

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Puerto Ricans fight for rights in Chicago

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Clinton orders pilots to halt strike at American

BY JANET POST

MIAMI — The first American Airlines pilots' strike since 1959 lasted only four minutes before U.S. president William Clinton intervened to stop the strike under the Railway Labor Act. The 9,300 members of the Allied Pilots Association (APA) had struck at 12:01 a.m., February 15.

Pilots expressed surprise and disappointment in response to Clinton's action. At a nationwide teleconference hook-up attended by 650 pilots in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, where the sentiment was clearly for a strike, the pilots had cheered its kickoff only moments before the announcement from the White House. "This will only lead to pent-up frustration," said APA member Paul Renneisen.

Over the next 30 days a Presidential Emergency Board will formulate a settlement proposal while the pilots work under the old contract. American and the APA will then have another 30 days to discuss the proposal. If no agreement is reached, either the pilots will resume their strike, the "cooling off" period will be extended, or Congress will impose the settlement recommended by the Emergency Board and outlaw a strike.

The Clinton administration invoked the Railway Labor Act by citing a threat to the nation's commerce, and grave inconvenience to travelers. The act was signed in 1926 by President Calvin Coolidge and amended to include workers in the airline industry in 1934. Its purpose is to string out negotiations, tie up workers with restrictive regulations, and to sap the strength of the workers' fight.

The national officialdom of the AFL-CIO was noticeably silent leading up to the strike. After Clinton's intervention AFL-CIO spokesperson Denise Mitchell said, "There are a lot of workers involved, and a lot of

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Pilots and supporters picket Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport in Carolina, Puerto Rico, hours before strike. Clinton invoked Railway Act to bar the strike.

President is strikebreaker in chief

The entire labor movement has an obligation to speak out against the Clinton administration's strikebreaking moves at American Airlines. The government's inter-

profits on workers' backs.

The Democratic White House cynically purports to be on labor's side. Just three days after Clinton signed the papers ordering the pilots back to work, Vice President Albert Gore had the nerve to tell AFL-CIO officials, "The right to organize and the right to strike are fundamental rights, and nobody's tax dollars should be spent undermining those rights." He promised the administration would issue regulations barring the reimbursement of companies with government contracts for money they spend to fight

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EDITORIAL

vention under the Railway Labor Act to impose a "cooling off" period and "mediation" is a blow to workers' rights to organize and use union power collectively to fight the employers' drive to increase their

Seoul uses 'spy' scare to step up repression

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

Washington and Seoul are using recently alleged incidents of defections and spy activities by north Koreans to bolster their campaign against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK), as a probe against the Chinese government, and as justification for maintaining antilabor laws that sparked a massive strike wave late last year.

The apparent defection from the DPRK of Hwang Jang Yop, a longtime leader of the Workers Party of Korea, was splashed across the big-business press in mid-February and held up as evidence of "instability in North Korea" and "cracks in [the] regime." Hwang, who is currently in Seoul's embassy in Beijing, has been used by the Washington and Seoul to provoke and slander north Korea. "It's like Marx defecting from the former Soviet Union," said Hajime Izumi, who the *Washington Post* described as a "leading North Korean specialist from the University of Shizuoka in Japan."

That article stated that government rationing and lack of food — the result of two consecutive years of damaging floods that destroyed two-thirds of the country's grain crops — was leading to "instability" in north Korea. It quoted a Red Cross official in Beijing as saying the rations were "too much to die from and too little to live off of." The DPRK government has appealed for 2.3 million tons in food aid. Under pressure from the U.S. and south Korean gov-

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Washington strong-arms rivals, plans social cuts

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

In his January 20 inaugural address, U.S. president William Clinton signaled Washington's intention to press its dominant military and economic weight around the world. "America stands alone as the world's indispensable nation," he declared. "Our economy is the strongest on earth."

Less than three weeks later, Clinton presented his 1998 budget to Congress February 6. In it he lays out a five-year plan to continue the course of chipping away at the social gains of working people. Pushing his theme to "make this the American century," Clinton presented his administration's perspectives for the U.S. capitalist class on domestic and international policy.

Washington's economic drive against its rivals was clear at a recent meeting of the World Trade Organization in Geneva, Switzerland. There, U.S. trade representative Charlene Barshefsky pressed for an agreement, concluded February 15, that opens up the telecommunications markets of 68 countries for companies based in United States and other imperialist countries.

The pact was supposed to be struck last April, but many governments resisted, fearing their leading companies would be overwhelmed by the telecommunications giants.

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'Free men can die, but no money can turn them back into slaves'

Fidel Castro responds to U.S. gov't economic offensive

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

"Let our imperialist enemies and reactionaries not be mistaken and let them not underestimate us," said Cuban president Fidel Castro. "They are mistaken in whatever they come up with. Their Helms-Burton Act is miserable and even more miserable is the plan to implement it."

Castro made these remarks as part of an impromptu speech at a rally at the end of the March of the Torches in Havana on January 28. Thousands of students, workers, and others took part in the action celebrating the 144th anniversary of the birth of José Martí, Cuba's national hero. They were also commemorating the 30th anniversary of the death of Ernesto Che Guevara, one of the central leaders of the Cuban revolution. Castro was

responding to the news that U.S. president William Clinton had just sent a report to the U.S. Congress that day titled "Support for a Democratic Transition in Cuba."

Clinton's report was part of the aggressive use by Washington of its misnamed Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (Libertad) Act, also referred to as the Helms-Burton law. Clinton signed the legislation March 12, 1996, substantially escalating the U.S. economic war on the Cuban people and their revolutionary government.

Clinton's latest report was filed under Title II of the Act, which instructs the president to develop a plan for a "transition to democracy and market economy" in Cuba. It stipulates that a condition for such a transition would be the installation of a government that does not include Fidel Castro or Raúl Castro, the minister of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces. Clinton's report offered \$4 – 8 billion in "aid" to Cuba if such a "transition government" is put in place.

"It really angers us that someone may think that liberty and dignity can be bought off... that, in exchange for all the gold in

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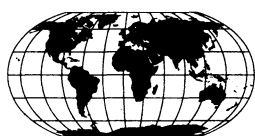
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800,000 strike against austerity in Colombia — page 3



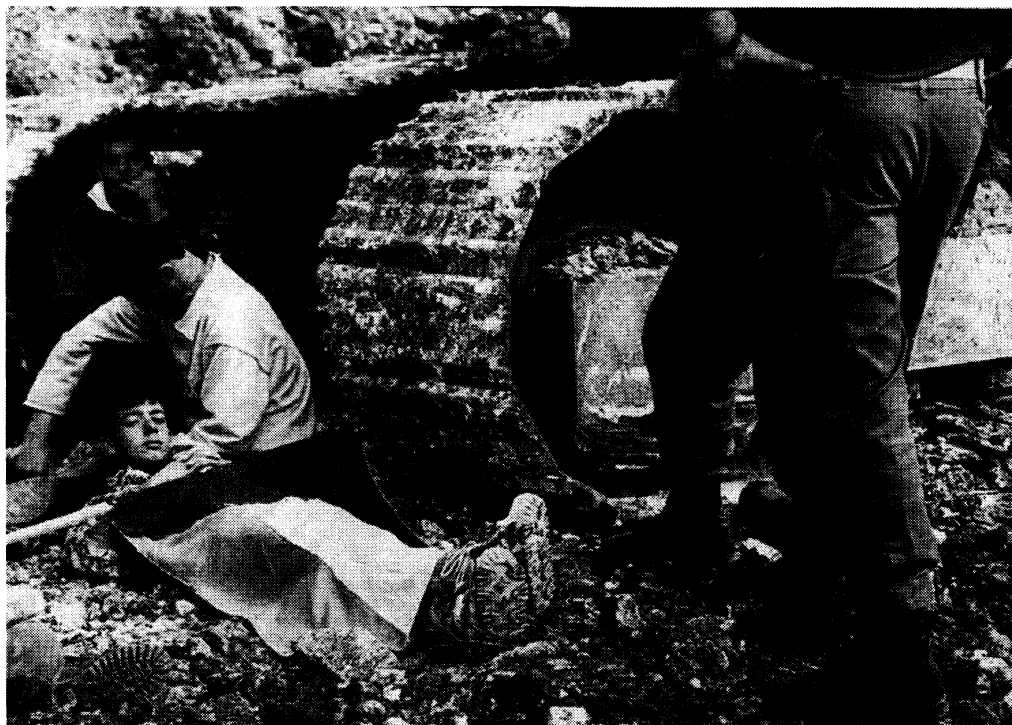
Palestinians stand up to settlers

Hundreds of Palestinians blocked Israeli bulldozers from excavating land to provide stone for the Israeli building industry on February 14. The disputed area is at Wadi Tin in the West Bank and is to become Palestinian territory in March. Hassan Khreishe, a Palestinian legislator from the nearby city of Tulkarm, said 2,500 acres of land had been expropriated from Palestinians for the project. During daily rallies at the Wadi Tin site the week leading up to the sit-down protest, several protesters were hurt in scuffles with Israeli soldiers. The army stayed away on February 14 as Palestinians lined up seven rows deep, knelt on the grassy slope that was scheduled for excavation, and prayed. "We will confront the Israeli soldiers any time they want to take land by force," Khreishe said. Hamzeh Hussein, who owns 17 acres of land in the disputed area, called for daily protests to block the Israeli project.

Spain truckers' strike stuns auto

Production at Renault's two auto assembly plants in Spain stopped February 13, as factories across northern Spain felt the effects of a week-long truckers strike in that country. The French Michelin tire company was also forced to scale down production at Valladolid and Aranda de Duero plants due to lack of supplies. Production has also been affected at Citroën's factory at Vigo and Opel's plant at Zaragoza. The Japanese Nissan automaker has been forced to suspend production at its plant in Avila. Madrid's motor manufacturer's association expressed "great concern" about the blows the strike is dealing to car production. Activities at fishing ports have also been paralyzed and supplies of basic foods in some areas, such as the coastal Cantabria region, are running out.

The striking truckers are demanding better working conditions, cheaper diesel fuel, and retirement at 60 years of age instead of the current 65. The drivers aim to emulate the success of the work stoppage of their colleagues in France in November, when truckers shut down French highways for 12 days and won retirement at 55, down from the previous 60. Portuguese vehicles crossing into northern Spain were reportedly



Palestinian youth blocks path of bulldozer February 23 in the West Bank town of Nablus. Palestinians continue resisting land confiscations by Zionist settlers, who are backed by Israeli government and its armed forces.

stoned, and the Portuguese road haulage federation Antram said that a number of transport businesses could be at risk if the protests in Spain went on for much longer. The February 14 *Financial Times* of London reported that five people were arrested in Pamplona after a British truck had its windows smashed. Paramilitary Civil Guard troops escorted convoys of trucks carrying perishable goods, and other transport companies are seeking Civil Guard protection to break the strike.

Swiss joblessness at record high

Switzerland's unemployment rate rose to a record 205,501 people, or 5.7 percent, in January — breaking the 5.3 percent record set in December. *Bloomberg News* reported that joblessness jumped "as more companies shed workers in the country's longest no-growth period since World War II." The February 11 news item said that "the Swiss economy is expected to grow as little as five-

tenths of 1 percent this year, having barely grown since 1990."

Chernobyl cleanup workers go on hunger strike in Russia

Dozens of former Chernobyl cleanup workers have begun hunger strikes in Russia to demand that they be paid \$6.2 million in pensions and other benefits, owed to them since March of 1996. Nearly 60 workers struck or stayed off the job in the several Ural mountain towns, reported Interfax news agency. Protesters demonstrated outside the regional parliament February 5. In Kireyevsk, there were 60 protesters at the onset of the strikes. When Moscow issued some partial payments some stopped demonstrating. But the strike continues with demands that the money owed to workers be paid in full.

Turkey builds up its arsenal

In two recent deals the Turkish government is getting a new arsenal of helicopters. Ankara signed a contract with Sikorsky, a U.S. company, and with Eurocopter, a German-French manufacturer. The 30 Eurocopters ordered by the Turkish Defense Industries Department, will be largely built in Turkey. The German-French sortie makers have to buy at least half the worth of the helicopters in equipment from Turkish companies. The *Financial Times* described the deal as an important breakthrough for Eurocopter into the Turkish market, attributing it to recent rejections from Washington on arms deals. Ankara is building up its armaments to boost its military strength in its conflict with the government of Greece over territorial claims in the Aegean Sea, as well as over Cyprus. Turkish troops occupy

the northern part of Cyprus.

1,200 U.S. troops carry out exercises with Kuwaiti forces

On February 11, a Pentagon spokesperson announced that 1,200 U.S. troops were being deployed into Kuwait to carry out a four-month military exercise. This will include joint maneuvers with Kuwaiti troops. Under the pretext of making Kuwait safe for democracy, Washington took advantage of the Iraqi invasion of the Gulf emirate and launched a massive assault on Iraq in 1991, destroying civilian infrastructures and killing hundreds of thousands of people.

Tokyo's shrinking yen

Japan's current account surplus, which measures the country's total value of imports and exports, shrank 28 times in the last 30 months according to a news item by *Bloomberg News*. Import prices have gone way up and surplus declined 23 percent in a little over a year. The biggest drop in surplus, with a 30.9 percent decline, occurred in 1996. Last year was also the third year in a row that there was an overall decline.

Abortion rights battle continues

After much controversy, the abortion-inducing drug mifepristone, or more popularly called RU486, was reviewed and deemed safe and effective for distribution in the United States. The Food and Drug administration said the drug was "approvable," but asked for more information on manufacturing and labeling. Advances for Choice says it will be available for purchase by the end of this year.

A day later, a bill criminalizing doctors who perform one type of "late-term abortion" was passed by the State House in Jackson, Mississippi. Except when a woman's life is in danger, doctors who carry out the medical procedure could be fined \$25,000, sent to prison for two years, and be sued by the father of the fetus for "psychological and physical" damages. If the woman having this procedure, which opponents call a "partial birth abortion," is under the age of 18, her parents can sue the doctors as well.

FBI probes phone-tapping

The Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) met with phone companies in early February to propose vastly expanding its wire-tapping capacity in the cellular phone industry. The new proposals will give the FBI capabilities to simultaneously tap 103,190 phones nationwide. The highest number of simultaneous wiretaps conducted in the United States by local, state, and federal police agencies has been 6,070. The secret police have met some objections from executives of the phone companies involved, who said it would be too expensive and an invasion of privacy.

— BRIAN TAYLOR

THE MILITANT

Class struggle deepens in France

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800,000 protest austerity in Colombia

BY HILDA CUZCO

Some 800,000 public employees in Colombia struck for eight days demanding wage increases equal to last year's inflation rate of 21.5 percent, and against privatization of state-run enterprises. Union leaders and the government ministers settled February 18 for a wage increase close to 20 percent ending the strike, the largest in 20 years. The new agreement also call for setting up a commission to analyze the government privatization program. At the same time the Colombian government is under pressure from Washington to qualify for "certification" as an ally against its so-called "war on drugs" or face sanctions for the second year in a row.

Dealing a blow to the government of Ernesto Samper, the country's main union federations backed the strike, which rejected an original 13 percent wage increase offer. In addition to the United Labor Federation (CUT), whose members were on strike, the Workers Confederation of Colombia (CTC), the General Confederation of Democratic Workers (CGTD), and the National Federation of State Workers (Fenaltrase) supported the strike and agreed to take major labor action had the negotiations failed. In addition to their wage demands, the workers were protesting government attacks on democratic union rights and the privatization of mining and electrical state companies. Negotiations between the labor unions and government representatives started January 13. An earlier wave of strikes involving 500,000 public employees took place last October when the Samper government announced its austerity package.

In January the Colombian cabinet declared a state of economic crisis, and asserted the need to slash government spending, increase taxation, and reduce wage increases in order to reduce the budget deficit by \$900 million. The deficit reached \$4.4 billion in 1996. At the time Samper declared that "strikes and protests will be no use as, although there is goodwill, there is simply no money." He also claimed that without his austerity program the economic growth of Colombia "would be severely limited and unemployment would rise." The official unemployment rate stands at 11.9 percent, up from 8.1 percent in late 1995. The economic growth rate for 1997 is predicted to be lower than last year's 3 percent.

Samper claims strike is 'subversive'

In an effort to paint the strike as terrorist, the press reported that Samper had received a report from surveillance agencies that the National Liberation Army (ELN) and Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) were planning to promote armed struggle and isolate main cities of the country during the strike. Gen. Rosso José Serrano, director of the national security police, claimed that his agency had intercepted communications of the guerrilla leaders backing the strike. Military officials also reported a battle with 400 guerrilla fighters in the mountains of San Juanito, 30 miles southeast of Bogotá, the capital city.

Prior to the strike, CUT president Luis Eduardo Garzón protested the government's attempt to portray the labor action as infiltrated by guerrillas and drug traffickers, saying, "The government wants to stigmatize the social protest, characterizing it as subversive, while some leaders of the strike have received death threats and others have been jailed."

"The presence of the guerrilla and drug trafficking in the strike is a government invention," added Wilson Borja, president of Fenaltrase. In addition the propaganda campaign against strikers, the government said workers in basic public services would lose their jobs if they joined the walkout.

Minister of defense Guillermo Alberto González said the Colombian government deployed more than 300,000 troops in strategic areas around the country and ordered the army and the police to remain in state of alert during the strike. Education Minister Jaime Niño canceled all public school and university classes as a "security" measure.

Meanwhile, the U.S. State Department has accused the Colombian government of "cooperating" with the drug traffickers and predicted its continued "decertification" as an ally in the "war against drugs." In a testimony before a House subcommittee, Assistant Secretary of State Robert Gelbard said, "The government of Colombia has failed to



Thousands of coca farmers from the southern Colombian Putumayo region demonstrated last August against the government.

follow through on promised counter-narcotics action or to confront fully the drug interests that contributed millions of dollars to President Ernesto Samper's campaign."

One year ago, the Colombian president was charged with illegal enrichment, falsifying documents, fraud, and cover-up by chief prosecutor Alfonso Valdiveso. Samper's election campaign treasurer, Santiago Medina, testified in 1996, that Samper accepted knowingly at least \$6 million in drug cartel money. The accusation turned into a scandal that led to the resignation of a number of his cabinet members and diplomats, and sparked a debate in Congress and the media in Colombia about

Samper's resignation, as well as demonstrations by thousands of students. The Colombian congress absolved the president of those charges last June.

Drug 'certification'

Washington uses "certification," its so-called war on drugs, as a way to pressure governments throughout Latin America and justify a greater military presence in the region. The Clinton administration first "decertified" Colombia in March 1996 and imposed economic sanctions that prevented Bogotá from getting new international loans. A U.S. law requires an annual evaluation from the president on which of the

Clashes spotlight apartheid's legacy

BY GREG ROSENBERG

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Running battles between protesters and police erupted February 6 in the mostly working-class townships south and west of Johannesburg, South Africa. Hundreds of residents of these so-called Coloured townships were demanding lower rates for water and electricity, and protesting the cutoff of these services to a few residents.

The clashes put a spotlight on the devastating legacy of apartheid and continued divisions among blacks — Africans, Indians, and that section of the population referred to as Coloured by the former white rulers — that were fostered under apartheid rule. While apartheid oppressed all blacks, successive National Party governments handed a few crumbs of relative privilege to Indians and "Coloureds" in relation to black Africans, who constitute the overwhelming majority of the population of 42 million people.

Hundreds of residents of Eldorado Park, Westbury, and other areas stayed away from work and set up barricades with piles of burning tires and trash cans in protest against threats by the metropolitan council to evict those not paying for the water and electricity they use, and demanding a flat rate for these services. Passing motorists were stoned and jeered.

When police moved to clear these barricades, shooting broke out, some of it directed at the cops, who responded in armored vehicles firing volleys of stun grenades, tear gas, rubber bullets, and buckshot. Police officials claim no live ammunition was used. When the smoke settled, according to press reports, four people were dead and 400 injured. Several gas stations and other buildings were razed.

The stayaway protest was called by the South Western Joint Civics Association, led by chairman Basil Douglas, who is also a member of the metropolitan council.

Douglas, who voices demagogic appeals on behalf of "the Coloured nation," claims that "we're being made slaves again in our own country." He tries to stir up resentment by pointing out that most residents of neighboring Soweto, populated by Africans, pay a flat fee of 45 rand a month — about \$10 — and are not metered for water and electricity. Moreover, many working people are angry that some of the wealthy white residents of Sandton, north of Johannesburg, have been boycotting service fees for

months.

The Mandela government has urged township residents nationwide to begin paying the fees, which were widely boycotted as a protest against apartheid. There has been very limited progress, however, in the provision of basic services to most blacks in townships throughout the country.

The response to the protest call found a hearing among many working-class residents of Eldorado Park and other nearby townships. These areas are filled with substandard housing thrown up under apartheid, in which there are often six people to a room. Unemployment, which afflicts millions of black South Africans, is rife. Demonstrations around the same demands broke out in September 1994.

Neva Brink, a carpenter who stayed home to join the protest, remarked that the government "is busy destroying us. We have no jobs here. We are not rich."

"These blacks are on the gravy train," stated painter Peter Clarke, echoing a common refrain repeated by opponents of the African National Congress-led government.

Reaction to the events varied. The daily *Sowetan* newspaper, most of whose readers live in Soweto, said the protesters' grievances were justified, but lamented the violent clashes that took place.

No comment was available from the national publicity department of the ANC at press time. The ANC in Gauteng province dismissed Douglas as an "unsound anarchist" who had falsely told residents that their electricity would be cut off and instigated supporters to vandalize property.

Protests died down after the Gauteng provincial government announced that a task force had been assigned to investigate protesters' demands, including government corruption. The February 7 *Argus* reported that assault and incitement charges had been laid against Douglas.

Cops admit murder of Biko

In other news, five cops admitted to South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission that they killed Steven Biko, the popular leader of the Black Consciousness Movement, whose 1977 death spurred a new round of international protests against the apartheid regime.

While it has long been known that apartheid jailers killed Biko, the recent revelations contain new information in how this fighter was put to death. For nearly two de-

countries supposedly linked to drug trafficking are making "progress." The governments of Bolivia, Colombia, and Peru have all carried out eradication of coca plantations as part of meeting Washington's dictates, despite protests from peasants who are offered no alternative means of livelihood.

Last September, U.S. president William Clinton authorized an increase in the funding for "counternarcotics" operations in Colombia, to \$40 million, three-quarters of which will go to the Colombian army and the rest for police forces. Gen. Wesley Clark, the U.S. army commander at Washington's Southern Command in Panama, said this would aid in fighting "narco-guerrilla movements that require the military to respond with a combat presence." U.S. and Colombian officials claim the ELN and FARC are involved in drug trafficking. Washington has supplied the Colombian military with more than \$147 million in equipment training and supplies since last year.

At the February 14 Congressional hearing, Gelbard praised Colombia's top narcotics prosecutor and the head of the national police, but declared Samper is "a truly corrupt president who has had a clear history of cooperating with drug dealers and receiving drug money back to 1982."

The Clinton administration is threatening tighter sanctions if Bogotá is "decertified" again this year, such as cutting off landing rights for Colombian planes, searching Colombians entering the United States, and stopping tariff preferences on coffee and other Colombian products. Another move being negotiated between the United States and Colombian governments is a maritime interdiction treaty that would permit U.S. police agents to search Colombian-flagged ships in Colombian waters.

cedes the apartheid government and cops insisted that Biko had hit his head against a prison wall and died of brain injuries.

For 20 days Biko, arrested at a Grahamstown roadblock, was chained naked to his bedpost. He was then removed for "interrogation," when he was beaten and tortured by the cops. It was during this period, Truth Commission investigators are now charging, that the cops administered poison to the anti-apartheid fighter. The previously healthy 30-year-old was later found semiconscious and foaming at the mouth in his cell. Doctors ordered him to a Pretoria prison hospital. Biko was thrown into the back of a van, again naked, with only a bottle of water for the 11 hour trip. On arrival at Pretoria, he was dumped on the floor. The anti-apartheid leader died the next day.

The five cops who have come forward say they killed Biko unintentionally — that they were only following official orders to beat him up. They are applying for amnesty for this crime. Under the rules of the commission, they have to tell the whole truth about the murder.

New International no. 5

The Coming Revolution in South Africa

by Jack Barnes

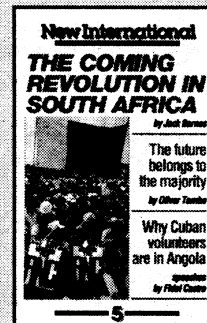
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Puerto Ricans fight for rights in Chicago

BY JOHN STUDER

CHICAGO — Braving frigid temperatures, 350 people, many waving Puerto Rican flags, marched February 12 from Roberto Clemente High School to the *Chicago Sun-Times*, protesting a series of articles attacking the Puerto Rican community here.

Many of the placards carried at the protest underscored the theme of the right of Puerto Ricans to learn their history: "Students have a right to know their history," and "Our history is part of education."

Sparked by a front-page *Sun-Times* article on February 4, titled "School funds used to push terrorists' release," the protest organizers demanded that the newspaper issue a "statement of apology to the Puerto Rican/Latino community." The *Chicago* daily has refused to meet with leaders from the Puerto Rican community so far. Outside New York, Chicago has the largest Puerto Rican population in the United States.

The *Sun-Times* reporters based their article on an internal School Board report, which has not been made public. The main charge was that state funds were used to "support a campaign to promote Puerto Rican independence and free convicted terrorists."

"The money," the paper said, "helped turn the school into a hotbed of Puerto Rican nationalism underwritten by taxpayers." More than \$150,000 was spent between 1992-1995, the paper claimed, to "indoctrinate" students politically.

The *Sun-Times* reporters said that funds were used to "bankroll" fund-raisers for Puerto Rican political prisoners in the United States, and to bring in outside speakers who, in addition to addressing students at Clemente, "also appeared at pro-independence political events and fund-raisers."

Examples cited by the *Sun-Times* were the invitation of Piri Thomas, a well-known Puerto Rican poet and author who received accolades for his novel *Down These Mean Streets*, and another Puerto Rican poet, Avotcja Jittonro. "A schedule obtained by the *Sun-Times* shows that they were booked not only to lecture students, but also to perform at two evening poetry readings from which proceeds went to an organization working to free the FALN [Armed Forces of National Liberation] terrorists."

A special target of the *Sun-Times* investigation was the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, which holds classes for Clemente High School. The center is headed by José López, whose brother, Oscar López, is one of 15 Puerto Rican political prisoners held in U.S. jails. The reporters also claimed that the U.S. flag was "forbidden" in some classes and that funds were used to finance student trips to Puerto Rico and Mexico.

Another target was Edward Negrón, who had been the school's acting principal. Negrón, a long-time supporter of Puerto Rican independence, was recently transferred to another school.

The school authorities have made a veiled threat to remove a mural of Carmen Valentín, who was sentenced to 90 years in prison in 1981 "for conspiring to overthrow the U.S. government," according to the *Sun-Times*. The mural dedication says: "We would like to dedicate this work of art to Carmen Valentín, a person we believe struggled for the rights of Puerto Ricans and sacrificed her freedom in order to make things better for her culture and people."

Before being imprisoned, Valentine was the companion of Negrón.

Chicago Schools chief executive Paul Vallas said the mural is "totally inappropriate.... I think we have to depoliticize the school."

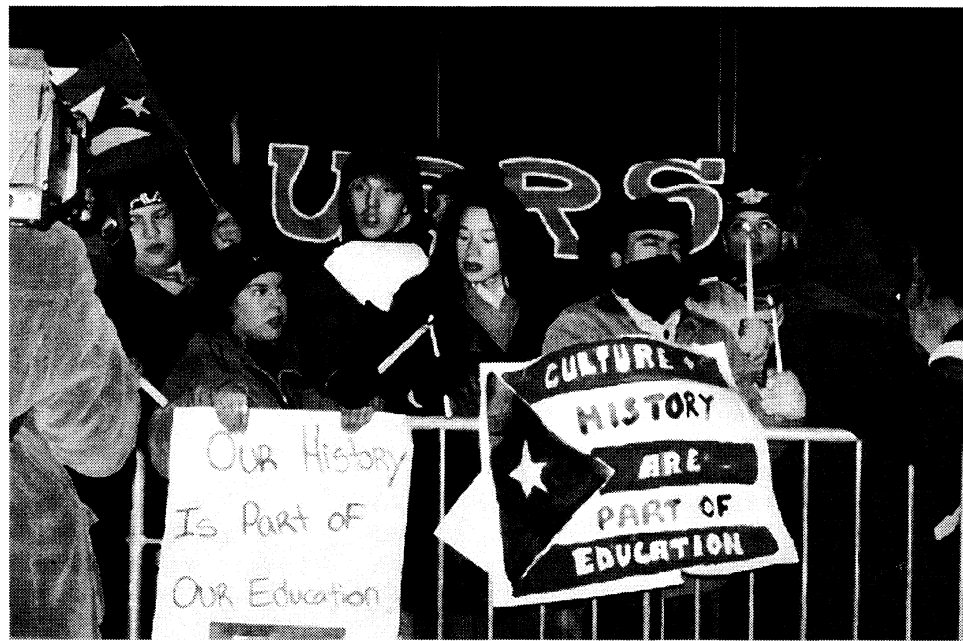
The person in line to replace Negrón as principal, Jerry Anderson, refused the position after it was reported to the police and the *Sun-Times* that she had received death threats. In the wake of the *Sun-Times* coverage, the FBI, prodded by Illinois elected officials, has begun an investigation of the alleged death threats and "of the school's link to a campaign to free Puerto Rican terrorists."

This move was protested by the Latino Institute, whose executive director, Migdalia Rivera, accused the *Sun-Times* of carrying out a "witchhunt" against the Puerto Rican community.

At a press conference, Rivera answered the charges in the *Sun-Times* article point-for-point. In response to using government money for outside speakers, she said, "Schools across the city, with approval of the Chicago Board of Education, have used state Chapter 1 monies to pay for outside speakers, artists, dancers, and entertainers. Citing the pro-independence ideology of these speakers somehow implies that this ideology is inherently illegal."

Democratic State Representative Edgar López will be chairing the McCarthyite committee put together to investigate the Puerto Rican community. He said he plans to subpoena "anyone who's received money, anyone who's been in a position to authorize vouchers... elected officials, school officials." In addition, Cook County State Attorney Richard Devine has jumped on the bandwagon, calling for more prosecutors to look into Clemente.

In the recent events, U.S. Rep. Luis Gutierrez (D-Ill.), is taking some heat. Gutierrez represents the 4th Congressional District, where Clemente High School is



Militant/John Studer

About 350 people protested February 12 in Chicago against racist articles published by the *Sun-Times* about a predominantly Puerto Rican high school.

located. More than 50 percent of Clemente's students are Puerto Rican, and the school itself is 85 percent Latino. Known as a supporter of Puerto Rican independence, Gutierrez has recently called on President Clinton to grant pardons to the 15 Puerto Rican political prisoners.

In response to *Sun-Times* attacks, Gutierrez, has now joined the calls for audits of how Clemente spent federal funds. "These vital funds should be used for nothing other than reading, writing, and arithmetic," he said. Gutierrez has also praised the *Sun-Times* for "doing the right thing about disclosing the problems at Clemente."

As part of the campaign against the Puerto Rican community, more police are now deployed near the school, adding to the intimidating atmosphere. One teacher was removed from the school for handing out political literature. And after threats of a possible student walk-out, school chief Vallas said he would close the school down. "This is no game," Vallas stated. "If the school doesn't get its act together and if there is any exploitation of the students against their best interests, we will dismantle the school and reconstitute it."

The witchhunt climate has been backed

by Mayor Richard Daley, and by the *Chicago Tribune*, the other major daily in the city. The *Tribune* has been somewhat low-key in its coverage, perhaps out of fear of inflaming the Latino community as it did last year when it printed an anti-Mexican column by liberal journalist, Mike Royko. More than 1,000 people, mostly Latinos, protested in front of the *Tribune* building.

On February 7, supporters of the Militant Labor Forum in Chicago publicized an event featuring the showing of the video *Mi Puerto Rico* (My Puerto Rico). The video tells the story of 100 years of struggle by the Puerto Rican people against U.S. colonialism. Following the *Sun-Times* attack on supporters of Puerto Rican independence, four TV news stations — Channel 5, 7, 11, and 66 — covered the forum showing.

In an introduction to the forum, Frank Forrestal, Socialist Workers write-in Senatorial candidate in 1996, and a member of United Auto Workers Local 551, said, "This is an attack on free speech and on the rights of students to discuss and learn their heritage and the real history of U.S. colonial domination of Puerto Rico." The story appeared that night and the next day on all four stations.

Free speech victory in New Jersey

BY LEE OLESON

NEW BRUNSWICK, New Jersey — After a five-month fight for the right to sell political literature in front of the Rutgers University Student Center here, supporters of free speech scored a victory February 11 when university officials dropped charges of "soliciting without a permit" against Bob Miller. Miller, a member of the United Auto Workers union local at the nearby Ford assembly plant in Edison, had been campaigning for the Socialist Workers Party national and statewide candidates last September when Rutgers police shut down the campaign table and issued a summons.

Immediately after the charges were dismissed, Miller and his supporters returned to the student center, set up a literature table, and sold political books and the *Militant* for four hours without harassment from police or university authorities. Attorney William

Volonte, who represented Miller on behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union, stayed by the literature table for the first two hours. Another worker from the auto plant, Bud Haithcoathe, also joined the sales team for an hour.

Volonte argued that written material should be exempt from requirements for vending permits under First Amendment guarantees of free speech.

Widespread opposition to the university's assault on democratic rights was reflected in press reports on the case in the student *Daily Targum*; two local dailies, the *Home News & Tribune* and the *Courier-News*; the *New York Times*; and the *Newark Star-Ledger*. The February 11 *Daily Targum* ran an article reporting the university's decision to drop the charges. The next day the student paper carried a second article on the socialists' return to the campus, with a photo of

the literature table outside the center. (See below.)

Many people stopped at the table to congratulate the campaigners on their victory. Students and others bought nine *Militants* over the course of the day, along with a copy of the *Communist Manifesto*, two pamphlets on the Cuban revolution, and the book *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women*.

"The reaction of students who spoke to me at the literature table was the same as the people on my line when I went back to work the next day," Miller said, "thumbs up, support for the right to distribute literature, and some surprise and anger that the university had me arrested for campaigning. This victory for democratic rights will make it more difficult for government entities to restrict the space for the exchange of ideas on public streets."

from the pages of the *Daily Targum*

February 12, 1997

UNIVERSITY

The *Daily Targum* Page 3

Socialist returns to RU campus

By Hannah Cho
TARGUM STAFF WRITER

Robert B. Miller returned yesterday to the front of the Rutgers Student Center to promote the Socialist Workers Party after all charges were dropped against him by University officials.

"I was campaigning for the Socialist Workers' candidates (presidential election) and discussing political issues," Miller said.

Miller said he plans to continue to campaign and solicit material once every week. Yesterday, Miller returned with other members of the Socialist Workers Party, including Lee Oleson of Newark.

Miller, an auto worker from Edison, was arrested and ticketed on Sept. 12 for distributing and selling written materials, books and leaflets in front of the student center.

Miller was violating New Brunswick's municipal ordinance which states a person cannot solicit without a permit.

William Volonte, an attorney who represents Miller on behalf of the American Civil Liberties Union, said the government cannot require a person

who distributes leaflets or handbills to get a permit. But the government has the right to regulate commercial vending activities, such as hot dog stands.

Miller said the ordinance is questionable when it concerns the selling of materials.

"The selling of books should be equally protected by the First Amendment," Volonte said. "The reason is that you cannot give away a 400-page book."

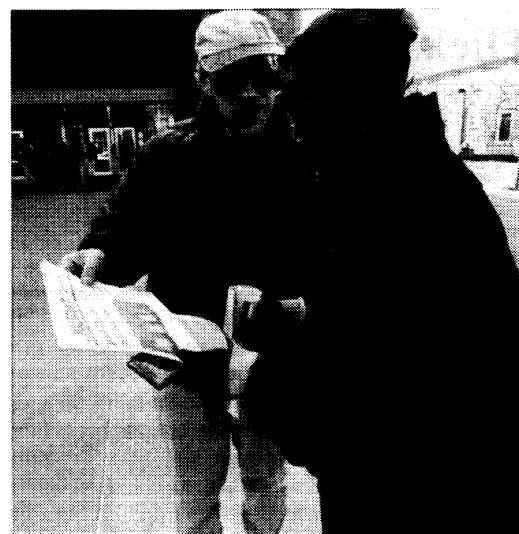
Miller has challenged the constitutionality of the ordinance, but it is the decision of the city of New Brunswick to decide whether to take action, said Edward Sponzilli, the attorney who represents Rutgers in this matter.

Volonte said Rutgers lies within New Brunswick and the University has to enforce the city ordinance. However, when it comes to the dissemination of ideas, people have a much broader right to do what they want, he said.

"Rutgers has upheld the rights of people," Volonte said.

Miller said he is fighting for social change and an important part of that is to have civil and political discussions with the youth.

"The reversal is a victory for all democratic rights and fighters for social change," Miller said. "The victory is broader than just for the Socialist Workers Party."

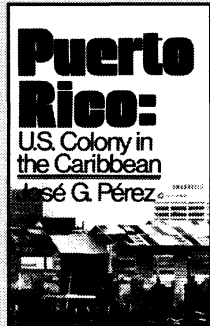


David Forre/The Daily Targum

Lee Oleson of Newark, a member of the Socialist Workers Party, shows poster by Jaheerah Kendrick, a Rutgers College junior, some information concerning the Socialist Workers Party.

From Pathfinder

Puerto Rico: U.S. Colony in the Caribbean
José G. Pérez
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SELL THE BOOKS WORKERS OF THE WORLD NEED

Join the campaign to sell Pathfinder books and pamphlets

Iowa meatpackers renew subscriptions

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

A week into the February 8-28 renewal drive, socialist workers in Iowa report they've sold several subscription renewals to the *Militant* and its Spanish-language sister *Perspectiva Mundial* to packinghouse workers. Joe Swanson, a meatpacker at the IBP plant in Perry, Iowa, where many immigrants from Latin America live, said, "We sold two renewals on the job to young maintenance workers who bought subs during the last *Militant* circulation campaign. One bought the paper because he really appreciated its coverage of the labor movement. He knows the *Militant* will have something on the recent American Airlines dispute." Swanson said his other co-worker renewed because his family likes the paper. "He shares it with his mother."

"We made trips to visit people and spent time talking to them," said Dick McBride, another Iowa meatpacker. McBride said they sold a new subscription to a Mexican worker who became interested in political discussions on the labor movement, while they were at the home of a *Perspectiva Mundial* subscriber who decided to renew. "After that visit, we went to the house of another co-worker and sold him *New Internationalist* no. 7," which features the article "The Opening Guns of World War III."

Gerardo Sánchez, a rail worker at Union Pacific, sold two *Perspectiva Mundial* re-

newals to Latino workers who lost their jobs after the Montfort packing plant in Des Moines shut down. "One worker was from Ecuador, who I talked to for an hour at his home. He asked lots of questions about Clinton's cuts on welfare benefits to legal residents, medical benefits, and workers compensation. He said he wondered if it will make any difference if immigrants are legal or illegal," Sánchez said. Another worker from Mexico who renewed his *Perspectiva Mundial* sub said he liked it "because it's the only paper where you can find out about struggles of immigrant workers in this country." The socialist workers in Des Moines are using the renewal campaign to build an upcoming *Militant* Labor Forum on the fight for immigrant rights.

Militant supporters in San Francisco have sold five renewals to the socialist newsweekly, nearly half their goal. "When we learned about the renewal campaign, we looked up our co-workers who bought subscriptions in the past," said Omari Musa, who works at Unocal in Rodeo, California. The chemical worker said he sold two renewals — one to a co-worker and the other to another chemical worker in the area who is a longtime reader of the *Militant*.

"She had one or two issues remaining on her subscription when I asked her about renewing," said Musa, "and told me, 'I wouldn't want to miss a single issue, because the *Militant* helps me to think out a lot of political questions.' " She also pledged \$300 to the *Militant* Fund. Musa reported that another co-worker who is also a longtime reader of the *Militant* pledged \$150 to the fund, which will run from February 22 to April 26.

A former student at Rutgers University in New Jersey renewed her *Militant* subscription and bought a Pathfinder Readers Club membership and two Malcolm X titles, reports Jane Harris, a rail worker in Newark. "I talked to her for an hour and a half," Harris said she also sold a new *Militant* subscription to one of her co-workers at New Jersey Transit. "I'm on a roll," she declared.

Betsy Farley, a steelworker in Birmingham, reported supporters have sold nine renewals to the *Militant* there, including two to coal miners, three to steelworkers, two to students at the University of Alabama, and two to members of the United Auto Workers on strike at PEMCO, an aircraft repair plant. "Our goal is 15 but I think we will sell more than that because people need this paper," said Farley. The accompanying chart does not reflect the subscriptions from Birmingham, as they have not yet arrived at the *Militant* office. All renewals received by Tuesday at noon EST, will be counted toward that week's chart.

Farley said socialist steelworkers also sold a new subscription to *Perspectiva Mundial* on the job, several single issues of the *Militant* to co-workers and seven Pathfinder books.

Militant bundle orders have increased slightly, reflecting a step up by supporters in using the socialist press to reach out to win new readers. This is a good warm up to the international subscription drive that will begin March 8. The renewal campaign is also part of the effort build the upcoming Young Socialists convention and recruit new fighters to the socialist movement. Next week's issue of the *Militant* will feature an article on the *Militant* Fund and a chart with the goals listing cities where supporters around the world are participating in the fund-raising campaign.



Militant/Janet Roth
Selling the *Militant* at march for Maori rights in Waitangi, New Zealand, February 6.

Monthly Sales of Pathfinder Books to Non Pathfinder Outlets

CITY	GOALS	JANUARY		# of books sold		
		SOLD	%	DEC	NOV	OCT
Washington, D.C.	42	429	1021%	207	1	1
Des Moines	35	274	783%	476	219	211
New York	190	417	219%	435	152	85
Boston	50	100	200%	268	42	7
Greensboro	36	65	181%	15	32	0
Philadelphia	49	81	165%	249	8	0
Cleveland	40	63	158%	46	1	0
Chicago	60	71	118%	223	410	16
Los Angeles	95	78	82%	100	23	103
Morgantown	25	20	80%	37	0	0
San Francisco	74	53	72%	275	62	3
Pittsburgh	49	31	63%	55	7	1
Newark	133	66	50%	2	0	2
Peoria	27	13	48%	20	4	1
Miami	32	11	34%	29	100	0
Houston	32	10	31%	57	40	1
Salt Lake City	40	10	25%	170	7	16
Seattle	60	7	12%	20	7	14
Atlanta	32	3	9%	23	0	2
Birmingham	50	0	0%	10	2	0
Detroit	60	0	0%	53	5	0
Twin Cities	67	0	0%	26	13	3
TOTAL	1,278	1,802	141%	2,796	1,135	466

Sales tour a success in D.C.

BY TOM HEADLEY

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Bookstores and libraries here placed orders for 402 Pathfinder books and pamphlets in an eight-day period earlier this month. Nineteen Pathfinder supporters visited 40 stores and libraries in Washington, Maryland, and Virginia in conjunction with a sales tour by Pathfinder staff member Michael Baumann.

"The interest booksellers displayed in Pathfinder titles — ranging from the Cuban and Russian revolutions to the labor battles of the 1930s, which laid the basis for the industrial union movement and social gains that are coming under intensified attack today — confirmed their relevance to the issues on many people's minds," Baumann noted.

Advance preparation contributed substantially to the success of the bookstore visits. In almost all cases Pathfinder supporters set up appointments well in advance and then confirmed them before the visit. Eleven of the visits produced immediate orders, and ten more offered serious prospects for orders through follow-up work. Besides the 402 books initially ordered, 60 more have been ordered since then as a result of the week's work. These go toward supporters' goal of getting orders for an additional 100 books in February.

Pathfinder supporters showed book buyers a representative selection of about a dozen books — ranging from *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War: 1956-58* by Ernesto Che Guevara to Leon Trotsky's *History of the Russian Revolution*, *The Origins of Materialism* by George Novack, and the

Communist Manifesto by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. Preconceptions about which titles may interest a given buyer may be inaccurate and opportunities can be missed if a buyer never sees a broadly representative sampling of Pathfinder's stock.

One example of this was the response of an owner of an independent bookstore in northern Virginia who initially said he did not want "anything political — just Malcolm X." He ended up ordering five *Communist Manifestos*, five copies of *The Jewish Question: A Marxist Interpretation*, and five copies of *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women* for a total of 50 books.

A number of stores ordered Pathfinder titles dealing with the Cuban revolution and its leaders. Prominent among these were Guevara's *Bolivian Diary and Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War*, and *To Speak the Truth: Why Washington's 'Cold War' against Cuba Doesn't End*, containing speeches by Fidel Castro and Guevara.

Several campus bookstores ordered a range of titles for Black History Month specials. At a relatively new Black-oriented bookstore in Baltimore, Pathfinder supporters were invited back to participate in an upcoming forum on Malcolm X and his relevance for today.

Supporters found a number of stores where appointments could be scheduled for weekend visits. These included a local airport, where the team combined a plant-gate sale — focused on introducing books and periodicals to airport workers organized by the Machinists union — with a visit with a buyer for the airport store.

RENEWAL DRIVE
Militant • Perspectiva Mundial

Country/City	Militant			PM		
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	%
NEW ZEALAND						
Auckland	14	11	79%			
Christchurch	3	2	67%			
Wellington	4	2	50%			
N.Z. Total	21	15	71%			
AUSTRALIA						
	6	4	67%	1	0	0%
UNITED STATES						
Washington, DC	6	4	67%	5	3	60%
Houston	6	4	67%	3	1	33%
Des Moines	5	3	60%	5		0%
San Francisco	11	5	45%	5		0%
Salt Lake City	5	2	40%	2		0%
Cleveland	6	2	33%	2		0%
New York	25	8	32%	15		0%
Chicago	10	3	30%	25		0%
Pittsburgh	8	2	25%			
Boston	8	2	25%	3		0%
Los Angeles	25	6	24%	10	1	10%
Miami	9	2	22%	6		0%
Philadelphia	10	2	20%	3		0%
Newark, NJ	15	3	20%	10		0%
Detroit	12	2	17%	3		0%
Seattle	10	1	10%	3		0%
Birmingham, AL	15	1	7%	1		0%
Atlanta	5	0	0%	3	1	33%
Twin Cities, MN	15	0	0%	3		0%
Peoria, IL	5	0	0%	1		0%
Morgantown, WV	8	0	0%	1		0%
Greensboro, NC	10	0	0%	3		0%
Denver		1				
Total U.S.	229	53	23%	0	6	3%
CANADA						
Toronto	7	2	29%	2	2	100%
Montreal	4	1	25%	2		0%
Vancouver	5	0	0%	1		0%
Canada Total	16	3	19%	5	2	40%
SWEDEN						
	5	0	0%	8		0%
UNITED KINGDOM						
London	15	0	0%	3		0%
Manchester	5	0	0%			
U.K. Total	20	0	0%			
International totals	252	75	30%	132	8	6%
Should be	250	83	33%	125	42	34%

IN THE UNIONS

United States						
UFCW	2	1	50%	2		0%
UMWA	5	2	40%			
UAW	30	7	23%	5		0%
UNITE	10	2	20%	2		0%
USWA	12	2	17%			
OCAW	20	3	15%			
IAM	28	4	14%	2		0%
UTU	9	0	0%			
TOTAL	116	21	18%	11	0	0%

YS members speak out on socialism, join in supporting strawberry pickers' fight for justice

This column is written and edited by the Young Socialists (YS), an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information about the YS write to: Young Socialists, P.O. Box 14392, St. Paul, MN 55114. Tel: (612) 644-0051. Compuserve: 105162,605

BY REGGIE MILLER

ST PAUL, Minnesota — Young Socialists in this area are now engaging in a series of campus speaking events to build for the upcoming Young Socialists National Convention. On February 5, Meg Novak, a member of the Young Socialists National Committee, was invited to a "Political Spectrum" at Armstrong High School in Robinsdale, which about 100 students attended.

Other political organizations represented at this event included the Reform Party, Libertarian Party, Republican Party, Democratic Party, and a supporter of rightist Lyndon La Rouché. Novak, the youngest panelist and only woman speaking, was directed a disproportionate share of the questions. Students posed questions ranging from, "What is your stance on immigration?" to "Why do we hear the health care system is going bankrupt and why can't the government fix it?"

One student, Ralph Strickter, who bought

the pamphlet, *Fascism: What It Is and How to Fight It* by Leon Trotsky and was interested in joining the YS, asked Novak, "Capitalism seems so firmly grounded in America... what can be done to overturn it?"

Novak replied, "What I do as a member of the Young Socialists is go out and talk to young people, like today, and speak with those who are looking to fight for real social change; that could mean speaking here or at a protest against police brutality or on a picket line. The Young Socialists is made up of young workers and students who are willing to actively stand up against capitalism and offer a way forward for humanity."

After the panel session, students had the option to talk informally with the speakers. The Young Socialists discussed politics and answered questions for the remainder of the class period, while the other speakers headed for the door. Rob, a senior at Armstrong High School, after speaking with a YS member, said, "I've really had a change of opinion today after listening to the speakers. Socialism and Cuba aren't at all what I've heard they were.... I'd like to learn more about the socialist movement." Rob was one of the students who expressed interest in the YS National Convention.



BY STEVE GORDON

KEENE, California — On the weekend

of February 7-9 the United Farm Workers held their second annual student conference at the UFW Headquarters to build an April 13 march for strawberry workers in Watsonville, California. The march is to support the rights of the strawberry workers and to protest their super-exploitation by the growers.

There are over 20,000 strawberry workers in the Watsonville-Salinas area of California. Working 10 to 12 hour days, the workers suffer from chronic back pain and injuries, lack clean drinking water and bathrooms, and end their work days in overcrowded apartments or dilapidated shacks. Many also face sexual harassment from the bosses as well as intimidation and physical assaults for suspected union activity.

Over 100 students from all over California met to discuss ways to build the march on their respective campuses, and how to raise money to get the largest number of students possible to come to support the farm workers.

Young Socialists from Fresno, Los Angeles, and San Francisco participated in the conference, and were able to introduce students there to the *Militant*, socialist literature, and socialist ideas. One student from the University of San Diego who was interested in women's liberation and the history of Native Americans purchased the pamphlets *Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle* by Thomas Sankara, the



Militant/Ove Aspoy

YS member Steve Gordon (left) helps sell Pathfinder books at showing of movie on Che Guevara in San Francisco.

leader of a revolution in Burkina Faso in the 1980s, and *Genocide Against the Indians* by George Novack.

Another student from the same campus explained, "I always wanted to read the *Communist Manifesto*," and purchased the *Manifesto* and a pamphlet by Che Guevara. Students from Fresno State discussed the Soviet Union and the role of Stalinism in its development. The Cuban revolution was also a major topic of discussion, especially as an example to the rest of Latin America.

The April 13 demonstration is projected by the UFW to include 20,000 demonstrators, 10,000 of which will be farm workers organized by the UFW. YS members and others should join in building the march in Watsonville.

Black farmers plan conference on land loss

BY STU SINGER

WASHINGTON, DC — Black farmers are organizing a Black Land Loss conference in Enfield, North Carolina March 20-22. Enfield is about 60 miles northeast of Raleigh. The stated goals of the conference are to "Stop the trend of African-American land loss and the disappearance of family farms.... Establish a regional network in support of the sustainable economic development of rural resources.... Investigate the reality of a national conference in Tillery to develop and implement broader, more global solutions.... Communicate the rural voice of Americans effectively across all cultural, racial and geographic boundaries.... Serve as a clearinghouse to disseminate ideas and alternatives in response to poverty and injustice in North Carolina and the world."

The initiative for the conference comes from the Concerned Citizens of Tillery, a nearby area in North Carolina where Black farmers have been fighting to hold onto land their families got in the 1930s and '40s.

The brochure for the conference explains, "In the United States, African-Americans are losing land at a rate of 9,000 acres per week." In 1920, the statement continued, "1 in every 7 farmers was African-American. By 1982 only 1 in every 67 farmers was still working the land. In 1950, African-Americans owned 1.2 million acres of land in North Carolina. By the late 1980s, African-American owned farmland in North Carolina had declined to less than 400,000 acres. Additionally, many rural southern communities have endured environmental degrada-

tion, health risks and loss of economic vitality as part of a nationwide trend of environmental racism."

Gary Grant, one of the organizers of the conference, is from a Black farm family in Tillery. He told the *Militant* their goal is to bring together Black farmers from a number of states. He expects 100-200 people including farmers from Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Georgia, and Texas. With the focus of the conference on Black land loss, other farmers, union members, environmental activists, and others are welcome, he said.

Grant and others involved in the conference were part of the demonstration organized by the National Black Farmers Association outside the White House in Washington December 12 that exposed blatant racist practices by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The Secretary of Agriculture was forced to declare a moratorium on farm foreclosures while a task force studies the extent of racist discrimination, particularly in farm loans to Black farmers, but also in discrimination against Black employees of the USDA itself. Grant hopes new chapters of the Black Farmers Association can be set up through the conference. National Black Farmers Association President John Boyd will participate in it.

For more information on the conference, registration and housing, contact Gary Grant at 919-826-3017 or write to The Land Loss Fund, PO Box 61, Tillery, NC 27887.

Stu Singer is a member of United Transportation Union Local 454.

Come to the Young Socialists Second National Convention

March 28 - 30 ❖ Atlanta, Georgia

- Defend abortion rights
- Defend the Cuban revolution
 - Stop police brutality
 - Fight for Black freedom
- Equal rights for immigrants
- Stop the attacks on affirmative action
 - Support striking workers
- Stop the assaults on Social Security



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- ☐ I am interested in attending the YS convention
☐ I am interested in joining the Young Socialists
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U.S. gov't ready to deport Irish activists

BY CATHLEEN GUTEKANST

SAN FRANCISCO — Closing arguments were heard here January 6, in U.S. District Court in the extradition cases of Kevin Barry Artt and Terrence Kirby.

Artt and Kirby are two of the "H-Block 4," four Irish men who escaped from the H-blocks of Long Kesh Prison outside of Belfast, northern Ireland, in 1983. The four men had lived in California for more than 10 years until they were arrested by the FBI in 1992. The U.S. Justice Department began extradition hearings to return them to prison in northern Ireland.

Jimmy Smyth, the first of the four to be arrested, was handed over to British authorities last August and flown to Long Kesh Prison where he remains today, serving a further five years of his sentence. Smyth fought a four-year legal battle against his extradition and was able to win broad political support for his right to remain in the United States.

In closing his arguments against Artt and Kirby, U.S. Justice Department Attorney Mark Zanides claimed the two were "terrorists" and criminals, not political fighters victimized for their opposition to the British occupation of their country.

Zanides stated that because Kirby had signed a confession admitting to taking part in a bombing, this proved Kirby's guilt. Kirby withdrew his confession the next day, stating that he had only signed after severe beatings. Ignoring statements by family members and witnesses who testified on the nature of Kirby's wounds, Zanides stated that "With the exception of a short period following the escape in 1983, there has

never been any brutality directed against Republican prisoners in the Maze Prison. It's a very tranquil situation."

This view contradicts the findings of Amnesty International, the European Commission on Human Rights, and other human rights groups, which have documented instances of torture, beatings, and severe mistreatment of prisoners in northern Ireland.

Artt also signed a confession, which he retracted, stating he had signed as a result of threats and intimidation during police interrogation.

Artt's attorney, James Brosnahan, pointed out that the Diplock courts in northern Ireland allow coerced confessions to be admitted as testimony. "What standards are we using in assessing whether or not an extraditee has received a fair trial (in his country of origin)?" Brosnahan asked. "Zanides states that you should use the UK standard."

The defense explained that Artt was convicted in a nonjury Diplock "show trial" involving 38 people, all implicated in serious charges by Christopher Black, a "supergrass" informant. "Supergrass" is the term used to describe paid informers for the British military who have testified against thousands of people charged under the Emergency Provisions Act and, later, under the Prevention of Terrorism Act.

Christopher Black testified that Charles McKiernan was guilty of the 1978 murder of deputy H-Block Governor Albert Miles. McKiernan, in turn, made a statement implicating Kevin Artt in the murder. There was no evidence presented in the trial against Artt apart from his confession. Artt



Militant/Barbara Bowman

Supporters of Irish freedom struggle picket home of British consul in San Francisco on eve of "peace talks" in northern Ireland, June 6, 1996.

was found guilty and sentenced to 20 years in prison.

Artt was a taxi driver in Belfast at the time of his arrest, and was often stopped by the police while he was working. He had been the victim of two previous attempts on his life, and the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) had admitted that they had information that he was on a Loyalist hit list.

The trial proceedings were attended by Irish solidarity and human rights activists, with about 25 supporters attending each day of the closing arguments.

John Fogarty and H.B. O'Keady of the Irish American Unity Conference traveled to Belfast in December 1996. They found evidence that forged documents were submitted by the British government in the San Francisco trial of Artt and Kirby. In Novem-

ber 1996, David Baxendale, a forensic scientist, had testified for the defense that the documents submitted by the British Government as evidence, alleged to have been written in 1978, were shown to have been prepared sometime after 1981.

Supporters of the H-Block 4 are preparing for activities in support of the men. Pól Brennan, the last extraditee, will be on trial later in 1997. All three men remain under house arrest and are unable to work or attend public gatherings.

Contributions and messages of support can be sent to: Irish American Unity Conference, 2624 3rd Street, San Francisco, CA. 94107, to the attention of John Fogarty.

Cathleen Gutekanst is a member of Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 1-5.

Cop frame-up against Natives unravels in Canada

BY ROGER ANDREWS

SURREY, British Columbia — A police frame-up and violence-baiting attack against 18 fighters for Native Indian rights is rapidly unraveling in a courthouse in this Vancouver suburb. The Gustafsen 18 are facing criminal charges ranging from trespass and public mischief to possession of firearms dangerous to the public peace. Two defendants are charged with attempted murder of police officers.

The charges stem from a government and police assault on an encampment celebrating Native Indian spiritualism and culture at Gustafsen Lake in central British Columbia in the summer of 1995. The celebration had become an annual event, but in July 1995, acting at the behest of a rancher with a specious claim to the land surrounding the lake, police ordered participants off the land. They refused, affirming that the land was territory Indians had not ceded. The British Columbia government, with the backing of Ottawa, then directed the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP), Canada's federal police force, to force them out by any means.

The defense campaign has exposed startling evidence of the lengths to which the police and provincial and federal governments went.

A damning videotape

The biggest revelation to date came on

January 19 when a police videotape of an RCMP strategy session on Sept. 1, 1995, became public. The cops are viewed planning a smear campaign to falsely paint the defendants as violent and criminal. They agree to publicize the criminal records of several camp participants. They discuss which officials of Native Indian organizations might cooperate in giving public denunciations of the encampment.

RCMP negotiator Dennis Ryan then asks, "Did you find somebody else that could help us with a disinformation or smear campaign?"

"Smear campaigns are our specialty," answers a smiling RCMP Sergeant Peter Montague. He was the officer responsible for media relations as the police carried out a planned escalation of the confrontation.

Montague was challenged by defense lawyer George Wool in testimony on January 23. "You were conditioning the Canadian public — including prospective jurors — that the people at Gustafsen Lake were terrorists," the lawyer charged.

"That was the message, yes," replied Montague. He described his job as striking "a balance as to what the public has a right to know and what they should know."

The tape of the strategy session is part of 50 hours of filming of the standoff, which RCMP witnesses have said now serves as a training videotape for the force.

Jurors at the trial first saw the tape in December. The judge quickly ordered a ban on publication of its contents. The public revelation of the tape was in defiance of that gag order.

Montague's bragging about RCMP smear campaigns has embarrassed the capitalist media in the province. All news agencies faithfully repeated whatever stories the RCMP fed them during the standoff. Until the videotape revelation, they have conducted a virtual news blackout of the trial, which began last July.

Police testimony last fall revealed that the rancher, Lyle James, had no legal title to land at Gustafsen Lake. The cop in charge of the local RCMP detachment testified in September that he accepted "hearsay evidence" from some local residents as his basis to support the rancher's claim.

Cops, army organized violent assault

Other testimony by police has shed light on the planned escalation of the conflict. A key date was August 18, when police dressed in camouflage staged an armed sortie against the encampment. Activists phoned police to complain that people they believed to be right-wing vigilantes were staging a provocation. They demanded that the police remove them. The cops denied any knowledge of what was taking place. A recording of the call was later destroyed.

The next day, the cops held a press conference charging that they had come under fire from the camp and announcing a massive increase in the police siege. Four hundred cops and units of the Canadian army were eventually deployed.

Once the option of escalating the conflict was decided, front-line cops had authorization to shoot to kill. "What the RCMP set in motion at Gustafsen Lake was a Waco, Texas-style shoot out," charged defense campaign spokesperson John Hill at a public meeting in Vancouver last month. "We are fortunate that our actions to defend ourselves denied them that chance."

Hill was referring to the armed attack by FBI and other U.S. federal agents against a wooden complex in Waco, Texas, housing the Branch Davidian religious sect. The April 19, 1993, assault, which came after a 51-day siege of the religious group, resulted in the holocaust of the compound and the deaths of 86 people, including 17 children.

Other testimony at the trial has revealed: Police lied in justifying the use of a land

mine to blow up a truck driven by two participants in the encampment on September 11. They claimed that the occupants were armed and had previously fired on police helicopters. Montague admitted January 24 that the cops had no such evidence. The passengers of the truck miraculously escaped injury from the blast.

In testimony on January 28, RCMP Staff Sergeant Ken Porter was slammed by defense lawyers for the force's repeated use of the word "terrorists" to describe camp participants when none had any background remotely related to terrorism. "The whole thing is hearsay," the cop admitted.

The RCMP admit to firing between 10,000 and 20,000 rounds of ammunition into the encampment Sept. 11, 1995, in an unsuccessful effort to force a surrender of the activists.

Following that failure, the cops considered asking for a bigger deployment of the Canadian army. "Four thousand-plus would be needed...100 to one," wrote Deputy RCMP Commissioner Dennis Farrell in a September 13 memo.

The police siege ended on Sept. 17, 1995, with the peaceful arrests of the camp occupants.

Defendants press for justice

The 18 defendants are now calling for a judicial inquiry into the confrontation. They are also stepping up calls for the release of William (Wolverine) Ignace, one of two defendants charged with attempted murder. The trial judge has refused repeated motions to release him on bail.

"We have been confident all along in winning this trial because we have the truth on our side," Bill Lightbown told the *Militant*. Lightbown was a participant in the encampment and one of the spokespeople for the defense campaign of the Gustafsen 18. "The only possibility for a conviction was if the judge could keep a lid on evidence of the police frame-up. But the testimony we have forced out of the RCMP witnesses has blown the cover off that."

"Our concern now is that the judge may do some damage control by dismissing the charges and putting an end to the trial. We want the whole truth to come out, not only the RCMP's actions but also all of what their political masters in the provincial and federal governments said and did."

Testimony by defense witnesses is due to begin later in February.

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'We won't be slaves'

Continued from front page

the world, we would be capable of accepting to become slaves again," Castro said.

"We will wait for the news and information on that Machiavellian policy, and we will reply accordingly. For the time being, we tell you that free men can die but no power or money in the world can convert them into slaves."

U.S. trade offensive against allies

Washington has also taken an aggressive stance against its imperialist allies, especially in Europe and Canada, who have objected to aspects of the Helms-Burton law, particularly Title III of the act. That provision permits Cuban-American and other U.S. businessman, whose property on the Caribbean island was confiscated by Cuban workers and peasants after the 1959 revolution, to sue companies abroad that invest in those properties.

On February 3, European Union (EU) trade commissioner Leon Brittan formally asked the Geneva-based World Trade Organization (WTO) to appoint a panel to investigate its complaint that the Helms-Burton law violates international rules. Washington agreed to under the Uruguay round of trade negotiations. The WTO director-general Renato Ruggiero had 10 days to name the panelists.

The U.S. government threatened to veto Ruggiero's nominees. The White House is arguing that the Helms-Burton law falls outside the WTO's jurisdiction because Washington can order unilateral trade sanctions for reasons of "national security," a claim the EU disputes.

The U.S. legislation "has been rightly condemned well beyond the EU for its attempt to impose politically-inspired U.S. laws on the rest of the world," said an editorial in the February 4 *Financial Times* of London. "It amounts to a blatant example of extraterritoriality, which would most probably be ruled out of court by any WTO dispute panel."

That's why Washington has been trying to block the formation of such a panel, flaunting its military and economic superiority in Europe against its imperialist allies, who are also competitors. "The Europeans would be wise to hold their fire," warned an editorial in the *New York Times* on February 17. "Skirmishing over Cuba is not worth the potential risk to the World Trade Organization."

In an attempt to gain time and avert a head-on collision, the EU asked the WTO on February 12 to postpone by one week, to February 20, the nomination of a dispute panel. Subsequent talks between EU's Brittan and Stuart Eizenstat, Clinton's special

envoy on Cuba, have failed to produce a settlement. As we go to press, EU officials were insisting they would press for the nomination of the panel, which would have six months to rule.

Clinton administration officials have also gone on the propaganda offensive to peddle the idea that their aggressive use of the Libertad Act is working wonders in tightening the economic noose around Cuba by stifling foreign investment. At a February 10-11 conference in Washington, D.C., (see article below) Michael Rannenberger, the State Department coordinator for Cuban affairs, claimed that 12 companies "have either pulled out of Cuba as a direct result of Libertad, or refrained from investments they were planning to make."

While the Cuban government has admitted increased economic difficulties because of the intensifying U.S. embargo, including being forced to pay much higher interest rates on loans to finance imports, Washington may be exaggerating the impact (see appeal below).

Rannenberger also praised Clinton's January 28 report and tried to counter Castro's description of its \$4-8 billion offer as a crude buy-off. "It is not a bribe, as the Cuban government has alleged," he said.

'U.S. capitalist garbage'

For its part, Cuba's communist leadership has continued its propaganda counterattack. Ricardo Alarcón, president of Cuba's National Assembly, said in an interview on Cuban TV that after Clinton's January 28 addition to the Helms-Burton law, "perhaps it can be called the Helms-Clinton law."

"No matter how hard they try to gild the



National Institute of Agrarian Reform/Raúl Corrales

Cuban peasant receives land in 1960. Cuban president Castro explained U.S. capitalists want right to snatch land given to thousands of peasants through the revolution.

lily, they cannot deceive anyone," stated Fidel Castro in a February 7 speech at an international conference on pedagogy in Havana. "This plan is about stripping our peasants and workers of the land given by the revolution. It is about stripping all the families of the houses given by the revolution to the families that lived in them. It is about snatching from the hands of the people all the enterprises that were so justly nationalized."

The Cuban president pointed to the catastrophic results for working people of the attempts to integrate Russia and the Eastern European workers states into the capi-

talist market. He added that in imperialist countries like the United States capitalism perpetuates a culture of violence and drug abuse and marginalizes the poor, elderly, and sick. "Who has told the U.S. government that it has the divine right to draft government programs for another country?" Castro asked. Cubans could also consider recommending a transition government, Castro said, "one that would eliminate the capitalist garbage" that exists in the United States.

"No, Mr. Clinton, there won't be a transition government in Cuba, nor a transition from socialism to capitalism in our country!"

Third anti-Cuba conference debates effectiveness of Helms-Burton law

BY JANICE LYNN
AND MARY MARTIN

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The third in a series of international conferences on the misnamed "Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996," also known as the Helms-Burton law, took place here February 10-11. The gathering was titled "Helms-Burton: A Loose Canon?" It was held at the Brookings Institution and the House of Representatives' Rayburn Building.

The main organizer of the two-day conference was the Washington, D.C.-based Center for International Policy, a liberal research group. The Canadian Foundation for the Americas and the Institute of European-Latin American Relations cosponsored it. More than 250 people took part. They included academics, researchers, government officials, businessmen, several right-wing Cuban-Americans, and some representatives of groups that organize activities in opposition to U.S. policy toward Cuba. Speakers included top administration officials who are pointmen of Clinton's policy toward Cuba.

Panelists expressed unanimity on their common goal of overturning the current government in Havana headed by Cuban president Fidel Castro. They discussed what kind of foreign policy would best aid Washington in fomenting a "transition to democracy and market reforms." Panelists differed on whether the measures contained in the Helms-Burton law were effective in accomplishing these ends, and on their consequences for intensifying trade disputes between the U.S. government and its allies in Canada and countries that belong to the European Union (EU).

Wayne Smith, former chief of the U.S. interests section in Havana between 1979 and 1982, said that the law "works against our interests and what we say are our objectives — to bring about a peaceful transition to the government we want to see." Smith said he was not that concerned about the effects of the legislation on Cuba. "I am more concerned about the implication of Helms-Burton for the international system," he stated.

U.S. undersecretary of commerce Stuart Eizenstat, who is also Clinton's special envoy on Cuba, argued that the so-called Cuban Liberty Act is having the desired effect for Washington. He praised the European

Union for adopting "an historic legally binding resolution which conditions economic relations with Cuba to specific progress on human rights and social and economic reforms."

Eizenstat was referring to a resolution adopted by the European Union on December 2, which assailed the revolutionary government in Havana for alleged human rights violations and lack of democratic freedoms. Shortly after the passage of that resolution, Clinton suspended implementation of a section of the Helms-Burton law that has caused the most uproar among EU members. That part of the law, called Title III, allows Cuban Americans and other U.S. businessmen whose property was expropriated after the Cuban revolution to sue in U.S. courts anyone, including foreign companies, investing in those properties. Eizenstat described Title III, and the ability of the White House to continue to use its postponement to create uncertainty among U.S. competitors, as "an effective lever to make progress to pressure European allies to step up efforts to bring about reforms in Cuba."

"We have complete agreement on the objectives. We don't like at all the Cuban regime. We want to change it," stated Hugo Paeman, EU Ambassador to the United States, in his remarks. "We will do whatever we can to change it as soon as possible. But we diverge on how to achieve this end."

"The United States would never accept this kind of law from any other country in the world," Paeman continued. "And we can't accept it from the U.S. or any other country in the world. It's clear that the best situation from the EU perspective would be repeal of the act." Paeman indicated that the EU will pursue its complaint against the Helms-Burton law at the World Trade Organization (WTO) (see article above).

Dan Fisk, a Republican who is an Associate Counsel of the Committee on Foreign Relations of the U.S. Senate, presented his own list of seven non-U.S. companies that have supposedly pulled out of Cuba over the last year: the Spanish bank Banco Bilbao Vizcaya; the Dutch banking and insurance group ING Groep NV; Cemex, a Mexican cement company; the Spanish hotel firms Occidental Hotels and Paradores Nacionales; the Canadian sugar producer Redpath Sugars; and the Colombian airline

Aero Republica. He also claimed that another seven companies, including the Mexican state-owned oil monopoly PEMEX and the UK-based cigarette company British American Tobacco, "have been reassessing their operations in Cuba or distancing themselves from any direct commercial relationship with Cuba."

Doug Lewis, chairman of the Cuba-Canada Business Committee outlined Ottawa's approach in undermining the Cuban revolution. "Passage of Helms-Burton did cast a chill on investment in Cuba," he said. "We know changes are necessary. But we have to act in engagement — to show the Cubans the way we do business — see our supermarkets, read our newspapers, see our TV's. They have to taste it and see how it works. We need to lead by example, not by rhetoric or the big stick."

The day after the conference, the Clinton administration announced it would allow 10 U.S. news organizations to open bureaus in Cuba for the first time in nearly thirty years. The Cable News Network (CNN) plans to open a full-time Havana bureau in March.

Germany's director for Latin American Affairs in Bonn's Foreign Ministry, Wilfried Richter, said that the Helms-Burton law "impedes efforts to foster the free movement of goods and capital. We share the same goals as the U.S. — political change and economic reform are overdue. But the EU policy will help to meet the fundamental reform process in Cuba and in the end will prove to be a more effective one."

Gareth Jenkins, editor of the London-based newsletter *Cuba Business*, noted the recovery in the Cuban economy from earlier in the decade. The country's gross domestic product (GDP) grew 7.8 percent in 1996, up from 2.5 percent a year earlier. But the forecast for GDP growth in 1997 is expected to be only 4-5 percent, he said.

William Lane, Washington director of government affairs for Caterpillar, Inc., also spoke. "The Cuban market is not going to be a good investment until there is a free Cuba," he stated. "We will support anything that will get us there."

There were a few opportunities at the meeting for participants to ask questions or make brief comments. Only a few in the audience presented an entirely different view from the panelists, supportive of the

Continued on Page 12

Appeal to our readers

Over the last week, *Militant* reporter Megan Arney called the office of Michael Rannenberger, Coordinator of Cuban Affairs for the U.S. State Department, several times asking for information substantiating the claim the Clinton administration official made at a conference in Washington, D.C., February 10 that "around a dozen companies" have pulled out of Cuba as a result of the Helms-Burton law. *Investor's Business Daily* and other media repeated this claim as a fact the next day.

Finally, on February 18, after repeated requests for a list of the companies that have supposedly disinvested from Cuba, Rannenberger's secretary Tamiko Lofty responded that the State Department does have the names of these corporations but "we are not releasing them to the public."

At the conference where Rannenberger made this statement, Republican Dan Fisk provided his own list of such companies (see article on this page). But the number of companies he gave did not match Rannenberger's estimate and the State Department would not corroborate Fisk's list.

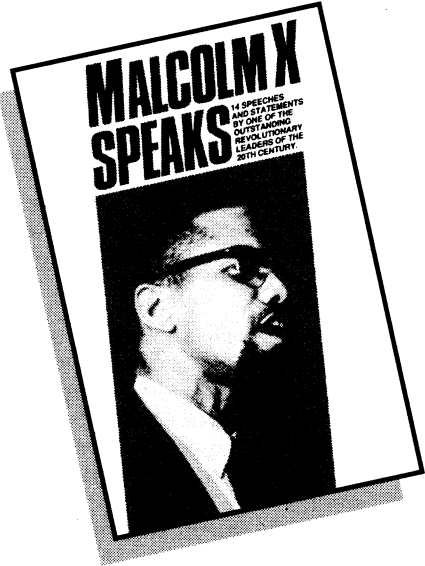
The *Militant* is offering a free one-year subscription to the first reader who can provide substantiated evidence of the number and names of companies that have pulled out of Cuba as a result of Helms-Burton law since Clinton signed it a year ago. — A.M.

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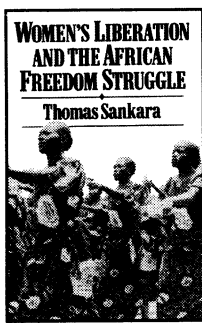
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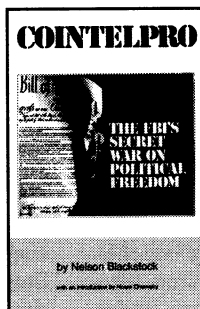
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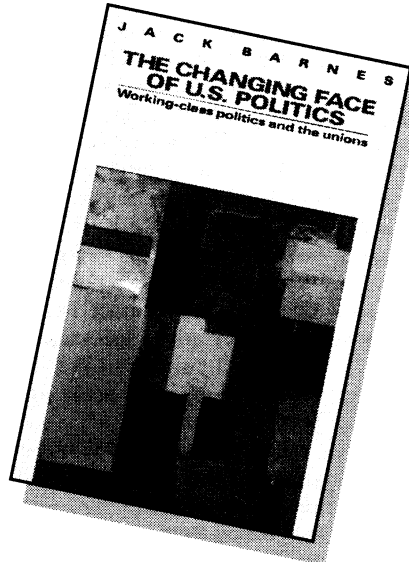
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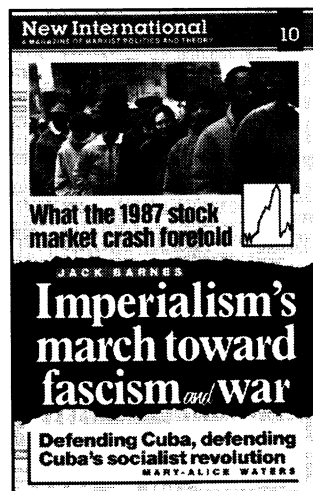
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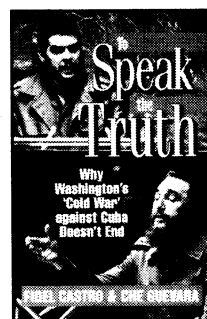
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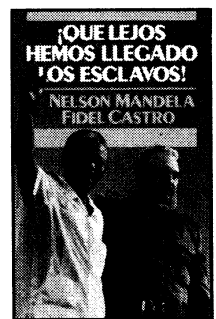
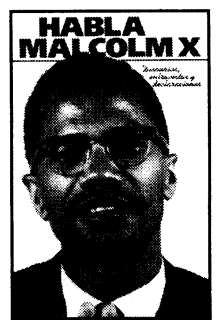
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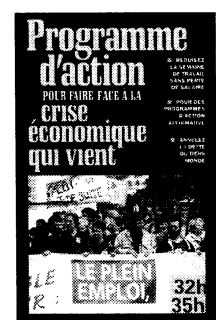
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American Airlines

Continued from front page

consumers who would be affected, and we respect the decisions that were made." On February 18 the *Miami Herald* commented that the union federation "has kept a low profile during the standoff between American Airlines and its pilots, in part because the pilots don't belong to an affiliated union."

At the Miami airport striking pilots, upon hearing about the presidential intervention, switched their "On Strike" picket signs to "Defend the Profession" signs, thus making it an "informational" picket, for about 30 minutes before leaving the airport. A United ramp worker walking by the departing pickets called out to the pilots bitterly, "That's quite a president we've got, eh?"

In Washington, D.C., national APA president Jim Sovich commented "There is no deal, there is no contract, there is no labor peace."

Republican and Democratic Party politicians, corporate heads, businessmen, and American Airlines officials including Chairman Robert Crandall all demanded the government intervene to stop the pilots' strike — quoting figures in the millions, and billions, of dollars that could be lost in commerce.

Clinton's move drew praise from Frank Lorenzo, the former CEO who tried to break the Machinists union in a strike at Eastern Airlines in 1989-91. Rather than see their union smashed, the workers forced the airline under and drove Lorenzo out of the airline business. In a column published in the February 19 *New York Times*, Lorenzo wrote, "In retrospect, I think Eastern made a mistake in resisting Presidential interference.... We misjudged the intransigence we would encounter. We would have been better off taking our chances with a mediation board."

Many airline workers and others saw the political impact that the American pilots' strike could have had as the main reason for the White House intervention. "Somebody has to set a precedent. If the pilots can't win some demands, how are the blue-collar workers ever going to?" asked Rodney Johnson, a food service worker at United Airlines in Miami in International Association of Machinists (IAM) Local 368.

"We're behind the pilots 100 percent," said Cruz Lopez, a ramp worker at American. Lopez called Clinton's action "just like a slap in the face for the pilots."

Kevin Holmes, a food preparer at Sky Chef at the Chicago airport, told the *Militant*, "A lot of people at work were saying that it's not a good move by Clinton — it really weakens the pilots."

Rick Walker, a TWU member in Miami and former Eastern striker, said, "Almost all the ramp workers I talked with understand that Clinton's concern for American Airlines and other corporations are the reason he stopped the strike — not out of concern for 'the workers' and whether we have better jobs."

Some American workers, though, had opposed the strike, citing the pilots' high pay. The company had seized on this and had asked them to sign letters that were sent to Congress asking for federal intervention.

The Railway Labor Act, which is often invoked against railroad workers, was last used in the airlines industry in 1966 by President Lyndon Johnson when machinists at five airlines — Eastern, National, Northwest, TWA and United — went on strike. The machinists' union rejected the proposals by the government-imposed mediation board, struck for 43 days, and succeeded in breaking a 3.5 percent wage freeze that had been imposed by the government. Some of the basic gains seen by many airline work-



Militant/Kathy Mickells

Eastern strikers march in Philadelphia, 1989. Airline bosses and government remember victory of machinists in that fight, and acted to stop walkout by American pilots.

ers today can be traced back to this 1966 victory. This history has not been mentioned by the media in their coverage of the American situation.

In January of this year the APA membership rejected a proposed contract by 63 percent. The central issue is whether small jets being ordered by American to replace the turboprops flown by its commuter subsidiary, American Eagle, will be flown by the American pilots or the American Eagle pilots — who are paid much less and face more strenuous working conditions. The Eagle pilots are members of the Air Line Pilots Association, an affiliate of the AFL-CIO. The new jets can travel up to 2,300 miles and could replace some of the current American Airlines routes.

"The issue here is an end-run around our jobs," said Alex Garmendia, a Miami American pilot with 21 years' seniority.

American and the other major carriers plan to buy hundreds of these jets in the future and this could become a fundamental question for labor negotiations in the industry. Flight attendants, ramp workers and cleaners who work on American Eagle flights earn considerably less than their American Airlines counterparts, except for new hires at American who work under the recent concession contract.

Janet Post works at United Airlines in Miami and is a member of IAM Local 368. Betsy Stone, member of IAM Local 1487 in Chicago, contributed to this article.

Clinton pushes trade offensive and social cuts

Continued from front page

"The developed countries will get the lion's share of this market," said Neil McMillan, a British official, who chaired the negotiations.

"U.S. companies are the most competitive telecommunications providers in the world; they are in the best position to compete and win under this agreement," Barshefsky bragged. She said Washington had "effectively exported the American values of free competition."

Officials at AT&T, the largest U.S. operator, said the "U.S. negotiating team went above and beyond to ensure the interests of U.S. industry were understood and reflected in this agreement." According to the *New York Times*, "Barshefsky, many countries complain, used the enormous weapon of access to the United States where — 50 percent of the world's telecommunications market is situated — to squeeze concessions from out of lesser economies."

The governments of Canada, Mexico, and Japan balked at pressure by Washington to permit foreign investors to attain majority shares of companies based inside their borders. The Mexican and Canadian regimes, however, conceded to some of Washington's demands, with the Mexican government increasing its foreign equity limit to 49 percent and Ottawa raising its equity limit to 46.7 percent.

U.S. capitalists vs. imperialist rivals

A February 8 gathering in Berlin of finance ministers and bankers from the so-called Group of Seven (G7) major industrialized countries highlighted the relative economic strength of the U.S. capitalist class against its rivals in Europe and Japan. Fi-

nance ministers and central bankers from the G7 countries — Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United States — issued a statement that the U.S. dollar had risen far enough. Over the last 20 months the dollar rose 33 percent against the Japanese yen and 17 percent against the German D-mark. Many bankers predicted it would continue to climb despite the G7 statement.

A few days before the G7 meeting, big-business dailies across the world reported that unemployment in Germany increased by an unprecedented 500,000 in January to 4.66 million workers, the highest level since the early 1930s. Meanwhile, Japanese prime minister Ryutaro Hashimoto has warned of impending financial disaster in that country. Tokyo's banking system hit the skids when equity and property prices began collapsing in 1990, leaving the financial institutions with at least \$350 billion in bad loans.

With the economies of Washington's imperialist rivals in the doldrums and the relative strengthening of the U.S. economy, capital is flowing into United States at a record pace. Foreign companies invested some \$71.8 billion in the first nine months of 1996. Foreign investments in the United States could reach a record \$95 billion for the year, according to estimates from Dean Witter Reynolds Inc.

"Stable capital is pouring in from British, German, French, Japanese, and other countries," a February 8 article from the *Wall Street Journal* reported. This has spurred a record climb in the stock market. The Dow Jones industrial stock average passed the 7,000 mark for the first time February 13.

"The U.S. growth model," crowed *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman, "is now in ascendancy." With imperial arrogance, Friedman wrote in his February 9 column, "Every time I come over here to Europe, or visit Japan, I return home itching to invest more in the U.S. market.... Some exuberance seems quite rational."

Friedman's article was a response to remarks in December by U.S. Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan, who cautioned Wall Street sharks to avoid "irrational exuberance" in the financial markets.

While ruling-class mouthpieces like Friedman are gloating about higher stock earnings, the strengthened dollar has alarmed some weaker sectors of capitalists

such as the auto barons, whose ability to compete at home and abroad has been hampered by the 7 percent rise in the dollar's exchange rate in the past year. The Big Three U.S. automakers complained that their share of the U.S. market fell 3.7 points in January, to 71.1 percent, while sales of Japanese car companies rose a comparable amount. Barshefsky argued that Tokyo was not living up to an agreement intended to boost U.S. auto parts sales in Japan.

Despite the good cheer of Clinton and other big-business politicians over the U.S. economy, the standard of living for workers continues to decline. A February 24 article in *Business Week* noted that from 1990 to 1995, nearly 850,000 workers were jettisoned from well-paying jobs at the ten largest "downsizers" — corporations like Boeing, General Dynamics, McDonnell Douglas, and IBM. "It's clear that corporate restructuring and downsizing are still in high gear," the article stated.

Deputy Treasury Secretary Lawrence Summers acknowledged at the recent World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, that a baby born in Shanghai has a better chance of making it to its fifth birthday than one born in New York.

As the U.S. rulers asserted their global economic might, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright embarked on a nine-nation tour of Europe and Asia to flex Washington's military muscles. Her agenda includes pushing for the expansion of NATO into eastern Europe in hopes of overthrowing the workers states there and reinforcing Washington's political and military dominance over its imperialist "allies" in Europe.

Clinton chips away at entitlements

The Clinton administration's 1998 budget proposals lay out the course the president has been pushing for some time: keep chipping away at entitlements, but avoid a frontal assault on the social wage of working people for now. The five-year budget plan he presented to Congress February 6 calls for cuts of \$100 billion from Medicare and \$22 billion from Medicaid.

The White House issued new rules February 6 that would halt disability benefits for 135,000 poor children and deny benefits for another 45,000 disabled children who would have qualified for assistance in the next five years.

The president's budget offered as a crumb

to allocate \$21 billion over five years to restore benefits for some legal immigrants and others receiving food stamps who were cut off after he signed the welfare law last summer. There is no indication, however, that the proposed change has a chance of passing Congress.

Clinton's budget proposals drew criticism from many Republicans and others because about 75 percent of the cuts come two years after Clinton will leave the White House. "In my opinion it is not a bold first step — at least not as bold as I would like," said Senate Budget Committee Chairman Peter Domenici, a Republican from New Mexico.

The editors of the *Washington Post* chided Clinton's plan as a proposal to "tread water" rather than take on the "vast benefit or entitlement programs such as Social Security and Medicare."

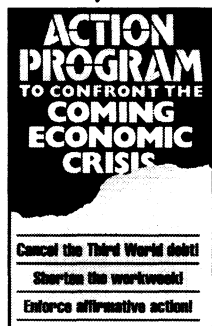
These bourgeois figures had no argument, however, on prioritizing interest payments to wealthy bondholders. The president's \$1.7 trillion budget for 1998 allots 15 percent to this parasitic layer of society — a smooth \$255 billion. It would also increase spending on cops, jails, and military armaments.

A few days after Clinton proposed his "balanced budget," Republican legislators decided to postpone until March a vote in the House of Representatives on a constitutional amendment requiring a balanced federal budget, fearing they didn't have enough votes to pass it.

Meanwhile, Clinton administration officials and other capitalist politicians are continuing their propaganda campaign to win acceptance for gutting entitlements won through decades of working-class struggle. The Senate Finance Committee has been holding hearings on schemes to recalculate the consumer price index (CPI), used to set cost-of-living adjustments for Social Security and other benefits. A White House-appointed commission asserted last December that the CPI overstates inflation by 1.1 percent a year. "We all agree that we need a consensus among experts," said an aide to Democratic Senator Patrick Moynihan, a proponent of the proposal to lower the CPI.

Federal Reserve chairman Greenspan suggested at a January 30 meeting of the Senate committee that a new commission should set cost-of-living adjustments for federal programs, separating them entirely from the CPI.

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Johnson Controls strikers win support

BY JOHN SARGE

PLYMOUTH, Michigan — As members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) entered their third week on the picket line at Johnson Controls Inc. (JCI) here and in Ohio, a discussion was unfolding among union members on how to organize workers in the growing nonunion parts sector of the auto industry.

JCI, described by the *Wall Street Journal* as “one of the biggest and most sophisticated beneficiaries of automotive outsourcing in the world,” had \$10 billion in sales last year. Only six of the company’s 34 North American plants are unionized, including the two on strike for their first contract. The struck plants produce seats for Ford trucks and minivans.

UAW members at both JCI and Ford saw it as a victory when the auto giant decided not to accept management- and scab-produced seats from the struck plants a few hours after the walkout began January 28. Ford made its announcement after strikers and auto workers from the surrounding plants mobilized on the picket lines.

After 10 days of building seatless trucks, Ford closed all or parts of three truck assembly plants, including the Michigan Truck Plant. Most workers assumed that JCI would quickly sign a contract that was close to what workers at the company’s main competitor — Lear Seating — have won. Workers at Lear are members of the UAW.

JCI, however, soon removed machinery from its Plymouth plant. Ford made a deal that JCI would make seat frames for its sports utility vehicle at an unstruck plant, then ship them to Lear and Ford’s Chesterfield Trim Plant for final assembly. Meanwhile, the 300 Plymouth strikers are organizing picket lines 24 hours a day, seven days a week, even though JCI has removed some equipment. There are between 10 and 30 workers gathered around fire barrels at the two gates at any time.

While pickets say they don’t want to discuss what they think about Ford’s move to get its lines rolling again, they report that there were a lot of “negative feelings.” The strikers are more willing to explain why they are fighting. Workers describe long hours, unsafe working conditions, and lower pay than JCI employees receive in an unorganized plant just a few miles away.

The union is demanding wages from \$12 to \$14 per hour, up from the current \$8.50 to \$11. Mario Vásquez, a striker who is originally from Honduras, said he had come to the United States “for a better life.” He said, “Now I find the same enemy, the same bosses.... Now I struggle in the USA.”

A discussion has broken out in the union over how the JCI strike and Ford’s move to find other suppliers effects efforts to strengthen the UAW. A letter circulated by UAW Local 900 officials at the Michigan Truck Plant the day after workers there were called back said, “The temporary arrangement between Ford Motor Company, Chesterfield Trim and Lear Corporation has had many positive results already.” The letter highlighted the cancellation of a temporary layoff, the possibility of some overtime at Chesterfield Trim, and the recall of 250 laid off Lear workers. The letter continued,

“Michigan Truck Plant UAW members can be proud of yourselves, because of your strong Union support and our good UAW-Ford Management relationships we have once again been a part of making Labor history by refusing to accept non-union or replacement worker made seats.”

There was no mention of how supposedly “good UAW-Ford Management relationships” would help the 500 UAW strikers win a union contract. Tim Cumming, a body shop worker, pointed out that “coming back to work will make it harder to get contracts for parts workers. The last contract allows Ford to set up lower cost parts suppliers. Then when parts workers go on strike they expect us to accept it just because they moved the work.”

John Sarge is a member of UAW Local 900 and works at Ford's Michigan Truck Plant.

BY KIBWE DIARRA

OBERLIN, Ohio — Solidarity for the

After 19-month strike, Detroit news unions make back-to-work offer

BY JOHN SARGE

DETROIT — As the strike against this city’s two daily newspapers entered its 20th month, officials of the six striking unions announced February 14 that they would make unconditional offers to return to work, but planned to step up advertiser and circulation boycott activities.

On July 13, 1995, 2,500 editorial, production, and distribution workers went on strike against the *Detroit News* and *Free Press* and their joint business agent, the Detroit Newspaper Agency (DNA). Some 2,000 workers remain out. While some have found other jobs, many continue the fight.

The strike started with demands to protect jobs, wages, working conditions, and their unions’ right to negotiate jointly. Today the fight is aimed at defending the right to a union, as the companies use scabs and private toughs in an attempt to break them. Hundreds of workers continue to take part in regular strike activity. Three days before the back-to-work announcement, 300 strikers and their supporters held a demonstration in downtown Detroit as part of a campaign called “Shut down Motown.”

Union officials said that if the newspapers did not return strikers to their jobs, they will ask the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) to seek a federal court injunction ordering the companies to reinstate all strikers, even if it means displacing the “permanent replacement workers.” Management has pledged to retain the scabs. The union officials compare their scheme to the 1994-95 strike against Bridgestone-Firestone, where the union made an unconditional offer to return to work after 10 months on the picket line. Nineteen months later, in December 1996, a contract was negotiated.

If the NLRB were to rule that the news-

paper strike at Johnson Controls has been building in Ohio. Members of UAW Local 2000, which organizes Ford’s Ohio Assembly Plant in Avon Lake, voted February 16 to contribute \$1,000 to the striking local and are planning a plant gate collection.

“I think that we as fellow union brothers and sisters should support them 100 percent,” said Steve Marrero, a UAW member at the Avon Lake plant. Nearly 3,000 workers there and at the Lorraine assembly plant were laid off after Ford ran out of seats as a result of the strike. Marrero has visited the picket lines in Oberlin several times. He commented, “It would be beneficial to them if we were to help them financially in their time of need.”

“The JCI strike is an extremely important fight for the UAW as a whole,” said Chris Ladikos, another member of Local 2000. Only 20 percent of auto parts workers in the United States are unionized. Ladikos added, “If we [the UAW] are going to organize other suppliers successfully, we must win this one!”

paper strike was caused by unfair labor practices on the part of the company, the strikers would have a legal right to return to work. They would go back under the wages and conditions existing when they walked out, but without a union contract.

A NLRB Administrative Law Judge received the last legal briefs on charges filed by the unions early in the strike. He has up to a year to rule. Then the owners can appeal in federal court. If the companies eventually lose they would be liable for back pay to any striker not returned to work if scabs are retained.

Al Derey, chairman of the Metropolitan Council of Newspaper Unions, announced that the unions planned to expand the advertiser and subscriber boycott. He said the *Sunday Journal*, a weekly tabloid that the striking unions help publish, will continue

Workers fired during the strike are not covered under the return to work offer. They must wait on the outcome of NLRB charges filed by the unions on their behalf. According to Gary Rushnel, a fired printer, more than 375 strikers were dismissed during the walkout.

The announcement was not a surprise to many strikers because rumors had circulated that a return to work was being discussed by the international presidents of the Teamsters, Communication Workers of America (CWA) and the Graphic Communications International Union. The presidents of the three unions made the decision at a meeting on February 11. The only local union whose members were allowed to vote on the offer was the Newspaper Guild Local 22. The international officers of the other unions made the final decision for those locals. Guild international president Linda Foley circulated a letter urging adoption of the approach by Local 22.

John Stolnicki, a mailer before the strike and member of Teamsters Local 2040, described the return to work offer as “a legal

A student group at Oberlin College sponsored a community meeting February 11 to discuss the strike. Five strikers and 40 other unionists and students attended.

Answering questions, the strikers explained they were getting a lot of support. Other unionists are stopping by the picket line all the time. Picket coordinator Pam Hatfield said, “People have started to come past in the morning and dropping off donuts, and coffee.” Hatfield reminded those present that they had an injunction against having more than six pickets at each of the two gates at any time.

Strikers described how support was coming in ways they had not expected. A family who lives across the street from one of the gates let them set up a portable toilet, for instance.

Thanking those attending the meeting, striker Rick Gibson said, “It’s important to know you got others behind you.”

Kibwe Diarra is a member of UAW Local 2000 at Ford's Ohio Assembly Plant.

strategy, not surrender. If it can accomplish what it’s suppose to, it will be great.” He said he didn’t want to leave any union member out if he went back to work.

Many strikers made clear that they wanted to continue the fight. Glen Libby, a striking printer and member of CWA Local 18, said that at his regular weekly union meeting, just hours before the public announcement, “the local president wanted a secret ballot advisory vote about going back. In a voice vote, we overwhelming rejected his signing the back-to-work offer.”

The companies were quick to respond. “Our position is that the strike is over,” Tim Kelleher, senior vice president for labor relations at the DNA told the press. He repeated management’s position that replacement workers are permanent and that strikers should apply to be on a preferential list. An article in the *News* claimed, “All three companies will be ‘open shops,’ meaning union membership will not be compulsory.” The companies have five days to officially respond to the unions’ offer.

The strike hurt the newspapers, owned by two publishing giants, Gannett and Knight Ridder. But the strikers were never able to stop the papers from printing. Early in the strike the DNA published a joint edition of the two newspapers, but eventually resumed publishing both.

The companies admit to losing \$120 million and about 30 percent of their readerships, but claim the strike allowed them to streamline the operations. They say they need 700 fewer workers to produce the papers through cutting the size of printing and shipping crews and reorganizing distribution. The unions report the strike has cost the papers \$250 million and 700,000 readers. Wall Street sharks supported the union busting campaign in Detroit. Gannett saw its stock price rise almost 50 percent during the strike, and Knight-Ridder’s stock price climbed almost 40 percent.

Tentative contract at American Axle

BY HOLLY HARKNESS

DETROIT — United Auto Workers union negotiators reached a tentative contract agreement with American Axle and Manufacturing (AAM) early February 17, after having passed an initial February 14 strike deadline. Details of the agreement were not released.

AAM’s five plants in Michigan and New York were sold to Richard Dauch and a group of investors in 1994 by General Motors as part of its “cost-cutting” plan. UAW workers at the plants continued to work under the 1993 GM-UAW agreement until this year. UAW members at all locations will review summaries of the contract and vote over the next week.

Labor and management in the auto industry are both closely watching to see if the new owners can wrest concessions from the union in the first contract since the purchase. According to the *Free Press Automotive Writer*, AAM “can’t afford to pay” workers the “level of wages and benefits” equal to the Big Three pattern set at GM, Ford, and

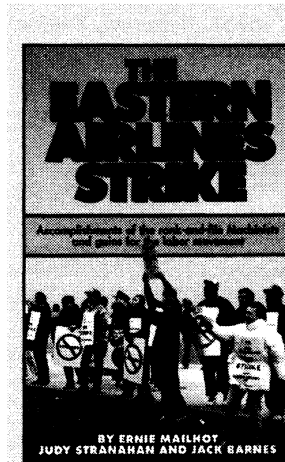
Chrysler.

The UAW and AAM have been negotiating this contract since last November. Both sides agreed not to speak publicly about the talks, but local papers reported that the company was pushing for a lower starting wage and a longer period of time before new workers reach full scale.

Hundreds of workers, many of them young people recently hired, turned out for Local 235’s monthly union meeting February 16. That local organizes more than 3,000 UAW members at AAM’s Detroit Gear and Axle facility. Speaker after speaker at the meeting expressed their willingness to hit the picket lines if the company continued to drag its feet in the negotiations. At the front of the room picket signs were stacked and ready in the event of a strike.

AAM workers build axles for GM’s trucks and sport utility vehicles, as well as forging axle shafts for Ford.

Holly Harkness is a member of UAW Local 235 at AAM.



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CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Build March 9 Demonstration for Immigrant Rights. Speakers include: Don White, Central American solidarity workers; Carlos Ixquiac, Guatemala Support Center; Francisco Heredia, union organizer; Virginia Garza, Socialist Worker nominee for Los Angeles controller. Fri., Feb. 28, 7:30 p.m. 2546 W. Pico Blvd. Donation: \$4. Buffet: \$4. Tel: (213) 380-9460.

FLORIDA

Miami

The Legacy of Malcolm X. Program includes video clips and discussion. Fri., Feb. 28, 7:30 p.m. 137 N.E. 54th St. Donation: \$4. Translation into Spanish and English. Tel: (305) 756-1020.

ILLINOIS

Peoria

Defend Abortion Rights! Stop the Clinic Bombings! Speaker: Charlene Adamson, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., March 1, 7 p.m. 915 N.

Western. Donation: \$4. Tel: (309) 676-2472.

MICHIGAN

Detroit

Black Women and Their Fight for Equality. Speaker: Willie Reid, Socialist Workers Party, and member, United Auto Workers union. Fri., Feb. 28, 7:30 p.m. 7414 Woodward Ave. Donation: \$4. Tel: (313) 875-0100.

MINNESOTA

St. Paul

Why Working People Should Support the Dairy Farmers' Protest. Fri., Feb. 28, 7:30 p.m. 2490 University Ave. Donation: \$4. (612) 644-6325.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Twenty-five Years After 'Bloody Sunday': British Troops Out of Ireland, Irish Political Prisoners Out of Jail! Speakers include: Mary Nell Bockman, Socialist Workers Party, just returned from Derry commemoration of Bloody

Sunday, and a Representative of Irish Northern Aid. Fri., Feb. 28, 7:30 p.m. 87A Halsey St. (1 block west of Broad, 2 blocks north of Raymond). Donation: \$4. Translation into Spanish and French. Tel: (201) 643-3341.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

Cuba: How Cuba Uprooted Racism. Fri., Feb. 28, 7:30 p.m. 1906 South St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (215) 546-8218.

Pittsburgh

The Fight Against the Klan. Panel discussion. Fri., Feb. 28, 7:30 p.m. 1103 E. Carson St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (412) 381-9785.

UTAH

Salt Lake City

History of the Civil Rights Movement. Panel discussion and excerpts from the award-winning video *Eyes on the Prize*. Fri., Feb. 28, 7:30 p.m. 209 East 300 South. Donation: \$4. Tel: (801) 355-1124.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

The Cuban Revolution and the Debate on the Helms-Burton Law. Speakers include: Brian Adams, coordinator of "Hands Off Cuba" Coalition. Fri., Feb. 28, 7:30 p.m.

International Women's Day Weekend. "The Fight for Women's Liberation Today." Speakers: Estelle DeBates, Socialist Workers Party in Morgantown, West Virginia, and Olympia Newton, member of the Young Socialists and student at George Washington University. Sat., March 8, 7:30 p.m. Dinner, 6 p.m. **Class:** "Roots of Women's Oppression." Speaker: Estelle DeBates. Sun., March 9, 10 a.m.

All events held at 1930 18th St., NW (at 18th & Florida, entrance on Florida). Donation: \$4. Tel: (202) 387-2185.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

Korean Workers Fight Exposes the Myth of the 'Tiger' Economy. Speaker: Joanne Kuniansky, Communist League and AMWU. Fri., Feb. 28, 7 p.m. 66 Albion St., Surry Hills. Donation: \$4. Tel: (02) 9281 3297.

France: workers strike, while fascists gain strength

Continued from back page

minister, Raymond Barre, publicly urged the government not to give in to any further demands to lower the retirement age or reduce the workweek.

Lionel Jospin, first secretary of the Socialist Party, has also joined the efforts to reduce workers enthusiasm for a shorter workweek. Jospin may become the next premier if the SP wins the legislative elections scheduled for early next year. He opposes retirement at age 55 except in special cases and announced that the 35-hour work week, formally part of the SP program, would not be adopted in the early stages of a future SP government.

However, workers' support for early retirement and a shorter work week remains unshaken. Prior to Chirac's attacks on early retirement, a poll conducted by the business radio station BFM showed 61 percent favoring retirement at 55. After Chirac's speech, a poll done for the daily *Le Parisien* showed 93 percent support for retirement at 55 for workers doing difficult or tiring jobs. While 54 percent were against retirement at 55 for all workers, 40 percent still supported the demand.

The growing mood of labor resistance was reflected in the recent actions by the 3,000 workers at the *Credit Foncier de France* (CFF) bank. When the government announced the bank's impending closure, the workers occupied the bank's headquarters for over three weeks. For the first six days of the occupation, they kept the bank's governor and its six directors as "uninvited guests" — locked into their offices. Government representatives accused the strikers of holding the bank's management as "hostages." The government finally agreed to find a solution that would keep the bank functioning.

Since then, striking workers have detained their bosses in six other actions including the director of a textile mill, the director and four managers of a sugar refinery, and the directors of two different hospitals.

National Front gains wider hearing

While sections of the working class are responding to the crisis with demands that unite employed and unemployed, the ultraright blames layers of the working class, particularly immigrants, for the high levels

of unemployment and other social ills. These views are gaining a wider hearing.

That's what the victory of the National Front in the municipal by-elections in Vitrolles, a town with 39,000 inhabitants, indicated. The National Front candidate Catherine Mégret won 52.5 percent of the vote in a runoff election against Socialist Party incumbent mayor Jean-Jacques Anglade, who is under investigation for corruption.

The new mayor is the wife of FN deputy leader Bruno Mégret, who was banned from running because he exceeded the spending limit before the last poll in 1985. "This is the importance of Vitrolles," Bruno Mégret told the British daily *Independent* after the first round of the elections there. "We will have taken on, for the first time, the combined forces of all the other political parties in France, and beaten them. It is a sign that the dike is beginning to crack."

This suburb of Marseilles is a run-down working-class district where the now ruling conservatives have never had much support. The conservative candidate, who won 16 percent of the vote in the first round of balloting, urged his followers to vote their conscience on the second round while expressing his "absolute opposition to the FN's

views."

"It is not because the Vitrolles are fascists," Marius Comti, 41, who works in a local coal mine, told the *Independent* in an interview about the impending victory of the National Front. The miner, who opposed

the ultrarightists, continued, "It is because they are angry and they have no work and feel themselves abandoned. They have no love for the Front candidate. How can you like someone who shakes hands without taking off her white gloves?"

Conference on Cuba embargo

Continued from Page 8

Cuban revolution.

Johana Tablada, third secretary of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C., who had been observing part of the proceedings, took the floor briefly and said, "For Cuba, this law matters. It matters probably more than for anyone here in this room. It matters for the 11 million people still living there. What the Cuban people gained in 1959 was the right to control our own destiny in a poor country in a poor region. We already have great achievements other countries don't have and we would like to preserve them."

"Washington's goal with the Helms-Burton law, and the entire 38-year-long U.S cold war against Cuba, is to destroy the example workers and peasants in that country have

provided to working people in the United States and throughout the Americas and the world," said Joshua Carroll, a member of the Young Socialists National Committee who was recognized and spoke briefly the second day of the gathering. All the panelists who object to the U.S. legislation, or aspects of it, Carroll said, want to restore capitalism in Cuba. "The basis of workers' opposition to Helms-Burton should be identification with the struggle of our Cuban brothers and sisters to defend their national sovereignty and the socialism they freely chose."

Janice Lynn and Mary Martin are members of the International Association of Machinists in Washington, D.C. Joshua Carroll also contributed to this article.

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SWEDEN

Stockholm: Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St Eriksplan). Postal code: S-113 42. Tel: (08) 31 69 33. Compuserve: 100416,2362

Talk about gall — The U.S. State Dept. warns Jewish tourists that Israel's rabbinical courts have extended their jurisdiction to tem-



Harry Ring

porary visitors. Travelers can be held while the religious courts weigh charges filed by spouses in other countries on such divorce-related matters as support and child custody.

The two-party system — Joseph Califano, then attorney for the Democratic Party, admitted he advised a Nixon aide that Watergate tapes should be burned. "It was the only chance they had," he says. "We could not understand why the tapes were not destroyed. It would have been terrible for ten days, but then it would have been over."

Probably psychological — "Dozens of pets have died suddenly after being given an anti-flea treatment that contains chemicals similar to those used in the Gulf War. The manufacturer of Driplex admitted that 23 cats and one dog had died as a result of a 'bad batch' of the drug." — *The Times*, London.

All in the family — There were some familiar faces in the Greensboro, North Carolina account where the tobacco industry is acting to block the Food and Drug Administration from regulating cigarettes. The lead lawyer for the industry is former chief counsel for the FDA. The presiding judge is a former tobacco lobbyist.

Good ol' boys — A former tax official says that if Newt Gingrich dips into his own pocket to pay the \$300,000 penalty for lying to the House ethics committee it may be tax deductible as "an ordinary and necessary business expense." That's because the committee chose to describe his fine as a "reimbursement"

toward the expense of the probe.

Take that — A San Francisco cop who harassed, manhandled and stole jewelry from his girl friend pleaded no contest. In a negotiated settlement he got six years probation and will continue on the police force. The settlement specifically exempts him from a federal law taking guns away from people convicted of domestic violence.

They care — Britain's pence-pinching National Health Service cuts some extra corners by discharging elderly hospital patients too soon. Among other things, this has brought an 11 percent jump in readmissions.

'Love the lord and the boss' — A number of companies are hiring "industrial ministers" as chaplains to their work force. The head of the Worklife Ministry says they can befriend employees in a way managers can't.

Oldie but goodie — Joe Hill the legendary IWW song-writer, had a tune that went, roughly, like this: "Long-haired preachers come out every night, tell us what's wrong and what's right. And when you ask for something to eat, they will answer in voices so sweet: 'You will eat by and by in that glorious land above the sky. Work and pray, live on hay. You'll get pie in the sky when you die.' — That's a lie!"

What is a workers state? A Marxist appraisal

The excerpt below is from the article "The problem of Eastern Europe" by Joseph Hansen, a long-time leader of the Socialist Workers Party. It was written in December 1949 and is published in its entirety in *Class, Party, and State and the Eastern European Revolution*, an Education for Socialists bulletin published by Pathfinder Press. The bulletin costs \$7.00

BOOK OF THE WEEK

and can be ordered from bookstores on page 12, or from Pathfinder (see address on page 9). The portion that follows deals with the question of what is a workers state. It is copyright © Pathfinder Press and is reprinted by permission.

BY JOSEPH HANSEN

One of the easiest errors to slip into when considering this question is to make a kind of fetish of the category "workers states." All of us tend to think of it as something glorious that arose to put an end to the blood and filth of capitalism. To this day an aura surrounds the words "workers state" because of all associations with [Russian Bolshevik leaders V.I.] Lenin and [Leon] Trotsky and the great emancipating struggle they led. We therefore find difficulty connecting it with anything base, and even when we insist on its degeneration in the USSR a brightness still clings to it. We want it to be something noble and great and inspiring....

To make a scientific appraisal, however, we must learn to cut through the superficial appearance. The state should be regarded as expressing a relation between classes. It is a relation of coercion that takes the form mainly of a civil bureaucracy and armed forces. Through this apparatus one class coerces or oppresses another....

The dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, as we all know, is based on private property in the means of production. To maintain this social relation it oppresses the working class.

The dictatorship of the proletariat begins with the elevation of the working class into a ruling class in place of the capitalists. The task of the new power is to end the social relation peculiar to the capitalist class. But this does not occur over night. Even a model workers state is still nothing but a hangover of capitalist society. On top of this, a workers state is forced to maintain for a time, even in the best of circumstances, bourgeois modes of distributing the national income.

We have a contradictory reality — a state that is based on destruction of bourgeois property forms and the nationalization of economy but which still retains vestiges of capitalism.

When this state eventually begins to wither away as the productive forces expand and all danger of a capitalist restoration vanishes, then we can first begin to speak of socialism, the lower stage of communism. If we call a workers state "socialist" it is more because of its aims and tendencies than what it is when it first emerges from the womb of capitalism.

A workers state is a *transitional* state, transitional between capitalism and socialism.

A healthy workers state carries this transition through as rapidly as possible by extending the revolution along the international

spiral. But history has forced us to include in our general category a workers state that is not healthy, one that is retrogressing toward capitalism. This degenerated workers state, spilling over the frontiers fixed at the close of World War I, has upset capitalist property relations in Eastern Europe and given rise to formations that are pretty much replicas of the USSR. Their fate is intimately bound up with that of the Soviet Union. If the USSR must be included in our general category of a workers state, I do not think it is incorrect to include Yugoslavia and the other Eastern European countries where the capitalists have been displaced as the ruling class.

Social content and political form

In November, 1937, Trotsky wrote a most illuminating article on the character of the USSR. The title is "Not a Workers and Not a Bourgeois State? Political Form and Social Content."....

Written in a pedagogical manner, it picks up the theoretical threads of the pamphlet written four years earlier, *The Soviet Union and the Fourth International*. Trotsky explains the difference between the economic and social content of a workers state and the variegated political forms that it can assume.

Here is one of Trotsky's illuminating instances: "The domination of the Social Democracy in the State and in the Soviets (Germany 1918-1919) had nothing in common with the dictatorship of the proletariat inasmuch as it left bourgeois property inviolable. But the regime which guards the expropriated and nationalized property from imperialists is, independent of political forms, the dictatorship of the proletariat."....

"Only the intrusion of a revolutionary or a counterrevolutionary force in property relations can change the class nature of the state," Trotsky emphasizes.... Then he continues: "But does not history really know of cases of class conflict between the economy and the state? It does! When the Third Estate seized power, society for a period of years still remained feudal. In the first months of Soviet rule the proletariat reigned on the basis of bourgeois economy. In the field of agriculture the dictatorship of the proletariat operated for a number of years on the basis of petty-bourgeois economy (to a considerable degree it does so even now). Should a bourgeois counterrevolution succeed in Russia, the new government for a lengthy period would have to base itself upon nationalized economy. But what does such a type of temporary conflict between economy and the state mean? It means a *revolution* or a *counterrevolution*. The victory of one class over another signifies that it will reconstruct the economy in the interests of the victory. But such a condition of transition appearing during the necessary time in every social revolution, has nothing in common with the theory of a classless state which in the absence of a real boss is being exploited by a clerk, i.e., by the bureaucracy."

This paragraph deserves the closest study and thought, in my opinion, for the light it can shed on the events in Eastern Europe. For one thing, it seems to me to place the question of the class relations in agriculture in their properly subordinate place in determining the character of the state.

More important, it indicates the contradiction that can exist for a time between the economy and state during a transition period. Finally, it reaffirms the Marxist law that a fundamental change in property relations cannot occur without the intrusion of a revolutionary or counterrevolutionary force. The



Working people of Zagreb, Croatia, greet Yugoslav Partisan troops as they liberate the city, May 1945. The Yugoslav workers state was established within months.

events in Eastern Europe constitute a test of these propositions. The problem is to work out how they either confirm or invalidate Trotsky's theses....

Criteria and norms

To illustrate his meaning, Trotsky uses the familiar analogy between a workers state and a trade union. Our norm, embodied in the program we fight for, calls for a trade union to be an organization of class struggle. But reality gives a different kind of trade union, in fact a great variety of them. Some of them are definitely reactionary but that doesn't mean they are not trade unions.

Trotsky then tells us by what criteria we

can distinguish both trade unions and workers states: "The class character of the state is determined by its relation to the forms of property in the means of production. The character of such a workers organization as that of a trade union is determined by its relation to the distribution of national income." Because William Green & Co. defend private property in the means of production they are bourgeois. So long as the AFL bureaucracy is forced to defend the workers' share of the national income, however, they continue to head genuine trade unions. "This objective symptom is sufficient in all important cases to permit us to draw a line of demarcation between the most reactionary trade union and an organization of scabs."

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



March 3, 1972

LOS ANGELES — The acquittal Feb. 16 of Chicano activist Rosalio Muñoz on charges stemming from his refusal to be drafted may possibly open the door for review of the cases of other draft resisters who — like Muñoz — may have been denied their proper rights in the Selective Service process.

Muñoz, former chairman of the National Chicano Moratorium Committee, had been indicted for refusal to report for induction Nov. 18, 1969. His acquittal was ordered by Federal Judge Warren J. Ferguson during the second day of the trial while the government was still arguing its case.

The trial was, in many respects, a dramatic one. It was to begin last year but was postponed after the then presiding judge and the government prosecutor agreed that Muñoz' attorney, Michael Tiger, was "unqualified" because he had not been admitted to the California bar. Last month the U.S. Supreme Court overturned this ruling and the trial began again.

The defense based its case on two essential points. The first was that Muñoz had not been accorded due process within the Selective Service system.

The second was Muñoz' belief that we are living under a social system that oppresses the Chicano people, and that as victims of cultural, political, and physical

genocide, the Chicano people cannot participate in wars waged by this system.



March 1, 1947

LONDON, Feb. 14 — Trinidad workers in the oil fields, waterfronts and public works have been engaged in recent months in a series of bitter struggles for decent wages, conditions and elementary freedom. The Governor of Trinidad, Sir Bede Clifford, has vainly denied and tried to conceal the labor struggles, but despite this and outright suppression of news, the facts have seeped through and the British Minister for the colonies has been forced to demand a report in London.

An account of a brutal attack upon unarmed and sleeping men and women oil workers has been published here by the Feb. 5 Daily Mirror from its correspondent John Walters: "The attack started at 1 p.m. on January 22 last, when (Police Commissioner) Muller's men armed with tear bombs and truncheons descended upon the hall belonging to Uriah Butler's oilworkers union.

"Five hundred men and women who were sleeping in the hall had marched from the oilfields of southern Trinidad to the capital to protest against the State of Emergency proclaimed there by the Governor, Sir Bede Clifford, because of the strike."

Imperial bullying of Colombia

Washington's threatened "decertification" of Colombia for a second year in the row for supposedly failing to combat illegal drugs is another expression of imperial arrogance by the U.S. rulers. It is simply used as a pretext to deepen imperialist intervention and domination of a country rocked by social instability, at the time when hundreds of thousands of workers waged an eight-day strike, pushing back some of the austerity measures of the capitalist regime of Ernesto Samper.

U.S. big business is worried that what unfolded only a week earlier in Ecuador, where millions of striking workers forced the resignation of austerity-happy president Abdalá Bucaram, can be repeated elsewhere in Latin America. Throughout the continent — from the Río Grande to Tierra del Fuego — capitalist exploitation and imperialist plunder has subjected millions of workers and peasants to deteriorating misery. That's why the financiers and other businessmen on Wall Street are right to expect more rebellions.

One should begin with the obvious question. Who gave the U.S. government the right to "certify" or "decertify" any sovereign nation? For that matter, who's going to "certify" Washington on stemming drugs?

The drug trade is a highly profitable capitalist business internationally, with U.S. capitalist interests playing a starring role in it. Capitalist governments — in Washington, Bogotá, or anywhere else — have no intention of ending it. U.S. imperialism simply uses its "war on drugs" to go after working people and anyone they don't like — anyone who's not subservient enough to Washington's dictates. The cries from the U.S. State Department that Samper is corrupt are cynically selective at best. Organized corruption and bribery on a massive scale, accompanied by threats and blackmail, are Washington's stock-in-trade.

The U.S. rulers are simply not confident that the Samper administration is competent to do the dirty work for the empire to the north. Unending protests by workers and peasants, along with a decades-long guerrilla insurgency, threaten the ability of Wall Street sharks to continue to devour the wealth the toilers in that country produce through the slavery of the foreign debt. This is why Clinton has increased funding for the Colombian military and police, ever since Washington first "decertified" the government of Colombia last year, preventing it from getting further international loans.

Hundreds of thousands of Colombian army troops were deployed in the cities during the recent strike. The same army and police, backed by U.S. "counternarcotics" training, and money, has been used against peasants who repeatedly rebelled last year against the forced eradication of their coca crops. These peasants and other food-growing producers revolted because the authorities destroyed their livelihood, while refusing to provide them with any alternative. Low market prices of basic food crops and lack of government assistance for fertilizer, seeds, and other inputs have forced thousands of peasants into coca cultivation, a lucrative cash crop.

While the U.S. government is threatening new sanctions against Colombia, it is also preparing to act unilaterally to protect imperialist interests. That's what the secret presidential decision directive — PDD 39, revealed by Associated Press in early February — is all about. That order allows U.S. agents to arrest anyone on the soil of another country Washington accuses of "terrorism" and wants extradited, "without the cooperation of the host government."

Working people should demand Washington scrap its arrogant "decertification" plan and cancel the foreign debt of Colombia and the rest of the Third World.

Back fight for political rights

The *Militant* encourages all unionists, young fighters, and supporters of democratic rights to support the continued fight by the Socialist Workers Party to protect the privacy of contributors to the party's election campaigns and candidates for public office.

At issue is a federal law requiring the disclosure of names, addresses, occupations, and contributions of those making donations above \$200 to party campaigns, and of recipients of payments from the campaign committees. These records are available to government agencies and open to the public, making them a convenient "enemies list" for right-wing groups, private spy agencies, employers, and local, state, and federal government agencies.

Since this law was adopted in 1971, the SWP has refused to turn over any names to the government, and has waged a political battle on the federal and state level to prevent the government from using this law to intrude on the privacy and rights of party supporters.

Socialists argued that disclosure of the names would lead to victimization of contributors and was a violation of the constitutionally protected right to freedom of association and privacy. In a federal suit in the mid-1970s, the party submitted substantial documentation on government harassment and spying on the party and of threats and acts of violence by right-wing groups. Based on this record and a public political campaign, the SWP scored a victory for democratic rights, winning exemption from the reporting requirements.

The SWP won an extension of the exemption in 1990 from the Federal Elections Commission, in part, based on the findings of a historic federal court ruling in 1986. This court decision found the FBI violated the constitutional rights of the SWP and Young Socialist Alliance by carrying out a decades-

long campaign to disrupt, spy on, and harass the socialists.

A request to extend the exemption, which expired at the end of 1996, was filed with the FEC in late October and documented 23 incidents of police, right-wing, and government harassment, attacks, or threats against socialists candidates, campaign offices, or campaign supporters. Despite this evidence, the initial response from FEC lawyers was to request more documentation of continued harassment since 1990. The party organized to document another 49 incidents and submitted them to the FEC in January, providing overwhelming proof of the need for a continued reporting exemption.

Defending the earlier victories by the SWP is crucial today. The Clinton administration is leading an assault on democratic rights and supporting greater intrusion by police into the activities of opponents of government policy, including the labor movement. Over the past several months the *Militant* has reported numerous such cases, from government agents questioning opponents of the U.S. embargo of Cuba, to FBI interrogation of unionists at the airports after the TWA Flight 800 explosion, to expanded powers for the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and other federal cops to intrude in areas they have no business.

Washington hopes these actions will have a chilling effect on workers and youth organizing to oppose government and company attacks, and from fighting to advance the interests of working people. The fight by the SWP has a double importance. One is to continue to establish in government rulings that a workers organization needs protection against proven patterns of government and private animosity. Second is the political space such a fight helps keep open by campaigning to explain the issues to as many people as possible.

Clinton: strikebreaker in chief

Continued from front page

union organizing drives or defend themselves from charges of violating labor laws. This shameless hypocrisy by the vice-president was uttered shortly after Clinton, the strikebreaker in chief, gave the flimsiest excuse for trotting out antilabor legislation from the 1920s to order pilots back to work: travelers would be inconvenienced over a holiday weekend. It was the first such presidential use of the Railway Labor Act against a walkout in the airlines since another Democrat, Lyndon Johnson, tried to wield it, unsuccessfully, against a Machinists strike 30 years ago.

As the union tops thanked Gore for his platitudes, their willingness to go along with Clinton's back-to-work order represented a betrayal of the most basic principles of working-class solidarity. "An injury to one is an injury to all" is a life-and-death question for the working class today.

Whatever the outcome of the pilots' struggle at American, there are more fights brewing in the airline industry. Like the bosses at American Airlines, all of the carriers are pushing to cut wages, impose longer hours, and reduce benefits through commuter subsidiaries and other schemes in a drive to beat out their competition. As the string of recent aviation disasters have demonstrated, the airline bosses carry this out with disregard for the health and safety of the workers and passengers alike.

Now is a good time to get Pathfinder's book *The Eastern*

Airlines Strike: Accomplishments of the Rank-and-File Machinists and Gains for the Labor Movement into the hands of as many airline workers and others as possible.

In March 1989, the 8,500 members of the International Association of Machinists walked out at Eastern, one of the world's largest carriers. By the time the battle ended 22 months later, the rank-and-file workers had defeated Eastern's attempt to create a profitable nonunion airline. They had driven Eastern boss Frank Lorenzo, among the country's top union busters, out of the industry. The company itself was forced out of business. Now Lorenzo admits, in his recent *New York Times* column, that he underestimated the "intransigence" of the fighters at Eastern, who vowed to stay out "one day longer" and stuck to that pledge. The Machinists at Eastern sent a powerful message to employers everywhere who believe destroying unions always increases profits. It's a lesson neither the airline bosses nor their political representatives in Washington have forgotten.

The history of this battle, and the support it won from millions of working people in the United States and around the world, is told in *The Eastern Airlines Strike*. It's a good companion to *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions*, also available from Pathfinder. These are handbooks for workers coming into struggle today, who want to stand up and say no to the bosses' attacks and government strikebreaking.

Washington, Seoul use 'spy' scare as provocation

Continued from front page

ernments, the United Nations World Food Program said it will only try to obtain 100,000 tons in assistance. Washington is touting its recent pledge to contribute the paltry sum of \$10 million in aid as an outstanding gesture.

Following the "disappearance" of Hwang, the *Washington Post* paraphrased officials in Pyongyang as stating that he must have been kidnapped and that only his return would avert a forceful response. A statement by the DPRK Foreign Ministry on the state radio network later explained, "Our stand is simple and clear. If he was kidnapped, we cannot tolerate it, and we will take decisive countermeasures. If he sought asylum, it means that he is a renegade and he is dismissed." Seoul declared that this stance on Hwang was threatening.

Highlighting Hwang's presence at the embassy in China put pressure on Beijing to take sides on the issue. An article in the *Washington Post* noted, "China has long sought to avoid choosing sides in the Korean dispute, simultaneously seeking to maintain historic links to North Korea while forging closer ties to South Korea and wooing its investment." The south Korean companies Daewoo and Hyundai have alone invested more than \$2 billion in China. This probe by the south Korean regime is another attempt to weaken the workers state of China and maneuver it to give greater recognition to Seoul.

At the same time the south Korean government has played up the shooting of Lee Han Young in Seoul, claiming north Korean agents were responsible. Lee was a pilot in the DPRK air force when he stole a MiG-19 fighter jet and headed to the south in 1982. Seoul paid him \$500,000 for the aircraft and military information, plus some extra funds to get settled. Lee was shot in the head February 15, and is essentially brain dead.

South Korean Home Affairs Minister Suh Chung Hwa called the shooting "an assassination attempt by north Korean infiltrators." The basis for this assertion was that the bullets used in the shooting came from a Browning pistol, supposedly a weapon favored by DPRK agents. A few days later, south Korean officials reported that Lee may actually have been shot with a different type of gun. In addition, the *New York Times* suggested February 18, that Lee "who was known as a womanizer and who was deeply in debt, might have had other enemies."

Cops mobilize to hunt for 'agents'

Nevertheless, the government immediately began whipping up an antispy, antiterrorist campaign, including a manhunt for the "agents" who supposedly shot Lee. Officials played up an alleged claim by Hwang that some 50,000 north Korean agents are roaming south — though even some U.S. officials have said the statements released in Seoul under Hwang's name are "dubious." Under a "terrorism alert," officials began blocking off sections of Seoul. Security police marched in formation up and down the streets.

This takes place as President Kim Young Sam is resubmitting for parliamentary debate legislation that expands the powers of Seoul's secret police. The measure was passed as part of a package of antilabor laws in a five-minute session of the National Assembly December 26, without any opposition legislators present. Hundreds of thousands of workers and students responded immediately with more than three weeks of strikes and mass demonstrations. The unionists suspended strike action in mid-January when the regime promised to submit the legislation for review, but said the walkouts would resume February 18 if the laws — which also attacked union rights and made it easier for companies to lay off workers — were not repealed. Union officials have now postponed the strike deadline to the end of the month.

Meanwhile, two south Korean legislators were arrested February 12 on charges of taking bribes from Hanbo Steel Industry Co., a subsidiary of the Hanbo Group, which went bankrupt in January. One of the arrested men, Hong In Kil, is a relative and close associate of the president. He allegedly received more than \$900,000 from the company, in exchange for approving loans. Hanbo, the country's 14th largest company, took loans that exceeded its capital 22-fold before it went under. The National Assembly is scheduled to hold a special session to investigate the scandal. Kim ran for president four years ago on an anticorruption platform.

UK Ford, union officials reach deal to lay off 980

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

ON THE PICKET LINE

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

LONDON — Leaders of the Transport & General Workers Union representing workers at Ford's Halewood plant in Liverpool, England, agreed February 7 to call off a ballot for nationwide strike action. In return, the company scaled back its proposed layoff plan for the Liverpool factory from 1,300 to 980 workers.

The union accepted assurances that Ford will build a new vehicle at Halewood in 2000, and secure the future of that plant. In January, the company had threatened to close down the Halewood factory if the union did not accept layoffs, after

production of its current Escort model ends in the year 2000.

An article in the February 8 *Financial Times* of London commented, "The company's greater willingness to back the project...

appeared largely based on private assurances from the government that it would receive satisfactory subsidies."

Ford also promised it would build its next generation Fiesta small car at the Dagenham factory in London, rather than Cologne in Germany, and the Transit van at Southampton on the southern coast of England.

According to the *Financial Times*, "union leaders committed themselves to working together to strengthen Ford's role in car making in Britain. The agreement was reached after two days of talks between union leaders and Ford management headed by Jac Nasser, chairman of Ford of Europe. The company emerged as the clear winner, and many of the investment decisions, while not previously announced, were expected."

Schering-Plough workers fight racist attacks

NEWARK, New Jersey — A

ninth worker at Schering-Plough Corp. filed racist discrimination charges against the Madison-based pharmaceutical company on January 28. Norren Alvarez, a 10-year employee at the company's Kenilworth site, added her complaint to six others already filed with the state Division on Civil Rights.

Alvarez charged that she has been verbally abused and harassed by supervisors because her boyfriend is a Black man and she is white. "I have been called a whore and a nigger-lover off and on, on many different occasions, for the time I've worked for the company," Alvarez said. "Most of the people who did this have retired. One of them was a supervisor who retired last December. But another one, a woman supervisor, is still there, still harassing myself and my boyfriend."

Alvarez's boyfriend, Major Holmes, subsequently filed a discrimination complaint of his own. The workers who have filed the complaints have organized protests in front of the company's offices, a march to publicize their cases, and press conferences.

At a well attended press conference at Mount Teman AME Church in Elizabeth, New Jersey, on February 5, nine employees, former employees, and contractors represented by Salaam Ismial, a civil rights activist, announced they are

calling for a boycott of five Schering-Plough products. The boycott list includes the allergy medication Claritin, Coppertone suntan products, and Proventhol asthma medicine.

"Schering-Plough has refused to address the question of racism," Ismial said. He introduced all the workers and told their stories. Besides Alvarez, the other six workers are: Eric Arnold, the first to file suit after a supervisor called him a "stupid nigger"; John D'Orazio, who witnessed the incident and backed up Arnold's story; and Douglas Curry, Henry Barbey, Thomas Parham, Thomas Harris, Donnell Brown, and Dwayne Ross. D'Orazio is white and the other five workers are Black.

Ismial announced that the boycott effort would begin the next day with

a picket line in front of University Hospital in Newark to urge doctors to stop using the pharmaceutical firm's products.

Negotiations between Ismial and the company ended in late November after he demanded \$20 million in damages for the workers and a hand in rewriting corporate policy against discrimination. The company said it intends to find and punish violators of its policy against discrimination but will not accede to the demands for compensation.

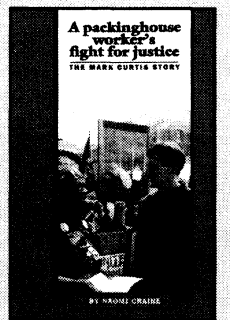
Ian Grant, a member of TGWU at Ford's Dagenham plant in London, England; and Martha Ressler, a sewing machine operator and member of the United Needletrades and Industrial Employees (UNITE) in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, contributed to this week's column.

From Pathfinder

A Packinghouse Worker's Fight for Justice: The Mark Curtis Story By Naomi Craine

The story of the victorious eight-year battle to defeat the political frame-up of Mark Curtis, a union activist and socialist. \$6.00

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LETTERS

Turmoil in Balkans

In his February 3 article, "Turmoil spreads in Balkan workers states," author Argiris Malapanis explains that working people throughout that part of the world are finding ways to resist the austerity drive foisted upon them by the various pro-capitalist parties and politicians now battling one another over power in each of the Balkan countries; and that it is this resistance that presents the most worrying threat to the imperialists' dreams of again reaping massive profits from the working classes of the region.

This is true in Yugoslavia and Albania, where workers and peasants carried out genuine and deepgoing popular revolutions in the 1940s. It is also true in Bulgaria, where, as Malapanis states, "the social transformation...took place... largely under the tutelage of Stalin's Red Army."

In all three countries, various pro-capitalist factions, all of which have their origin in the privileged bureaucratic social layer that has ruled since the late 1940s, either aim to put themselves at the head of the resistance in hopes of winning power, or try to retain it through the tried and true methods of police repression.

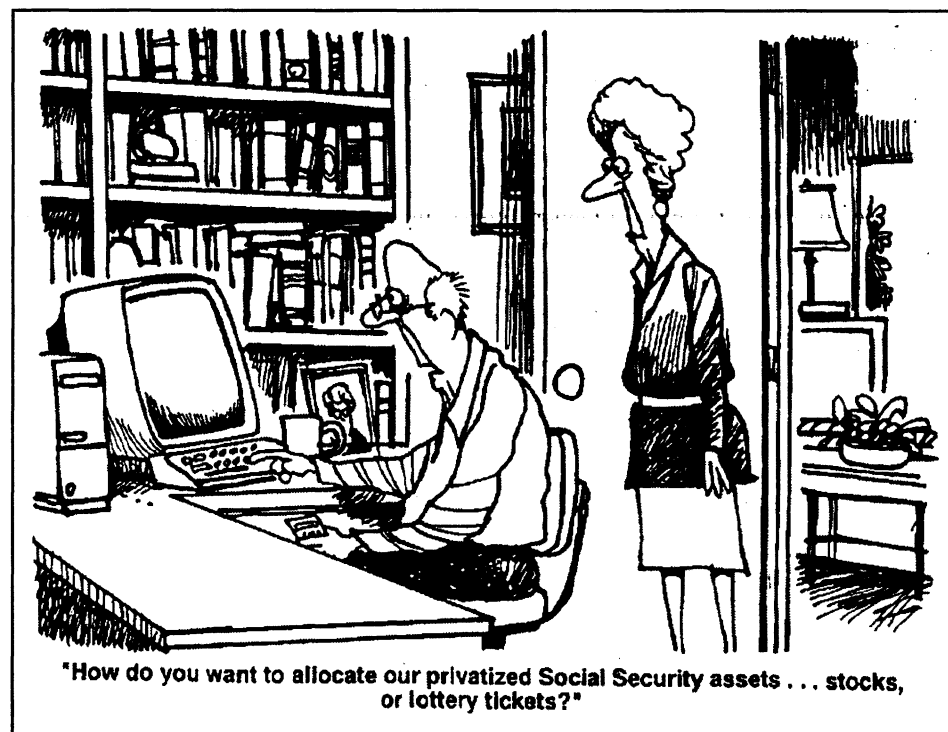
What Malapanis calls "the major difference" between developments today in Yugoslavia (and presumably Albania) and those in Bulgaria, that is, the lack of a popular revolution in Bulgaria 50 years ago, doesn't appear from the *Militant's* coverage to have made much of a difference, at least up until now. Some explanation in a future article would be most helpful. Keep up the good work!

Jim Altenberg
Oakland, California

Social Security

I was very impressed with Megan Arney's February 10 *Militant* article "Social Security: A product of labor battles." As she points out it was the labor battles of the 1930s that led to passage of the Social Security Act.

In 1932, in Cassandra, Pennsylvania, a small coal mining town near



Johnstown, PA, the coal company laid off one half of the work force. The miners who still had jobs went to the company and offered to work less so that nobody would be laid off. The company, certainly not interested in worker solidarity, refused.

Thus began the great Cassandra strike of 1932, a strike which lasted for close to two years. During those years, the miners' displayed tremendous determination, cooperation, and solidarity.

It was battles such as this that forced the capitalists to make concessions to labor.

Nicholas Brand
Loretto, Pennsylvania

On Watergate...

In your reply to reader Stan Smith (*Militant* Jan. 27, 1997), you take up the question of the Watergate scandal, saying, "The Watergate crisis, for example, had little to do with the incident after which it was named... [but rather] simply registered the implications for the U.S. bourgeoisie of American imperialism's defeat in Vietnam."

This may be a passage that itself suffers from being written — as you

say — "in-shorthand." And obviously, the implications for the U.S. bourgeoisie of their defeat in Vietnam are vast, covering practically everything that's happened since that great day. But such a statement, so general, doesn't really explain what Watergate was all about either.

I hope you won't think I'm nit-picking to write this comment. But I believe the way you answered Smith in this regard rather more confused than clears up the point that should be made.

My starting point is that I believe the Watergate crisis actually had a lot to do with the incident after which it was named.

As *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* explains:

"The working of American 'democracy' abroad has been revealed in Vietnam.... But even more than foreign operations, it was the extensive violation of democratic rights at home that were profoundly shocking to so many Americans as Watergate unraveled and the domestic crimes of the CIA, the FBI, and the Internal Revenue Service were exposed.

"As the Watergate scandal unfolded, American workers began to see this spectacle not as an isolated

case of crooked politicians being caught, but as proof of a general mode of operation that constituted a threat to fundamental democratic rights. These methods were initiated, carried on, and covered up by a ruling class determined to halt and eventually roll back the social and economic gains made in recent years by the working class and its allies.... The 'credibility gap' that began with Vietnam and escalated to unprecedented proportions with Watergate represents in reality a

crisis of political confidence in the government, the beginning of a crisis of legitimacy." (page 61)

This crisis has "deepened popular doubt about the rulers' intention to administer a government or to decide domestic and foreign policy in the interests of the broad majority." (page 105)

It was this distrust and growing interest in fighting such attacks that provided the political underpinning for the wide support that made possible a victory for the SWP and YSA in their historic lawsuit against government spying.

I think it's important to explain Watergate and the political problems it caused for the ruling class concretely because this is an essential backdrop to understanding the intended effect of the pornographication of politics today. Pornographication is exactly aimed at depoliticizing the disgust so many workers and youth feel as the divisions within leading circles of a weaker and more unstable imperialism bring to light more and more of capitalism's scandalous business as usual.

It is part of "the politics of resentment that benefits the ultraright, not the working class."

This is why the coarsening of

politics is such a serious question for class conscious workers. The reaction to Watergate during the post-war boom helps us see what is different in today's depression conditions.

...and uppercase 'B'lack

Also, with regard to the use of uppercase in the word Black. I believe the *Militant* — as do most publications — capitalizes the names or all nationalities (oppressed or not, regardless of their history or vanguard role) as a matter of style: Quebecois, Italian, Russian, Chechnian, etc. In this sense, uppercase Black is simply consistent as applied to the word used today by most Afro-Americans to describe their nationality. *The Militant* — unlike many other publications — also used to capitalize *Negro* when that was the word preferred by most Blacks prior to the radicalization of the 1960s.

In contrast "white" (as the *Militant* has pointed out) is not a scientific designation for a nationality. It is a shorthand formulation with no precise political or biological meaning for people who can be of diverse national origins and different social classes (with conflicting interests).

We can speak of "white workers" in a shorthand way, or "workers who are white." But this doesn't tell us very much about them. "White" could be used to describe, for example fighters, for an independent Quebec or many activists in the fight to win a new trial for Mumia Abu-Jamal — as well as staunch opponents of both these struggles.

"White" is a social and political category that feeds a racial myth. Used by itself, it doesn't really explain anything about a person's location in politics or even geography. Why would it be capitalized?

Pete Seidman
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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.

Transit workers in France strike for shorter workweek, retirement at 55

Reflecting social polarization, ultraright also gains strength, wins election

BY NAT LONDON

PARIS, France — As unemployment continues to spiral upward in France and throughout Europe, bus, trolley and metro workers are fighting to defend themselves from the effects of the economic depression. These unionists are striking throughout the country now for a 35-hour workweek with no loss in pay and lowering the retirement age to 55.

The official workweek here is 39 hours and most workers retire at age 60. The workers say that a reduced workweek and early retirement would create jobs for younger workers and bring down the unemployment rate, which has reached 12.7 percent. According to most estimates in the media, joblessness will hit 13 percent by June.

While transportation and other workers are resisting the effects of the capitalist depression and the austerity policies of the government of Alain Juppé, incipient fascist currents are also gaining strength — a sign of the more acute polarization of society.

On February 9, the ultrarightist National Front (FN) of Jean Marie Le Pen won the municipal council of Vitrolles, a suburb of Marseilles, defeating the incumbent candidate of the Socialist Party (SP) who was also supported by the conservatives. It was the fourth city where the National Front has won municipal elections. All four of these cities are in southern France, in areas with a high proportion of immigrants from northern Africa. Marseilles is also one of the centers of the transit strike.

Transit strikers try to emulate truckers

The public transit workers in France are following the example of the truck drivers who barricaded France's roads and highways for 12 days last November and by the national railroad workers strike in November-December 1995.

The truckers succeeded in lowering their retirement age from 60 to 55 after 25 years on the road. The railroad workers beat back a government effort to raise their retirement age to 60 years. As a result, train conductors still retire at 50 years and other rail workers at age 55.

The striking transit workers are employed by a large number of small municipal transit companies. Workers in at least 60 major cities have taken part in the strikes.

Bus and metro workers in Paris are not involved in the strike. They have the same status as the rail workers and have kept their retirement age at 55.

The action began following the truckers' victory in November, when bus and trolley workers walked off the job in a number of local strikes in Toulouse, Marseilles, and other cities demanding retirement at age 55 "like the truckers." A national day of action called by the unions for January 24 was overwhelmingly supported by workers, as city after city reported virtually no bus transportation for the day.

Four days later, the Union of Public Transportation (UTP), an employer's association which represents the bosses of 160 local transport systems, offered to reduce the workweek to 35 hours of work for 37 hours of pay.

In addition, the bosses demanded the right to calculate the 35 hours as a yearly average, going beyond a seven-hour workday on some days and having short work on other days. This would mean workers could be called in to work, made to stay late or sent home early at the bosses' behest. It would lessen the pressure on the employers to hire new workers to make up for the work time lost by reducing the work week.

The offer was rejected by the General Labor Confederation (CGT) and *Force Ouvrière* (FO) or Workers Force, the major



Militant/Tony Hunt
March of striking transit workers, Marseilles, Dec. 28, 1995 (above). At a recent Paris rally, a poster featuring ultraright National Front leader Jean-Marie Le Pen (right), called for "French first!" National Front recently won control of city hall in fourth city in southern France.

union federations among transit workers. Workers in Toulouse went on strike to ensure that the maximum work day would not surpass seven hours.

The CGT and FO then called for a second national day of action for February 6. A third union, the French Democratic Confederation of Labor (CFDT), whose leader-

ship supports the social democratic Socialist Party, refused to support the action.

The second day of action was as large as the first. The next day, workers in 12 major cities, including Marseilles, Toulouse, Toulon, and Nice in the south of France and Lille in the north decided not to go back to work. Two more national unions announced they would join the strike the following February 10. What began as a series of one-day actions has now developed to an all-out strike for a shorter work week.

An attempt by store owners in Toulouse to build an anti-strike march drew only 200 demonstrators. The broad support for the transit walkout reflects a growing sentiment among many workers that it is necessary to reduce work time in order to bring down the high unemployment rate.

Paris regrets previous concessions

The government is beginning to have regrets about having granted the 55 year retirement demand during the truckers strike. French President Jacques Chirac has twice made national television addresses to explain that the country cannot afford to grant early retirement at age 55 to everyone.

Former premier Edouard Balladur announced that "it will be necessary to raise the retirement age." Another former prime

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Rightists attack Maori land rights

BY MIKE PETERS

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand — Nearly 200 people attended a meeting here on January 29 that attempted to mobilize public opinion against Maori land and language claims. The heated debate at this public forum at Riccarton Town Hall illustrated the importance of the fight for national equality in the class struggle in this country. It also illustrated the polarization of views on this question, which is part of politics today.

The meeting was called by Denis Hampton, a self-styled researcher, to demand the abolition of the Waitangi Tribunal. The tribunal is named after a treaty signed at Waitangi in 1840 that claimed New Zealand as a British possession, but also spoke of Maori sovereignty over their resources. The treaty serves as the tribunal's broad terms of reference.

The tribunal was established in 1975, and since then has made a number of recommendations to settle grievances over land, language, and fishing rights. It was set up as a concession to the movement for Maori equality that developed in the 1970s. Protests throughout the 1970s and 1980s included a major land march, occupations of ancestral lands, and demands for recognition of the Maori language.

The mobilizations were fueled by the discrimination that Maori face, reflected in their second-class status in housing, education and employment, and in the injustices they suffer at the hands of the police and courts.

Maori are some 13 percent of the population and are a key part of the industrial and rural working class. Their struggles have gained widespread sympathy and support among other workers.

While antidiscrimination protests subsided during the 1980s and much of the 1990s, a new wave of land occupations and other actions broke out in 1995 and 1996.

Hearings of the Waitangi Tribunal, which has a considerable backlog of claims, serve as a source ongoing controversy. The meeting's organizers took particular exception to a number of large claims before the

Tribunal by the South Island tribe Ngai Tahu. (Christchurch is the largest city in the South Island).

During the week of the Riccarton Town Hall meeting, a scandal over a pilot Maori language television channel, Aotearoa Television Network, was just breaking. The new government decided to provide \$NZ4 million (\$US2.8 million) to fund the channel, but put the decision on hold amid allegations of mismanagement. The meeting's organizers referred to this scandal a couple of times.

Many in the audience were of retirement age, but there were a fair number of younger people. It was a noisy affair, with many interjections. Hampton was the main speaker. He alleged that Ngai Tahu assets had been inflated largely through property deals involving land sold to them by the government. These deals, he said, were squandering public money.

The Crown — in effect the government — "which represents us all," said Hampton, had sold land too cheaply in response to Treaty claims. "We, the people who own these things, are missing out," he said. He accused the Waitangi Tribunal of bias in favor of Maori claimants. "In my opinion... the Waitangi Tribunal is not a level playing field and should be abolished," he concluded.

The second official speaker, Ted Austin, had a more demagogic style. He began by declaring he was against racism and apartheid. But then he outlined his opposition to the Waitangi Tribunal. "We are being priced apart on racist grounds, and the instrument that is being used to do that is the Treaty of Waitangi," he said. "Everybody deserves a good old kiwi fair go... Maori are carving up New Zealand."

A noisy debate followed these presentations. Melanie MacDonald, a lecturer from the local College of Education, began with a short greeting in Maori over a number of cries of "Speak English!" or "Translate!" She gave examples of discrimination that Maori faced early this century.

MacDonald questioned Hampton's claim that New Zealand had become "culturally unbalanced."

"New Zealand is not becoming culturally unbalanced—it has been so for a very, very long time," she said.

Patrick Brown, a member of the Engineers Union in Christchurch, spoke on behalf of the Communist League. He said that those attacking the Ngai Tahu land claims and funding for Aotearoa Television had in their sights a broader target—the fight for special measures to overcome the racist discrimination and obstacles that Maori people face. "This offensive undermines the unity of the working class," he said.

A vote at the end of the meeting supported the abolition of the Waitangi Tribunal by a ratio of two to one. But in the debate the most conscious right-wingers had not scored a resounding victory, and if anything had lost on some points.

"They or their kind will not go away, however," said Brown in an interview after the meeting. "They are encouraged by the shift to the right of capitalist politics. Behind this shift is a creeping and accelerating social crisis, whose roots lie in the period of the economic decline of capitalism. The resulting instability and disorder open up a debate where reactionary solutions, proposing that layers of the working class are to blame for the crisis, are more stridently posed."

"Workers and young people who oppose those views need to step confidently into this polarization. We need to discuss the facts about New Zealand history and especially about the racism permeating capitalist institutions today that condemns the Maori, along with immigrants from the Pacific Islands and Asia, to second-class status."

"Even more importantly, we need to discuss a working-class response to this challenge. Only by championing the demands of Maori for national rights can the labor movement forge a fighting unity. It's a concrete example of the approach workers need to take to the struggles of women, immigrant workers, working farmers and all those who suffer from, and rebel against, the divide and rule tactics of the capitalist class."