

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Caterpillar and auto union  
set to renew talks

— PAGE 10

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 59/NO. 11 MARCH 20, 1995

## Prison says no to Curtis getting out of 'lockup'

BY NORTON SANDLER

DES MOINES, Iowa — Authorities at the Iowa State Penitentiary in Ft. Madison are refusing to budge on reducing the time union and political activist Mark Curtis must spend in the punitive lockup segregation unit, despite repeated recommendations by a prison committee. Meanwhile, new support continues to be won for Curtis, who is serving a 25-year sentence on phony charges of rape and burglary.

Prison authorities threw Curtis into lockup last September. He is housed in a five-foot by seven-foot cell for 23 hours a day. He is allowed an hour's exercise every day and three 10-minute showers a week.

Every month since being confined to the unit, Curtis has met with a classification committee composed of a correctional counselor, the unit manager of the prison wing he is held in, and a psychologist. Month after month this three-person committee has rated Curtis as having "above average attitude and behavior" and recommended reductions in the time Curtis must stay in lockup. These recommended cuts now come to 140 days — more than three months. If enacted, Curtis would be slated for release from the segregation unit in early June instead of late

Continued on Page 4

## Dollar's free fall: top U.S. 'brand name' takes beating

BY GREG ROSENBERG

"There is more than a whiff of crisis in the world's capital markets."

— Barron's, March 6, 1995

The U.S. dollar went into free fall in recent weeks against the German mark and Japanese yen. The currencies of Washington's chief trading partners — Canada and Mexico — are in even steeper descent. Stock and bond markets have been destabilized, especially in the weakest capitalist countries. A wave of declining confidence and panic in the centers of world finance capital is being exacerbated by the debacle in Mexico and collapse of the Barings P.L.C. bank in Britain.

The long-term value of the dollar registers the strength of U.S. capitalism vis-à-vis its major imperialist rivals. While the greenback remains the chief reserve currency for the propertied classes worldwide, its dominance as Wall Street's premier "brand name" has declined since the 1970s, mirroring the relative weakening of U.S. imperialism itself.

In the first week of March, the dollar — dragged down by worries over the Mexican peso crisis — set new lows against the Japanese and German currencies. Compared to a year ago, the dollar is now worth 14 percent less in terms of yen

Continued on Page 3

## Mexico's economic and political turmoil grows

Protests challenge Chiapas occupation and wage squeeze

BY LAURA GARZA

MUNICIPIO TRINITARIA, Chiapas — From Mexico's northern reaches at the U.S. border to the southern region here a few miles from Guatemala, Mexico's economic instability and political turmoil is palpable. The government crisis and sharpening attacks on working people can hardly escape any conversation.

More than 500 peasant activists have gathered at the third congress of the Emiliano Zapata Peasant Organization (OCEZ) here, on a plot of land taken over by landless peasants a year ago. The discussion quickly turns to the crisis in Chiapas and in Mexico as a whole.

"Our work and our products have no value," says a participant in one of the 10 discussion groups, referring to the effects of the crisis in the countryside. "The bosses don't pay a decent price for the peasants' work."

Jorge Aguilar Pérez and Lindaro Hernández, both of Nueva Villa Flores, point out that the price they get for corn — the main crop of many peasants in the area — has dropped over the last year from 750 pesos to 600 pesos a ton, and they expect it to go lower.

Such discussions are occurring throughout Mexico, as the government's calamities continue to mount and the blows being struck to workers and peasants as a result of the economic crisis seem to have no end in sight.

The \$50 billion "rescue" package announced last month by U.S. and Mexican government representatives has not halted the slide of the peso, as it continued to hit new lows of seven to the U.S. dollar while the congress was taking place.

Peasants from Guanajuato gathered



Militant/Margrethe Siem

Peasants discuss crisis in Mexico at the Emiliano Zapata Peasant Organization congress in Chiapas, as government takes drastic measures against working people.

around their visitors from the United States to express their opinion of the so-called bailout package. "We know they are giving the loan to help themselves and they are buying more control of Mexico at

the same time," one of them explained.

On March 3, the Mexican government took over the Asemex-Banpaís financial group, which includes the nation's fourth-

Continued on Page 6

## Cuban youth leaders begin U.S. tour

BY TONY LANE  
AND RYAN KELLY

MINNEAPOLIS — "Socialism is directly connected to the survival of our country," said Cuban youth leader Rogelio Polanco to 40 students at the University of Minnesota here March 7.

Polanco, along with Kenia Serrano, had arrived in the country less than 24 hours earlier to begin a six-week speaking tour to 13 regions of the United States. Local activists, including members of the Minneapolis-based Faculty-Student Cuban Youth Lectures Committee, greeted the Cuban youth at Minneapolis/St. Paul airport. The committee is coordinating their visit.

Following their first campus meeting, the two youth leaders toured the Ford truck plant in St. Paul and met with workers there.

Adriana Sanchez, a board member of La Raza Student Cultural Center at the University of Minnesota, welcomed Polanco and Serrano to the meeting. She thanked them for the opportunity to learn "first-hand, the truth about Cuba." Also welcoming them was Jamil Salaam from the Africana Student Cultural Center. Salaam was a participant in the recent In-

ternational Youth Brigade to Cuba.

Cuba is "facing an exceptional situation today," Polanco explained. The 1959 revolution that toppled the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship "allowed the Cuban people to define their future," he said. "The attainment of political power meant that basic needs of education, equality, and employment could be met."

But from the beginning of their revolution, Polanco said, the Cuban people had to confront great hostility from the U.S. government. Right now, Cubans are living through what they refer to as the special period, brought on by a combination of the 35-year U.S. trade embargo and

Continued on Page 4



Militant/Jon Hillson

Cuba solidarity activists greet youth leaders Rogelio Polanco (second from right) and Kenia Serrano (far left) upon their arrival at Minneapolis/St. Paul airport.





## Tel Aviv blockades Lebanon

The Israeli navy has blockaded a 40-mile stretch of Lebanon's coastline since February 8, preventing an estimated 1,800 fishermen from earning a living. The Israeli regime claims the aggression is justified by the need to prevent fishing boats from smuggling weapons to Hezbollah guerrillas. Tel Aviv controls a strip of land in southern Lebanon it calls a "security zone," and it wants to pressure the Lebanese government to crack down on those fighting to end the occupation.

On March 3 Israeli war planes staged mock air raids over the Lebanese town of Nabatiyeh, drawing anti-aircraft fire from the Lebanese army. Lebanon's president, Elias Hrawi, is appealing to Washington, Moscow, and European imperialist powers to intervene in the conflict to end the naval blockade and Israeli military occupation of its southern region.

## Taipei 'apologizes' for massacre

A monument was unveiled February 28 in Taiwan commemorating an estimated 15,000 to 30,000 people slaughtered in a popular uprising on the island in 1947 by the U.S.-backed troops of Kuomintang (KMT) leader Chiang Kai-shek. The rightist Kuomintang retreated to Taiwan and occupied it following its defeat in the Chinese revolution of 1949. The KMT leadership established iron-fisted rule over the indigenous Taiwanese population.

Taiwan's president Lee Tenghui, the KMT's current leader, attended the unveiling and delivered a public apology for the massacre. The 1947 uprising had been sparked in February of that year after a Kuomintang soldier kicked an old woman selling cigarettes.

## Mozambique rejects secession

The government of Mozambique rejected a request for secession made by Afonso Dhlakama, the leader of the Mozambique National Resistance (Renamo). Dhlakama has made thinly veiled public threats against the regime of Joaquim Chissano if Renamo does not receive government funding. Dhlakama wished the Mozambican government "bad luck" in its efforts to obtain economic assistance at a meeting of the Paris Consultative Group scheduled for the first weeks

of March.

Renamo, which was created, armed, and financed by the former apartheid regime of South Africa, waged a bloody war against the Mozambican government throughout the 1980s. Following a 1992 peace accord, elections were held in October 1994 in which Chissano's party, Frelimo, won 53.3 percent of the vote and Dhlakama's Renamo won 33.7 percent. Renamo claimed the balloting was fraudulent.

## Austerity planned in Argentina

Argentine finance minister Domingo Cavallo has announced what the *Washington Post* calls "drastic austerity measures." Buenos Aires plans to impose \$1 billion in budget cuts for 1995 and pay cuts of 5 percent to 15 percent for government workers earning more than \$2,000 per month. The country's economy has been shaken by Mexico's financial crisis this year, resulting in the flight of about \$3 billion in capital from Argentina in just 60 days.

Buenos Aires's attempts to insulate itself from the Mexican disaster have been unsuccessful, as the Argentine stock market has lost 29 percent of its value since December. Acknowledging low investor confidence, Cavallo implored them not to take their money out of the country.

## Canada military scandal deepens

The scandal continues to spread over the Canadian airborne regiment that tortured and murdered a Somali youth in March 1993. Ottawa was forced to disband the regiment in January of this year after the broadcast of two videos depicting racist comments by its members in Somalia and dehumanizing hazing rituals of troops at an air force base in Ontario.

Officials in both the current Progressive Conservative and former Liberal Party governments and military brass at the highest levels are now being implicated in efforts to cover up the truth about these events.

Maj. Gen. Brian Vernon, until recently the top army commander in Ontario, was fired February 13 on charges by higher-ups that he withheld knowledge of the contents of the hazing video, including the presence of officers revealed in newly released footage. Following the firing, Bloc

Quebecois member of Parliament Michel Gauthier remarked that Vernon was a "designated scapegoat" to "put the lid" on the affair "without going to the heart of the matter."

## Soldier who queried Haiti abuse faces trial

Capt. Lawrence Rockwood, an army intelligence officer stationed at Fort Drum in upstate New York, is facing a court-martial for leaving his post in Haiti last September to investigate reports of torture and abuse in a Haitian prison. Rockwood, whose duties included reviewing reports of human rights abuse, says he was stonewalled by superiors as he sought to investigate the National Penitentiary in Port-au-Prince. Finally, Rockwood went to the prison anyway, where he found 25 emaciated prisoners packed in a small cell the warden called the "infirmary."

Members of the Syracuse Haitian Solidarity Committee and former U.S. attorney general Ramsey Clark have thrown their support behind Rockwood's case. Rockwood is charged with dereliction of duty and conduct unbecoming an officer, among other violations.

## Four clinics torched

Burning road flares were thrown on the roof of the Choice Medical Clinic near Santa Cruz, California, on February 21.

It was the fourth abortion clinic in two weeks set on fire by arsonists in this area of the state. The arson fires are "part of a violent campaign designed to shut down women's health centers," said Pamela Maraldo, president of the Planned Parenthood Federation of America.

One doctor in San Luis Obispo who was terrorized from performing abortions a few years ago told the *Los Angeles Times* that she has been the target of a bumper-sticker campaign claiming she "killed babies."

## J.P. Stevens settles suit

J.P. Stevens agreed to pay \$20 million in back pay and interest to 2,900 Black employees in a discrimination claim filed more than 25 years ago. Lawyers for the workers announced the settlement with the textile giant on February 17.

The workers involved in the suit

## Pact reached in German metal workers strike



Some 20,000 workers on strike against metal and electronics companies marched February 24 in Bavaria, a state in southern Germany. The IG Metall metal workers union announced agreement on a two-year pact providing a wage increase of 4 percent in 1995 and 3.6 percent in 1996. The pact also maintains the one-hour reduction in the workweek to 35 hours at full pay beginning October 1, which the employers had been seeking to reverse. Voting by the 165,000 members affected is expected to end on March 10. Union officials say the walkouts at 30 factories will continue until the ballots are counted.

worked at or were refused jobs between 1966 and 1980 at nine of the company's textile plants and three office centers. The lawsuit states that the company reserved better jobs for whites and that Blacks with 10 years seniority were paid at the same rate as new hires who were white.

—MAURICE WILLIAMS

Beverly Bernardo, a member of Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union Local 178 in Vancouver, British Columbia, contributed to this column.

## THE MILITANT

### Defend women's rights

'Militant' correspondents are on the scene across the United States and worldwide covering actions in defense of abortion rights, the fight for affirmative action, and other issues of interest to working people and youth. We provide a socialist perspective on the fight for women's liberation. Don't miss a single issue!



## SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

### NEW READERS

☐ \$10 for 12 issues

☐ \$15 for 12 weeks  
RENEWAL

☐ \$27 for 6 months

☐ \$45 for 1 year

NAME

ADDRESS

CITY

STATE

ZIP

UNION/SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION

PHONE

CLIP AND MAIL TO THE MILITANT, 410 WEST ST., NEW YORK, NY 10014.

12 weeks of the *Militant* outside the U.S.: Australia and the Pacific, \$A15 • Britain, £7 • Canada, Can\$12 • Caribbean and Latin America, \$15 • Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, £8 • Belgium, 375 BF • France, FF80 • Iceland, Kr1,300 • New Zealand, NZ\$15 • Sweden, Kr75 (Send payment to addresses listed in business information box)

## The Militant

Vol. 59/No. 11

Closing news date: March 9, 1995

Editor: STEVE CLARK

Managing Editor: GEORGE FYSON

Business Manager: NAOMI CRAINE

Editorial Staff: Naomi Craine, Hilda Cuzco, Laura Garza, Martin Koppel, Paul Mailhot, Argiris Malapanis, Greg Rosenberg, Pat Smith, Damon Tinnon, and Maurice Williams.

Published weekly except for one week in December and biweekly from mid-June to mid-August by the Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Telephone: (212) 243-6392; Fax: (212) 924-6040.

The Militant can be reached via CompuServe at: 73311.2720 or via Peacenet at: themilitant

Internet: 73311.2720@compuserve.com or: themilitant@igc.apc.org

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

Second-class postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Subscriptions: U.S.: for one-year subscription send \$45 to above address. Latin America, Caribbean: for

one-year subscription send \$65, drawn on a U.S. bank, to above address. By first-class (airmail), send \$80. Asia: send \$80 drawn on a U.S. bank to 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Canada: Send Canadian \$75 for one-year subscription to Militant, 4581 St. Denis, Montreal, Quebec H2J 2L4. Britain, Ireland: £36 for one year by check or international money order made out to Militant Distribution, 47 The Cut, London, SE1 8LL, England. Continental Europe, Africa, Middle East: £40 for one year by check or international money order made out to Militant Distribution at above address. France: Send FF300 for one-year subscription to Militant, 8 allée Berlioz, 94800 Villejuif cheque postale: 25-465-01-S, Paris. Belgium: BF 1,900 for one year on account no. 000-1543112-36 of 1 Mei Fonds/Fonds du 1 mai, 2140 Antwerp. Iceland: Send 5,000 Icelandic kronur for one-year subscription to Militant, P.O. Box 233, 121 Reykjavík. Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark: 500 Swedish kronor for one year. Pay to Militant Swedish giro no. 451-32-09-9. New Zealand: Send New Zealand \$90 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand. Australia: Send Australian \$75 to P.O. Box K879, Haymarket, NSW 2000, Australia. Pacific Islands: Send Australian \$75 or New Zealand \$100 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand.

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



# ANC and miners advance fight for affirmative action in South Africa

BY GREG ROSENBERG

With the opening of the second session of South Africa's Parliament in Cape Town February 17, the African National Congress is taking new initiatives to advance the goal of a democratic, nonracial, nonsexist South Africa. Working people are taking advantage of their newly conquered political rights to advance the democratic revolution by organizing to eradicate racist discrimination in every aspect of social life.

These political advances have thrown the bourgeois nationalist Inkatha Freedom Party led by Mangosuthu Buthelezi into further crisis.

On February 21, Buthelezi, who is home affairs minister in the Government of National Unity, led a walkout by 43 Inkatha deputies from the national assembly. Decrying what he called "political impossibilities," Buthelezi claimed the ANC had breached an agreement reached in April 1994 allowing international mediation on the issue of regional rights for KwaZulu-Natal province.

South African president Nelson Mandela responded to the Inkatha walkout by instructing the national assembly, senate, and constitutional assembly to continue with their work, which they did. Frene Ginwala, speaker of Parliament, said Inkatha representatives would lose their seats if they did not return by March 15. Buthelezi led his deputies back into the assembly March 5.

Buthelezi and his coterie ran the KwaZulu Bantustan — one of the apartheid regime's phony homelands — and worked hand-in-glove with the National Party, military officer corps, and cops to derail the ANC-led democratic movement. With

the incorporation of the bantustans into a united South Africa last April, Inkatha suffered a political blow. Its system of patronage, tied to the dominance of traditional leaders in the largely rural province, has been weakened.

Efforts by the ANC to advance a land reform threaten deeper encroachments. A proposed Truth Commission, which will expose crimes carried out under apartheid, will further reveal Inkatha's true character. In leading the boycott, Buthelezi denounced the body as "an evil institution from which only evil will germinate."

The walkout was part of Inkatha's flagging effort to forestall local elections to be held this October. These elections for town and city councils will sweep away the remaining apartheid structures across the country. Unlike the coalitions at federal and provincial levels, the new local governments will be formed by the majority party in the balloting.

## Miners battle for affirmative action

Several thousand miners marched on the Johannesburg offices of Gold Fields of South Africa (GFSA) March 4. GFSA is one of the most recalcitrant mining houses. Its attempts to drive down miners' wages and weaken the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) led it to introduce contract workers, who are paid half the wages and prevented from holding the rights of union members. At the West Driefontein mine, 149 workers have been fired for alleged clashes with contractors. The NUM demands their reinstatement.

According to Mapalo Tsatsimpe, NUM Carletonville regional coordinator, the company insists on appointing administrators of the crowded hostels where miners



Militant/Greg Rosenberg

Mass meeting of 7,000 miners at West Driefontein mine in South Africa, January 11, 1995. The miners discussed company-inspired violence and attacks on the union.

are compelled to live. Workers demand the right to elect managers as part of a process leading to eradication of the hostel system. GFSA wants to continue the *induna* system, under which the hostels are divided and run on a tribal basis.

"In the history of mining in South Africa, appointed administrators have always been on the side of management and were oppressive. They practice ethnicism and tribalism, favoring one group over another," Tsatsimpe said in a phone interview. "Hostels are company property," said GFSA in a terse statement. "Management therefore has a responsibility to run the hostels and maintain good order."

NUM members are also demanding the company end the practice of distributing guns to the union's opponents on the mine sites. At the GFSA Deelkraal mine, the NUM's opponents have been provided with AK-47s. Tsatsimpe said the "NUM sees Deelkraal [management] as an orchestrator of violence and merciless killings." On March 6, five union members were murdered at Deelkraal. The union also wants an independent body to investigate the question of violence.

Tsatsimpe said GFSA management was given seven days to respond, failing which

further steps would be taken.

Miners also want accelerated steps to implement affirmative action. "Covert and open racism is the norm at Gold Fields mines," Tsatsimpe explained. "When workers have problems with management, management's response is that workers must go to Mandela, and he'll resolve the problems for them. Other workers are told that 'that bloody Kaffir Mandela thinks he is going to change this country,'" she said.

The NUM has negotiated an agreement with the Chamber of Mines for an Adult Basic Education and Training program, which includes literacy classes for the more than 50 percent of miners who cannot read. GFSA is stonewalling, and the program has yet to begin at its mines.

## Public service

In his speech opening Parliament February 17, Mandela addressed threatened strikes by several public service workers unions. Most of these threats have been advanced by formerly all-white unions, such as the Public Servants Association (PSA), which had never struck the previous apartheid government. The PSA, which now has a substantial number of black members, has demanded a 15 percent wage increase.

Unions aligned with the revolutionary democratic movement have rejected strike threats and called for an across-the-board increase in the minimum wage. They aim to aid the majority of the lowest-paid public employees, who are overwhelmingly black, and narrow the inequality in wages and conditions in the state administration.

The government has endorsed this general approach. The government and 19 public service unions also announced an agreement on affirmative action — in principle — in early February.

Mandela emphasized the ANC's determination to pursue affirmative action measures, vowing that "the government will continue to implement measures and programs aimed at ensuring that those who were disadvantaged by apartheid in the past are given the capacity to catch up with those who were given the opportunity to develop and advance themselves...."

"I therefore call on all our people to refuse to listen to the false prophets who seek to perpetuate the apartheid divisions and imbalances of the past by presenting affirmative action as a program intended to advantage some and disadvantage others on the basis of race and color," he said.

The South African Health and Public Service Workers Union (SAHPSWU), a union with some leaders aligned with the ultraleft Azanian Peoples Organization, held a short strike in January to demand a wage increase. Some 15,000 union members took part. SAHPSWU is threatening to resume the strike.

In January about 1,500 strikers marched on Pretoria with banners reading "Down with the Government of National Unity" and "Down with capitalism, up with a socialist country." At the end of February, the union's publicity secretary threatened on national television to kidnap cabinet ministers and white civil servants unless the demands of the union were met. An ANC statement condemned the threats,

Continued on Page 12

# Dollar nosedives in global currency crisis

Continued from front page

and 20 percent less against the mark. Capital has piled into the mark in hopes it will provide a more stable refuge.

Eighteen central banks, including the U.S. Federal Reserve, went on a dollar-buying spree March 2-3 in hopes of propping up the sagging currency, but to no avail. Strident statements from U.S. treasury secretary Robert Rubin about Washington's determination to defend the dollar had no effect. The White House was backpedaling from the ineffective rescue attempt by the week beginning March 6, as the currency kept sliding.

Washington is loathe to underline that neither it — nor any other government or central bank — can do much to control the \$1 trillion that moves through international currency markets every day at breakneck computerized speed.

## Global currency crisis?

"The biggest worry is that so many currencies are falling simultaneously," read an unnerved front-page article in the March 8 *Wall Street Journal*. "Yesterday, the British pound, French franc, Spanish peseta, Portuguese escudo, Swedish krona and Norwegian krone crashed to record lows against what is rapidly becoming the new benchmark of global currencies, the German mark." So did the Italian lira, while the Mexican peso continued to disintegrate and the Brazilian real fell more than 2 percent against the dollar.

If the turmoil continues, the *Journal* article said, "it might set off a full-blown global currency crisis that could drag down stock and bond markets around the world, disrupt trade and depress the economies of half-a-dozen countries."

Political uncertainty in Europe has contributed to the fallout. Continued worries over the Italian regime's repeated failures

to slash the social wage of the working class and a series of political revelations wracking the Spanish government helped depress the lira and peseta. European Union officials, in a move underlining the impossibility of creating a single European currency, devalued the peseta and Portuguese escudo March 6.

The workings of the market in Europe amid today's depression conditions reinforce the tendency of capital to flow from the poorest regions — such as Spain, Portugal, and Greece — to its richest, such as Germany, Holland, and France.

Wall Street analysts and the big-business press are now trotting out rationalizations to explain the dollar's fall. At the end of February, when Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan hinted that interest rates might not be hiked again for a while, he was hailed as responsible for the Dow Jones stock average breaking 4,000 points. Today, Greenspan is vilified by those who hope rising interest rates would attract more foreign capital and bid up the dollar, and who note that the German central bank may soon raise its rates, drawing capital to Bonn.

A feeble uptick of the dollar March 8 was attributed to public comments by the Federal Reserve chairman that interest rates might yet go up.

"We need a financial equivalent of Desert Storm, a coalition to defend the dollar," intoned the vice chairman of the Goldman, Sachs investment house.

Such a coalition is highly unlikely, given the rivalry between imperialist nations, a rivalry in fact exacerbated by the Persian Gulf War. Indeed, a central complaint of the *Wall Street Journal* is that "while bad enough, [these problems] are compounded by the ever-expanding dominance of German monetary policy on the Continent."

New details have also emerged on the collapse of the time-honored British investment house Barings, which bet the farm and lost \$1.5 billion in futures trades gone awry in Japan and Singapore.

## Leeson: from hero to goat

Barings's claim that it was victimized by Nicholas Leeson, a manager at its Singapore office, didn't stand up very well to the light of day during the first week of March. Over the previous two months, it turns out, the bank's London offices sent a sum of \$890 million — more than Barings' entire capital base — to Singapore to cover futures contracts it had purchased there.

Singapore officials have disclosed a February 8 meeting in that city-state at which Barings's treasurer and Asian finance director insisted that they knew the scale of investments and that they could be covered. The bank's tops now limply claim they thought Leeson had "hedged his bets."

Leeson was a hero for the firm in 1994. In the first seven months of the year, he pulled in a tidy \$30 million, which may have accounted for as much as 20 percent of the firm's 1994 profits. He was rewarded with a \$1 million bonus.

Today Leeson is the goat blamed for the overnight devastation of Britain's oldest merchant bank. He is being held in Germany pending extradition to Singapore, where he may face forgery charges. Wings of British finance capital are anxiously hoping Leeson is sent to Singapore and is never allowed to set foot on British soil again.

The reason is not hard to fathom. As a headline in the March 8 *New York Times* put it: "Public Relations Enters Barings Case: A hint that 'powerful people' may suffer when a fallen trader talks."



# Curtis wins support among unionists

Continued from front page September.

But Acting Warden Paul Hedgepath and Security Director John Emmett have said no each time. They claim such cuts do not apply to Curtis, since he was convicted of "assault" by prison authorities last year. They say that this is a new policy, adopted only recently.

## Kangaroo court

Last August, Curtis was removed from his job at the prison hospital and falsely accused by prison guards of assaulting another inmate. This came as supporters internationally were gearing up for a fight to demand his release on parole.

In a kangaroo court proceeding inside the prison walls in September, Curtis was pronounced guilty and sentenced by an administrative law judge to a month in the "hole" plus a year in lockup. Besides charges from guards, the only evidence offered against him was the testimony of a confidential informer, who Curtis was not allowed to question or otherwise challenge. During the hearing, Curtis's hands and feet were shackled.

Curtis's attorneys William Kutmus and Jeanne Johnson have filed a lawsuit in state court demanding that the summary conviction be thrown out and that Curtis be returned to the status he had prior to being thrown in lockup.

## Seven years since frame-up began

March 1995 marks seven years since the frame-up of Mark Curtis began. He has already been held behind bars for more than six years.

Curtis was arrested and beaten by the Des Moines police on March 4, 1988. He was falsely charged with rape and burglary. The arrest came in the midst of a struggle at the Swift meatpacking plant here (now the Monfort plant) that Curtis was involved in. Along with other unionists, Curtis was protesting a raid by immigration cops on the factory that resulted in the arrests of 16 Mexican and 1 Salvadoran worker. A few hours before his arrest, Curtis spoke in Spanish at a public meeting urging his union, the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), to become more involved in the defense of the 17.

Curtis was tried and convicted in September 1988 in a proceeding riddled by violations of his right to a fair trial.

## New endorsers won for defense effort

Supporters of Curtis's fight to win his release on parole have recently won dozens of new backers.

Scott Wilbanks, Ray Johnson, and Dave Olson, members of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 270 at Fawn Engineering in nearby Clive, recently signed up as endorsers of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee. Also endorsing in Des Moines is striking United Rubber Workers Local 310 activist Nick Campero. Two other rubber strikers here have recently viewed

the documentary video entitled *The Frame-up of Mark Curtis*.

Juan Estrada, a leader of the Perry, Iowa, chapter of the League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) is another recent endorser. Estrada is also vice president of UFCW Local 1149 at the IBP packinghouse in Perry.

Four rail workers on Amtrak and Conrail's Northeast Corridor recently added their names as endorsers of Curtis's defense committee. Three new backers were won recently at a meeting organized by Curtis supporters in Boulder, Colorado.

Supporters of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee have participated in several conferences over the last few months to talk to participants about Curtis's frame-up and the fight to win his release on parole. Thirteen people, including several rail workers, signed up for more information at a Labor Party Advocates conference in Kansas City, Missouri.

Farmers and others also requested more information on the case at the rural



Dannen Vance, participant in recent International Youth Brigade to Cuba, talks to Mark Curtis (center) and Militant staff writer and Young Socialists leader Naomi Craine about the trip and Cuban revolution. They visited Curtis in February.

women's conference in Des Moines and the American Agricultural Movement conference in Jackson, Mississippi, held earlier this winter.

Those wishing more information on the

case or to find out how to join Curtis's fight for justice can contact the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, PO Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa 50311, Phone (515) 246-1695.

# Cuban youth begin U.S. speaking tour

Continued from front page

the loss, at the opening of the 1990s, of preferential trade with the former USSR. "U.S. hostility has intensified," Polanco said.

Cuba today has no guaranteed access to secure markets, credit, and technology, he noted. Despite these difficulties, the revolution has worked to maintain its social conquests such as the education, health, and social security systems. Cubans have also sought to maintain their international solidarity, he reported, and their ability to speak as a sovereign nation.

Polanco outlined some steps Cuba has taken to deal with the difficult economic situation. "Cuba seeks foreign capital investment in certain areas" while maintaining control in the hands of the state, he said. Cooperatives in agriculture have been expanded, he told the audience, and some small privately owned enterprises have been legalized. "The principal objective was to increase production, make things more efficient, and help get us out of the crisis. While market tools have been used in certain areas, we have not given up on socialism."

## Wide-ranging discussion

Students asked Polanco and Serrano a wide range of questions at the meeting: Why had communism collapsed in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union? Would the lifting of the U.S. embargo put the Cuban revolution under greater pressure? What will happen when Cuban leader Fidel Castro dies? How do elections take place in Cuba? What are some of the activities being organized by Cuban youth? What is the place of women in the Cuban revolution?



Militant/Tony Lane

Cuban youth leaders Rogelio Polanco (left) and Kenia Serrano began 13-region speaking tour of U.S. campuses at a University of Minnesota meeting on March 7.

Serrano said that one aspect of the democratic process in Cuba is the worker and student assemblies. Some of the pressing questions these assemblies have taken up include "raising the quality of products" and "improving discipline in the workplace." She spoke of the problem of "paternalism, meaning allowing people to be irresponsible" yet still share the full benefits of the revolution. One such problem, she said, was exemplified by the fact

that university students could switch courses after a couple of years without regard to the prior investment in their education. Given current conditions in Cuba, she told the audience, "this couldn't continue, at least not in the same way."

Polanco noted that the workers assemblies showed what was different about Cuba. In the workers assemblies, problems are raised and there is discussion about the measures needed. "In the rest of world it is the other way round," he pointed out. "The measures are taken and there is no discussion with the workers."

In response to the question about why communism had collapsed, Polanco replied that "one model" of communism fell. He said many errors had been made in Eastern Europe and the former USSR, and that too much was "left up to the market." "Socialism," he said, "needs to be constructed by the will of the people. It can't be done without mass support."

## Visit to Ford plant

At the Ford plant, Polanco and Serrano were introduced to dozens of workers entering or leaving a shift change. The two Cuban youth leaders then toured the plant for more than an hour, giving them the opportunity to see the truck assembly line and to speak with some workers.

In welcoming them, one worker said that the U.S. rulers "wished that Cuba never existed. It's the only country with a successful revolution."

Serrano and Polanco asked workers about production in the plant. They were particularly interested in how many jobs had been displaced by automation in recent years.

## —REPORT BACK FROM CUBA YOUTH BRIGADE—

Seventy young people from the United States as well as Britain, Canada, Germany, Iceland, Mexico, Spain, and Sweden participated in the International Youth Brigade to Cuba in January. Brigade participants were on editorial assignment for newspapers and radio stations and are reporting back on the Cuban revolution today.

Following is an excerpt of an article by Jamil Salaam, a student at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. It is taken from *Insight*, a journal for business and the arts published and circulated in Minneapolis-St. Paul.

## Curious about Cuba

BY JAMIL SALAAM

(part 1)

Salaam was part of a recent delegation of students and activists who traveled to Cuba. In the coming weeks, Salaam will be documenting his experiences in *Insight*.

Cuba. A small island 90 miles off the south coast of Florida. An estimated 11 million people live there and it is a socialist country. I first thought the country's political system was no big deal. But after learning their leader, Fidel Castro, was a "dictator" and was behind the Cuban mis-

## INSIGHT

sile crisis, I really didn't care for Cuba.

In the summer of 1993 I became interested in politics. Not the type of politics where a person sits in an office and passes laws, but politics concerning oppressed people and how they fight and organize a movement geared toward change. During this time, I began learning more about Cuba. But what I was learning from the books, articles and speeches written and given by people who were really into Cuba conflicted with what I learned from American mainstream media.

So what did I learn outside of the main-



# Travelers to Cuba reply to harassment by gov't and attacks on constitutional rights

BY DAMON TINNON

At the end of February, the U.S. State Department returned the passports of three young people who traveled on editorial assignment to Cuba in January as part of an international youth brigade. The purpose of their trip was to learn about Cuba, do eyewitness reporting, and write about what they found for their respective publications.

Upon their return to the United States at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport, however, Sukul Baul, 21; Dannen Vance, 27; and Aislinn Pulley, 16, were each harassed by U.S. Customs agents and had their passports seized. They were also threatened with hefty fines.

Baul, Vance, and Pulley immediately responded by contacting other brigade members, friends, and supporters, who launched a defense campaign to win back their passports. Over several weeks, they spoke to meetings of students, striking workers, and others. Dozens of protest letters were sent to U.S. government officials by organizations and individuals across the Midwest and elsewhere in the United States and other countries.

When the passports were returned in late February, they were accompanied by a letter from William Wharton, director of the U.S. Department of State's office of passport policy and advisory services. "Your passport is herewith returned since there was no violation of a passport restriction," Wharton wrote. But he maintained the passports had been initially seized because of "other evidence of travel to Cuba in contravention of [U.S. government] restrictions and prohibitions."

"This statement is false," said Pulley, in reply to Wharton's remark. "There was no 'contravention' of the law by the three of us."

Vance added that the seizure of the three passports "constituted harassment in violation of our First Amendment rights, as well as freedom of the press and the right to travel." By seeking to justify these actions, Vance said, Wharton "in fact reinforces them."

## National task force

At the February 11-12 meeting of the National Network on Cuba (NNOC), a coalition of nearly 70 local and national groups that work to oppose Washington's policy toward Cuba, a report was given by a leader of the International Youth Brigade on the campaign for the return of the passports. Participants were surprised by the discussion that followed, since the number of such instances of harassment was greater than any individual at the meeting had previously known about.

In light of these reports, the NNOC decided to establish a task force on government travel restrictions.

Following the National Network meeting, the *Militant* contacted a number of those who had been targets of government harassment.

Pam Montanaro is a campaign coordinator of the Freedom to Travel Campaign (FTC) based in San Francisco. The campaign organized a delegation to the World Solidarity Conference with Cuba, held in the capital city, Havana, last October.

"U.S. Customs harassed eight of us for almost an hour in Montreal, Quebec," on the trip back from Cuba, Montanaro told the *Militant*. Others who were stopped included Jesse Cagan of the U.S.-Cuba Information Project and Holly Fincke of the Venceremos Brigade. Fincke is one of the four national coordinators of the National Network.

"They photocopied our passports and other information and searched us. Later we received letters from the Treasury Department," said Montanaro.

The letters, signed by William Wasley, chief of enforcement for the Office of Foreign Assets Control, said, "It is hereby ordered that you provide this office with complete details in writing concerning all trips you have made to Cuba." It went on to say that anyone who "knowingly and willfully falsifies, conceals or covers up" such information could receive a maxi-



Militant/Paul Montauk

Participants in October 1993 Freedom to Travel Challenge bring insulin to hospital in Cuba. Sixty had their passports taken by U.S. Customs upon their return.

mum \$10,000 fine or be "imprisoned not more than five years, or both."

The letters said they were to respond within 10 days. None did.

Participants in the FTC's most recent trip to Cuba were once again harassed by U.S. officials upon returning through Phoenix, Arizona, January 3. Of the 60 people on the trip, 25 had their passports seized and souvenirs and gifts confiscated. The passports were later returned, and so far none have received letters from the Treasury Department.

Montanaro said that she and others in the Freedom to Travel Campaign would not be intimidated by such undemocratic government actions. The FTC is organizing another trip to Cuba April 7-14.

The FTC is no stranger to such harassment. In October 1993, 60 of 175 participants in the group's first trip had their passports taken; all were later returned. Then in June 1994 the Treasury Department froze \$48,000 in a bank account of the group — funds that were to be used for a trip to Cuba one week later. After the group received emergency donations and loans, the trip was made on schedule, despite Washington's efforts to block it.

## 'I have a right to travel to Cuba'

James Van Pelt was stopped by U.S. officials at the U.S.-Canada border last year as he and a traveling companion were returning from Cuba. The agents searched his luggage and "forced me to sign a document that renounced my things from Cuba," he said.

Van Pelt, a member of the Connecticut Coalition on Cuba, had been part of the U.S.-Cuba Friendship Caravan that traveled to Havana for the World Solidarity Conference and to deliver material aid. Customs agents questioned Van Pelt and his companion about who they had traveled with and their financial transactions.

"I think I have a right to travel anywhere I want, including Cuba. Stopping me is unconstitutional," Van Pelt told the *Militant*.

Treasury Department officials later came to Van Pelt's home in Connecticut to interrogate him about the trip. They warned him that further action could be taken against him. Van Pelt told the National Network meeting in February that an annual trip to Cuba by a Connecticut group of senior citizens has been canceled because of concerns over U.S. government harassment.

## Attack on academic freedom

Wayne Smith and five other professors at U.S. universities were held at the Miami airport for four and a half hours by Treasury and Customs agents and threatened with arrest when they returned from a research trip in January. Smith, who currently teaches at Johns Hopkins University, was head of the U.S. Interests Section in Cuba during the Carter administration.

Following the grilling, the passports of all six academics were returned and they were released. According to the group's counsel, Margaret Ratner of the Center for Constitutional Rights, Customs agents told the six that charges are pending from the office of the attorney general. They have heard nothing further as of this writing, however.

Prior to the new regulations set by the Clinton administration in August, academics were free to travel to Cuba to conduct research.

"It was civil disobedience," Smith told the *Militant*, referring to the group's January trip. "Since August 20, the restrictions tightened. Now they say that as a researcher I must have a license from the Treasury Department. This is a violation of the First Amendment."

Smith said that he and other researchers will organize such trips "every month until this law is off the books."

## Venceremos Brigade

"The passport seizures and harassment are not having an impact on our plans to travel to Cuba this summer," Fincke, of the Venceremos Brigade, told the *Militant*. Twelve members of the brigade's last

trip, in May 1994, had their passports seized at O'Hare airport in Chicago. The passports were returned just prior to a press conference the group had called to mount public opposition to the confiscations.

Two members of the brigade returning to Denver through Dallas, Texas, were interrogated for two hours by Customs officials, and one — a woman — was subjected to a humiliating strip search.

Fincke says she is glad the National Network on Cuba "decided at the recent meeting that we must have a task force to help defend the rights of travelers."

Leslie Cagan of the Cuba Information Project, who along with Fincke is a national coordinator of the National Network, told the *Militant* that "people are concerned about what seems to be more harassment toward people who travel to Cuba. So the task force will look into ways of doing something about it."

## New regulations decrease travel

According to Bob Guild, program director of Marazul Tours, a travel agency that organizes flights to Cuba, the August change in regulations has substantially decreased travel to Cuba.

"Since the tightening of restrictions and having to go through the Treasury Department for a license," Guild told the *Militant*, "an atmosphere has been created. Not many people want to report their personal travel arrangements to the Treasury Department."

Guild reports that weekly Miami-Havana flights have declined since August from 10-12 full planes a week to only three or four. During the final quarter in 1994 only 220 researchers traveled to Cuba from the United States, compared to 800 in the last three months of 1993.

Restrictions have also been tightened on Cuban-Americans, who were previously able to travel to Cuba legally. Now Washington is demanding that they apply to travel to Cuba. Permission will only be granted in well-documented cases of an ill relative, the Treasury Department says.

Only one individual has ever been prosecuted for alleged violation of the U.S. travel regulation. That was Dan Snow of Kingston, Texas, who in 1990 was fined \$5,000 and jailed for 90 days with an additional 1,000 hours of community service on charges of "trading with the enemy."

Snow had organized sports fishing expeditions to Cuba.

## The Bolivian Diary Of Ernesto Che Guevara

Guevara's account, newly translated, of the 1966-67 guerilla struggle in Bolivia. A day-by-day chronicle by one of the central leaders of the Cuban revolution of the campaign to forge a continent-wide revolutionary movement of workers and peasants capable of contending for power. New translation includes material published in English for the first time. \$21.95

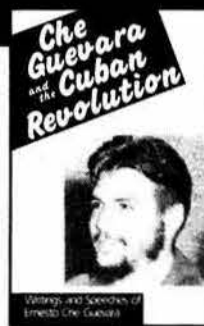
Ernesto Che Guevara  
**Bolivian diary**



## Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution

Writings and speeches of Ernesto Che Guevara

The most complete collection in English. Discusses the revolutionary war that brought the workers and farmers to victory; Cuba's efforts to overcome economic backwardness; developing a new social consciousness in a society on the road to socialism; and Cuba's commitment to freedom struggles around the world. \$21.95





# Workers and peasants in Mexico protest as 'prices keep going up'

BY LAURA GARZA

MEXICO CITY — "In January the boss came and said we would not get the raise," said Maya Rosillo, who has worked in the Carnival garment shop for seven years. "He said he had a loan, in dollars, and the interest was too high, so he couldn't give us a raise." For the first time in years, when the contract with the union was renewed there was no raise.

Like workers throughout Mexico, Rosillo and her co-workers have seen their actual pay drop in the last two months while prices on food and basic necessities have risen. As work has slowed down, explained Magdalena Moreno, most workers are earning less. She used to make about 250 pesos a week and is now earning around 170. Rosillo said her pay has been cut from 200 to around 150. Since November about 300 workers have been laid off from the plant, cutting the workforce in half.

Ricardo Santiago, a cutter in the shop, said the company has also been removing machinery little by little, but workers haven't been told what's going on. He believes they plan to relocate to Pachuco Hidalgo "where they can pay less."

Consuelo Velásquez, who works in the packing department, said she hopes workers can organize to fight against any planned move or closing of the plant. Moreno said she believes workers in the plant would be hesitant to fight for a raise right now since work is so slow.

Commenting on the loan guarantees pledged by Washington in hopes of forestalling defaults on Mexican government bonds, Velásquez said the deal "won't

benefit us, the workers will never see any of this. But we'll be more in debt."

Meanwhile, prices workers have to pay continue to rise in face of the peso's free fall. The phone company recently announced a 10 percent rate increase, and workers at the garment plant said they have seen the price of cooking oil jump 60 percent. A kilo of beef costs about 20 pesos, while the minimum wage is 16.43 pesos a day. Price hikes for public transportation were also recently announced.

## Peasant protest

"Prices keep going up but we get paid the same," said José Luis Hurtado. He was among several thousand members of the Democratic Peasants Union (UCD) who converged on the capital February 27, blocking traffic around the Zócalo, the main plaza in the center of the city. Many own small plots of land and supplement their income by working the fields or doing other jobs in the United States.

The vehicles the peasants buy in the United States, mostly trucks, are subject to a large registration fee in Mexico; some of the vehicles have been confiscated from those unable to pay the fee. The peasants were demanding legalization of their vehicles, as well as better conditions on loans and credits.

"The price of fertilizer has doubled but we still get the same prices for what we sell, a peso for a head of lettuce," said María Elena González. Hurtado explained that the price of a pound of cucumber seed has risen from 210 to 355 pesos.

Commenting on the financial pact worked out by the U.S. and Mexican gov-



Militant/Mindy Brudno

Peasants protest in Mexico February 27. Sign reads, "Stop the war in Chiapas! Support the people of Chiapas! Federal troops out! For peace and justice with dignity!"

ernments, Antonio Tirado Patiño said, "It's a disgrace. That is a debt we never asked for. But we will have to pay it."

## Flurry of protests

Other marches and protests have been taking place in recent days, causing frequent traffic jams around the Zócalo. For example, a delegation of some 1,500 farm workers from the coffee plantations in the southern province of Chiapas also arrived in the capital on February 27 to demand that land be turned over to them to till.

The ongoing protests have sparked the ire of pro-government elements, and a spate of articles appeared in the press about the need to reestablish order. The major daily *Excelsior* hung a banner in front of its building saying, "For an end to the marches!"

One of the largest recent protests was a rally organized by the Mexican Electrical Workers Union (SME), which drew a crowd estimated at up to 17,000. Workers

chanted and held signs saying, "For a decent wage with a 30 percent raise or strike" and calling for an end to privatizations of state-owned enterprises.

Meanwhile, announcements of layoffs and warnings of pending bankruptcies abound. At the Nissan plant in Cuernavaca, outside the capital, production has been cut from 450 cars a day to 240. The company laid off 1,000 workers in January, and on February 27 it began Monday shutdowns at several plants that it projects lasting through April.

General Motors announced 2,000 workers would be affected by staggered shutdowns totaling five weeks, and the truck manufacturer DINA (Diesel Nacional) announced it would discharge 366 workers and that some 2,500 others would be affected by a 60-day shutdown. Auto workers earn between 45 and 90 pesos a day, but while on shutdown many collect only 50-60 percent of their wages, depending on the company.

# Economic and political instability grows in Mexico

Continued from front page

largest insurance company and eighth-largest bank. The government cited "irregularities," including an inadequate capital base.

New regulations require banks to maintain higher reserves, given the rising number of past-due loans they are holding, but many banks don't have sufficient funds. In an article in the daily *La Jornada* March 5, figures from the National Banking Commission cite problems of capitalization and reserves for 15 other banks, including Serfin and Inverlat, the country's third- and fourth-largest banks.

## Emergency plan falters

The government has lent \$1.8 billion to banks in the last two months to help meet dollar-denominated debt obligations, but it is estimated that billions more will be needed.

The widening banking crisis is only one indication that President Ernesto Zedillo's January emergency economic plan —

which projected holding inflation to 19 percent, limiting wage hikes to 7 percent, and maintaining an exchange rate of 4.50 pesos to the dollar — has been a complete failure. Zedillo has said a new plan will be announced after the Mexican Congress approves the U.S. loan package. The Chamber of Deputies okayed the pact March 8, and the Senate was set to vote on it the following day.

Business owners are beginning to demand relief from having to pay payroll taxes. They are also asking the government to refrain from setting "unreasonable limits" on price hikes. Business and union leaders are currently in negotiations with the government on a revised pact to set emergency price and wage controls.

The main union federation, the Confederation of Mexican Workers, which has long supported the policies of the ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) and has refrained from calling any protest actions, announced that workers have suffered a 56 percent drop in buying power in

the last two months.

The Mexican Electrical Workers Union announced it would not sign any pact and has set March 16 as a strike date to demand a 30 percent wage hike.

## Mexico crisis continues to spread

Fallout from the Mexico crisis is being felt throughout Latin America, with sinking stock markets and the recent devaluation of the Brazilian currency, the real. Argentina's economy was described by the New York brokerage house Bear Stearns as being "in the teeth of a gale."

Mexico's new president has tried to shift the blame for the country's woes onto his predecessor, Carlos Salinas de Gortari. In an unfolding scandal reminiscent of a plot in a Gabriel García Márquez novel, the brother of Carlos Salinas is under arrest for the murder last September of a top PRI official, José Francisco Ruiz Massieu.

The slain politician's brother, Mario Ruiz Massieu, who was in charge of the investigation into the assassination, is now accused of covering up the role of the former president's brother, Raúl Salinas. Ruiz Massieu was arrested at the Newark International airport March 3 while attempting to flee the United States with \$46,000 in his suitcase and at least \$9 million more stashed away in U.S. banks. The sister of the Salinas brothers was previously married to the murdered official.

In a comic attempt to deflect attention from that scandal, Carlos Salinas launched an on-again, off-again hunger strike — perhaps the shortest in history. The ostensible aim was to protest Zedillo's attempt to blame Salinas for the country's current problems and to demand he be cleared of covering up facts about the assassination last year of Luis Donaldo Colosio, the PRI's initial presidential candidate.

"Some hunger strike — he didn't miss a meal," commented one OCEZ member, as participants in the peasant congress here joked about the former president's fast.

"Under Salinas we ended up with 24 billionaires while things got worse for the rest of us," said another.

Many at the congress here said they believed Raúl Salinas is guilty and his brother is a crook who enriched himself

while in office. But they also said Zedillo was using the whole affair to divert attention from the bigger problems he shares responsibility for. While Zedillo claims the arrest of Raúl Salinas heralds the dawn of fair play in Mexico and an end to impunity for corrupt ruling politicians, activists at the congress were skeptical.

"We still get no justice when we complain about conditions we face; they just send us away," said an OCEZ member. Many commented on the conduct of federal troops sent by Zedillo in February to occupy this region in southern Mexico, largely populated by peasants of Indian origin. If someone is suspected of supporting the Zapatista National Liberation Front (EZLN), the peasants say, then soldiers destroy their homes or drive them off their land.

"How can they say we have democracy while the army is still doing this?" asked a congress participant.

The Mexican government is trying to give the impression it has everything under control in Chiapas. The extraordinary session of the Mexican Congress was considering a new law with conditions for negotiations and amnesty for EZLN members. The EZLN objected to the draft law and placed several demands on the government: that the army and other repressive forces withdraw from Chiapas; that a commission of eight people, including Samuel Ruiz, Bishop of San Cristóbal, be intermediaries for the negotiations; and that the law mention the EZLN — something the first drafts avoided.

Congress adopted a revised law in early March. It incorporates some changes, including explicit mention of the EZLN, and gives the group 30 days to accept the terms and restart talks.

Meanwhile, federal troops continue to occupy towns throughout Chiapas. A demonstration of 25,000 took place March 4 in Mexico City denouncing the military occupation. On March 8, tens of thousands rallied in the Zócalo plaza in the capital to greet a "caravan for peace" composed of some 3,000 peasants and indigenous peoples from Chiapas. And students are planning strikes at 22 universities to demand an end to the occupation.



Thousands demonstrate in Zócalo plaza in Mexico City March 8 to demand that the government halt military operations against the EZLN in southern state of Chiapas.



# YOUNG SOCIALISTS AROUND THE WORLD

## Hundreds rally against anti-immigrant law

This column is written and edited by the Young Socialists, an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information about the YS or to join write: Young Socialists, P.O. Box 2396, New York, NY 10009, or call (212) 475-6482.

BY JEANNE TUOMEY

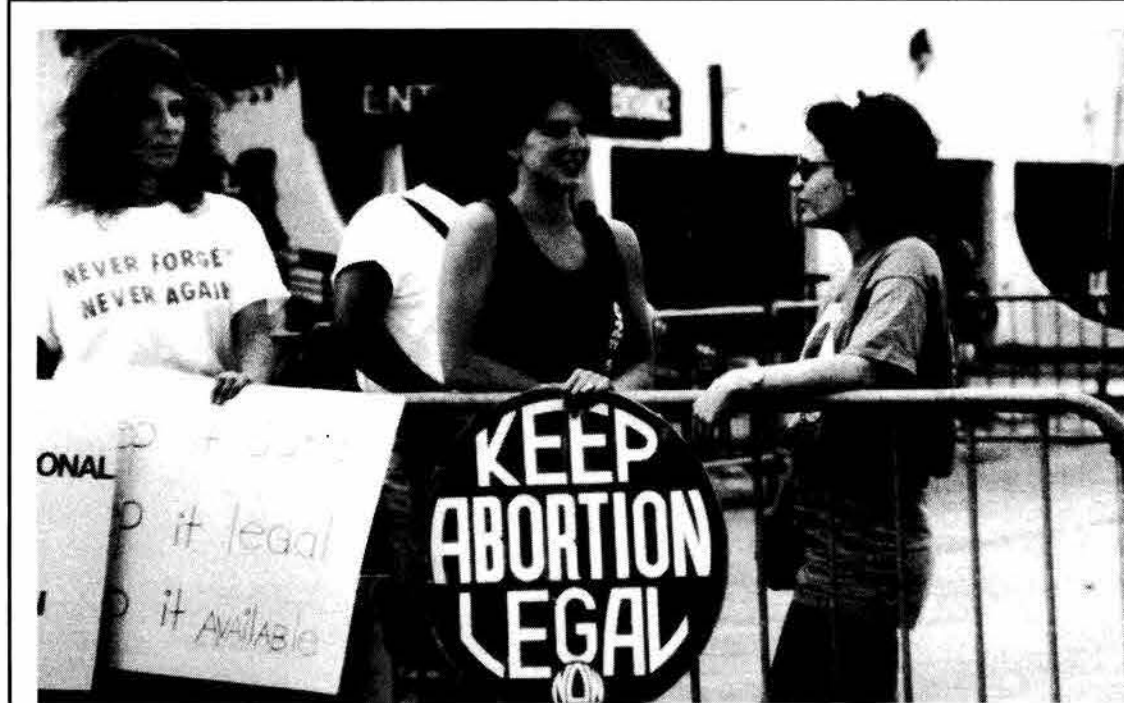
SAN FRANCISCO — "The people united, will never be divided," chanted hundreds of participants in a march and rally here to voice opposition to the anti-immigrant law, Proposition 187.

The February 20 march wound through the heart of this city's Mission District, a mostly Latino neighborhood. Promoting the theme, "Immigrant Rights are Human Rights," numerous local groups sponsored the demonstration in order to reach out to the Mission community. Rally speakers stressed the need to educate immigrants about their rights and to unite community members in actions to protest the anti-immigrant, anti-worker law.

"All people in the United States benefit from the labor of immigrants and workers," activist Celia Wong told the crowd, "yet when it comes down to it, we get blamed for everything." Wong, a recent immigrant from Hong Kong, is working with the Chinese Progressive Association, which actively protested Proposition 187.

The measure, adopted in last November's election, bars undocumented immigrants from receiving public health, education, and social services. Questioning the law's constitutionality, two California courts have placed preliminary injunctions on portions of it. Currently public workers are barred from denying services to immigrants or reporting suspected "illegal aliens" to the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

Although Proposition 187 may be tied up in the courts, the sentiment of protesters was that immigrants and other workers cannot stop fighting. According to Tom Edminster, a city high school teacher and member of the American Federation of Teachers, public school teach-



Militant/Janet Post

In response to an anti-abortion rights rally called by the Ku Klux Klan, around 60 people, mostly young, counterdemonstrated on February 24 in front of the Ladies Center in Miami, Florida. The protest demonstration was organized by the Miami Clinic Access Project. "I hate racism, and nobody has a right to decide over other people's lives," said José Estruch, an 18-year-old participant. The Klan did not show up. According to Ivan Rosero of Miami, Young Socialists members reported a lot of interest among young people at the action.

ers are actively recruiting fellow teachers to sign a petition of noncompliance.

### Students win round in France

BY FRANK HIRSCHMANN

PARIS — On Thursday, February 16, students in France celebrated their victory against the government's attempt to limit the studies of students in technical colleges and against a government-sponsored study, the Laurent report, which proposed increasing university fees, cutting scholarships, and opening university councils to local business interests.

Three thousand students demonstrated in Paris, and larger demonstrations were

organized in Toulouse and Montpellier. Between 25,000 and 30,000 young people hit the streets throughout France that day.

Many students and some student groups felt the actions were superfluous once the government abandoned plans to limit studies in technical colleges and disowned the Laurent report. The concessions, after only a week of protests, were clearly aimed at preventing further student actions. This is a sign of weakness, showing the difficulties the ruling class has in implementing its solutions for the capitalist crisis.

Leading right-wing politicians sharply criticized this latest retreat by the government of Édouard Balladur. With the presi-

## Why mine construction workers feel confident

BY JOHN HAWKINS

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama — Members of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) employed by U.S. mine construction companies ratified a new contract with the Association of Bituminous Contractors (ABC) February 10. Ratification came after working for more than a year under a contract extension and months of on-again, off-again negotiations.

In contrast with the past two agreements, the latest pact contains no new givebacks. In fact, it includes an increase

defeated by mine construction workers in Alabama by a nearly 2-to-1 margin. A host of objections were expressed here, all centered on getting back what has been lost over the past seven years.

Many mine construction workers expressed the desire to regain pay for vacations, floating and graduated vacation days, and personal days — all lost in previous contracts. They also want to restore 100 percent medical coverage, reduced to an 80-20 plan in the last two pacts.

Another frequently mentioned issue is the weakening of recall rights, which were permanent prior to 1991. Those hired since then, if laid off and not recalled within a year, now lose their seniority. And even with the wage and benefit hikes, mine construction workers will still be behind coal miners, although the gap will narrow by the time the two pacts expire.

More important than these criticisms of the contract, however, was the widespread view among mine construction workers that now would be a good time to take the companies on even if it meant a strike. Several developments fuel this sentiment.

While coal production continues to reach new highs in the United States, a big shift in where coal is mined has been under way for some years. Under the impact of environmental regulations, electric utilities are turning to suppliers of low-sulfur coal. In parts of the country where low-sulfur coal is mined production is expanding, while in areas where coal seams are mainly high sulfur companies are shutting down mines. In Illinois, for example, Peabody has closed all but one deep mine.

Here in Alabama coal operators have largely abandoned high-sulfur operations in favor of deeper, low-sulfur seams. There is a marked increase in construction of new mines and sinking of new shafts, as well as the building of new tunnels at existing mines. Preparation plants and other

surface facilities are also being modernized. This all adds up to a boom in mine construction, the likes of which has not been seen here in years.

As companies have expanded the mine construction workforce to meet the new workload, younger workers have been entering the industry. So have scores of laid-off coal miners used to working under the conditions of better contracts. These factors have increased combativity among mine construction workers as a whole. In fact, large numbers were spoiling for a fight. A commonly voiced opinion was, "There has never been a better time to strike." Workers received confirmation in January that they had the companies over a barrel. After months of unserious negotiations, ABC representatives walked out of the talks in a huff. The UMWA international responded by sending them a letter terminating the agreement in 60 days. Less than a week later, the contractors did an about-face and returned to the table.

The current combative mood has also been reinforced by encouragement from our brothers and sisters who mine coal. Most miners have little knowledge of the wages and conditions of mine construction workers, even though we all belong to the same union. Most are more than slightly displeased when they find out what has been lost by fellow union members.

Although the contractors avoided a confrontation this time, they don't have smooth sailing ahead. They stand face to face with a workforce that will grow more confident as its ranks expand and gain experience. And to the degree the upturn in mine construction extends beyond Alabama, this new mood will spread.

John Hawkins is a mine construction worker and member of UMWA Local 1867 in Alabama.

dential election only two months away, one of Balladur's contenders, Paris mayor Jacques Chirac, has repeatedly attacked the government for its "about-faces."

The students' victory in France is important internationally at a time when students in Canada, Sweden, Germany, and Britain have been fighting similar measures. A forum after the demonstration centered on the fight to defend the socialist revolution in Cuba and the need for an international communist youth organization. Several students signed up for more information about the Young Socialists.

Frank Hirschmann is a YS member in Manchester, England. Derek Jeffers, a member of the CGT Metalworkers federation in Saint Ouen, France, contributed to this article.

### 'Group upholds communism'

The following is an excerpt from an article headlined, "Group upholds communism" by Carla Eskew, published in the February 10 issue of the *Daily Vidette*, the Illinois State University (ISU) newspaper. The article announced that the Young Socialists have a weekly literature table in the student union. Appearing directly next to the article was an item headlined "Professors doubt support for ISU socialist club." An excerpt of that article follows the first item.

Individuals involved in a new organization on the ISU campus plan to work together to spread ideas of Marxist communism.

The Young Socialists organization, established at the beginning of this semester, works from a Marxist or class perspective, according to Jenny Benton, member of the organization.

"We are socialists. We are communists," she said.

Gloria Del Cid, a member of the organization, said many people think of the Soviet Union when they think of communism, but the Soviet Union was Stalinist, not communist. She said the members of the group uphold the communism that existed in the Soviet Union before Stalin came into power....

Benton said the group supports the democratic rights of everyone in the United States and around the world.

She said socialism is working in Cuba. The people have free health care, free child care and free education. "These benefits come from working together which is imperative to socialism," Benton said.

"We believe capitalism steps on people's rights. We wholeheartedly support the Cuban revolution and what it stands for," she added.

Benton said the group fights for a time when the modes of production are in the hands of the working class.

"The only way to have a true democracy is to have a government made up of the working class," she said.

From "Professors doubt support for ISU socialist club":

Gary Klass and Denis Thornton, professors of political science, both said Bloomington-Normal will probably not have much support for socialist ideas because the community is fairly conservative. "I don't think they will have very much impact on the campus," Thornton said....

"They probably will not receive a lot of support at first, but you never know, they've received a lot in the past," [Klass] said.

## UNION TALK

in wages of close to 10 percent for the three highest pay grades and well over 10 percent for the two lowest. It also includes an increase of more than 33 percent in pensions, close to 20 percent in sickness and accident pay, and 20 percent in eye and dental care.

"We didn't get all we deserved, but at least we're not going backward," was a common sentiment among mine construction workers. "If you fall off the top of a ladder, you have to climb back up a rung at a time," others said.

Compared with recent contracts in other industries, one might expect that such a proposed agreement would have met little opposition. And given the stiff battles workers in some industries are being forced to fight today to stave off company giveback demands, one might also think mine construction workers would have breathed a sigh of relief that they were able to wring the agreement out of the companies without a strike.

But that was not exactly the case. While the contract was ratified nationally, it was



# Women's liberation and class struggle

Printed below are excerpts from a report by Mary-Alice Waters that was discussed and adopted by the August 1979 national convention of the Socialist Workers Party. Waters was reporting on the resolution "Socialist Revolution and the Struggle for Women's Liberation," which was also adopted by the convention. Both the report and resolution appear in full in the three-part series entitled *Communist Continuity and the Fight for Women's Liberation*, published by Pathfinder Press.

Mary-Alice Waters is the editor of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist*. She has written extensively on the fight to end the second-class status of women, the socialist revolution in Cuba, and other topics of interest to working people. These excerpts are reprinted by permission of Pathfinder, copyright © 1992. Subheads are by the *Militant*.

## BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

The struggle for women's liberation is a form of the class struggle. It occupies a vital place in the strategic line of march of the proletariat toward the establishment of a workers government. For the first time in recorded history, such governments, on a world scale, will place power in the hands of a class that has no material interest in oppressing women. As the structure of society is overhauled from top to bottom, vast revolutionary changes in all social relations will unfold, including the eradication of all aspects of sex inequality that are institutional under class domination.

We do not say that the fight for women's liberation is a form of the class struggle only because, or even primarily because the majority of women are today part of the labor market in a few imperialist countries, like the United States. That is something very recent in historical terms. This trend indicates the direction of capitalist economic development. It creates objective conditions more favorable than ever before for the victory of the working class and for women. But the struggle for women's liberation, however episodic and embryonic, was an aspect of the class struggle for millennia prior to the current epoch of capitalism in its death agony.

It is a form of the class struggle because women's oppression itself is a product of class society. It has been an indispensable cornerstone of class society at every stage of its development.

## Greater strategic importance

Today, the integration of women into the labor market and, increasingly, into the industrial work force gives the struggle for women's liberation greater strategic importance for the class struggle than ever before. The interrelationship of the struggles of women and those of the organized labor movement is much closer. Understanding that women are both allies of the working class and an increasingly weighty component of the working class is indispensable to mobilizing the allies of the working class; indispensable to unifying the working class and helping to strengthen it politically; indispensable to preparing the working class for the socialist reconstruction of society tomorrow.

Thus, as the resolution explains, labor's strategic line of march must include support for and building of mass women's organizations, fighting for women's demands. This is intertwined with the transformation of the organized labor movement into an instrument of revolutionary struggle and the development of a class-struggle leadership of women and men.

To identify these goals, we must construct a revolutionary party whose proletarian composition includes the necessary component of women and oppressed nationalities....

This fact is important because it helps define the character of the turn we are making on a world scale to build proletarian parties whose big majority are industrial workers. It is not a turn away from the allies of labor with the greatest social weight, such as women, but a turn toward the radicalizing young working-class forces that will provide leadership for the struggles of both women and the labor movement. The resolution on "Socialist



Militant/Hilda Cuzco

January 22 march in Boston to defend abortion rights and protest murder of two clinic workers. "The oppression of women is not determined by their biology, as many contend. Its origins are economic and social in character," says 1979 SWP resolution.

Revolution and the Struggle for Women's Liberation" is not an optional extra....

The two most fundamental questions dealt with in the resolution are the origins of women's oppression in the rise of class society with its concomitant family, private property, and state; and the character of this family as an indispensable economic institution of class rule. Those two points are part of the bedrock of Marxism, of a historical-materialist approach to women's oppression — and to all of human history.

If the document failed to deal adequately with the origins of women's oppression and the character of the family system, or if it contained an analysis that was wrong on those two points, the entire political line of the resolution would go wrong. It would open the door to divorcing the struggle for women's liberation from the class struggle.

The origin of women's oppression is not something of interest solely to anthropologists. Nor is it a question that only comrades involved in debates in the women's liberation movement need to be knowledgeable about. Nor is it possible to dismiss it as a historical matter on which we need not take a position. What is at issue involves the most fundamental elements of Marxism, the principles of a materialist conception of history. The resolution says the following on the origins of women's oppression: "The oppression of women is not determined by their biology, as many contend. Its origins are economic and social in character. Throughout the evolution of pre-class and class society, women's childbearing function has always been the same. But their social status has not always been that of a degraded domestic servant, subject to man's control and command."

## The family system

"Before the development of class society, during the historical period that Marxists have traditionally referred to as primitive communism (subsistence societies), social production was organized communally and its product shared equally. There was therefore no exploitation or oppression of one group or sex by another because no material basis for such social relations existed....

"The origin of women's oppression is intertwined with the transition from pre-class to class society.... The change in women's status developed along with the growing productivity of human labor.... and the development of the possibility for some humans to prosper from the exploitation of the labor of others...."

Closely intertwined with the origins and character of women's oppression is the question of the family. The resolution reaffirms that the family system is an indispensable pillar of class rule. It is the historical mechanism institutionalizing the

social inequality that accompanies the rise of private property and perpetuating class divisions from one generation to the next. The family is first and foremost an economic institution that has evolved a great deal as it has adapted to meet the changing ruling classes throughout all stages of class society.



## PATHFINDER AROUND THE WORLD

By Sara Lobman

Pathfinder, located in New York with distributors in Australia, Britain, and Canada, publishes books and pamphlets by revolutionary fighters whose struggles against capitalism, racism, and all forms of exploitation and oppression point the way forward for humanity. Pathfinder bookstores are listed in the directory on page 12.

Pathfinder's new 1995 catalog is now available for distribution. The catalog is Pathfinder's central promotional piece. The attractive presentation and concise explanations of each book are designed to introduce new readers, bookstore buyers, and others to the range of titles published and distributed by Pathfinder.

Six full pages at the front of the 1995 catalog present new, reissued, and soon-to-be-published books. The catalog features expanded sections of works by Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, and V.I. Lenin that reflect Pathfinder's growing role in making these titles available to a new generation of workers, students, and others.

Sections on "The Cuban Revolution in World Politics" and "Trade Unions: Their Past, Present, and Future" have also been expanded, as have sections on books and pamphlets in Spanish, French, Farsi, Greek, Icelandic, Russian, and Swedish.

The catalog has a full-color cover highlighting the covers of several titles, including *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*, *Lenin's Final Fight*, *The Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara*, and *In Defense of Marxism*. The back cover displays the English, French, Spanish, and Swedish editions of *New Internationalist*, a Marxist magazine of politics and theory distributed by Pathfinder.

The catalog will be an important addition to Pathfinder bookstore displays and literature tables. Promoters of Pathfinder can use it to initiate discussions at their workplaces, campuses, and with anyone who wants to learn more about the history and lessons of

Because the family system is indispensable to the structuring of social inequality, the economic dependence of women and their oppression within the family system is likewise indispensable to class rule. The domestic labor of women in the home provides the least expensive and most ideologically acceptable system of reproduc-

working-class struggles that are the subject of Pathfinder books and pamphlets. It is an excellent tool to win new members to the Pathfinder Readers Club. Many readers will find more titles that interest them than they can afford at one time! The Readers Club, which offers a 15 percent discount off all Pathfinder titles and even greater discounts during special sales, makes it possible for working people and youth to build libraries over time as a basis for regular reading and study.

The Pathfinder business office is preparing a mailing of nearly 7,000 catalogs to bookstores, libraries, professors, and individuals, including all those who have ordered books from Pathfinder this year. Sales representatives plan to follow up on this mailing with visits to bookstores and libraries in their area.



Pathfinder supporters attending the February 24-March 5 Mexico City Book Fair report that Pathfinder books and pamphlets got a tremendous reception. The Pathfinder table was staffed by volunteers from both Mexico and the United States. In addition to a regular crowd around the Pathfinder booth, 50 people attended a March 2 reception hosted by Pathfinder at the site of the book fair.

One week into the fair, participants had purchased some \$1,000 of Pathfinder literature, including a wide range of titles in Spanish and English. These include *Habla Malcolm X* (Malcolm X speaks); *El socialismo y el hombre en Cuba* (Socialism and man in Cuba) by Ernesto Che Guevara; *Sudáfrica: La revolución en camino* (The coming revolution in South Africa); *Nelson Mandela: Intensifiquemos la lucha* (Intensify the struggle); *Peru's 'Shining Path': Evolution of a Stalinist Sect*; *Problems of Women's Liberation*; and both the English- and Spanish-language editions of *New Internationalist* with the article "Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War."



ing labor power. It minimizes the proportion of the social surplus consumed in raising each new generation, and maximizes the proportion available for private accumulation. Thus, women's oppression is not an inessential or optional feature of class society.

On the question of the family — as with the origin of women's oppression — the resolution firmly rejects a number of false ideas.

First, we reject the argument that the family system is something that is useful to the ruling class in capitalist society but not necessary. Could capitalism create some other social mechanism to organize the reproduction of labor power and perpetuate class divisions? We say no. It's not possible. Historical materialism precludes that. The family setup, however modified, is indispensable.

Secondly, we reject the idea that there has been any fundamental change in the function of the family system under capitalism. Today's urban "nuclear family" may look quite different from the extended farm family of the last century, to say nothing of the family under classical slave society. But the fact that the family is less and less a productive unit does not alter its essential function as the transmission belt for dividing society between those who own the major means of production and those who do not, between the exploiters and the exploited.

Under capitalism the state begins to take over general responsibility for some social tasks previously borne almost exclusively by each individual family — such as education (previously the exclusive privilege of the ruling classes), health care, or social security for the elderly. But such social programs are never designed to replace the family. They reinforce it. There is never a doubt that each family bears ultimate responsibility for its own. This becomes most obvious in any period of economic crisis, when cuts in social services brutally shift a growing burden of responsibility back onto the shoulders of each individual family of working people.

#### Rise of industrial capitalism

Thirdly, the resolution reiterates the discovery made by Marx and Engels more than a century ago that the family is an alien class institution historically imposed on the working class. With the rise of industrial capitalism, as women and children were incorporated into the work force in massive numbers, often working 12- and 14-hour days, the family began disintegrating in the working class. The ruling class consciously intervened to reinforce and strengthen the family in the last quarter of the nineteenth century because its disintegration was posing a threat to capitalist domination.

The social mechanism for reproducing human beings healthy enough and "socialized" enough to sell their labor power and produce surplus value for a few years was falling apart. For society to take general responsibility for raising and minimally educating children was economically precluded. The costs of such social care could only be taken out of surplus value and thus reduce profits. So the family structure had to be reimposed on the working class.

We reject the position that is advanced by many women in the feminist movement...that it was male workers who benefited from the introduction of protective legislation that kept women out of many industries in the nineteenth century. Likewise, we reject the argument that male workers have a material stake in the oppression of women in the family and thus benefited from reinforcing the family....

Fourthly, the resolution makes it clear that the disintegration of the family system is inevitable as capitalism inexorably draws more and more women into the work force. This is evident in the steadily climbing divorce rates in all of the advanced capitalist countries. The family ceases to be a productive unit in the working class, and then begins to disintegrate as every adult member goes out and sells his or her labor power individually on the capitalist labor market. Despite wage differentials and job discrimination, women

thereby gain a qualitatively new degree of economic independence. But there is not and there cannot be any alternative to the family system so long as social relations are based on the existence and maintenance of private property.

The disintegration of the family system under capitalism brings great suffering to the masses of working people. In bourgeois society, the contradiction between the romantic mythology surrounding marriage and the reality of personal relations is so acute that — in addition to all the economic hardship that comes with the disintegration of the family — it wreaks emotional and psychological havoc on millions of human beings every year. Many never recover.

We solidarize with those who face such personal misery. But unlike the Stalinists who tell a double lie — about what capitalism has in store for us and about what can be done — we tell the truth. We say there is no way to "save the family." As all institutions of class rule, it will continue to decay and disintegrate because capitalism has outlived its historically progressive role. The relations of production come more and more into conflict with the forces of production.

#### Private property

But until we eradicate the economic system based on private property and eliminate economic compulsion as the bond that corrodes all social relations and prevents them from having a truly human character, the disintegration of the family with all its attendant misery is just one more catastrophe capitalism has in store for us. It is one more reason to fight to get rid of this rotten system. And one more reason to demand a total social security program that covers every aspect of the economic and social needs of working people.

We reject the notion that communes or any other "alternative life-style" offer a social alternative under capitalism — even if a few individuals find what they imagine is a tolerable personal solution that way. And insofar as the search for "life-style" alternatives under capitalism becomes a political orientation, it is a road away from the class struggle and a revolutionary working-class perspective of trying to end the system that is the source of misery for millions.

Fifthly, the resolution stresses the role of the family in molding the character structure, the social and sexual behavior of each new generation. Within the family the attitudes and values that are necessary for survival in class society are inculcated in each individual child — respect for hierarchy and authority, sexual repression, and so forth. This kind of "education" can only be done within the family from the earliest age. There is no economic possibility for it to be accomplished elsewhere under capitalism. In this sense the family plays an indispensable ideological — as well as economic — role. But the "socializing" function is not what fundamentally defines and ultimately shapes the family institution.

Sixthly, we reject the idea that the family is basically a sexual relationship, or that any particular kind of sexual behavior represents a threat to the family system. The disintegration of the family is not the result of an evolving "sexual revolution." Changes in sexual mores are the product of greater economic independence of women. It is this growing economic independence that brings about the disintegration of the family and the consequent cultural changes.

The monogamous norm has always been for women only. Only in the last century, with the ideological buttressing of the family institution in order to reimpose it on the working class, has the myth been propagated that most sexual relations take place within the family between husband and wife. Throughout recorded history the opposite has been the case. In the ruling class, sexual relations between husband and wife were for procreation, and most sexual activity, especially for men, was outside of the family....

The realization that women's oppression  
Continued on Page 12

## FROM PATHFINDER MARCH IS WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

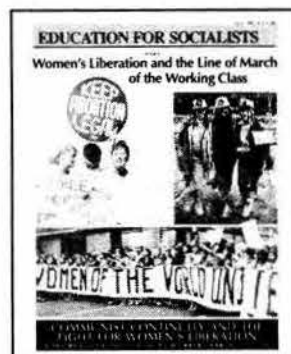
25% DISCOUNT TO MEMBERS OF THE  
PATHFINDER READERS CLUB  
OFFER ENDS MARCH 31, 1995

### Communist Continuity and the Fight for Women's Liberation (3 parts)

DOCUMENTS OF  
THE SOCIALIST  
WORKERS PARTY,  
1971-86

Edited with an  
introduction by  
Mary-Alice Waters

How did the  
oppression of  
women begin?  
Who benefits?  
What social forces  
have the power to  
end the second-  
class status of  
women? This three-part series helps  
politically equip the generation of women  
and men joining battles in defense of  
women's rights today.  
3 vols. 8 1/2 x 11 format set \$30.00  
(special offer \$22.50)



Women's Liberation and the Line of  
March of the Working  
Class Part 1 \$10.00 (special offer \$7.50)

Women, Leadership, and the Proletarian  
Norms of the  
Communist Movement Part 2 \$9.00  
(special offer \$6.75)

Abortion Rights, the ERA, and the  
Rebirth of a Feminist  
Movement Part 3 \$11.00  
(special offer \$8.25)

### On the Emancipation of Women

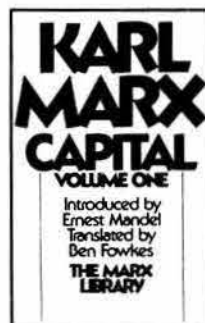
V.I. Lenin

Writings and speeches by the  
central leader of the Russian  
revolution on the fight for  
women's equality and the struggle  
for socialism. \$4.95  
(special offer \$3.70)

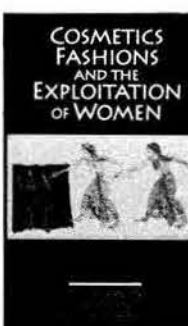
### Capital

Karl Marx

Marx explains that the capitalist  
system is a specific stage in the  
development of class society; how  
large-scale modern industry draws  
men, women, and children into the  
factories and into the army of  
unemployed that competes for  
jobs. And how at the same time this



produces the  
insoluble contra-  
dictions that make  
possible the  
transformation of  
society into one  
ruled for the first  
time in history by  
the majority, the  
producers.  
Volume 1. \$13.95  
(special offer \$10.45)



### Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women

Joseph Hansen,  
Evelyn Reed, and  
Mary-Alice Waters

How big business  
promotes  
cosmetics to

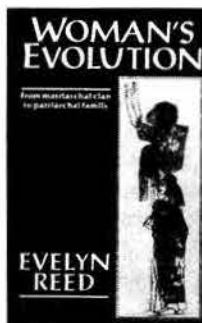
generate profits and perpetuate the  
oppression of women. In her introduction,  
Mary-Alice Waters explains how the entry  
of millions of women into the workforce  
during and after World War II irreversibly  
changed U.S. society and laid the basis for  
a renewed rise of struggles for women's  
equality. \$12.95 (special offer \$9.70)

### Woman's Evolution

FROM MATRIARCHAL CLAN TO  
PATRIARCHAL FAMILY

Evelyn Reed

Assesses women's leading and still  
largely unknown contributions to the  
development of  
human civilization  
and refutes the  
myth that women  
have always been  
subordinate to  
men. "Certain to  
become a classic in  
women's history" —  
Publishers Weekly.  
\$22.95 (special  
offer \$17.20)

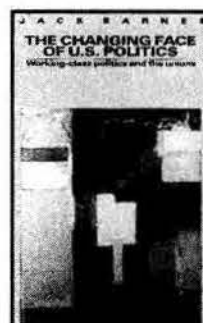


### The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

WORKING-CLASS POLITICS  
AND THE TRADE UNIONS

Jack Barnes

Shows how millions of  
workers, as political  
resistance to the uncertain  
life, ceaseless turmoil, and  
brutality of capitalism grows,  
will revolutionize them-  
selves, their unions, and all of society. As  
part of these battles, Barnes explains, the  
fight against the oppression of women is in  
"both the immediate and the historic  
interests of the entire working class."  
\$19.95 (special offer \$14.95)



### IN SPANISH

El manifiesto comunista  
Karl Marx and Frederick Engels,  
THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO  
Booklet \$5.00  
(special offer \$3.75)

### IN FRENCH

Manifeste du parti  
communiste  
Karl Marx and Frederick Engels  
THE COMMUNIST MANIFESTO  
\$5.95 (special offer \$4.45)

### Join the Pathfinder Readers Club

For a \$10 annual fee you can take advantage of special offers like  
these and get a 15 percent discount on all other Pathfinder titles

AVAILABLE FROM YOUR LOCAL PATHFINDER BOOKSTORE OR WRITE PATHFINDER, 410 WEST  
STREET, NEW YORK, NY 10014 TELEPHONE (212) 741-0690 FAX (212) 727-0150



# Caterpillar and auto union set to renew talks on March 16

BY JON HILLSON  
AND DEBORAH LIATOS

PEORIA, Illinois — Members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) on strike against Caterpillar here and in nearby Mossville and Decatur welcomed a March 1 announcement by the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service that negotiations would resume March 16 in Indianapolis. The strike against the world's leading heavy equipment producer is entering its ninth month.

On picket lines, in shanties, and at the union hall, the strikers' determination is clearly visible. Here in Peoria, they have gone through the winter at many gates in sturdy, insulated shacks, equipped with stoves and stocked with coffee and food.

"We can be just as bullheaded as [Caterpillar chief executive officer] Don Fites," said Joe Leddy, a Peoria striker who has worked for the company 27 years.

"My husband is more than a billfold to me. I'm proud of him for not crossing," said Linda Klaasan as she marched with her husband, Richard, at the weekly demonstration in front of Caterpillar's general offices in downtown Peoria March 2, along with more than 200 other strikers, spouses, and supporters. Klaasan is an activist in Families in Solidarity, which organizes the protests. She said the group meets weekly to respond to the needs of strikers' families and to build support and solidarity.

Despite subfreezing weather, the mood of the marchers was upbeat. Many had read in the *Peoria Journal Star* that the

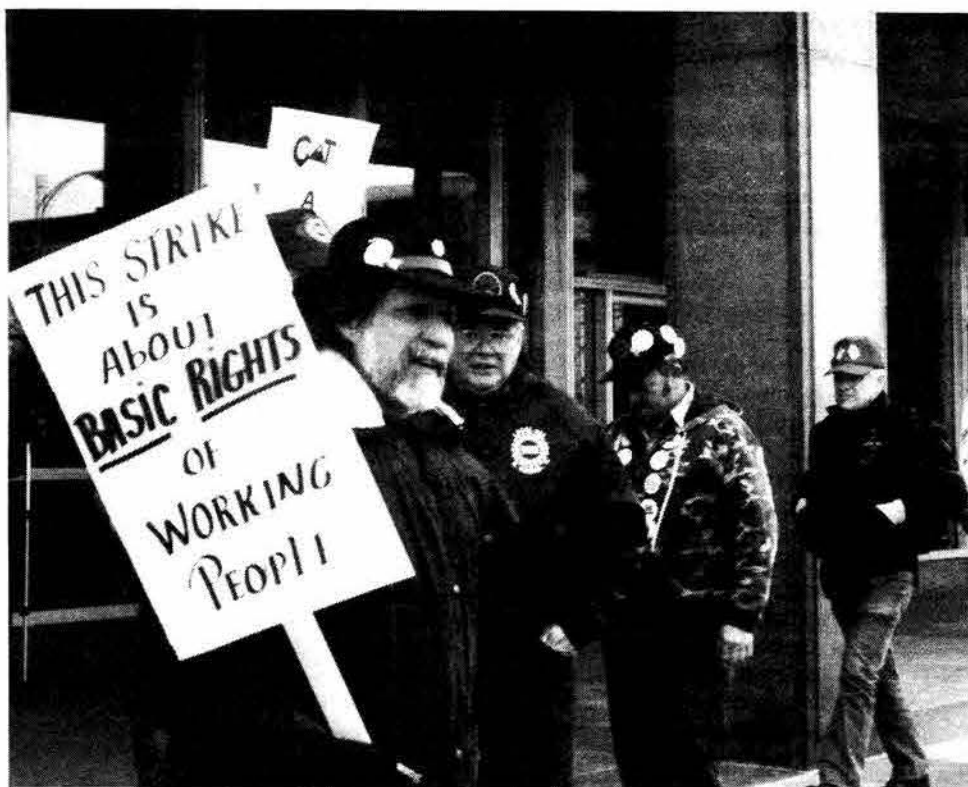
Wall Street firm Smith Barney Inc. had downgraded Caterpillar's stock from a "buy" recommendation, even though it believes the company will do better than the overall market this year. The news sent Caterpillar stock down one and three-eighths.

## Company has troubles

The *Journal Star* quoted investment analyst Blair Brumley as saying Caterpillar's growth will be slower in 1995 than 1994 "and the year after that will be smaller still."

Coverage in the U.S. financial press also continues to build pressure on Caterpillar to settle. Following the recent resolution of talks between the UAW and Deere & Co., for example, the *Wall Street Journal* reported March 7 that "Deere edged up 3/4 to 76 [on the stock market]. The Moline, Ill., farming and construction-equipment maker said the United Auto Workers union ratified a three-year labor contract involving some 10,500 UAW members. Heavy-machinery maker Caterpillar, which has dealt with an eight-month UAW strike, the longest in the company's history, dropped 1/4 to 48 3/4."

Most strikers believe, in the words of one Peoria picket, that Caterpillar has "flushed just about all they could get from us" by getting some UAW members to break ranks and cross the line. Most of the workers who went back in did so early on in the strike, and the company is having bigger and bigger morale and production problems trying to run the plants with tem-



Militant/Jon Hillson

Striking UAW members and supporters picket Caterpillar's general headquarters in Peoria, Illinois, March 2. Strikers remain firm as negotiations are set to reopen.

porary scab labor and its own white-collar employees.

A picket at the Mossville gate explained that he'd just convinced a family member to stay out on strike "and see what happens with the talks." Several pickets said between 30 percent and 40 percent of UAW members at the Mossville plant had crossed the lines. Overall, the figure is between 20 percent and 30 percent.

Caterpillar also announced in late February that it will distribute \$180 million in profit sharing and incentive pay to employees this year, including to UAW members who have remained on the picket lines. The payment is based on hours worked, and a company spokesperson said the average figure for an em-

ployee who worked all year (that is, crossed the picket line,) would be about \$1,800. The strike has been on since June. Strikers receive \$300 a week in strike benefits plus medical coverage.

## UAW president visits Decatur

UAW president Owen Bieber was accompanied by Gerald McEntee, president of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, in a visit to Decatur March 2 to show support for strikers and locked-out workers there. The visit followed a trip by 70 Decatur-area workers to the AFL-CIO Executive Council's meeting in Bal Harbour, Florida, in late February.

After visiting the picket lines at Caterpillar Inc., Bridgestone/Firestone Inc., and A.E. Staley Manufacturing, the two international presidents held a news conference at the UAW Local 751 hall. "We're here to express the solidarity of the entire labor movement with all of the workers who are fighting for dignity and fairness in Decatur," Bieber said. "Working people all over America are standing with them, and we will continue to stand with them as they work to achieve fair labor agreements with their employers."

Bieber and McEntee also addressed a meeting of some 300 members of the three striking locals at the United Paperworkers International Union (UPIU) Local 7837 hall.

Jon Hillson is a member of the United Transportation Union (UTU) in St. Paul, Minnesota. Deborah Liatos is a member of the International Association of Machinists in Philadelphia. David Marshall, a member of the UTU in Decatur, Illinois, also contributed to this article.

# Unionists ratify contract with Deere

BY ARDY BLANDFORD  
AND SHIRLEY PEÑA

DES MOINES, Iowa — Some 10,500 workers in Iowa and Illinois ratified a new three-year contract with Deere & Co., the world's largest agricultural implements manufacturer. The *Des Moines Register* reported that 70 percent of the United Auto Workers (UAW) members voting approved the agreement March 4-5. The old contract expired September 30. The union rejected a proposal from the company in October.

In the recent quarter, Deere had record sales of more than \$2 billion, raking in \$138.4 million in profits. The company, which makes equipment for farming, construction, and lawn and grounds care, has the largest union-organized workforce in Iowa, with plants in five cities.

Deere, based in Moline, Illinois, has not hired new workers here in more than a decade. For union members, this has meant many hours of overtime. To avoid hiring, the company has also contracted out many operations previously carried out by UAW members. Deere recently an-

nounced that in light of its record profits, it will be expanding production.

David Appelhans, a production worker at the Ankeny plant near here, said that for many UAW members the "average work-week has been six days a week for 10 hours a day." About 800 union members are employed at the Ankeny plant. Appelhans said workers in certain departments are forced to work 12-hour days, six days a week.

According to the *Register*, the contract is slated to run until October 1997 and includes no wage increases. Instead, workers will receive a \$500 ratification bonus, plus lump-sum payments totaling 4 percent of wages the first year; 3 percent the second, and 3 percent the third. Cost-of-living provisions from previous Deere contracts remain intact.

The agreement also calls for a new tier in the wage scale. New hires in production jobs will begin at 70 percent of the wages of current workers. Their hourly earnings will increase by steps each year, bringing them to full scale in the third year of the contract.

With many unionists at Deere nearing retirement, contract provisions dealing with pension benefits and medical coverage were a major concern. The new contract lifts the cap on retirement benefits, so retirees will receive their payments regardless of other income. Retirees will also receive three lump-sum payments of \$600 each over the next two years. Medical coverage remains largely the same.

The union "repelled the takeaway" demands of the company, said Bill Casstevens, UAW international secretary-treasurer.

At the contract meeting for Local 450 in Ankeny, Eugene Brown, a welder with 23 years in the plant, told the *Militant* that Deere is "trying to make gobs of money. The way they are doing that is cutting the wages and the amount of workers."

"They have made record profits," Brown said. "It will take three years for [new] workers to make top wages. This is good for the company. All the changes they are making are for their benefit and not for anyone else. The same thing is happening to all workers," he added.

"It's called greed," said Dean Parker, an East Moline, Illinois, punch press operator critical of the proposal. "But it's the best we are going to do."

The new pact expands an incentive program based on "teams" of workers in certain departments. Now the incentive pay will be based on weekly improvements in the team's output. The company also agreed to implement a profit-sharing agreement.

At the contract meeting in East Moline union members took a collection for UAW members on strike against Caterpillar since last June.

Ardy Blandford is a member of UAW Local 270 in Clive, Iowa. Shirley Peña is a member of UAW Local 997 in Newton, Iowa.

# Book fair is biggest U.S.-Cuba exchange since 1962 embargo

BY MICHAEL BAUMANN  
AND MICHEL DUGRÉ

HAVANA — More than 60 representatives from 27 publishers and periodicals in the United States are taking part in a two-week exhibit of U.S. books here, open to the public until March 13.

The exhibit, jointly sponsored by the Association of American Publishers and the Cuban Book Institute, is made up of more than 6,000 titles donated by the various publishing houses. Following the presentation, the books will be given to a number of Cuban libraries and cultural institutions.

The event represents the largest cultural exchange between the United States and Cuba since Washington imposed an embargo on trade with Cuba in 1962, three years after workers and farmers took power here from the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship.

In recent years, "information" products such as books and newspapers have been virtually the only exception to the brutal restrictions on trade with Cuba by U.S. companies. At the same time, however,

travel to Cuba for the purpose of promoting such trade is permitted only under special license by the Treasury Department. The delegation organized by the Association of American Publishers is the first trip of this kind.

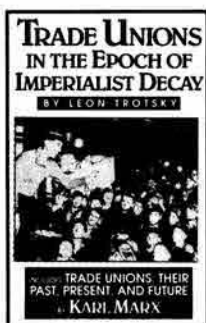
Participating publishers include Random House, Bantam, Doubleday, Dell, Readers Digest, HarperCollins, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Grolier, Pathfinder, Hearst, Wiley, Penguin, and McGraw Hill.

In a ceremony opening the exhibit February 27, Pablo Pacheco of the Cuban Book Institute pointed to the potential market Cuba represents for books from other countries, including the United States. The revolution has made possible one of the highest literacy rates in the world, he pointed out.

Nicholas Veliotes, president of the Association of American Publishers, and Roland Algrant of Hearst Books International also spoke. They said the exhibit was an important if limited step toward developing relations between publishers in the United States and their counterparts in Cuba.

## "Trade Unions: Their Past, Present and Future" by Karl Marx

Featured in *Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay*  
By Leon Trotsky



In this book, two central leaders of the modern communist workers movement outline the fight for a revolutionary perspective. 156 pp., \$14.95

Available at bookstores, including those listed on page 12, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Phone: (212) 741-0690.



# 'How workers use our unions is key'

## Socialist garment and textile workers assess capitalist crisis and labor response

BY ESTELLE DeBATES

NEW YORK — Socialist workers in the garment and textile industries gathered here February 25-26 to discuss the economic and social crisis of world capitalism and the tasks before communists in the trade unions today.

Participating in the meeting were members of the Socialist Workers Party who are active in the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) and the International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union (ILGWU). At back-to-back conventions in June, the two unions will merge to form the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE).

The merger, announced just a few days before the meeting, was initiated by the officialdoms of the two unions in response to declining membership and dues income. ACTWU's membership has dropped from a high of 400,000 in 1976 to 200,000 today; the ILGWU fell from 457,000 in 1968 to 150,000.

The impending merger has been a topic of discussion in many garment and textile workplaces, participants in the meeting reported. Socialists in these plants have been talking with co-workers about the need to build a fighting labor movement workers can use to defend our class as a whole against the employers' drive to reduce wages, worsen job conditions, and take back union and political rights we've fought for and won.

### Unions announce merger

In and of itself, the merger does nothing to strengthen workers' ability to advance along these lines, said Karen Ray, a textile mill worker from Boston, in her opening report to the meeting. The workers are the union, she said, and it's what we do with these potentially powerful working-class institutions that is decisive.

"Every day news stories point out the instability of the capitalist system," Ray said. The severe austerity drive against workers in Mexico foretells what capitalism has to offer all workers, not just in the Third World but also in the United States and other industrially advanced capitalist countries. "Our job is to present the other road — socialism — to the growing numbers of workers and youth looking for solutions in face of today's depression conditions," said Ray. "This means arming ourselves and other workers to better understand the class struggle as it unfolds and how we can fight back today."

Discussion on these themes continued at a public forum February 25, following the opening session of the meeting. Wendy Lyons, a member of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee who is a garment worker in Philadelphia, was the featured speaker.

"The New York Times recently reported



Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union members picket Kmart last November. "Workers acted like a union," socialist garment worker told meeting.

there are 2,000 sweatshops in this city," said Lyons. "The horrible conditions in these shops are of the type that led to the great struggles that organized workers into the unions." Lyons put these conditions into the larger picture of the crisis facing working people worldwide. Some 820 million people — 30 percent of the world's population — are either unemployed or underemployed, she reported.

Lyons said that Socialist Workers candidates for local and state offices are presenting a program calling for a 30-hour workweek for 40 hours' pay; unemployment compensation at union wages; a sliding scale of wages to compensate for inflation's effects on workers' buying power; defense and extension of affirmative action; an immediate increase in the minimum wage; universalization of government-funded pensions, workers compensation, and other social security measures as rights for all; and cancellation of the Third World debt.

### 'Build and join protests'

A labor-led fight for such demands, she said, would strengthen the unity of the working class internationally and win allies to its side among other working people and layers of the middle classes.

Brock Satter, Socialist Workers candidate for New York state assembly in the 68th district, chaired the forum. Satter, a garment worker in New York, encouraged everyone to build and join the protests against plans for deep cuts in education,

health care, and other social needs announced by the state and city administrations.

A highlight of the meeting was the experience of going through the organizing drive and contract fight by 500 workers at a Kmart distribution center in Greensboro, North Carolina. "Workers began organizing to get better benefits and working conditions without having a union," said Joan Paltrineri, "fighting in many ways, including work stoppages, concrete gains were won because workers acted like a union." In September 1993 the workers voted by a 2-to-1 margin to join ACTWU, despite an intense anti-union campaign by the company.

Since then workers have been trying to win a contract. They carried out a one-week strike last November protesting Kmart's unfair labor practices. After the walkout, which involved 78 percent of the permanent workers, some workers who had crossed the line decided to join the union.

Socialists who work at the distribution center said they have had many discussions with co-workers not only on the union struggle but also a broad range of political issues. Many have bought copies

of the *Militant* or subscribed, and five bought copies of issue no. 10 of *New Internationalist* during a recent campaign to sell the Marxist magazine.

The events at Kmart are part of a broader organizing effort by workers in the South who are standing up to the nonunion set-up. Around 5,000 textile and garment workers in the region have organized into ACTWU in the past year.

### Talking socialism on the job

"Defense of socialist Cuba is inseparable from talking socialism with our co-workers," said Rollande Girard from Miami, reporting to the meeting on tasks to strengthen the work of socialist workers in the union and among fellow workers.

"We have many opportunities to talk to co-workers about Cuba and to involve them in activities," she said. Girard pointed to the call by the National Network on Cuba for April educational activities to "tell the truth about Cuba" and nationally coordinated regional demonstrations in October against Washington's hostile policies toward the Caribbean country.

Other opportunities include organizing discussions with recent participants in the International Youth Brigade to Cuba and the upcoming speaking tour of two Cuban youth leaders, Rogelio Polanco and Kenia Serrano.

Participants in the meeting related recent experiences in this work — from bringing other garment workers to attend a recent New York meeting for Pável Díaz, a leader of the Union of Young Communists of Cuba, to getting a textile worker in Greensboro to donate work boots as an act of solidarity with fighting workers in Cuba who face shortages of many things, including work equipment.

The socialist workers also resolved to increase efforts to build solidarity with the United Auto Workers' eight-month-long strike against Caterpillar and to join teams of *Militant* distributors in central Illinois where the strike is centered. The need to step up efforts to win endorsers for the Mark Curtis Defense Committee among garment and textile workers was also discussed. Curtis is a framed-up union and political activist serving a 25-year sentence in an Iowa prison.

Special efforts will continue to help socialists get jobs in the industry and union in New York City, long a leading U.S. garment center, and to continue to study Spanish, which is the first language of many garment workers.

## Drapery workers get contract but boss keeps 'replacements'

BY FLOYD FOWLER  
AND ELLEN HAYWOOD

LOUISVILLE, Georgia — Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) members here and in nearby Waynesboro voted this past December to end their two-month-long strike, approving their second contract with a New York-based drapery manufacturer.

The company opened the Samson's and Delila Manufacturing Co. plants in the 1960s to take advantage of lower wages in the rural South. The owners paid minimum wage to the overwhelmingly Black and female workforce. As one worker put it, the plant was "like a cotton field with a roof over our heads."

In the late 1980s workers won a hard-fought union recognition drive, voting in ACTWU. In 1991 they won their first contract. The workers rejected the company's final offer on the eve of its expiration and walked out October 24.

About 300 of the 650 production workers joined the strike. The unionists rejected management's proposed 3 percent

pay raise over a 14-month contract. The December settlement allowed the company to retain 55 replacement workers brought in during the strike. One hundred two of the lowest seniority workers were not recalled but instead placed on a "preferential hiring list."

The three-year contract provides a 10 percent wage increase. The company agreed to continue to pay for health insurance. There is no pension plan.

A handful of workers fired since the last pact who filed unfair labor practice complaints were rehired with back pay or given lump-sum payment if they chose not to return.

"It made a lot of people mad," said Morris Lockhard, 19, one of the workers not yet recalled. "I don't think I'll get back to work."

"The biggest complaint we have is that not everyone gets to go back to work," said Willie Lovett, member of ACTWU Local 2524 in Waynesboro. "Our slogan was: 'We all came out together, we're all going back together.'"

## Socialist meatpackers discuss industry restructuring and set political tasks

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

DES MOINES, Iowa — Members of the Socialist Workers Party employed in the meatpacking industry organized by the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) met here February 25-26. They discussed, among other things, the current stage of the strike by United Auto Workers members against earth-moving giant Caterpillar and the need for ongoing solidarity activities with this fight.

Participants also discussed how to more effectively use the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and socialist books and pamphlets on the job on a weekly basis; win support for SWP election campaigns; and involve co-workers in Cuba defense work.

The packinghouse bosses are restructuring the industry. Hog production is undergoing a transformation with the development of giant hog confinement operations run as corporate farms. This is deepening the crisis for small farmers who are being forced off the land. The polluted environment created by these operations devastates entire rural communities.

The packing bosses are driving to mechanize hog kill-floor operations as well.

Several giant companies like Hormel

and Wilson reported record profits last year. For workers, however, this has meant massive overtime as well as a labor shortage in many plants. At the same time, with corporations like Tyson Foods and Premium Standard Farms now getting into pork, intensified competition will lead to more attacks on workers' wages, benefits, and safety on the job.

Several participants pointed to the multinational composition of the workforce in many packing plants. At the IBP plant in Perry, Iowa, for example, there are workers originally from Sudan, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Mexico.

Ruth Nebbia, a meatpacker in Des Moines, pointed to some successes in winning co-workers to support the defense of Mark Curtis, a political activist and former meatpacker framed up and imprisoned for six and a half years on phony rape and burglary charges. A showing of the *Frame-up of Mark Curtis* video to some co-workers led a worker from Sudan to begin showing it to other workers.

The chief shop steward at the IBP Perry plant and president of the chapter of the League of Latin American Citizens (LULAC) also saw the video and is now looking into showing it to the LULAC chapter.



# The fight for women's rights and the class struggle

Continued from Page 9

sion is above all an economic question and that everything else is derivative is the essence of a materialist understanding of that oppression. Without that as your starting point, you will lose your bearings in understanding class society and the class struggle as a whole. Failure to grasp this fact is at the root of the erroneous positions held by many feminists on the question of whose interests are served by women's oppression....

## Affirmative Action

What is our political strategy for raising the class consciousness of male and female workers? In addition to the demands we advance for basic democratic rights such as legal equality, abortion, and others, we put forward basically two axes of struggle.

1. We concretize our demands for socializing the domestic labor of women — such as child care.

2. We demand preferential action programs for women in education, employment, job training, in order to break down the barriers that have kept women out of sectors of the economy traditionally restricted to males.

The fight for preferential programs, for affirmative action, plays a decisive role in effecting changes in consciousness on a mass scale. It undercuts the divisions and stratifications that are used to hold down the wages and working conditions of all workers. Male and female workers can be convinced that it is in their class interest to fight for such demands.

Secondly, the fight for affirmative action makes both men and women more conscious of all the ways in which discrimination against women is built into this society. Oppression is not an idea or a state of mind, it is a social relation. It has material consequences in unequal conditions of life and labor, and deliberate measures are needed in all areas to overcome the results of centuries of oppression of women.

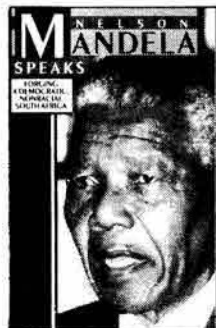
Thirdly, affirmative-action victories begin in the most fundamental way to undercut sexist attitudes toward women. As women break down the social barriers of their second-class status, they gain self-confidence. Men begin to see their women co-workers as equal human beings. They learn to respect and judge women more as people and less as female sex-objects. That has a powerful impact on the attitudes and conduct of millions of men and women in their personal lives. Men do start sharing the housework.

It is by charting this kind of political course of mass struggle for affirmative action and other demands that we seek to break through the false consciousness that's engendered by the ruling class. It is along this path that we help the working class to think socially and act politically, and thereby become more class conscious.

Mass independent women's organizations have a vital role to play in helping to advance in this direction. Their actions can converge with progress by vanguard workers in transforming the labor movement and forging the kind of working-class leadership that is necessary for women's struggles.

## NELSON MANDELA SPEAKS

Tells the story of the struggles that have brought the democratic revolution in South Africa to a new stage.  
**\$18.95**



Available from your local Pathfinder bookstore or write Pathfinder, 410 West Street, New York, NY 10014. Telephone (212) 741-0690 Fax (212) 727-0150.

## -MILITANT LABOR FORUMS-

### GEORGIA

#### Atlanta

**We Don't Come Here to Die: Labor's Fight for Safety on the Job.** Panel discussion. Sat., March 18, 7:30 p.m. 803 Peachtree (corner of 5th and Peachtree). Donation: \$3. Tel: (404) 724-9759.

### ILLINOIS

#### Chicago

**Socialist Workers 1995 Campaign, a Working Class Alternative.** Speaker: Raymond Parsons, SWP candidate for mayor of Chicago. Sat., March 18, 5 p.m. 545 W. Roosevelt Rd. Donation: \$4. Translation into Spanish. Tel: (312) 829-6815.

### IOWA

#### Des Moines

**Crisis in Mexico.** Speaker: Norton Sandler. Sat., March 18, 7 p.m.  
**The Fight for Women's Rights Today.** Sat., March 25, 7 p.m.  
Both events at 2105 Forest Ave. Donation: \$3. Tel: (515) 246-8249.

### MASSACHUSETTS

#### Boston

**Revolutionary South Africa Today: An Eyewitness Report.** Speaker: Vanessa Knapton, reporter for the *Militant* at African National Congress conference, member of Young Socialists and United Transportation Union. Sat., March 18, 7:30 p.m. 780 Tremont St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

### MICHIGAN

#### Detroit

**Police Frame-ups: Why They Happen, How to Fight Them.** Speakers: Susan Berman, Communist League and member of Canadian Auto Workers, and Kimberly Trent, National Association of Black Journalists. Sat., March 18, 7:30 p.m. 7414 Woodward Ave. (1 block north of Grand Blvd.) Donation: \$4. Tel: (313) 875-0100.

### NORTH CAROLINA

#### Greensboro

**Why All Working People Should Defend Affirmative Action.** Speaker: Diane Shur, Socialist Workers Party, member of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union. Sun., March 19, 6 p.m. 2000C South Elm-Eugene St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (910) 272-5996.

### WASHINGTON

#### Seattle

**Defend Affirmative Action!** Panel discussion. Sat., March 18, 7:30 p.m.  
**The Fight for Women's Rights.** Speaker: Pat Grogan, Socialist Workers Party, member of United Steelworkers of America, co-author of pamphlet *Abortion Is a Woman's Right*. Sat., March 25, 7:30 p.m.  
Both events at 1405 E. Madison Ave. Donation: \$3. Tel: (206) 323-1755.

### AUSTRALIA

#### Sydney

**Crisis in Mexico: Class Struggle and**

**Currency Collapse Intensify Capitalist Instability Worldwide.** Speaker: Linda Harris, Communist League Election Campaign and member of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union. Sat., March 18, 6 p.m. Surry Hills Neighbourhood Centre, corner Norton and Collins Sts. Donation: \$4. Tel: (02) 281 3297.

### BRITAIN

#### London

**Celebrate Women's History Month.** Sat., March 18, 6 p.m. 47 The Cut. Donation £2. Tel: 071 401 2409.

#### Manchester

**The Working Class and the Struggle for Abortion Rights Today.** Panel discussion. Sat., March 18, 6 p.m. 1st Floor, 60 Shudehill. Donation: £2. Tel: 061 839 1766.

### CANADA

#### Toronto

**Ottawa's Budget: Robbing the Poor to Pay the Rich.** Sat., March 18, 7:30 p.m. 827 Bloor St. W. (between Christie and Ossington). Donation: \$4. Tel: (416) 533-4324.

### NEW ZEALAND

#### Christchurch

**Labor and the Fight for Workplace Safety.** Speaker: Kate Rodda, Communist League. Sat., March 18, 7 p.m. 199 High St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (03) 365-6055.

## ANC, miners fight for affirmative action

Continued from Page 3

adding, "We remain committed and unequivocal in our support for legitimate trade union activities including the right to strike and protest as guaranteed by the Interim Constitution, but we also stand firm against those who want to abuse this hard-fought right and interpret it to mean anarchy and criminality through their actions or word of mouth."

On February 2, labor minister Tito Mboweni of the ANC introduced a new labor law into Parliament. The draft law, now under debate, would guarantee workers' right to strike and form trade unions, clearing away much red tape and regulations that slowed the process toward taking legal strike action under apartheid.

The bill includes a stipulation guaranteeing the right of employers to lock out

workers. In 1993, a similar provision was incorporated at the insistence of bourgeois parties into the current interim constitution as a precondition for moving ahead with last year's elections. The lock-out clause met with stiff resistance from unions. Tsatsimpe of the NUM reported the union plans to take the new labor bill to its members for discussion. Union members' conclusions will be forwarded to Parliament.

## -CALENDAR-

### NEW YORK

#### Manhattan

**An Evening Caribbean Social.** Fri. March 17, 8:30 p.m.  
**Cultural Event Celebrating International Women's Day.** Sat., March 18, 8 p.m.  
Both events at Casa de las Americas, 104 West 14th St. For information, call: (212) 675-2584.

### GREECE

#### Athens

**The Origins of Women's Oppression and the**

**Fight for Women's Rights Today.** Sat., March 18, 7:00 p.m. Kapodistriou #2, 6th Floor (Kannigos Square). Sponsored by friends of the *Militant* newspaper.

### ICELAND

#### Reykjavik

**Educational Conference.** Class on Politics and Economics in Today's World, 1 p.m.; forum on *The Politics Behind the Parliamentary Elections*, 4 p.m. Sat., March 18. Location to be announced.  
**Young Socialists meeting.** The Young

Socialists will sponsor an introductory meeting for young people interested in the fight for socialism. Sun., March 19, 2 p.m. Klapparstíg 26. For information on both events call: 552 5502.

### NEW ZEALAND

#### Auckland

**Report Back from Cuba Work Study Brigade 1995.** Speaker: Andrew Mercer, Massey University, participant in January 1995 brigade to Cuba. Sat., March 18, 8 p.m. La Casa Latina, 239 Onehunga Mall, Onehunga.

## -IF YOU LIKE THIS PAPER, LOOK US UP-

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

### UNITED STATES

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

**CALIFORNIA: Los Angeles:** 2546 W. Pico Blvd. Zip: 90006. Tel: (213) 380-9460, 380-9640. Compuserve: 74642.326. Internet: 74642.326@compuserve.com  
**San Francisco:** 3284 23rd St. Zip: 94110. Tel: (415) 285-5323. Compuserve: 75604.556.

**CONNECTICUT: New Haven:** Mailing address: P.O. Box 16751, Baybrook Station, West Haven. Zip: 06516. Tel: (203) 688-5418.

**FLORIDA: Miami:** 137 N.E. 54th St. Zip: 33137. Tel: (305) 756-1020.

**GEORGIA: Atlanta:** 803 Peachtree NE. Zip: 30308. Tel: (404) 724-9759.

**ILLINOIS: Chicago:** 545 W. Roosevelt Rd. Zip: 60607. Tel: (312) 829-6815, 829-7018. **Peoria:** P.O. Box 302. Zip: 61650-0302. Tel: (309) 674-9441.

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

**MASSACHUSETTS: Boston:** 780 Tremont St. Zip: 02118. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

**MICHIGAN: Detroit:** 7414 Woodward Ave. Zip: 48202. Tel: (313) 875-0100. Internet: 74767.1050@compuserve.com.

**MINNESOTA: Twin Cities:** 2490 University Ave. W., St. Paul. Zip: 55114. Tel:

(612) 644-6325.

**NEW JERSEY: Newark:** 141 Halsey. Mailing address: 1188 Raymond Blvd., Suite 222. Zip: 07102. Tel: (201) 643-3341.

**NEW YORK: Albany:** P. O. Box 2357, E.S.P. Zip: 12220. Tel: (518) 465-0585. **Brooklyn:** 59 4th Avenue (corner of Bergen) Zip: 11217. Tel: (718) 399-7257. **New York:** 214-16 Avenue A. Mailing address: P.O. Box 2652. Zip: 10009. Tel: (212) 388-9346; 167 Charles St. Zip: 10014. Tel: (212) 366-1973.

**NORTH CAROLINA: Greensboro:** 2000-C S. Elm-Eugene St. Zip 27406. Tel: (910) 272-5996. Compuserve: 75127.2153.

**OHIO: Cincinnati:** P.O. Box 19484. Zip: 45219. Tel: (513) 662-1931. **Cleveland:** 1832 Euclid. Zip: 44115. Tel: (216) 861-6150.

**PENNSYLVANIA: Philadelphia:** 1906 South St. Zip: 19146. Tel: (215) 546-8218. **Pittsburgh:** 1103 E. Carson St. Zip 15203. Tel: (412) 381-9785.

**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. Compuserve: 75407.3345.

**WASHINGTON: Seattle:** 1405 E. Madison. Zip: 98122. Tel: (206) 323-1755. Compuserve: 74461.2544.

**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.

### 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.

### 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:** MBE 201, 208 rue de la Convention. Postal code: 750175. Tel: (1) 47-26-58-21.

### ICELAND

**Reykjavik:** Klapparstíg 26. Mailing address: P. Box 233, 121 Reykjavik. Tel: 552 5502.

### 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 peacekeepers** — U.S. Marines who went back to Somalia had new, assertedly nonlethal "crowd control" weapons. Said a sergeant: "There's been skepticism all along. Why do we have to



Harry Ring

be using this stuff when we have M-16s?

"But the Marines have adapted real well. And at close quarters you can still kill somebody with

some of this stuff. That made these Marines feel better."

**Oh joy** — The Chinese government estimates that 80 million people there don't have enough to eat or to wear. Now, a "Happiness Project" will bring an unreported amount of social services to remote impoverished areas. Loans will be available to help poor women develop household sideline production. An official said the goal is to help women raise happy families.

**Why not 17?** — Thai immigrants and others are being used to replace West Bank and Gaza Palestinians barred from working in Israel. Burbled a greenhouse

operator: "They will work 16 hours a day, no problem." Added another: "They are very obedient.... And they don't look at our women."

**So long as the kid's making a mint, why not?** — "The setup was akin to giving your child access to your checking account as well as the job of balancing your checkbook: The risk is that you won't know what he's spent until the bank statement comes in the mail." — A reporter pondering how now-bankrupt Barings could let its derivatives high roller, Nicholas Leeson, bet the farm and, also, balance the books.

**No appreciation** — A London

engineer told a *Los Angeles Times* correspondent that like Nicholas Leeson, he too was of working-class origins, so he kind of liked what had befallen a part of the banking system. The reporter added: "His view was apparently shared by many working-class Londoners who said they would not shed a tear for a fallen bank."

**They can't learn about futures** — A French lawyer thought he had a sure bet when he agreed to pay Jeanne Calment \$500 a month to take over her apartment (valued at \$50,000) when she died. She was then 90, but that was in 1965. Last month Calment celebrated her 120th birthday. She said that each year she writes him a jocular

note, "Sorry I am still alive."

**And toss the union contract?** — "American workers need a new emotional and moral contract with their employers. The paternalistic employer is disappearing, taking away a critical anchor in the lives of many workers." — An editorial in the *Des Moines, Iowa, Register* on workplace violence.

**The great American pastime** — Time was when major league baseball club owners were pleased to have Little League teams use their names — free publicity, good will, etc. No more. Little Leaguers using a major league team name will now pay a fee of \$6 per uniform.

## Farmers conference discusses credit squeeze

BY JON HILLSON

WANDA, Minnesota — In this small southwestern Minnesota town dominated by the elevators of a local grain cooperative, 75 working farmers marked the 10-year anniversary of Groundswell, the family farm organization.

The group took its name from a 1985 farm protest of 17,000 people, many on tractors and in trucks, who poured into Minnesota's capital of St. Paul. They demonstrated against a devastating wave of bank foreclosures of family farms, and demanded government action to answer the financial crisis faced by working farmers.

The ripple effect of those and other pressures were at the center of discussions at Groundswell's 1995 celebration — a day-long meeting and lunch February 18.

A massive rise in corporate hog farming bears down on the existence of small, independent livestock producers. At the same time, many farmers are bracing for the impact of final "balloon" payments on interest and remaining principal for loans taken out in the late 1970s and 1980s.

Merle Lundeen, a grain and livestock farmer from northwest Minnesota, reported on a measure he drafted for the state legislature, to spread out these payments over a decade. He said a local legislator has agreed to submit the proposal in the Minnesota state House of Representatives.

"I borrowed from Farm Credit in 1979" to expand land in his family since 1930, Lundeen told the *Militant*. He was like hundreds of thousands of farmers who were urged by the government and agricultural experts to expand production and buy more acreage. "They told us the price of land would never drop," Gene Swoboda, a southwestern Minnesota farmer explained.

When land prices began to plummet in the 1980s, "I reamortized," Lundeen said, referring to efforts to readjust and reorganize his indebtedness. "But lots of people lost their land, they couldn't get loan extensions," he noted. Like tens of thousands of other farmers, Lundeen said, part of his debt was "shelved" while he paid small interest on the remainder.

Now, he said, "everything is due. I owe \$44,000 in cash next month and I don't have it. If I can't pay, that's it. I'm 61 years old." Farm Credit lending, backed by the U.S. government, holds billions of dollars of farm debt.

Lundeen's situation, many here said, is shared by an untold number of farmers. In Minnesota alone, many are still reeling from the billion-dollar financial pounding they suffered when federally backed crop insurance, and paltry state aid programs, failed to compensate for the flood-ruined harvest of 1993.

While Minnesota working farmers produced a 1994 bumper crop in grains, they have no control over prices for their products, which are falling. Prices are determined by big grain merchants, agribusiness monopolies, capitalist farmers, and commodity speculators.

At the same time, federal price supports to make up for deficits suffered by farmers



An Iowa farm. Many small farmers are unable to make large debt payments to government this year.

when government-set "target prices" aren't reached, have also dipped. This has increased poverty in the countryside. One indication of this is that the number of rural families using Groundswell's clothing center in Wanda leaped from 1,428 in 1991 to 6,173 in 1994.

Farmers "continue to suffer in silence," Swoboda noted, "they think they're at fault, not the government." These tensions are compounded, Swoboda said, by the rapid growth of corporate farms. "Sometimes you know who owns them, sometimes it's a secret. It may be a 'corporation' of 50 or 60 people but all you know are the 'officers of the corporation.' Or it's IBP [Iowa Beef Processors] or somebody they own," he said.

Corporate hog farming places a premium on volume production, with hog barns holding up to 4,000 pigs. Small farmers are induced to join as junior partners. Their land is collateral, and the individual farmer pays for water and electricity. The corporate boss sets a fixed, final price for their hogs.

If the cost of production for the farmer increases, the farmer sustains the difference in losses. If the farmer's end of the deal fails, the corporation takes their land.

Last year, in a "compromise" resolution explained to farmers here by a former Groundswell activist who is a state representative, the Minnesota legislature opened the door to corporate farming.

"There are 63 'earthen lagoons' in Renville County," Swoboda said, referring to the big hog-waste run-off pools, whose residue pollutes soil, contaminates drinking supplies, and fouls the air.

"A few years ago, there were none. Nothing's regulated. They call this rural economic development," he said over a lunch of beef, ham, corn, whipped potatoes, muffins, and gravy.

"The smell from the lagoons," noted Don Swoboda, Gene's 34-year-old son, who farms with him, "is not to be believed."

The increased volume of truck traffic, bearing far heavier loads, one local county commissioner explained, "is pounding [unpaved] county roads to pieces. And the corporations want the taxpayers to foot the

bill."

"Most people get in corporate farming as a last ditch effort," said Michael Erickson, a 42-year-old hog farmer from Ruth-ton, in southwestern Minnesota. "They're

so desperate, they get talked into it. The corporate farm drives down the price of pork so you can't compete unless you're in with them."

Erickson produces hogs for "45 to 50 cents a pound per hundred weight," but the price, until February, "was at 25 cents per pound." The only thing that's kept him solvent is that "corn is cheap."

Like other working farmers here, Erickson said he believes they should fight for federally set prices that "guarantee the cost of production, plus a profit." Small, independent, working hog farmers should "build our own packing and processing facilities, and do our wholesaling and retailing together."

"The corporations would like to do to us what they did to chicken farmers — price us out," Erickson said. "They produce chickens with a profit of 1 or 2 cents each. Unless you produce a million chickens, how could you compete with that?"

Jon Hillson is a member of the United Transportation Union in St. Paul, Minnesota.

## — 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —

### THE MILITANT

Published in the interest of the Working People

March 20, 1970

Price 10¢

LOS ANGELES — Some 2,000 Chicanos marched for more than an hour through a drenching downpour here Feb. 28 to protest the war in Vietnam and to demand Chicano power. Although most of them were without hats or raincoats, spirits were high and shouts of "Chicano Power" and Chicano si, Vietnam no" rang out continuously as the crowd marched down Whittier Blvd.

Contingents from all over California participated in the march: farm workers from Delano, members of the Chicano studies department at Merritt College in Oakland, and groups from San Francisco, San Jose, and San Diego. There were also representatives of the Crusade For Justice in Denver, the Alianza in Albuquerque, N.M., and MAYO in Texas.

The response of the community to the march was generally favorable. Individual demonstrators walked the sidewalks to convince onlookers to join in. Many did; others apologized for not joining.

At the open-air rally following the march, while the rain continued intermittently, the demonstrators heard Tosalio Munoz of the Chicano Moratorium; Rudolfo "Corky" Gonzales of the Denver Crusade For Justice; Sal Castro, a militant Los Angeles high school teacher; Alicia Escalante of the Welfare Rights Organization; David Sanchez of the Brown Berets; attorney Oscar Acosta; Froben Lozada, head of the Chicano studies department of Merritt College and Socialist Workers

Party candidate for state attorney general; Santiago Anaya of the Alianza land grant movement; Woodrow "Nino" Diaz of the New York Young Lords; and Ernest Ce-bada of the Baltimore Six.

In addition to denouncing the war in Vietnam and stressing the fact that Spanish-surnamed GIs are dying at about twice the rate of other service personnel, several speakers insisted on the need to break with the capitalist Republican and Democratic parties and develop independent political action.

"The first thing Chicanos should do is organize our own political party," Lozada said. "We are sick and tired of playing in the ball park of our oppressors."

### THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

March 17, 1945

ENGLAND — A week-old strike of 10,000 longshoremen and stevedores on the London docks ended after promises by Ernest Bevin, labor minister, that there would be an inquiry into the grievances.

The strike began on March 2nd in protest against severe penalties for absentees and a worsening of conditions on the job, measures initiated by [Winston] Churchill's flunky minister, Bevin. Beginning on the London docks, the walkout spread to the storage depots along the Thames and to the adjacent port of Tilbury. The strike was declared "unofficial" from the start by the labor leaders who worked with might and main to bring it to a quick termination, regardless of the grievances of the longshoremen. Troops were called in by the government to scab on the striking workers.



## Help get Mark Curtis out of jail

Mark Curtis is getting a raw deal at the hands of government and prison authorities on account of his political and union activities. With every arbitrary action by Iowa officials to deny Curtis justice and keep him behind bars, the ongoing pattern of political prejudice becomes plainer to more working people and other democratic-minded individuals.

In the latest instance, prison authorities have repeatedly refused recommendations from their own classification committee to trim Curtis's one-year punitive lockup sentence by three months for good conduct. This denial adds insult to injury, since Curtis was placed in lockup — confined to a small cell for 23 hours a day — on a trumped-up charge of assaulting another prisoner. These persistent injustices can help open the eyes of greater numbers of people to the political railroading of Mark Curtis, who in 1988 was sentenced to 25 years on false rape and burglary charges. Curtis's real crime was, and remains, standing up for immigrant workers, actively defending unions, and setting an example for fellow workers and farmers.

The political nature of the frame-up was clear from the moment the arresting cops spotted leaflets in Curtis's car headlined "Stop government attacks on political rights!" It became unmistakable when the police who beat him bloody at the station house called him a "Mexican-lover, just like you love those coloreds."

## All that capitalism has to offer...

Currency turmoil; economic catastrophe in Mexico and the pillage of that country by Washington; the collapse of the Barings banking house in London; the bankruptcy of Orange County, California. These are the headlines working people wake up to every day in the 1990s.

A bank failure, earthquake, currency collapse, fall of a government, or political uprising — any sharp economic or political jolt can touch off cascading events shattering the world capitalist financial system. In today's depression conditions, the threat of a deflationary collapse is real. Capitalism's brittleness is rooted in a decades-long fall in the rate of industrial profits. This slide is registered in the slowdown of investment by finance capital in capacity-expanding plant and equipment. The employers are not drawing more and more workers into the output of new production goods and consumer items.

When a capitalist calamity happens, its effects won't be limited to Wall Street and corporate board rooms. Millions more workers the world over will be thrown out of jobs and small farmers will be driven off the land at a quickening pace. Workers can suddenly face skyrocketing prices. Pension and medical plans can melt away overnight, as the giant bubble of debt bursts without warning.

Governments and central banks cannot control these phenomena. The blind laws of the market are more powerful in this regard than the strongest capitalist regimes

At Curtis's trial, the judge excluded key evidence. The jury was not allowed to hear that the FBI had kept files on Curtis's political activities; that the Des Moines police had beaten him up; that one of the arresting cops had previously been suspended for brutalizing suspects and lying about it. The false testimony of this cop was a centerpiece of the case against Curtis.

Curtis has been denied parole year after year, and he has now served six and a half years — far longer than the average time served in the state of Iowa on the sexual abuse charge he was falsely convicted of. Parole board officials have unsuccessfully tried to break him by insisting he submit to a "sexual offender treatment program" that requires admission of guilt.

The problem for the authorities is that Curtis has kept up his political activity behind bars and continues fighting for justice, winning public support in the process. The jailed activist took the cops who brutalized him to federal court and won a ruling in January 1992 that shone further light on the character of the frame-up.

We urge our readers to join in pressing Iowa state and prison officials to release Curtis from lockup and to demand he be granted parole. By explaining the facts, new support can be won among unionists, farmers, and other partisans of democratic rights for the Mark Curtis Defense Committee and the international fight to free this working-class fighter.

— all the more so at a time when capital and currency trading occurs at computer-driven speeds. Too many U.S. dollars, German marks, Japanese yen, and British pounds are afloat for a run on any one of them to be stemmed by the action of central banks and government treasuries. Fiddling with interest rates can neither ensure a "soft landing" in the business cycle nor, over the long haul, bolster a historically sagging dollar.

What happened at Barings? The claim by top managers that they were victims of a "rogue trader" is patently self-serving. Greed and profit maximization brought the banking house down. The directors were hungry for yield and tried to best their competitors by making off with a load. And they lost. This is what capitalists do: they go for short-run gain and keep their eyes on the bottom line.

In face of the mounting insecurity the capitalist crisis brings into the lives of hundreds of millions, the labor movement needs to advance a program of action to defend the interests of all working people — employed and unemployed, urban and rural, union and nonunion, and regardless of nationality, age, sex, or language. We need to launch a fight for jobs for all, full protection of wages and social benefits against the ravages of inflation, and a halt to foreclosures on working farmers.

Working people must not be forced to bear the brunt of grinding instability and sudden breakdowns, which is what capitalism has to offer in the closing years of this century.

## Welfare 'reform,' jobs, and wages

Testing the waters on how far the government can go in attacking social welfare programs, the U.S. House of Representatives Agriculture Committee okayed a food stamp bill March 8 that would cut cost-of-living benefit increases to less than the inflation rate. Unemployed workers would be denied food assistance after 90 days unless they found work for at least 20 hours a week. Legal immigrants would be ineligible for at least five years.

This is one of many schemes being floated by politicians of both capitalist parties. As part of a "welfare reform" package, Republicans are talking of eliminating Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) and giving "block grants" to state governments instead; eliminating federal school lunch programs; denying benefits to mothers under age 18; and rewarding states that reduce their "illegitimacy ratio," that is the number of abortions and out-of-wedlock births.

The Democrats' rejoinder is that these measures are "weak on work." President Bill Clinton has been singing the praises of an Ohio plan to hand money allocated for benefit payments directly over to bosses as "compensation" for hiring welfare recipients into low-wage jobs.

Bipartisan demagoguery aside, food stamps, AFDC, and school-lunches form only a tiny portion of the capitalist budget.

The proposals bandied about in Washington and state capitals are part of an ideological campaign to scapegoat working people, especially those worst-off, for the crisis of capitalism. Big business politicians are trying to lay the groundwork to go after Social Security, workers compensation, and other entitlements working people depend on.

Acknowledging that "welfare reforms" won't really save money, a *Wall Street Journal* article recently noted that a proposed five-year cutoff of benefits would re-

quire "elaborate and expensive interstate tracking systems to keep tabs on welfare recipients."

But working people don't need more snoops and spies. We don't need more fraud investigators and bureaucrats to humiliate us. We need to fight for the unity of the working class and not allow a section of our class to be stigmatized.

The labor movement must oppose any move by the bosses' government to cut one penny received by fellow workers as welfare payments. At the same time, labor needs to address the heart of the problem: the fight for jobs for all at union scale, and a living wage for all those either unable to work or for whom the capitalist system can't provide a job.

Unemployment brings the biggest division into the working class. Under today's depression conditions, it is a dagger dangling over every worker's head. A fight for a shorter workweek with no cut in pay and a massive, federally funded public works program would unite workers — employed and unemployed — to defend our common interests by creating more jobs. At the same time, labor needs to fight to raise the minimum wage and demand that basic social needs, such as health care and child care, be provided free of charge. And workers should receive full unemployment compensation at union wages until the capitalist government can find us work.

Workers and working farmers produce everything of value. The true frauds are the capitalists who grow rich off the product of our labor. The working class has to say no to degrading means-testing and "investigations" into our personal business. Jobs, a living wage, and lifetime social security — these are universal social rights. That should be our class's answer to the "welfare reform" schemes of the employers, their twin parties, and their governments.

## José Martí on Karl Marx: 'rebellion, ideals, and struggle'

BY ANDY BUCHANAN

The following article was written by Cuban revolutionary democrat José Martí and appeared in the Buenos Aires, Argentina, newspaper *La Nación* on March 29, 1883. It is a report of the meeting held at the Cooper Union building in New York City to commemorate the death of Karl Marx, who had died on March 14 of that year. Marx was a central founding leader of the modern communist workers movement along with Frederick Engels, who lived and remained politically active for 12 more years.

The Cooper Union meeting, held March 20, 1883, was organized by the Central Labor Union of Greater New York and Vicinity. Some 6,000 working men and women filled the hall to capacity, and 5,000 were turned away at the door, in the most important memorial held anywhere in the world in the weeks after Marx's death.

The platform — as Martí reports — drew together communist workers, leaders of the Knights of Labor and the American Federation of Labor, anarchists, and others. Workers from many countries participated in the meeting. It was among the first times that workers who had emigrated from Germany and elsewhere in Europe had joined together with native-born U.S. workers to organize a major political event. Surplus funds from the meeting were used to print a special English-language edition of the *Communist Manifesto*.

Exiled from Cuba for his participation in the struggle against Spanish colonial rule, José Martí lived in the United States for much of the time from 1880 to 1894. During those years, Martí contributed regular articles on politics, society, and culture in the United States for *La Nación*, the leading daily newspaper in Latin America at that time. In May 1895 Martí was killed during the second and final war of independence against Spain.

The 1880s were marked by the rapid growth of U.S. industry and by an intensification of the class struggle. The living and working conditions imposed on working people by burgeoning industrial capitalism, and the strike battles that erupted as workers fought back, had a deep impact on Martí. These experiences led him to conclude that while the U.S. ruling class wanted to see the end of Spanish rule in Cuba, their intention was to replace it with their own colonial yoke.

A fuller account of the memorial meeting is contained in *When Karl Marx Died*, edited by Philip Foner and published by International Publishers. Many of Martí's articles on the United States are collected in *Inside the Monster*, published by Monthly Review.



BY JOSÉ MARTÍ

Look at this large hall. Karl Marx is dead. He deserves to be honored for declaring himself on the side of the weak. But the virtuous man is not the one who points out the damage and burns with generous anxiety to put it right; he is the one who teaches a gentle amendment of the injury.

The task of setting men in opposition against men is frightening. The compulsory brutalization of men for the profit of others stirs anger. But an outlet must be found for this anger, so that the brutality might cease before it overflows and terrifies. Look at this hall: dominating the room, surrounded by green leaves, is the picture of that ardent reformer, uniter of men of different peoples, and tireless, powerful organizer. The International was his creation: men of all nations come to honor him. The crowd, made up of valiant workers, the sight of whom affects and comforts, shows more muscles than jewels, and more honest faces than silk underwear. Labor beautifies: it is rejuvenating to see a farm-worker, a blacksmith, or a seaman. By manipulating the forces of nature, they become as beautiful as nature is.

New York goes on as a kind of whirlpool: however much it surges and heaves in the rest of the world, in New York it drops down. Here they smile at one who flees; out there, they make him flee. As a result of this kindness, a strength has come to this people. Karl Marx studied the methods of setting the world on new foundations, and awakened those who were asleep, and showed them how to cast down the broken props. But being in a hurry, with his understanding somewhat clouded, he did not see that children who do not have a natural, slow and painful gestation are not born viable, whether they come from the bosom of the people in history, or from the womb of woman in the home. Here are the good friends of Karl Marx, who was not only a titanic stimulator of the wrath of European workers, but also showed great insight into the causes of human misery and the destiny of men, a man driven by a burning desire to do good. He saw in every one what he carried in himself: rebellion, highest ideals, struggle.

### CORRECTION

An error appeared in *Militant* no. 9 dated March 6, 1995. The article by Vanessa Knapton on page 5 incorrectly reported on the panel at a Los Angeles Cuba defense meeting. Floyd Taylor, Jennifer Banathy, and Jeanne Tuomey spoke at a San Francisco event. Roberto Molina, who did speak in Los Angeles, was inadvertently omitted.



# Candy workers fight to halt plant shutdown

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

a 24-hour standoff, the trucks left empty.

Despite adverse weather, the unionists have not needed to establish a picket schedule because most members are showing up voluntarily, including many who spend long hours picketing. Since it is not an officially sanctioned strike, they receive no strike pay from either the Bakery, Confectionery & Tobacco Workers union or the Operating Engineers, which

workers in Decatur, Illinois. Boston-area unions have donated tens of thousands of dollars to support their brothers and sisters in Decatur. Thousands of workers are walking the picket lines in that central Illinois town — United Auto Workers members on strike at Caterpillar, United Rubber Workers members who walked out at Bridgestone/Firestone, and members of the United Paperworkers International Union locked out by A.E. Staley Manufacturing.



Militant/Cecelia Moriarity

Locked-out Staley worker Royal Plankenhorn (center) talks with Boston-area unionists at December AFL-CIO-sponsored meeting in Massachusetts. Plankenhorn returned to New England in February and helped raise tens of thousands of dollars for brothers and sisters locked out or on strike in Decatur, Illinois.

## ON THE PICKET LINE

other workplaces in your area, including interesting political discussions.

One hundred seventy workers at the D.L. Clark plant near Pittsburgh, where the Clark candy bar is made, are waging a spirited battle to save jobs.

On February 27, after four days of picketing, the company agreed not to remove manufacturing equipment from the plant for 45 days, while management continues to try to find a buyer for the plant. The Bakery, Confectionery & Tobacco Workers, which organizes Clark's production workers, won the right to observe loading and unloading as well as to inspect already loaded trucks.

On February 15, Clark informed union members that they were to be laid off in two days time. A week later two union members drove by the plant and saw several tractor trailers preparing to haul away machinery, office equipment, and candy. They quickly alerted other workers and picket lines were set up, preventing the trucks from leaving. After

organizes the mechanics.

The pickets are buoyed by support from unionists and others who, after seeing news coverage, stopped by to offer solidarity. Many workers doubt the company will reopen the plant.

Despite the long odds their spirits are high. "We may not win," said one worker with more than 25 years on the job, "but we're not going without a fight."

### Decatur, Illinois, strikers win solidarity in Boston

"All the laws are in favor of management these days," Royal Plankenhorn told union members at Harvard University in late February. "We're going back to the days of industrial servitude. Workers need to remember, though, that it was those fights that led to the minimum wage, the 40-hour week — things corporate America is trying to take away from us now."

Plankenhorn addressed the crowd while touring Boston with Gary Garner to drum up support for fellow striking and locked-out

### Canada rail workers protest job-cut plan

Hundreds of rail workers marched through the streets of downtown Montreal February 23 to protest threatened job cuts on Canada's national railways. They marched past the corporate headquarters of Canadian Pacific (CP) and Canadian National (CN) railways, the two national freight railroads, and Via Rail, the passenger rail network, each of which are located within a few blocks of each other.

The workers carried signs reading, "CN-CP-VIA: without job security, no contract!", and "[CN president Paul] Tellier: We are not cattle for sale!"

"We could be in for a long fight," said Jean Bergeron, a rail car repairman at the CP Rail St. Luc yard in Montreal. "So we need to be sure we stick together."

The demonstration was organized by the Canadian Auto Workers union (CAW), which represents close to 20,000 railcar and locomotive repair workers.

Some 43,000 workers at the three companies are without collective agreements and the key stumbling block to any settlement

is the railways' drive to cut jobs and eliminate job protection agreements that were negotiated in the 1980s.

CP Rail says it will operate with management and scab personnel if there is a strike.

CN is a state-owned corporation the government wants to sell off.

"I want to stress a new work regime," Tellier recently told a Montreal Board of Trade conference, saying he wants to freeze workers' wages, eliminate any job security, and be able to assign workers as the company sees fit.

Officials of the CAW and Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees (BMWE) have

announced that if there is a strike, it will not be a shutdown of the whole rail system. Instead, they say they will conduct rotating strikes in local areas, each lasting a few days at a time. The BMWE represents 9,000 workers that maintain and repair tracks.

The last national rail strike in Canada shut down all rail transport for five days in 1987.

Contributors to this week's column include: Bill Scheer, a member of the United Steelworkers of America Local 1557 in Pittsburgh, and Roger Annis, a member of Communications, Energy, and Paperworkers Union of Canada Local 841 in Montreal.

## LETTERS

### Ottawa cuts farm benefit

Prairie farmers took a heavy hit in Ottawa's February 27 budget. Wiped out effective August 1 is the "Crow benefit," a subsidy on rail transport of prairie grain to port. Ottawa's slashing of the Crow will double prairie farmers' current freight bill. According to the National Farmers' Union (NFU), elimination of the benefit will amount to a Can\$5,000 loss in annual net income per grain producer.

In place of the Crow benefit, Ottawa is offering a one-time Can\$1.6 billion payment, amounting to about Can\$20 an acre. Farm organizations and prairie provincial governments had been arguing for Can\$7 billion in compensation to farmers if the benefit were changed.

Ottawa's payout will be made to landowners, rather than actual producers. In Saskatchewan, for example, close to 40 percent of farmland is rented or leased, with financial institutions often acting as landlord. The federal government's own Farm Credit Corp., "lender of last resort," is the province's largest landowner, holding close to 1 million acres.

"Renters are out of luck," says NFU president Nettie Wiebe. "The money doesn't land on our kitchen table, but the transportation bill does."

A further effect of Ottawa's cut will be depressing the price of farmland, reducing farmers' access to credit.

Elimination of the Crow is linked to other proposed federal measures deregulating grain transportation, including protection against rail line abandonment. Aimed for is a more centralized grain handling and trans-

portation system that will force farmers to truck grain at their own expense to more distant elevator points. Not only farmers' freight costs, but grain handlers' and rail workers' jobs are on the line in this restructuring.

The Crow originated in the 1897 Crow's Nest Pass Agreement in which the Canadian Pacific Railway accepted a cap on grain freight rates "in perpetuity" in exchange for a mammoth government handout. This statutory "Crow rate" was replaced with the "Crow benefit" in 1983, sparking a broad mobilization of farmers in rallies and demonstrations to "Save the Crow!"

Howard Brown  
Rosetown, Saskatchewan

### A committed activist

Alberta Dannells, a longtime supporter of the Socialist Workers Party, died February 15 in Sacramento, California, at the age of 83.

Alberta first became acquainted with the *Militant* in 1969 in Tucson, Arizona, where she was a committed activist against the Vietnam War. She had been a supporter of the Bring the Troops Home Newsletter introduced to Tucsonians by the Student Mobilization Committee. When a Young Socialist Alliance chapter was formed in Tucson in 1970, Alberta began reading the works of Leon Trotsky and other Marxists. At the age of 59 she became a committed supporter of the Socialist Workers Party. She did fundraising and media work for the Tucson YSA in the 1970s.

Following the lead of the National Peace Action Coalition, Alberta helped form the Tucson Peace Action Coalition in 1970.



She was home-bound by chronic illness; nevertheless, for 15 years she worked out of her bedroom "office" on all the major campaigns of the party, telephoning two or three hours every day of the week.

From the time of the Watergate revelations in 1973 until the 1986 federal court victory of the SWP lawsuit against government spying and disruption, Alberta raised thousands of dollars and enlisted hundreds of Arizona supporters for the Political Rights Defense Fund. She also worked for 11 years on the campaign for political asylum of Héctor Marroquín, who fled the repression and murder of student activists in Mexico. She helped the supporters of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee in Tucson until her retirement to Sacramento in 1989.

Other campaigns Alberta worked on included helping to organize participation in the National Chicano Latino Conference in San Antonio, Texas, in 1977; opposing the Hyde Amendment's elimination of funding for abor-

tions for poor women, and the Committee to Save the Iranian 14 in 1979.

My suggestion for those wishing to commemorate Alberta Dannells is to send contributions in her name to the *Militant* newspaper.

Betsy McDonald  
Tucson, Arizona

### Prisoner rights

Over the last two years, while working around Native American prison support issues, I have met many families faced with long separations after the inmate is transferred out of state. Somewhere, this cycle of retaliatory transfers must be broken, for the sake of these men and their families. It is time to speak out. The pain of seeing a loved one only a few hours a week is great. But to know that they are being abused in any manner, or denied their religious rights, is an unspeakable pain.

I feel fear for speaking out against the system, not for myself,

but for the power that they have over every aspect of my husband's life. But it won't get any better by keeping silent and it won't bring him home any faster by not resisting the terrible misuse of power that I see every day in this system.

He wouldn't want me to remain silent even though our protesting the denial of his religious rights and the beating that he was given at Keen Mountain in Virginia resulted in his transfer back to Minnesota and his pending transfer again to places unknown. He knows the only thing that can defeat him is our silence.

Renee StillDay  
St. Paul, Minnesota

### Subscribers' comments

As readers renew their subscriptions, many have taken advantage of a space allotted for comments and suggestions. Some of the comments follow:

Some coverage of the electoral process in Cuba, especially for the highest officials such as Fidel [Castro].  
Santa Cruz, California.

More theoretical/practical analysis of domestic political issues, e.g. welfare reform.  
Croton, New York

I appreciate your coverage of South Africa — keep it up.  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

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.



## Ottawa announces new assault on social wage of working class

BY STEVE PENNER

MONTREAL — *Business Week* proclaimed Canadian prime minister Jean Chretien's recent federal budget proposal "the most draconian...Canada has seen in four decades."

On February 27 federal finance minister Paul Martin announced plans to slash CAN\$7 billion (CAN\$1=US\$.70) in health, welfare, and post-secondary education spending and eliminate 45,000 public employee jobs over the next three years. In addition, Martin proposed cutting subsidies to grain and dairy farmers, privatizing Canadian National Railways and Petro-Canada oil, increasing gasoline taxes, and imposing a \$975 fee on all those applying to emigrate to Canada.

In the weeks before unveiling the budget proposal, government officials carried out a massive campaign to convince workers, farmers, and the middle class of the need to accept slashes in social spending.

One trial balloon after another was floated to gauge the reaction of working people to gutting programs that protect workers and farmers who are unemployed, sick, injured, or retired from being forced into destitution by the profit-driven capitalist system. The government threatened measures that would double tuition, impose restrictions on those eligible for unemployment insurance, and raise the age of eligibility for pensions from 65 to 67.

These threats have sparked resistance. On January 25 more than 100,000 students from coast-to-coast took part in demonstrations and class boycotts to protest threatened education cutbacks. Several other actions have also been held, including a march of 7,000 Quebec unionists February 12 who joined with students to protest the threatened cuts in social entitlements and education.

### Workers wages and conditions worsen

Canada's rulers have made significant gains in lowering wages and working conditions over the past 20 years, as they have sought to boost falling profit rates.

Real wages declined by 3 percent between 1980 and 1991. Many lower-paid workers, including hundreds of thousands who labor under two-tier wage schemes, have seen a much greater decline.

Workers are being forced to work longer hours, as well as endure speedup and deteriorating health and safety condi-



Student demonstration in Montreal January 25 against government plans to cut education funding. Ottawa has moved slower on cuts because of fear of broader protests.

Militant/Monica Jones

tions. In 1990 close to one million workers worked 50 or more hours a week as a norm — 11 percent of all full-time workers, compared to 8 percent in 1975. During that same period, the number of workers compelled to take part-time jobs because they couldn't find full-time work jumped from 109,000 to 760,000, many working at more than one job.

The official percentage of unemployed workers has rarely dipped below 9 percent since the early 1980's; real unemployment is substantially higher.

Canada's capitalist rulers hope to combine what they have accomplished in cutting wages and working conditions with a broader assault on the social entitlements the working class has won through struggle in past decades. This will not be so simple, as one *Washington Post* article pointed out: "Canadians are concerned about the deficit, they also oppose significant reductions in government services."

Faced with the prospect of a new round of protests with growing labor participation, Ottawa backed off the most far-reaching cuts in presenting its new federal budget. The government's proposals fall well short of what Canadian capitalists are looking for to place themselves in a

stronger competitive position in the sharpening contest for world markets. The Canadian employers main competitors — U.S. businesses — have made greater gains in driving down wages and social spending and increasing labor productivity through downsizing and speedup.

Through two decades of piecemeal austerity measures, Ottawa has so far avoided a frontal assault on old age pensions, medicare, and unemployment insurance for fear of the resistance it would provoke.

Instead of making big direct cuts in federal programs, Ottawa plans to slash its financial transfer payments to the ten provinces. In this way, not only are the decisions on where to cut back postponed, they are also set up to be made province by province. The government hopes this will undermine the capacity of the unions to organize a country-wide fight.

Some of the deepest cuts in programs

that benefit working people have been spearheaded by provincial governments in the past few years. Alberta's premier, Ralph Klein, has thrown half of all welfare recipients off the rolls, cut some programs for retirees, imposed fees for kindergarten students, and closed many rural hospitals.

### Protection for bondholders

Government ministers are attempting to bring deficit spending under control on the backs of working people. They argue the deficit must be cut in order to maintain a healthy economy, but the real concern is protecting the value of the CAN\$546 billion interest and principal payments owed by Ottawa to billionaire bondholders. In the coming year CAN\$51 billion — 37 cents of every tax dollar — is expected to be paid out to them in interest alone.

The severity of the Liberal Party's plans notwithstanding, the proposed budget did little to improve Canada's standing among the owners of capital around the world who finance Ottawa's massive debt. While many big-business voices expressed satisfaction with finance minister Martin's proposals, the Canadian dollar continued to fall against the U.S. currency.

An article in the *Globe and Mail* noted the "message from the currency markets is that Martin's new budget isn't enough."

Dan Gordon, a Canadian commodities and futures broker, complained in an interview with the Wall Street weekly *Baron's* that "Canada needs a crisis.... We really need to hit the brick wall."

"I don't see the politicians having the gumption to really cut as much as is required," Gordon said in frustration.

As the Canadian dollar came under renewed downward pressure in wake of the budget announcement, Ottawa began campaigning anew to try to lay the basis for deeper cuts. Prime Minister Jean Chretien declared his intention to seek a second term to drive the budget cuts through. He said medicare, unemployment insurance, and pensions would be on the chopping block in the next round.

## Village in Iceland suffers a not so 'natural' disaster

BY SIGURLAUG GUNNLAUGSDÓTTIR

REYKJAVÍK, Iceland — Early on the morning of January 16, an avalanche hit Súðavík, a fishing village on the northwestern peninsula of Iceland. It destroyed 15 houses where 250 people lived, mainly families of fishermen and workers in the local fish and shrimp plant. Fourteen people died in the disaster.

The catastrophe at Súðavík has become a major topic of discussion among working people and was the subject of a recent meeting sponsored by the Internationalist Forums here.

Gylfi Páll Hersir, a member of the communist movement in Iceland and also of Dawn, an unskilled workers union in Reykjavík, pointed out that this was the second disaster to hit the fishing town in the past ten years. "Over a decade ago, Súðavík had almost double the population of today," said Hersir at the forum. "A 'natural' catastrophe of another kind hit the village then — the crisis of the fishing industry."

Súðavík is among dozens of villages that have been centers for fishing and fish processing — the main source of profit for the capitalist class in Iceland. In the early 1980s, restructuring was initiated through

a quota system that allowed those with the biggest ships to fish the most. Gradually many smaller fishermen were forced to sell their quotas and give up fishing.

Concentration of capital in the fisheries has increased enormously in the past few years. The average income per person on the northwest peninsula is the highest in the country. But this does not measure the living standard of the working population. A massive exodus from the area has been taking place. Some of the poorest housing is to be found there, and a relatively big proportion of the work force consists of seasonal workers.

"Economic catastrophes are not always seen as directly taking people's lives," Hersir pointed out. "But when people lose their jobs and the whole village deteriorates, little or nothing is done about avalanche protection." In Flateyri, another fishing village, construction of an avalanche defense system that started more than ten years ago was never finished. An avalanche recently damaged two houses there.

Hersir pointed out that solidarity and support among working people for the victims of the Súðavík avalanche was widespread. "In many workplaces, funds have been raised," he said.

**New 1995 PATHFINDER CATALOG available now!**

The 1995 catalog features a full-color cover and attractive presentations of titles distributed by Pathfinder, along with concise explanations of each book. The new catalog includes a special section on new and newly reprinted titles and an expanded section on works by Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, and V.I. Lenin.

Write to the address below to get a complimentary copy of the catalog. Bundles of five or more catalogs can be ordered for \$0.50 each. When ordering a bundle, please add an additional \$3.00 for shipping and handling.

Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690, Fax: (212) 727-0150