rural Orange County, New York, the sheriff's department had to get rid of two people for racist offenses. A white captain was fired for cursing a Latino corrections officer and calling him a "spic." A few days earlier, a white correction officer was fired for presenting a Black coworker with a birthday cake decorated with a burning cross.

St. Mark Town Center — In San Marcos, a San Diego suburb, business consultant Joe Turner objects to calling the new city hall

complex a town "centre." "I don't know why we have to go poking into some British or French dictionary," he grumbled, "for a spelling to put between something as American as San Marcos."

Equal opportunity program — Reports on the use of pepper spray by Los Angeles cops showed that most of the victims were Black. Police Chief Willie Williams was reported as assuring that "department officials will continue monitoring the use of the spray to ensure that it is not used disproportionately against suspects of any ethnicity."

Urban renewal — Real estate hustler Donald Trump is helping to alleviate the New York housing

shortage. He's going to renovate the Gulf & Western office tower across from Central Park and include several hundred apartments on the upper floors. They'll be peddled as condos, with a good-size one-bedroom apartment available for as little as \$1 million.

Other possessions too — Two New York ex-cops operate Check-A-Mate and will snoop on your spouse or date for \$65 an hour (\$325 minimum.) A reporter asked if there shouldn't be some trust in relationships. Responded one cop: "The educated consumer checks out everything from his box of cereal to his car."

Love those lawyers — Told by

a District of Columbia judge to continue defending a client or else, attorney Clayton Powell warned it would harm the defendant since he would be totally hostile to him. The judge declared a mistrial. Powell had assumed the trial would be shorter and bought nonrefundable vacation airline tickets.

Tough situation — What with the slump in the L.A. area, posh Beverly Hills shops are cutting prices. At Ralph Lauren's, sweaters are marked down to \$300 and shirts to \$200. "We're not panicking," assures a Chamber of Commerce rep, "but we obviously need to reach out to a wide group. . . . There is a finite number of truly rich people in the world."

A Marxist appreciation of the Cuban revolution

Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution by Joseph Hansen. 393 pp. New York: Pathfinder Press, 1978, just reissued with new cover. \$19.95.

Once you see Cuba for what it is, a workers' state and the opening stage of the socialist revolution in the Western Hemisphere, . . . then it is quite clear why it plays such a spectacular role. . . .

With its signal that the stage is now opening for non-Stalinist revolutionary leaderships, it even appears as a turning point in the whole postwar period. Wall Street, quite understandably from the viewpoint of its class interests, is not excited over the weight of Cuba as a particular country but as a bright flame burning amidst crates of high explosives. It can absorb the economic losses in Cuba. It cannot absorb the political consequences of long continued existence of the revolution that caused these losses.

BY CHRIS HOEPPNER

The above lines written by Joseph Hansen, a longtime leader of the Socialist Workers Party and partisan of the Cuban revolution, are from *Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution*, a book recently reissued by Pathfinder Press. This compilation of articles

IN REVIEW

accurately places the Cuban revolution at the center of world politics. It provides unique insight into why, 35 years after the victory of the revolution, the current U.S. administration of Bill Clinton is following in the footsteps of previous presidents by turning up the pressure in order to destroy the revolution.

This collection includes documents of the Socialist Workers Party from the early 1960s and articles from the *Militant* newspaper defending the Cuban revolution against apologists for the State Department. Hansen writes in the 1978 preface that "it takes something more than careful study of the current developments" to place Cuba's fight for socialism in the world class struggle. "It is imperative to go back to the origin of the Cuban revolution." This book will prove valuable on that score both to longtime partisans of the revolution and to those learning about it for the first time.

In the opening article, entitled "The Truth

About Cuba," Hansen explains how in 1898, during the Spanish-American War, U.S. troops "landed in Cuba under the proclaimed aim of aiding the Cuban struggle for independence" from Spain. After the Spanish government signed a peace treaty relinquishing Cuba — and ceding the Philippines, Guam, and Puerto Rico outright to the United States — U.S. troops remained as an army of occupation on the island for four years. Only the victory of the Cuban revolution in 1959 finally removed the boot of U.S. imperialism off the neck of the Cuban people.

U.S. imperialism and Kremlin

In this collection, Hansen explains why by "bringing forward a leadership of non-Stalinist origin, the Cuban revolution visibly hastened the eventual closing of the whole chapter of Stalinism." In today's context of the collapse of Stalinist regimes in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, these articles are worth a serious study.

Hansen points out that for Cuba, "the main source of difficulties was American imperialism," which marked Castro for assassination, inoculated farm animals in Cuba with contagious diseases, hired saboteurs to set bombs, and organized the armed invasion at the Bay of Pigs. "Worst of all," Hansen says, "was the blockade, which completely disrupted Cuba's traditional pattern of trade with the U.S. and greatly reduced the possibilities of free trade with other countries."

But, Hansen says, the Kremlin must also be "held responsible for another source of difficulties. Without help from the Soviet Union, the Cuban revolution would certainly have been smashed by either [U.S. presidents Dwight] Eisenhower or [John F.] Kennedy. The Cubans were completely correct in seeking that aid," he argues. "Stalin's heirs felt obliged to respond to the Cuban plea, but instead of providing aid free of charge, as was their duty, they demanded that a price be paid — principally on the political level. In short, to get the required aid the Cubans had to let the red glow of the Cuban revolution shine on [Soviet leaders Nikita] Khrushchev and [Leonid] Brezhnev."

Hansen notes that it is clear that the price demanded by the Kremlin for Soviet aid rankled the Cubans. "A good example is Castro's criticism of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, which he reluctantly supported."

In the article "Fidel Castro and the Events

in Czechoslovakia," which appears at the end of the book, Hansen examines why the Stalinist Communist Parties around the world maintained a "conspiracy of silence" over Castro's speech on the invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968. While supporting the Warsaw Pact governments' intervention, Castro in his speech also attacked many of the anti-working-class policies of the Stalinists in power in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

The Cuban revolution, which Hansen calls "the greatest occurrence in the Western Hemisphere since the American Civil War," was so powerful because of the strong alliance established between the *campesinos* (working farmers) and the workers. It carried through "the swiftest and most radical agrarian reform in the history of Latin America," Hansen writes. "It did this against the combined resistance of the Cuban landlords, Cuban capitalists, and the American imperialists. . . . The counterrevolutionaries fought with rifle and bomb and whatever the CIA and Pentagon could give them. Against this . . . the new government armed the people of Cuba. Not just with speeches but with mass distribution of guns and the organization of a powerful militia."

The fact that the Cuban revolution has survived for 35 years, only 90 miles from the shores of the most powerful and ruthless imperialist power in the history of the world, is testimony to the strength of this revolution, its



SWP leader Joseph Hansen

people, and its communist leadership. Reading this book is not a historical exercise, but a must for working-class fighters and youth trying to figure out how to confront the effects of the world capitalist depression today.

Chris Hoepfner is a member of International Association of Machinists Local 289 and the Seattle-Cuba Friendshipment.

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —

THE MILITANT
Published in the interest of the Working People
April 11, 1969 Price 10¢

Cheers and applause filled the usually staid Alameda County Superior Court March 28 as a jury of eight men and four women brought the 11-week conspiracy trial of the Oakland Seven to a dramatic end by acquitting all the defendants.

The seven antiwar militants had been charged with conspiring to induce thousands of demonstrators to trespass and obstruct police during Stop the Draft Week demonstrations at the Oakland induction center in October, 1967.

The defendants, all in their twenties, were Frank Bardacke, Terry Cannon, Reese Erlich, Bob Mandel, Steve Hamilton, Jeff Segal, and Mike Smith. They faced possible three-year jail terms and \$5,000 fines.

According to the local press, the jurors who acquitted the seven felt it was not fair that "the defendants were picked out and charged with conspiracy when scores, maybe hundreds, of other people were doing the same thing."

THE MILITANT
PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE
NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

April 8, 1944

Britain's greatest militant labor upsurge of the past 18 years again threatens to spread, as over 135,000 coal miners and shipyard workers continue their strikes in defiance of the Churchill government's army draft threats

and the frantic back-to-work appeals of their own traitorous union leaders.

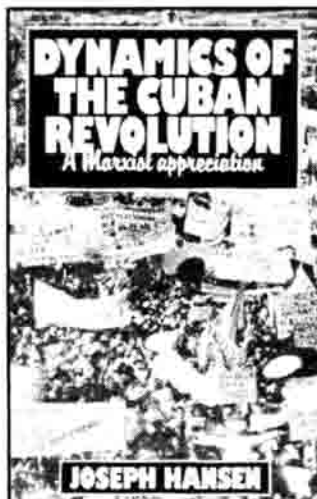
Last week some 45,000 shipbuilding workers employed in the huge Tyneside, Clydeside and Belfast, North Ireland, shipyards joined the strike ranks of the 90,000 South Yorkshire coal miners who walked out over two weeks ago.

Government officials termed the current strike movement the "worst labor crisis" since the 1926 General Strike and spokesmen of the Fuel Ministry are voicing the fear that the Yorkshire struggle may spread amongst all the 700,000 British coal miners.

The strike of 35,000 Tyneside and Clydeside shipbuilders and engineers apprentices, protesting a strikebreaking attempt to send thousands of them into the coal pits under the Essential Works Order, has evoked the threat by the government to draft them into the armed forces.

The British capitalist press, which at first described the strikes as "spontaneous" and "without any definite leadership or program," have opened up a smear campaign charging that the strikes are being fomented by "subversive elements," including Trotskyists, and report that Scotland Yard detectives are seeking out the strike leaders. The threat of a witch-hunt and prosecution is intended to further intimidate the strikers.

Mine union officials only intensified the wrath of their striking members when they publicly termed the Yorkshire strike "sabotage and stabbing the Government in the back." These officials last week spread the false report that the miners had accepted the grudging concessions offered by the Churchill Fuel Ministry in answer to the miners' demands for rectification of their grievances rising out of the government's Porter Commission wage awards.



DYNAMICS of the CUBAN REVOLUTION A MARXIST APPRECIATION

Joseph Hansen

Examines the place of leadership and the role of workers and peasants in making a socialist revolution in Cuba. Traces key turning points during the early years of the revolution.

\$19.95

Available at bookstores including those listed on page 12, or from PATHFINDER, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Fax (212) 727-0150. If ordering by mail, please include \$3.00 to cover postage and handling.

France: youth, workers win one

Students and young workers in France won one for the working class when they forced the government to back down from its subminimum wage scheme. A series of mass demonstrations that drew in hundreds of thousands of youth and won significant union backing compelled Prime Minister Édouard Balladur to abandon the measure. This achievement puts all working people in France in a stronger position to defend their livelihood from further cutbacks, which the capitalist class will undoubtedly try to pull off again once the dust settles.

This was the third time in six months that workers and others forced Paris to back off from measures aimed at driving down the living standards and expectations of working people. Last October, a strike by workers at Air France pushed back the government's plans to slash jobs at the airline. An attack on public education — a proposal for state funding of private, religious schools — was also thwarted by a large demonstration organized by the teachers union in January.

Despite the protests, the capitalist rulers in France and their government are driven to try to impose measures like the lower minimum wage for young workers in order to compete with their rivals. The employers in the United States and Britain have succeeded in drastically lowering wages and increasing productivity over the last several years; their counterparts in France and other European countries are far behind and scrambling to catch up.

The French bosses' inability to ram through austerity measures and assaults on the social wage has set them back

in relation to these competitors. Paris's economic policies, built around an alliance with Bonn and attempts to prop up the value of the franc, are now coming under increasing strain. That's why the employing class in France, despite its recent setbacks, won't stop its attempts to cut social programs, reduce wages, worsen working conditions, and undermine democratic rights.

But if the youth protests are any indication, the bosses will wake up to more surprises. The potential for explosive class conflicts will grow in the coming months and years, not only in France but throughout the imperialist world, as the employers in each country try to squeeze more out of workers and farmers.

The young demonstrators in France recognize their fight is not over. As soon as Balladur announced he was suspending the subminimum wage decree, student organizations reaffirmed their plans to hold another day of nationwide protests March 31. Their demands include, dropping the charges against hundreds arrested during the demonstrations, and returning two immigrant teenagers who were deported to Algeria for participating in the protests.

The students and workers who have rejected Paris's attempt to slash their wages and increase divisions in the working class are proving it is possible to mobilize and fight back against the ravages of the capitalist system. The labor movement around the world should celebrate this victory for the working class, and throw its wholehearted support behind their ongoing struggle and just demands. Youth in France have set an example worth emulating.

Buthelezi's act of desperation

Events of the past week show that the ANC and its allies in the democratic movement continue to advance the fight to hold the country's first ever democratic elections at the end of April. The rally of some 100,000 people in the streets of Durban March 25 as part of the ANC's mass action campaign to ensure the right of residents in Natal province to participate in the elections is powerful proof of this.

ANC secretary-general Cyril Ramaphosa clearly explained that this mass action campaign will escalate as long as Inkatha Freedom Party leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi attempts to block the holding of free and fair elections in Natal. The marches being organized by the Congress of South African Trade Unions April 11 in major cities throughout the country will be an important part of this campaign.

As the last remaining opposition Bantustan leader, Buthelezi is more isolated than ever. The armed demonstration by thousands of his supporters in Johannesburg March 28, with the aim of storming the ANC's offices there, was simply an act of political desperation.

In attempting to forestall the march of history towards a democratic, nonracial republic, Buthelezi is committing political suicide. His funding and power base in the KwaZulu Bantustan has always been based on the existence of the soon-to-be ended apartheid regime in South Africa.

In fact it is no small coincidence that this latest provocative act in the streets of Johannesburg comes just 10 days

after an official government commission led by judge Richard Goldstone released its report implicating top leaders of the South African police and military in arming and funding Inkatha's terrorist squads.

This collusion continues. The ANC statement printed in this issue points out that the cops failed to heed the ANC's request for adequate protection of its headquarters from the Inkatha thugs.

In an effort to stem this rise in violent attacks, ANC president Nelson Mandela has bent over backwards to involve Buthelezi and other opposition rightist forces in the election process. He has called for extending the deadline for registering candidates for the ballot, for example. Mandela even agreed to international mediation with Inkatha leaders in an effort to resolve differences.

The decision by the South African government to declare a state of emergency in Natal province and send in the troops to ensure that all residents can participate in the elections has been welcomed by the ANC. As with the other already fallen Bantustans, the ANC has called for the multiparty Transitional Executive Council to take over the administration of Kwazulu.

Working people the world over should step up their support for the ANC's election campaign and its fight for the holding of a truly democratic vote throughout the country. A strong ANC mandate in the balloting will place the working people of South Africa in the strongest possible position to advance their fight for social justice.

Edison blast hits workers hardest

The natural gas explosion that sent a fireball through an apartment complex in Edison, New Jersey, was not a freak occurrence or just an accident. Its ruinous impact on the lives of hundreds of local residents who were left homeless was a direct result of the priorities of the money-hungry bosses and their capitalist system that routinely discounts the lives of working people.

Texas Eastern Transmission Corp., like all capitalist enterprises, put profits ahead of public safety in operating the gas pipeline. There were no sensors or automatic shut-off valves on the 33-year-old pipe, for example. This meant the gas flow continued for two hours, feeding the blaze, while workers fought to manually shut down the line. The pipeline was operating at high pressures that, while permissible under government regulations, put extra strain on the pipe.

There have been other deadly explosions in pipelines and other facilities operated by Eastern Texas. In at least one case, investigators found the company had neglected to notice corrosion of the pipes during a routine inspection, leading to a blast that left five people dead. Some residents of the Durham Woods apartment complex in Edison said they had reported smelling gas a few days before the fire leveled their homes.

Texas Eastern is not unique, however. The conflagration in Edison was the sixth natural gas explosion in three months in the state of New Jersey. This highlights the fact

that the capitalists and their government don't put the needed resources into safely maintaining infrastructure. Large pipelines are allowed to operate without proper protections, right next to apartments and houses where workers and others live.

Industrial accidents like this are not class-neutral. While they effect everyone caught in the area, workers, small businesspeople, and others who do not have a lot of wealth suffer the consequences disproportionately. Less resources are put into maintaining safety and a clean environment in working-class neighborhoods. And when an explosion, earthquake, or hurricane hits, working people have fewer resources to pull themselves out of the crisis.

Hundreds of Durham Woods residents fled the fire in the middle of the night carrying nothing. Many of their homes were totally consumed in the flames. The gas company is now offering a paltry \$2,000 — at most — to those left homeless by the blaze. Beyond that, some government and private relief agencies are providing emergency housing and aid. Some of this "aid" takes the form of loans.

The labor movement needs to demand that the government force gas companies to take whatever measures are needed to operate safely. In the Edison case, working people should call for Texas Eastern to pay for the costs of the blast — including immediate and complete relief and compensation — for all those affected.

Nation of Islam leader draws 10,000 in males-only event in Washington, D.C.

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Nation of Islam leader Louis Farrakhan spoke to a capacity crowd of 10,000 here March 21 in a males-only meeting. Most participants in the rally came from Washington, D.C., and nearby Maryland and Virginia. Others came from as far away as New York and North Carolina.

Echoing the central campaign of this city's administration and other capitalist politicians, Farrakhan's speech focused on crime and violence in African-American communities.

"We no longer have just our enemies who sentence us to death," Farrakhan said, "but it is we who are sentencing our young men particularly to death."

"Crime cost the government \$42 billion last year," Farrakhan continued. "That is why the government should be supporting me. The work of the Nation helps to reduce crime," he stated.

Farrakhan argued that a decline of morality in African-American communities lies at the root of the violence. He quoted at length from the Koran and the Bible. He implored Black men to treat each other as brothers. "I don't want to get to the color of you, I want to speak to the essence of you. You have a responsibility to the creator," Farrakhan said.

The Nation of Islam leader's anticrime program doesn't rest solely on appeals to stop the violence and for moral upliftment. Several announcements were made during the rally for applicants to join a security agency run by the group.

Collaboration with police

In several large cities the group has obtained contracts to provide security at government-run public housing projects. Police officials often praise them for supposedly ridding the projects of crime and drug trafficking.

This was the latest in a series of males-only meetings called in several cities by the group. A handful of white males attended the rally. Human rights officials in New York City are investigating whether the exclusion of women from a similar meeting there violated that city's laws. Officials here have said they would carry out a similar investigation only if someone filed a complaint.

Justifying the exclusion of women from the meeting, Farrakhan said, "The morgues of America are not filled with the bodies of white women, or Black women, but with Black men." He added, "For too long our women have borne the brunt of leading our struggle, it's time for us to stand up and be counted as men."

Most in the crowd, which included a large number of young people, were not members of the Nation of Islam. Many, like Harold Jones, a construction worker from Virginia, had come to show support for Farrakhan whom they see as a Black leader under attack. Some people wore large red and white buttons that read, "I support Farrakhan."

Anti-Semitism

The Nation of Islam has come under attack by the big-business press, vice president Al Gore, U.S. Congressmen, and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) following anti-Semitic remarks made by the group's national spokesperson, Khalid Abdul Muhammad, at the end of last year. Several prominent elected officials who are Black and civil rights leaders called on Farrakhan to disassociate the Nation of Islam from Muhammad's anti-Semitic statements.

There was barely any mention of Jews during Farrakhan's three-hour rally. But several titles, including *The Jewish Onslaught*, *The Jews and Their Lies*, and *The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews*, were prominently displayed on the literature tables at the entrance to the auditorium.

Abdul Alim Muhammad, a local Nation of Islam leader and a national spokesperson for Farrakhan, stated that many elected officials who are Black and civil rights leaders were afraid to attend the rally because of pressure from the ADL. The only elected officials present were D.C. council members Harry Thomas and former mayor Marion Barry. Several well-known political activists from the area's college campuses and churches were also present.

Several appeals were made to participants in the rally by Nation of Islam officials to register to vote. "When you register we don't want you to register Democrat or Republican. You should register as Independent Black Man," stated Abdul Alim Muhammad. Farrakhan ended the rally with a call for a Black men only march on Washington sometime next year.

Sam Manuel is a member of the United Transportation Union in Washington, D.C.

Auto workers in Spain protest against layoffs

This column is devoted to reporting the resistance by working people to the employers' assault on their living standards, working conditions, and unions.

We invite you to contribute short items to this column as a way for other fighting workers around the world to read about and learn from these important struggles. Jot down a few lines about what is happening in your union, at your workplace or other workplaces in your area, including interesting political discussions.

Thousands of working people have been protesting in Spain

workers in Morocco, France, Japan, and Spain."

"They didn't guess that the whole province would mobilize to support the auto workers," an activist in the women's auxiliary said.

Workers in Vanuatu fired during strike

Public service workers in the Pacific Island country of Vanuatu who have been part of a nationwide general strike were fired from their jobs in late March. The 1,400 civil servants and other government employees



Militant/Paco Sánchez

Participants in March 22 general strike in Linares and surrounding region in Spain. The action was organized in solidarity with workers employed by Santana Motors. This company announced plans to lay off two-thirds of its workforce at four plants around the country.

ON THE PICKET LINE

against plans by Santana Motors to lay off more than two-thirds of the 1,600 workers at four plants around the country. Suzuki, the Japanese company that is the majority owner of Santana Motors, claims the layoffs are necessary for it to find a new Spanish partner.

The company is also demanding that contract agreements signed last year with three different unions be reopened. In those contracts, workers had already accepted increased line speed and a shorter lunch break — 15 minutes instead of 30. In exchange, Suzuki said it would sell the Spanish-built cars in Europe and move toward getting more of its parts from Spanish-owned companies.

On March 16 hundreds of workers organized a sit-in at the train station in Linares — where the largest of the factories is. A brutal attack by dozens of riot police left 20 wounded. One worker lost his eye. The cop assault was seen by working people across the country on the evening news. The following afternoon, 50,000 people turned out to demand the resignation of the governor. Six hundred students organized a sit-in downtown as well.

Three thousand more supporters demonstrated March 17 in front of the provincial government building and almost 1,000 women protested in front of city hall.

The following day, 1,500 workers and their supporters headed to Madrid to demonstrate at the convention of the ruling Spanish Socialist Workers Party.

The fight over the layoffs has provoked a lot of discussions. Many workers say the problem is that the plant is owned by a Japanese company. Others don't agree. "They lie and convince us one at a time with their story about the need to be competitive," Antonio Ruiz said in an interview. "But they tell the same lies to

have been on strike since December after the government refused to negotiate a pay increase with their union, the Public Service Association (PSA).

Since February, they have been joined in a general strike by Vanuatu's two other main unions, the Teachers Union and the National Union of Labour, which organizes workers in the private sector. The general strike, which began first as a one-day, then as a three-day stoppage, was called in support of the PSA strikers by the Vanuatu Council of Trade Unions.

Schools have shut down across Vanuatu as news of the strike has spread gradually through the country's 80 islands.

Striking workers and union leaders have faced harassment and arrests during the strike. In March Vanuatu's Supreme Court declared the PSA strike illegal.

A government statement declared that with the public service workers dismissed it now regarded the strike as over and would hire a new workforce. The opposition Vanuatu Party condemned the firings.

Finland food workers protest longer workday

Workers at several factories in Finland went on strike after the food workers union rejected a two-year contract proposed by an arbitrator March 9. The food industrial organization immediately locked out all its employees throughout Finland.

The arbitrator had proposed an immediate wage increase of \$29.00 a month, followed by a raise in October 1994 of another \$11.70 a month. But the arbitrator also proposed a more flexible workweek, including lengthening the workday from 8 to 10 hours and the workweek from 40 to 50 hours.

This proposal would force unionists to work overtime without overtime pay or compensation in paid time off.

The chairperson of the Finnish food workers union, Ritva Savtschenko, told the press after negotiations broke down that long shifts are unacceptable.

The transport workers union initially threatened a sympathy strike, but held off after they were told by the chairman of the food industrial employers that such actions are illegal. On the first day of the strike, police pushed away workers who tried to stop trucks from leaving the LEAF-candy factory in Åbo with goods loaded by supervisors and white collar workers. The union said they would set up at other factories if the cops' strikebreaking activity didn't stop.

Strike in Canada ends with concessions contract

Three hundred members of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers union at Kent Homes in Buctouche, New Brunswick, waged a one-week strike in early March. Kent Homes manufactures pre-fabricated houses. It is part of the Irving family empire, which includes most large industrial enterprises in New Brunswick, as well as most radio, television, and newspaper outlets there.

The strike ended after workers

agreed by a narrow margin to accept wage cuts of 10 percent and to allow the company to contract out jobs.

Court finds Yellowknife gold miners not guilty

In a victory for the former striking gold miners in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, a jury found 13 members of the Canadian Association of Smelter and Allied Workers (CASAW) and one member of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) not guilty February 28 of participating in a riot. "This shows that Royal Oak was wrong in pushing these charges," said CASAW member Joe Lisoway, referring to the company. Lisoway was one of the unionists found not guilty. Royal Oak, however, has refused to allow the 13 to return to work. They, along with 35 coworkers — also fired on similar trumped-up charges — await arbitration hearings in early April. The strike against Royal Oak started May 22, 1992, and lasted until December 1993.

In a related development, the court ruled that CASAW member Roger Warren will go to trial in late 1994. Warren is being framed up on nine counts of murder for the deaths of nine replacement workers following an explosion at the Royal Oak gold mine on Sept. 18, 1992.

At this time 70 CASAW members have been called back to

work at the mine. Twenty-six members who had crossed the picket line during the strike are also back at work and 100 replacement workers are still working at the mine. In addition, the company has refused to rehire a dozen CASAW members who either are receiving workers' compensation benefits or for personal reasons couldn't return to work at the date required.

According to Bob Kosta, secretary treasurer of CASAW Local 4, more than 30 replacement workers have come into the union hall to sign union cards. The arbitration ruling that ended the strike stipulates that CASAW is to be the union local at Royal Oak Mines for the next three years. According to CASAW members, the replacement workers are quickly becoming hostile to the company because promised bonuses are not being given and conditions of work don't meet their expectations.

The following people contributed to this column: Paco Sánchez, member of USWA Local 6037 in Cleveland, Ohio, reporting from Spain; Michael Tucker, in Auckland, New Zealand; Maria Hamberg, member of the Swedish Food Workers Union in Stockholm; Roger Annis, member of Canadian Auto Workers Local 1900 in Montreal; and Ned Dmytryshyn, member of Teamsters Local 213 in Vancouver, British Columbia.

LETTERS

Radical reconstruction

In my letter printed in the March 21 edition I took issue with Maggie Trowe's statement that "Marx and Engels supported Radical Reconstruction." I stated that "there is no mention of this in their speeches, documents and letters in the period from 1866 to 1877."

In her response Trowe challenged this. However, none of the documents she cites are from the above-mentioned 10-year period.

What happened in the Reconstruction period was and is of utmost importance to working-class fighters today. The refusal of the victorious capitalist class then to extend their military victory over the slavocracy into a social victory was a deadly blow to the former slaves and the working class. The demand "Forty Acres and a Mule" died aborning and the former slaves

were forced to work on the same plantations for the same slavocrats, but now as sharecroppers.

For over 10 years there was no comment on these events by either Marx or Engels. The July 1877 great railroad strike letter was the last time either one came near mentioning it. In the instances cited above where they did discuss it they did so in a sentence or two in a private letter.

On another, more public platform, Marx had the opportunity to speak out: The Address to the National Labor Movement (NLU) from the General Council of the International Working Men's Association (IMWA), in May of 1869, written by Marx.

Marx comments to the NLU how "the civil war did compensate by freeing the slave and the consequent moral support it gave to your own

class movement." Not a single word about the raging struggle in the South then and its import to the working class as a whole.

How explain Marx's and Engels' misunderstanding of the Reconstruction period? Possibly it was a reflection of Friedrich Sorge who led the IMWA here and did not see the struggle of the Blacks as an independent one, and as Trowe correctly says, erred in not "focusing on the need to mobilize the ranks of labor, Black and white, to take up defense of Reconstruction as a life-or-death question."

Paul Montauk
Oakland, California

Lie detector tests

Aldrich Ames, the CIA bigwig accused of spying for the Russian government, passed lie detector tests in 1986 and 1991 that were

designed to ferret out such agents. Apparently the CIA forgot they give all their agents a course in how to lie to lie detectors.

William Safire noted in his syndicated column that while lie detectors aren't much use in catching spies, they're great for scaring ordinary people accused of a crime into a confession.

Floyd Fowler
Atlanta, Georgia

Supports NAFTA

Before the North America Free Trade Agreement was passed, it was correctly opposed by socialists and communists. But to continue to oppose NAFTA now is racist.

The racists oppose the North American Free Trade Agreement because they are concerned about jobs for white people. These same racists are constantly calling for the

expulsion of Latinos from the United States.

I would suggest that we deal with NAFTA by supporting the AFL-CIO and Teamsters. I am not just talking about token support, but real support. Union members should strive to organize the unorganized. The AFL-CIO should organize nonunion shops and plants. What about the nonunion auto plants? What about the nonunion restaurants and hotels?

Richard Moto

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.

New Zealand protesters reject gov't attacks on health care for workers

BY RUTH GRAY

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Moves by the New Zealand government to charge long-stay geriatric patients in public hospitals have met with widespread opposition here in recent weeks.

On February 10, protest meetings and rallies involving thousands of pensioners took place in 72 cities and towns across the country. The following month 3,000 elderly demonstrated March 3 outside Parliament when it opened for its first session since elections last November.

Previously, geriatric care in public hospitals in New Zealand was free. The government's new policy now requires these patients to pay fees if their income and assets are above a set amount and they require more than 13 weeks of care in a public hospital. For example, for a married couple where one partner is in the hospital, assets above NZ\$40,000 (One New Zealand dollar equals US 56 cents) can be claimed by the state to meet hospital fees. The government originally set the asset level at NZ\$20,000, but raised it to NZ\$40,000 because of the protests, which also prompted Wellington to cap public hospital fees for geriatric patients at NZ\$636 a week.

Geriatric patients in private hospitals and rest homes who receive a government subsidy are also subject to the new asset test. Previously only their income had been means-tested.

The National Party government promotes the new hospital charges as being fairer. According to Prime Minister Jim Bolger, "We clearly have distorted values of individual responsibility when the elderly have been marching in the streets not because they are poor, but because they want to keep their money and demand that someone pay theirs to look after them."

National Party member of Parliament Max Bradford said, "The people who will be most affected by abolishing the income and asset test are not the elderly. Rather it is their children and their grandchildren who will not benefit in any way, and who will be left with the bill."

Health restructuring

Asset testing of geriatric patients is the latest move in a decade-long drive by both Labour Party and National Party governments to restructure and commercialize the health-care system and to reverse the social benefits in health care that working people have won in the past.

Cutbacks have left the public hospital system run down and underfunded. Public hospital beds declined by one-third in the 15 years to 1991 as hospitals were closed or reorganized. The remaining 23 public hospitals presently owe more than NZ\$1.25 billion in debt, with five reported to be in serious difficulty.

The closure of psychiatric wards has left many former patients to fend for themselves. A community care service that was to be established for them barely functions.

Since 1990, public hospitals have been required to compete against each other and against private hospitals as profit-driven corporations. Now called Crown Health Enterprises (CHEs), the hospitals are required by legislation "to be as successful and efficient as comparable businesses that are not owned by the crown."

Attempts to impose business secrecy have included subjecting nurses and other staff to a gag rule and disciplining of medical personnel who speak out publicly on the effects of changes in the health-care system.

Other sectors of the medical-care system have been affected by government restructuring over the past decade, as well.



Striking nurses protest in Whangarei, New Zealand, in February for higher wages and safer staffing levels. Government attacks on medical care have meant less workers doing more work.

State-funded prescription medicines, previously free, are now subject to a tax of NZ\$15 per item for most users. The cost of visiting a doctor has also increased steeply as state subsidies on doctors' fees have declined.

Surveys show a drop in the number of doctor visits and prescriptions being filled, as a result of these new policies.

Charges were also introduced for outpatient services provided by public hospitals. Originally, the government introduced charges of NZ\$50 per night for inpatient care, but these were abolished little more than a year later following widespread opposition and refusal to pay by many patients.

The state-run accident compensation pro-

gram, funded by the government and employers to cover all types of accidents, has also come under attack.

In April 1992 a new tax on workers' income was introduced by the government, claiming this was needed to cover the cost of nonwork-related accidents. At the same time, the levies paid by employers to fund the program were reduced.

If an employer records a low rate of work-related accidents their levy is reduced even further. This encourages employers to pressure workers not to report accidents or file accident compensation claims.

Workers can now be fined up to NZ\$100,000 and imprisoned for up to one

year if they fail to "take all practicable steps to ensure their own safety" on the job or if "any action or inaction on their part while at work causes harm to any other person." Soon after this legislation was adopted in 1992, a worker who had his fingers severed in a work accident was prosecuted.

Accident victims are prevented from seeking compensation through legal action against employers or others.

Previously, under accident compensation, those suffering permanent disability as the result of an accident were eligible for a lump-sum payment up to a maximum of NZ\$27,000. This has now been replaced by a weekly payment of a maximum of NZ\$40. The proportion paid is determined by an assessment of a person's disability.

A 22-year-old woman who lost a leg when she fell under a train was declared 69 percent disabled, qualifying her for a NZ\$15 disability allowance on top of the sickness benefit of NZ\$132 per week. While needing a wheelchair and car to be mobile, she can afford neither.

Parallel to the restructuring of the health-care system, health standards are declining. There has been a rapid rise in the number of cases of meningitis, hepatitis B, and tuberculosis. Only 58 percent of children are being fully vaccinated against preventable diseases, and the infant mortality rate of 10 per 1,000 is one of the highest for an industrialized country.

Sixty-four percent of trainee nurses who graduate each year cannot get jobs, while the workload in hospitals has increased.

Nurses and other hospital staff have seen their wages and working conditions eroded with cutbacks imposed by the new CHEs. Contract negotiations in February saw public hospital nurses in several centers strike for four days to press demands for a wage increase and safer staffing levels.

Ruth Gray is a member of the Engineers Union in Auckland.

Auckland harasses immigrant workers

BY FELICITY COGGAN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Several events in recent months have highlighted the harassment and discrimination that immigrants here face.

On March 9, following widespread protests, the ruling National Party was forced to drop a legal challenge to the eligibility of more than 500 voters who had cast ballots in the Auckland electorate of Onehunga in last year's November 6 general election. The National Party accused the voters of being immigrant workers who were ineligible to vote.

The election had resulted in the incumbent National Party member of Parliament, Grahame Thorne, losing the seat to Labour's Richard Northey by 407 votes.

To vote in New Zealand, people must be over 18 years of age, either a citizen or a permanent resident, and have lived in the country for at least one year and in the electorate for three months or more.

Of the 546 voters challenged, the vast majority were Pacific Islanders. Others were Asian and Indian immigrants, many of whom had lived in the electorate for years and did, in fact, satisfy the voting eligibility criteria. A number of those challenged were Niuean, Cook Islanders or Tokelauan. Residents of these countries have automatic rights to New Zealand citizenship. Also included were voters who are Maori — the indigenous people of New Zealand.

The National Party hired a private inves-

tigator and used party volunteers to knock on the doors of suspected "ineligible" voters and question them about their right to vote. Letters were sent requiring people to provide documentary evidence of their eligibility to cast ballots and threatening court action if they did not comply. The party attempted to obtain a list of "illegal" immigrants from the Immigration Service under the Official Information Act to check against names of voters. This request was denied.

To protest the racist and undemocratic nature of these attacks, a Pacific Island Voters Action Group was formed, led by a member of the Samoan branch of the local Labour Party. The group also hired a lawyer to represent the challenged voters.

Over the following weeks, as many of the challenges proved unsustainable and uncheckable and public opposition mounted, the political price the National Party was paying — especially among its small but growing Pacific Island supporters — became too great. Both challenges were withdrawn and the National Party now faces claims for legal costs, as well as a defamation action from the challenged voters.

There are an estimated 14,000 undocumented immigrants in New Zealand, called overstayers by the authorities. Of these, 58 percent are Pacific Islanders, who make up 73 percent of the 740 deported each year.

Harassment and the threat of deportation are broadly used to police and intimidate

working people who immigrate to this country and to drive down the value of their labor power. For example, immigration officials visited college administrators at the start of the new school year, encouraging them to inform on students who they suspected of being "overstayers" and threatening a NZ\$2,000 fine for knowingly enrolling non-residents — a large sum for today's cash-strapped schools. Last year Tangaroa College in South Auckland, which has a predominantly Pacific Island student body, was raided twice by Immigration Department officials who pulled students out of the classrooms.

The capitalist economic crisis is having a disproportionate impact on immigrant workers in New Zealand, as well as the Maori population. Pacific Island workers, concentrated in manufacturing, have been hard hit by plant closings and layoffs. Unemployment among Pacific Island workers rose from 12 percent in 1986 to 28 percent in 1991, about three times that of the workforce as a whole. Of Pacific Island youth aged 15-19, 53 percent are unemployed and Pacific Island households comprise 40 percent of the households receiving the lowest 20 percent of income. Pacific Islanders comprised 5 percent of the New Zealand population at the 1991 census.

Felicity Coggan is a member of the United Food, Beverage and General Workers' Union in Auckland.