

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

'Cuban revolution is example for the exploited'

— PAGE 8

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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Economic depression in Japan gives rulers jitters

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

The Japanese economy is headed toward one of its worst downturns since the end of World War II, which has provoked anxiety among the major capitalist powers. With unemployment at its highest level in 45 years, the country's economy contracted 0.5 percent in the 1997 fiscal year, corporate profits are down 15 percent, and zero growth is projected in 1998, the April 13 *Business Week* reported.

Corporate bankruptcies soared 30 percent in February to 1,586, according to Tokyo Shoko Research, a credit research company. The company forecast 17,300 bankruptcies of companies owing a total of more than \$100 billion for the 1998 fiscal year.

After adjusting for inflation, real wages of workers at large companies in Japan fell an average of 1.3 percent last year.

At the same time, the government carried through an austerity budget that included raising the sales tax and cutting social spending.

"The Japanese economy is currently facing its most difficult time ever," Norio Ohga, chairman and chief executive of Sony, declared April 2. "I am concerned that if Japan falls into a deflationary spiral it would affect the Asian economies."

Warning that the "economy is on the verge of collapse" that could trigger a world re-

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'Militant' sells well at plant gates, union rallies

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

"Supporters of the *Militant* sold 19 papers to Caterpillar workers in East Peoria, Illinois, April 3 and the next day we went back and sold 12 more *Militants* to Caterpillar workers there, said Cappy Kidd, a member of the United Auto Workers in Chicago. "One worker renewed his subscription at the plant gate and urged others to buy the paper. 'This is the only paper that stood behind us all the way,' he told his co-workers."

Kidd said he and other *Militant* supporters went to the home of the worker who renewed his subscription. They discussed politics with him, another Caterpillar worker, a retiree from the company, and their spouses. "One worker said, 'Too bad no one has written a book about that fight.' They got excited when we told them about bound volumes of the *Militant* that contain articles about their strike."

Ned Dmytryshyn, a member of the International Association of Machinists from Vancouver said a *Militant* sales team joined an April 4 rally in Campbell River, British Columbia of 1,500 unionists and their families in support of the Fletcher Challenge strikers. "We met with success there selling six *Militant* subscriptions, 29 copies of the paper, and one copy of the Marxist magazine *New International* no. 2. We also sold two *Militant* subscriptions this week at work."

Supporters of the *Militant* have stepped

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Defend Social Security!

In the name of "educating" about Social Security and preparing ways to "save" it, the Clinton administration seeks to lay the groundwork to eventually dismantle this social gain, which was won as a product of the struggles of working people over decades. The union movement and all working people have a stake in opposing these moves.

The employing class prefers that workers die quickly once they're too old or sick to sell their labor power. For them it's a prob-

EDITORIAL

lem that workers live many years past retirement.

Social Security, which provides cash benefits to the elderly and disabled, is a piece of the social wage. It's a portion of the wealth that the toiling majority produces, which the working class has won from the bosses as a social right for all. Like direct wages, each increase in the social wage cuts into the profits the capitalists take from the value produced by workers' labor. That's

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Clinton floats proposals for cuts in name of 'fixing' system

BY MARTIN KOPPEL

The White House has launched a campaign to win greater public acceptance for making inroads into Social Security — all in the name of "fixing" it. Some 44 million people, overwhelmingly workers and farmers, depend on this entitlement today.

President William Clinton staged the first road show on this subject April 7 at a community college in Kansas City, Missouri. The "town hall" meeting, attended by 750 people selected by the liberal American Association of Retired Persons and the Concord Coalition, an advocate of budget reductions, was one of four such events to be emceed by Clinton or Vice President Albert

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Construction workers and other unionists flocked to the wharf the morning of April 8 to protest the government-supported firing of 1,400 workers.

Workers protest mass firing of dockers in Australia

BY JOANNE KUNIAISKY AND MARNIE KENNEDY

SYDNEY, Australia — Thousands of unionists around Australia demonstrated April 8 to oppose the overnight sacking of 1,400 dockworkers — the entire workforce of Patrick, one of two main stevedoring companies in Australia.

At 11:00 p.m., in a coordinated military-style operation, hundreds of security guards with dogs evicted workers from the docks. The federal cabinet held a special meeting earlier that night. The next morning, Minister for Workplace Relations Peter Reith was in Parliament proposing legislation to provide \$250 million in loans to stevedoring companies to fund the dismissals.

Prime Minister John Howard said that "these events are a defining moment in Australia's industrial relations history." This latest union-busting plan of the Howard government follows months of attempts to break the Maritime Union of Australia's (MUA) closed shop on Australia's wharves, including the setup

of a nonunion terminal in Melbourne.

By 10:00 a.m. 5,000 unionists walked off their jobs in Sydney to march to Patrick's Darling Harbour terminal to support the sacked "wharfies." Most were construction workers from the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union. Members of the New South Wales (NSW) Nurses Association, Australian Workers Union, NSW Teachers Federation, Communication, Electrical and Plumbers Union, and Public Service Association also joined the action. Later, 100 dockworkers from the P&O docks marched to the picket line at the neighboring Patrick terminal, chanting, "The MUA is here to stay!" Similar protests took place around the country.

Round-the-clock picket lines are being staffed by wharfies. Students from Macquarie and Sydney universities have already joined the pickets. At Darling Harbour an official from the National Union of Workers (NUW) announced financial support from NUW members

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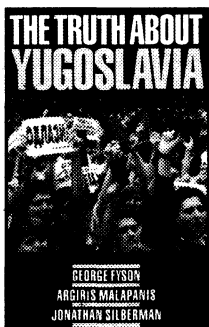
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'We'll give up our lives, but we won't give up Kosovo' — page 9

Iraqis say 'U.S.-UN out now'

During a March 24 funeral procession, the families of 53 Iraqi children who died a week earlier due to shortages in medicine, protested outside the Al-Rasheed hotel in Baghdad, where United Nations "weapons inspectors" reside. Washington imposed economic sanctions on Iraq in August 1990 as part of its preparations for the 1991-90 Gulf War, and has pushed for the UN Security Council to keep them in place since. By conservative estimates, half a million children have lost their lives as a direct result of the sanctions, which cut off Baghdad's ability to import medicines and other necessities.

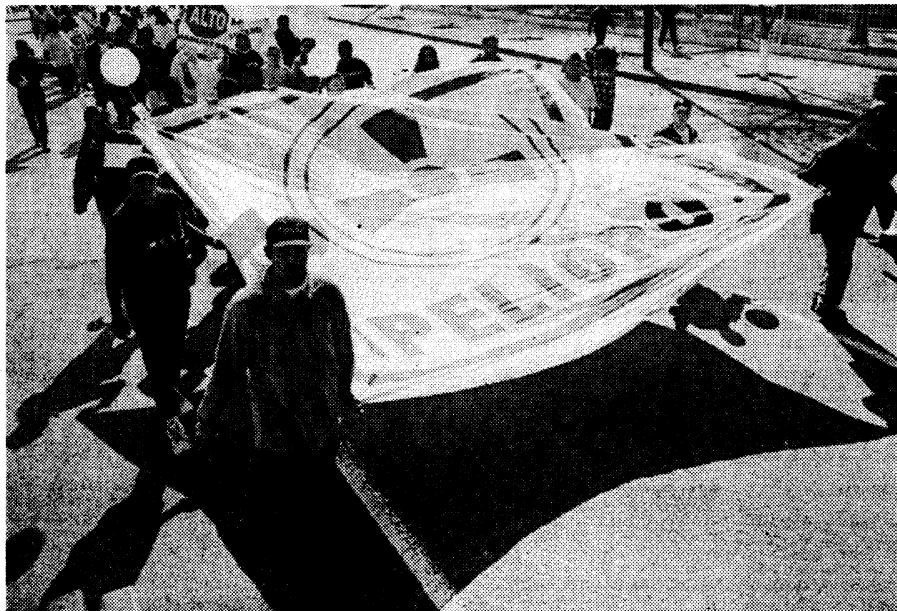
Israeli shells kill Lebanese farmer

Israeli warplanes pummeled a small village in Iqlim al-Tuffah, Lebanon, with air-to-surface missiles April 2 and then shelled the area, killing a 33-year-old farmer. Tel Aviv claims that Loueizeh village — the focus of the bombing — was a stronghold for Hezbollah guerrillas, but the village was all but deserted. That evening Hezbollah returned fire into territory occupied by Tel Aviv. Hezbollah was formed by fighters in Lebanon who opposed the 1972 Zionist troop occupation of southern Lebanon, which was aimed at putting down resistance of Palestinian guerrillas.

The day before the Loueizeh attack, Tel Aviv claimed to endorse a UN resolution demanding the withdrawal of Israeli forces from Lebanon, but only with conditions unacceptable to the Lebanese government: that Beirut organize to "protect" Israeli territory. Lebanese information minister Bassem al-Sabei said the Israeli demands were like "punishing the resistance that fought for Lebanon, and rewarding Israel's allies." Hezbollah secretary general Sheik Hassan Nasrallah also rejected the Israeli conditions, saying, "The only logical and acceptable solution is an unconditional withdrawal of the occupying forces from our land."

Turkish prisoners revolt

Inmates in jails across Turkey held protests, took guards prisoner, and burned jail cells March 31 to protest the transfer of prisoners at Buca jail. Prison officials said 12 warders and 11 guards were seized by in-



Thousands of residents in the northern city of Juárez, Mexico, protested March 21 against the U.S. government's decision to install a nuclear waste dump in nearby Sierra Blanca, Texas. The march ended in a rally at a border crossing between the two countries. Banner reads: "Danger!"

mates in Bursa in western Turkey, as well as 11 prison staff in Istanbul and four others in an Ankara jail. Fourteen warders were taken hostage in Cankiri and Sakarya. According to Reuters news agency, some of the inmates involved in the actions belong to the Revolutionary People's Liberation Party-Front.

Copper miners strike in Poland

Workers at the Rudna mine in Poland, the largest copper mine of the KGHM company, went on strike at the end of March. The call for strike action by the Solidarity union was overwhelming voted up by the 4,400 workers at Rudna March 30. They are protesting a company "restructuring" plan that includes transferring many of the 20,000 KGHM miners to lower-paid jobs in KGHM-owned subsidiaries. The current action was sparked by management's attempt to transfer 23 miners at Rudna to a mine construction affiliate. Workers at the company's two other mines took a strike authorization vote April 2. KGHM produces 3.5 percent of the

world's copper.

Yeltsin threatens to dissolve Russian parliament

Russian president Boris Yeltsin is threatening to dissolve parliament if it does not approve his appointment of Sergei Kiriyenko as the country's new prime minister. Yeltsin had dismissed his entire cabinet March 23, with the exception of Foreign Minister Yevgeny Primakov and Defense Minister Igor Sergeev. Under the country's constitution, the president can demand new parliamentary elections if his nomination is rejected three times.

The legislature is scheduled to debate Kiriyenko's nomination April 10. Kiriyenko is seeking to curtail protests called for April 9 by the trade unions who are demanding payment of back wages of \$9.5 billion this year. The government has retreated on a plan to cut 208,000 state jobs that been announced by Deputy Finance Minister Alexei Kudrin during the last week of March.

Communist Party gets highest vote in Moldova elections

The Communist Party in Moldova won that country's March 22 elections with 30.1 percent of the vote, or 40 of the 101 parliamentary seats. The Democratic Convention, a backer of swift market reforms, came in second with 19.2 percent. The Bloc for a Democratic and Prosperous Moldova and the Party of Democratic Forces won 18.2 and 9 percent respectively. The Communist Party says it is for a state-run economy and closer political and military ties with Moscow. That party's leader Vladimir Voronin was a former Soviet interior minister. The standard of living has plummeted in

Moldova since the breakup of the Soviet Union in 1991.

Madrid detains 'ETA suspects'

The Mexican government on April 3 expelled two men accused by the Spanish government of involvement in the Basque independence movement. Miguel Echevarria Iztueta and José María López González were detained by Mexican officials two days earlier for supposedly lacking proper travel documents. Spanish cops immediately arrested the two men upon their arrival in Madrid. Spanish authorities claim the two belong to the ETA (Basque Homeland and Freedom), an armed organization fighting for the self-determination of the Basques, an oppressed nationality in northern Spain and southern France. The Mexican government has returned four other accused ETA members to Spain since last November.

Venezuelan workers strike

Workers at Venezuela Aluminum Corp. went on strike in early March to protest sell-off of 70 percent of the state-owned company, scheduled for March 25. They are demanding a productivity bonus of \$1,150 and a 12 percent wage increase. Venezuela Aluminum is one of the world's largest producers of that metal. Alfredo Rivas, an official of the state holding company CVG, of which Venezuela Aluminum is a subsidiary, said a bonus for the workers was "absurd." But the strike's impact forced the demands into a March 23 shareholders' agenda.

Bolivian gov't provokes unrest

Ten thousand farmers blockaded Bolivia's main highway April 2 in Chapare, an area 400 miles east of the Bolivian capital La Paz. They were demanding the government finance projects to replace the coca leaf planting it is destroying with other viable crops. Government troops broke up the protest action, firing tear gas and rubber-coated bullets into the crowd. Two protesters were killed and 17 were injured.

The same day 150,000 public school teachers and health workers throughout Bolivia went on strike demanding a raise in the minimum monthly wage, which now stands at \$47. Thousands of cops were deployed into La Paz and other cities by the Bolivian government.

Clinton pushes 'anticrime' move

Flanked by Attorney General Janet Reno and Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin, U.S. president William Clinton issued an executive order April 5 to permanently bar the import of some 58 "assault" weapons. Presidential advisor Rahm Emanuel described the step as part of a "comprehensive anticrime strategy." The White House sought to tie this move to professed concern over the recent incident in Jonesboro, Arkansas, where two boys, aged 11 and 13, opened fire on a school yard, killing four female classmates and a teacher.

— BRIAN TAYLOR

THE MILITANT

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Imperialist rivalries highlighted with 'euro'

Working-class resistance, tensions over European Monetary Union deepen

BY CARL-ERIK ISACSSON

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — Just 24 hours after German chancellor Helmut Kohl declared his government's support for initiating the projected European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) with 11 of the 15 members of the European Union (EU), the president of Germany's central bank again raised doubts.

Speaking before the lower house of the German legislature April 5, Bundesbank chief Hans Tietmeyer said that the ratio of government debt to gross domestic product in Italy and Belgium was too high and could "very quickly" cause conflict over monetary policy within the single currency. He refused to discuss how many countries should start the EMU, however, saying this was a political decision.

The governments planning to participate in the single currency see the "euro" as a possible economic block against rival currencies, particularly the U.S. dollar and Japanese yen. But a strong euro is virtually ruled out today for two reasons. One is because of the conflicting political and economic interests among the potential members, particularly Paris and Bonn. And secondly, because of the failure of the capitalist rulers in any of these countries to break workers' resistance to the austerity conditions the employing class needs to impose to shore up their profit margins. The starting membership of the EMU is to be formally decided May 2, and the common currency will take effect Jan. 1, 1999.

On March 25 the European Commission, the executive body of the European Union, recommended 11 states for admission into the EMU: Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, and Spain.

The governments of the United Kingdom and Denmark have a treaty with the EU to also stand outside the common currency for now. The Swedish social democratic government announced last year it would not participate either in the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) or the EMU at the beginning. At first Swedish officials argued that the EMU project was too shaky, and later shifted to saying that it has too little popular support in Sweden.

The commission stated that the remaining EU member, Greece, had not met the criteria for EMU membership.

In addition to these recommendations, the European Commission published a so-called convergence report on how well the EMU criteria was met. This report particularly targeted Rome, which has a public debt of more than 120 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), double the target of 60 percent; and Brussels, which has a similar debt. But the commission said it had assurances by these governments that the figure would be considerably decreased in the years ahead.

Another criteria discussed in the report was currency stability. Finland and Italy had not participated in the ERM, considered a criteria for EMU membership, for two years. The commission stated that their currencies had been stable enough the last two years to waive this requirement.

Athens has announced harsh austerity measures it says will make possible a bid to enter the EMU and the common currency by the year 2001. In mid-March the Greek government applied to participate in the ERM, and was taken in after devaluing the national currency, the drachma by 14 percent. The Greece government announced it would further deregulate markets there and privatize companies and banks.

German finance minister Theodor Waigel welcomed Athens into the ERM, but emphasized that the proposed austerity measures must be carried through.

After an informal meeting in York, England, with the finance ministers of other EU states in mid-March, Waigel said there should be no doubt about the stability of the new currency. He insisted that the meeting of heads of government within the European Union in early May should issue a special stability declaration. "We have to have guarantees that every country fulfills what they have promised in their convergence plans," Waigel said.

On March 25 the European Monetary Institute (EMI), the forerunner of the European Central bank, also issued a "conver-



Workers masked as German chancellor Helmut Kohl and finance minister Theodor Waigel at unemployment protest in Bonn on April 7.

gence report" that gave approval to a start of the common currency as recommended by the European Commission.

The commission had refuted accusations that several governments had manipulated their figures to meet the criteria. But at a press conference March 25, EMI chief Wim Duisenberg said the budget deficits for the 11 states slated to enter the EMU, which now average 2.4 percent, were partly the result of one time measures and budget trickery like the "Euro tax" in Italy. This must now be replaced by more sustainable and long-term measures, Duisenberg said. He demanded further austerity measures to reduce public debt and achieve more "labor flexibility."

Tietmeyer presented a Bundesbank convergence report at a press conference March 27. He expressed doubts whether Rome and Brussels could reduce their public debt, and demanded that these governments make further commitments to do so.

Austerity measures spark protests

With unemployment figures hovering around 12 percent or higher in Germany, Italy, and France, further austerity measures are spurring social protests. Tens of thousands of unemployed workers and others are taking part in monthly demonstrations across Germany demanding jobs. According to the organizers, these protests are to continue until the federal elections on September 27 this year.

In France, street protests and occupations of unemployment offices by jobless workers have been an important feature in politics over the last six months.

In mid-March, tens of thousands marched through Milan, Naples, and Palermo, Italy, demanding government action to provide jobs. And workers in Greece are holding a series of strike actions against the government's latest attacks on the unions there (see article on back page).

Worries that further austerity measures could provoke social explosions are expressed in the big-business press. The March 26 *International Herald Tribune* ran the headline "Calls for a more 'social' Europe put leaders on spot."

"The risks are enormous," Ralf Dahrendorf, former head of the London School of Economics, told the *Tribune*, "because once everybody is inside the single currency, they will relax again, and my own view is that the stability pact is nonexistent.... The scenario could be that between 1999 and 2002, at least one of the major members will either have to or will wish to leave [the] EMU because of domestic social and political needs that are overriding, and it could all begin to unravel."

Proposed cuts in farm subsidies

The European Commission on March 18 proposed austerity measures within the EU in a seven-year budget proposal for the period 2000-06. This included lowering the guaranteed prices within the EU Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) on meat, grain, and milk by up to 30 percent.

The commission also proposed that regional support only go to the poorest regions and for fewer purposes. Agricultural subsidies make up about half of the expenses of the EU budget, and regional support is about

a quarter. The annual EU budget totals some \$100 billion. On the income side, member countries pay a maximum of 1.27 percent of their GDP to the EU budget. The commission has not proposed any change on the income side, and is not expected to do so until after the German federal elections in September.

Earlier reductions in EU subsidies have brought about protests by farmers in Greece, Italy, and other member countries around the Mediterranean.

The commission's proposals were sharply criticized in Germany. Gerd Sonnleitner, chairman of the farmers organization, called the plan to reduce the guaranteed prices on farm products "a big provocation," and Finance Minister Waigel threatened to block future EU decisions if Bonn is not allowed to reduce its payments to the European Union budget.

Germany is a net payer of more than 20 billion marks (\$10.8 billion) to the EU budget. The governments of Sweden, Austria, and the Netherlands are also net payers to the EU budget, and are joining Waigel in his criticism.

During the 1980s then-British prime minister Margaret Thatcher, negotiated for London a rebate on its payments. This has now become an issue of dispute with the other net-payer states.

Spain is a net receiver of 12 billion D-marks, Greece of 8 billion D-marks, Portugal of 5.5 billion D-marks, and Ireland of 4.7 billion D-marks. None of these regimes wants to receive less, and none wants to pay more.

The European Commission proposal is officially promoted as a way of financing the enlargement of the European Union into eastern and central Europe. Membership negotiations with Cyprus, Estonia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and Slovenia began March 30-31 this year.

At the same time, all of the EU agricultural ministers stated opposition to the proposed cuts in the CAP subsidies, as they currently stand. The foreign ministers leav-

ing the meeting to discuss EU enlargement were met with protests by farmers.

Dispute over Cyprus, Turkey

At a meeting of EU foreign ministers in Edinburgh, Scotland, in mid-March, the question of Cyprus being among the applicants for membership in the European Union became a point of tension. Athens won the promise in 1996 that Cyprus would be invited to membership negotiations if the Greek government gave its approval to a customs union between the EU and Turkey. Since the early 1980s, the Turkish government has applied for membership in the Union, but has never been given serious consideration, especially due to opposition from the governments of Greece and Germany.

Relations between Ankara and the European Union have been frozen since it became clear that Turkey was not among the six countries that were to be invited to the first round of membership negotiations, but Cyprus was. The island of Cyprus is militarily occupied and divided. The Greek-backed government ruling in the south is the one being considered for EU membership; Turkish forces occupy the northern portion of the country.

Paris has demanded that negotiations should include delegations of Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots. As relations between Germany and Turkey have worsened, Paris has become the big power in Europe that has objections to the exclusion of Turkey from the enlargement of the European Union. French president Jacques Chirac wanted to postpone membership negotiations with Cyprus until Greek and Turkish Cypriots could unite in a common delegation. Athens, on the other hand, threatened to block membership negotiations for the other five applicants if negotiations with Cyprus didn't start March 30-31.

A compromise was worked out in Edinburgh. The foreign ministers unanimously stated that negotiations should start with a divided Cyprus as planned, but there was no agreement on whether a divided Cyprus could become a member of the European Union. They also declared that they were for a united Cyprus.

After a meeting with the Turkish Cypriot leader Rauf Denktaş during a visit to northern Cyprus March 30, Turkish foreign minister Ismail Cem declared, "The Greece Cypriot administration is paving the way for another war on the island."

The government in southern Cyprus has imported a substantial amount of weapons over the last few years. The most recent order was for Russian anti-aircraft missiles, which will be delivered later this year. They are supposedly to protect an air base close to Paphos in south western Cyprus, where jet fighters from Greece are to be based in an "emergency." During a recent visit to the United States, Greek foreign minister Theodore Pangalos said Athens will defend the regime in southern Cyprus if Turkish forces destroy the missiles.

Carl-Erik Isacsson is a member of the metalworkers union in Södertälje, Sweden.

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JACK BARNES

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Nearly 140 turn out for Los Angeles socialist conference

BY PAT NIXON
AND HEATHER MARTIN

LOS ANGELES — Under banners reading "U.S. Hands off Iraq and Yugoslavia — Self-Determination for the Albanians in Kosovo," "Rebuilding an Anti-Imperialist Youth Movement Worldwide — Join the Young Socialists," and "The Year of the 100th Anniversary of the Anti-Imperialist Struggle in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Philippines," 137 people from the West Coast and elsewhere participated in a socialist conference here April 4.

Many of those attending the conference were young. Members and supporters of the Young Socialists from Los Angeles, San Francisco, Santa Cruz, and Seattle attended. Three students from Occidental College in Los Angeles participated in their first socialist conference.

Teresa Harris, a young worker at United Airlines, attended because she wanted to learn about the Middle East and the world. "I love Che Guevara," Harris said after reading *Socialism and Man in Cuba* by the Argentine-born revolutionary who was a leader of the Cuban revolution. "I liked his concept on the working man, his idea of feeling good about your work," she said.

Displays at the conference reflected the range of activities socialist workers and

youth are involved in. A Pathfinder Bookstore exhibit featured the recent publication in English and Spanish of *Celebrating the Homecoming of Ernesto Che Guevara's Reinforcement Brigade to Cuba*, a collection of articles reprinted from the *Militant* about Guevara and the Cuban revolution's place in world politics. A photo exhibit showed socialist workers and youth campaigning against imperialism and its war at factory gates, political protests, picket lines, and on campuses. Another photo display detailed the working-class resistance in Albania, Kosovo, and Macedonia.

Conference participants heard eyewitness reports from Jack Willey and Argiris Malapanis, *Militant* reporters just back from a three-week reporting trip to Egypt and the Balkans.

The reporters attended the conference of the World Federation of Democratic Youth held in Cairo, Egypt, and then traveled to Yugoslavia, especially the Kosovo province, Macedonia, and Albania. The discussion and questions reflected great interest in the roots of the national oppression of the Albanian population in Kosovo and the ongoing working-class resistance to that oppression.

Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press, participated in the recent Havana Book Fair and reported to the confer-



Militant/Ellen Berman

Opponents of Proposition 227, a California ballot initiative that would ban bilingual education, at San Francisco rally to support farm workers on March 28. Following the conference, socialist workers and youth met to plan California election campaign, which will join in this and other struggles in coming months.

ence. Waters discussed the role of Pathfinder Press in today's world and the need to get the books into the hands of thinking and fighting vanguard workers and youth. The conference discussed the new opportunities for communists because of the disintegration of Stalinism as a worldwide obstacle to working with young fighters. Discussions on the origins of Stalinism and its decline continued late into the evening after the conference adjourned.

An appeal for the *Militant* Fund raised more than \$19,000 in contributions and

pledges (see article below). The next day, members of the Socialist Workers Party in California held a statewide convention to launch the Socialist Workers 1998 election campaign here. Members of the Young Socialists participated in the discussion, and many other conference participants attended as observers.

A report on that meeting will appear in an upcoming issue of the *Militant*.

Pat Nixon is a member of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers.

Give to a paper that prepares workers to fight

BY JON ERWAY

NEWARK, New Jersey — "The *Militant* is a weapon that arms us, our co-workers, and everyone who will listen, and prepares us to confront the growing capitalist world disorder," said Robin Maisel, a longtime supporter of the socialist paper, at a West Coast socialist conference held in Los An-

geles April 4. Maisel made an appeal to the audience of 140 people to contribute to the \$110,000 international *Militant* Fund, reports Pat Nixon from Los Angeles.

The conference, co-sponsored by the Socialist Workers Party branches in Seattle, Los Angeles and San Francisco, featured major presentations by *Militant* staffwriter Argiris Malapanis and Young Socialists leader Jack Willey, who spoke on their recent trip to Cairo and the Balkans, and Mary-Alice Waters speaking on the Cuban revolution and Pathfinder Press.

As members of the audience took envelopes in which to place their contributions, Maisel urged them to wait a bit and hear his appeal before writing out checks and pledges. "You don't know yet exactly how much you're going to give," he suggested with a smile. Maisel was right. By the end of his brief but effective fund pitch, which underscored the irreplaceable role of the socialist press for workers who want to fight and change the world, those present had made more than \$19,000 in pledges and contributed about \$1,000.

The positive response to the *Militant* Fund has been evident in other cities as well. Megan Arney from Newark reports that during a Sunday afternoon sale, a team of *Militant* supporters at Pennsylvania Station was approached by a member of the Teamsters union who works at the local Anheuser-Busch brewery. The Teamsters there are engaged in a contract fight and are preparing for a possible strike in face of the company's attempts to force a two-tier contract and other concessions on workers. The unionist stopped and talked with the salespeople, bought a *Militant*, and gave a \$5 contribution. He said he and other Teamsters would welcome a *Militant* reporting team to come and interview workers to publicize their side of the story.

Militant readers are urged to send in brief reports highlighting similar responses from industrial workers at picket lines, on the job, and at factory gates.

Mike Italie in Atlanta reports that *Militant* supporters there raised \$900 at an event April 4

where Ma'mud Shirvani spoke about the U.S. war drive against the workers states in Russia and republics of the Caspian Sea region. An auto worker from the local Ford plant and three other workers from Latin America who support the *Militant* were among those who attended the event.

Sam Manuel in Washington, D.C., reports: "Supporters of the *Militant* newspaper here are planning a special fund raising forum on Sunday, April 19. The forum will feature Rosa Garmendía, a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union, who was part of a recent *Militant* reporting team in Cuba.

Garmendía will speak about the Havana Book Fair and other developments, such as how working people in Cuba are collectively confronting the challenge of increasing ag-

ricultural and industrial production."

Supporters in Chicago raised their goal from \$9,500 to \$11,000, based on the successful momentum they gained from the April 4 regional socialist conference held there, reports Helen Meyers, *Militant* Fund director in Chicago.

After three out of the eight weeks in the international fund drive, we are at 15 percent but need to be at 38 percent of the goal. Over the next couple weeks, *Militant* supporters need to take steps to turn this around, both in raising enough pledges to meet local goals, and especially to collect funds and send them in.

Contributions can be made out to the *Militant* Fund, and sent to 410 West Street, New York, New York, 10014.

Miami program to celebrate 100 years fighting U.S. imperialism

BY ERNIE MAILHOT

MIAMI — Activists against the U.S. economic blockade of Cuba here have called for a public meeting titled "100 Years of Struggle Against U.S. Domination — Resistance of the Puerto Rican and Cuban People." It will be held at the First Unitarian Church in southwest Miami on May 2.

Among the featured speakers at this event will be Rafael Cancel Miranda, a Puerto Rican independence fighter who spent 28 years in U.S. prisons; Andrés Gómez from the Antonio Maceo Brigade, an organization of Cubans in the United States who support the Cuban revolution; and Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press and editor of the English-language edition of *The Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara*. A representative from Cuba has also been invited to address the meeting.

The sponsors of the meeting include the Miami Coalition to End the U.S. Embargo of Cuba, the Antonio Maceo Brigade, the Alliance of Workers of the Cuban Community, and the Socialist Workers Party.

One year ago the same groups sponsored a public meeting in Miami for Félix Wilson, the First Secretary of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C. This event marked the first time that a public meeting with a representative of the revolutionary government of Cuba was held in Miami. More than 200 people, most of them Cuban-Americans, attended.

Orlando Collado, from the Miami Coalition to End the U.S. Embargo of Cuba, com-

mented on the importance of the upcoming Miami meeting. "Last year's meeting was a big success and showed the changes in this city. Those attacking Cuba have less support. The meeting with Rafael Cancel Miranda and the others will also show this. And this time we're going to publicize this weeks in advance."

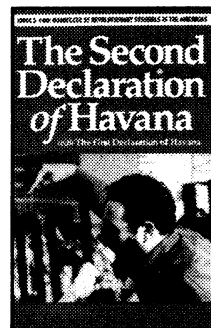
Ernie Mailhot is a member of International Association of Machinists Local 1126.

Militant Fund Drive March 14 - May 10

CITY/COUNTRY	GOAL	PAID	%
United States			
Chicago*	11,000	4,141	38%
Des Moines	2,500	933	37%
Philadelphia	4,000	1,279	32%
Atlanta	3,200	855	27%
Boston	6,000	1,330	22%
Los Angeles	9,000	1,770	20%
Houston	6,000	1,165	19%
Birmingham	2,500	480	19%
Detroit	3,500	656	19%
Twin Cities	7,000	995	14%
Newark	8,500	1,140	13%
Pittsburgh	5,000	550	11%
New York	14,000	1,326	9%
Cleveland	3,000	0	0%
Miami*	2,850	0	0%
San Francisco	10,000	0	0%
Seattle	7,000	0	0%
Washington, D.C.	3,000	0	0%
Other	0	75	
U.S. Total	108,050	16,695	15%
Australia	650	0	0%
Canada			
Montreal	1,517	0	0%
Toronto	2,414	0	0%
Vancouver	1,000	0	0%
Canada Total	5,000	0	0%
New Zealand			
Auckland	930	0	0%
Christchurch	700	0	0%
Wellington	115	0	0%
N.Z. Total	1,630	0	0%
United Kingdom			
Manchester	0	0	0%
London	0	0	0%
UK Total	1,000	0	0%
Sweden	700	0	0%
INT'L TOTAL:	117,030	16,695	15%
SHOULD BE:	110,000	41,800	38%
*raised goal			

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'Militant' sells well at factory gates from Peoria to Vancouver

Continued from front page

up sales to working people at plant gates, on picket lines, and labor solidarity actions as part of a campaign to win new subscribers to the socialist weekly and its Spanish-language sister publication *Perspectiva Mundial* (PM), as well as copies of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist*. Although the sales drive remains behind schedule, a few days into a special two-week effort to get on target, distributors in many areas are starting to gain momentum.

Activists in Chicago sold 10 copies of the paper to workers at the plant gate of the Amoco oil company and LTV Steel in a "steady rain." And Angel Lariscy from Miami reports, "We sold a *Militant* subscription at the rail yard where supporters of the paper sell every week. A track maintenance worker at CSX who had bought two copies of the *Militant* also decided to renew his subscription."

Distributors in Seattle sold eight *Militant* subscriptions at two rallies in support of fighting workers, wrote Chris Rayson. "We sold two subscriptions to workers at an April 2 rally of 200 people in defense of strawberry workers fighting to organize into the United Farm Workers union," he wrote. "One of the workers who bought a sub at the farm workers rally was a striker from the Jet Equipment and Tools company. John Naubert, a member of the International Association of Machinists, sold six *Militant* subscriptions at a rally of 100 people on April 3 that was organized to win support for 24 workers at the Jet Equipment and Tools company, who are fighting for a union contract. Five of those Naubert sold were to his co-workers from Hexcel who participated in the event, including three to members of the union women's committee.

dustrial and Textile Employees at the plant gate of Pincus Brothers garment factory where a woman worker from Bosnia insisted on giving \$5.00 for the paper because of the coverage on the independence struggle of Albanians in Kosovo, Yugoslavia.

A sales team also went to a bus barn where members of the Transportation Workers Union work. These workers are fighting for a contract with SEPTA, the regional transportation association, against demands for work rule changes and increased hiring of part-time workers. One driver bought the paper. At a previous sale, on the night that a possible strike was projected, one worker bought a *Militant* subscription and three others bought the paper.

Philadelphia supporters also set up a literature table at a meeting where 100 people came to hear Rafael Cancel Miranda, a longtime leader of the struggle for Puerto Rican independence. Participants at the meeting bought two subscriptions to the *Militant*, one to *Perspectiva Mundial*, and several books.

During the first three weeks of the sales campaign, six co-workers of *Militant* supporters have bought subscriptions. Two were sold to members of the Machinists union who attended a film showing at the Pathfinder bookstore that raised funds to send their co-worker, Becca Arenson, to an international women's conference in Havana, Cuba. A new subscriber at the Lear corporation in Newark, Delaware, attended a Militant Labor Forum and came to a class by Ma'mud Shirvani on the Russian revolution. A young Black worker at Boeing bought a subscription and then attended a campaign rally for his co-worker, Connie Allen, who is running for Congress on the socialist ticket.

BY MAGGIE TROWE

DES MOINES — Elvidio Mejia, organizer of the *Militant/Perspectiva Mundial* circulation drive in Iowa, reports that supporters of the *Militant* and *PM* here are preparing to field a team in the Midwest meatpacking region — Iowa, Nebraska, Kansas, and southern Minnesota — from April 25 through May 2. They will pay special attention to packing plants organized by the United Food and Commercial Workers union.

"The team's itinerary will include stops for plant gate campaigning with Socialist Workers candidates from Iowa," said Mejia. "They will also visit campuses and go door-to-door in working-class neighborhoods."

Mejia explained that "destinations include the IBP-owned Tama Packing plant in Tama, Iowa, where the company called in the immigration cops in January after workers had staged two days of sit-down strikes in the cafeteria; the Swift ham plant in Omaha, Nebraska, where Immigration and Naturalization Service agents arrested 110 workers in February; and beef plants in Nebraska where the packing bosses sold hamburger tainted with E. coli bacteria last year, thousands of pounds of which was ordered recalled by government inspectors."

Socialist activists will also visit the large IBP plant in Perry, Iowa, where Thomas Alter, Socialist Workers candidate for governor of Iowa, works. They will combine plant gate campaigning with visits to university campuses in Des Moines, Omaha, Lawrence, Kansas; and Grinnell, Iowa. The sales team will also reach out to working farmers in the area, including hog farmers who have been hit by a steep drop in prices and competition with big capitalist farmers.

"Supporters of the *Militant* and *PM* can join us if they can get that week or part of it off," Mejia said. "While many of the packing-house workers are Spanish-speaking, you don't have to speak Spanish to be part of the team. Anyone who is interested in the team can call us in Des Moines at (515) 277-2121."

BY CANDACE WAGNER

PHILADELPHIA — Supporters of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* traveled to Kennett Square, Pennsylvania, "the mushroom capital of the world," where workers at the Kaolin mushroom factory have been in a seven-year fight for a union contract. The team went to apartment buildings in the town, where one mushroom worker bought a subscription to *Perspectiva Mundial* and another mushroom worker renewed his *PM* subscription.

One worker bought a yearlong subscription along with the special offer of *Celebrating the Homecoming of Ernesto Che Guevara's Reinforcement Brigade to Cuba*. One former mushroom worker purchased a copy of *Junto a Che Guevara* (At the Side of Che Guevara) by Cuban leader Harry Villegas. Several expressed interest in attending a Militant Fund event in Philadelphia in two weeks.

Supporters of the socialist press sold two copies of the *Militant* to members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) at the plant gate of The Boeing Company. A sales team also talked to members of the Union of Needletrades, In-



Militant supporter John Naubert, right, selling the paper at a Boeing plant gate in Renton, Washington.

SUBSCRIPTION DRIVE MARCH 14 – MAY 10

Week 3 should be 38%

	Militant Goal	Sold	%	PM Goal	Sold	NI Goal	Sold
Sweden	16	9	56%	6	3	10	5
New Zealand							
Christchurch	25	14	56%	1	1	8	1
Wellington	4	2	50%	1	0	1	0
Auckland	35	11	31%	2	0	8	1
N.Z. Total	64	27	42%	4	1	17	2
Canada							
Vancouver	50	22	44%	6	3	20	8
Toronto	45	15	33%	8	4	20	13
Montreal	25	6	24%	7	6	25	12
Canada Total	120	43	36%	21	13	65	33
United States							
Philadelphia	35	16	46%	8	3	10	3
Atlanta	30	12	40%	13	4	18	4
Houston*	40	15	38%	10	6	18	12
Miami	45	17	38%	22	10	20	9
Seattle	70	23	33%	15	5	25	4
Washington, DC	45	15	33%	15	3	15	14
Boston	50	16	32%	20	7	40	15
Des Moines	45	14	31%	25	6	25	2
Los Angeles	100	28	28%	50	9	50	38
Detroit	40	10	25%	8	1	15	3
Newark, NJ	125	26	21%	50	12	60	20
Cleveland	35	7	20%	8	2	10	0
Birmingham, AL	50	9	18%	10	4	15	2
New York	150	25	17%	75	32	75	17
Chicago	90	14	16%	40	6	30	7
Pittsburgh	50	8	16%	3	0	15	3
Twin Cities, MN	70	11	16%	12	3	20	4
San Francisco	80	9	11%	30	13	35	5
U.S. Total	1150	275	24%	414	126	496	162
United Kingdom							
London	45	12	27%	8	2	35	7
Manchester	26	4	15%	2		18	3
UK Total	71	16	23%	10	2	53	10
Australia	16	2	13%	5	3	10	4
Iceland	9	1	11%	1	0	3	0
International totals	1437	373	27%	460	148	651	216
Goal/Should be at	1400	532	38%	450	171	600	228

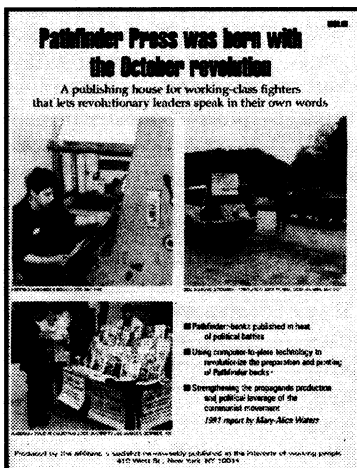
IN THE UNIONS

United States							
UFCW	15	6	40%	16	4	10	1
UNITE	10	2	20%	12	3	10	3
UTU	50	10	20%	5	0	20	2
IAM	60	16	27%	14	3	35	6
OCAW	27	5	19%	5	0	20	0
UAW	45	3	7%	10	1	22	1
USWA	49	1	2%	7	2	31	4
U.S. total	256	43	17%	69	13	148	17
Canada							
CAW	4	1	25%			2	2
USWA	5	1	20%	1	2	6	1
IAM	9	1	11%	1	0	5	1
UNITE	2	0	0%	1	0	2	0
Canada total	20	3	15%	3	2	15	4
New Zealand							
MWU	3	1	33%			1	0
EU	5	0	0%			1	0
SFWU	2	0	0%			1	0
N.Z. total	10	1	10%			3	0
Australia							
AMWU	3	0	0%			2	0
TCFU	1	0	0%	1	1	1	0
Australia total	4	0	0%	1	1	3	0
United Kingdom							
AEEU	5	0	0%			6	0
RMT	3	0	0%			3	1
TGWU	5	0	0%			3	0
UK total	13	0	0%			12	1

*raised goal

AEEU — Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Workers Union; AMWU — Amalgamated Manufacturers Union; CAW — Canadian Autoworkers Union; EU — Engineers Union; MWU — Meat Workers Union; IAM — International Association of Machinists; OCAW — Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers; RMT — National Union of Rail, Maritime, and Transport Workers; TGVU — Transport and General Workers Union; TCFU — Textile, Clothing and Footwear Union; UAW — United Auto Workers; UFBGWU — United Food, Beverage, and General Workers Union; UFCW — United Food and Commercial Workers; UMWA — United Mine Workers of America; UNITE — Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees; USWA — United Steelworkers of America; UTU — United Transportation Union.

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Los Angeles YS built on action and study

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, 1573 N. Milwaukee, P.O. Box #478, Chicago, Ill. 60622. Tel: (773) 772-0551. Compuserve: 105162,605

BY HEATHER MARTIN
AND MIKE BROUMAS

LOS ANGELES — Young Socialists in Los Angeles have organized a weekly class series at Occidental College on *New International* no. 7, which includes the article, "The Opening Guns of World War III." The class was formed following a rally of 150 held late February at that campus to protest Washington's war plans against Iraq. Four people who attended the rally have also participated in the class and carried out activities with the YS since.

In addition to the class at Occidental, the Young Socialists has also held a class on the same topic at the Pathfinder Bookstore. Teresa Harris, a young worker at United Airlines, attended that class because "I wanted to know what was going on in the Middle East," she said. Harris purchased *New International* no. 7, *Is Biology Woman's Destiny?* by Evelyn Reed, and *Socialism*

and *Man in Cuba* by Ernesto Che Guevara. She later attended a conference in Los Angeles entitled "Welcome Back from Cairo, Havana and Kosovo"

Selling Pathfinder at UFW march

Members of the Los Angeles Young Socialist chapter attended a march and rally in San Fernando of about 300 people March 29 to commemorate the anniversary of the death of César Chávez and to support current farm workers' struggles. The action was called by the United Farm Workers (UFW) union. The march went from Brand Park to San Fernando Park. At the culminating rally at San Fernando Park, a Pathfinder table staffed by Young Socialists and others attracted workers, students, and youth. Three copies of *The Communist Manifesto* and two copies of the *New International* magazine, along with a number of other books, were sold at the rally. Two people bought subscriptions to *Perspectiva Mundial* and one signed up for the *Militant*.

Building report back from Kosovo, Havana

The Los Angeles YS, with help from a regional Young Socialists team from Seattle, also helped to build the April 4 report back from Kosovo, Cairo, and Havana.

Sara Hunt, an 18-year-old student at Oc-



Militant/Carole Lesnick

YS member Autumn Knowlton (left) talks Inger Giffin at socialist conference in LA

cidental who had helped to organize the February protest opposing Washington's war moves against Iraq and had participated in the YS class on *New international* no. 7, attended the conference, as did two other Occidental students.

Hunt said that she had been "looking at various socialist groups" and that she was attracted to the Young Socialists because they "are open to questions." Hunt also explained that she has "gone through different processes of being angry at the system," but that it was important to realize that capitalism "was the real core of the problem." Hunt has bought copies of *The Truth about*

Yugoslavia: Why Working People Should Oppose Intervention and New International no. 7.

Two students from UC Santa Cruz attended the conference. One of them, Inger Giffin, bought a number of Pathfinder titles including *Che Guevara and the Fight for Socialism Today* by Mary-Alice Waters, *Malcolm X Talks to Young People, To Speak the Truth: Why Washington's 'Cold War' against Cuba Doesn't End* by Guevara and Fidel Castro, and a subscription to the *Militant*. "This is exactly what I've been looking for," she said. These ideas "are powerful tools."

Protests mount against cop brutality in Chicago

BY JOHN STUDER

CHICAGO — "I feel like marching," Rev. Paul Jakes, chairman of the Greater Chicago Committee Against Police Brutality, told a crowd of more than 300 people at a tribunal against police brutality here March 29. The event followed a week of mobilizations by hundreds of Blacks and other opponents of police brutality to protest the second police beating and arrest of 19-year-old Jeremiah Mearday.

Mearday was assaulted by two cops last September and his front teeth were smashed down his throat by a police flashlight. On March 12, in a victory for opponents of police violence, the two cops involved, James Comito Jr. and Matthew Thiel, were fired by the Chicago Police Board. The board said the cops used "egregiously violent conduct" and "conspired to cover up how Mearday received his injuries."

One week after the firing, three cops approached Mearday as he was sitting on his front steps. A number of witnesses have told the press they saw the cops jump Mearday and handcuff him. The cops took the young man to the same police station where Comito and Thiel had been assigned, searched him, and found nothing. The cops

claimed a later search found six pieces of crack cocaine in one of Mearday's shoes. Mearday was held overnight and charged with attacking the three cops who arrested him and possession of the cocaine.

Hundreds turned out for an emergency meeting that night at the offices of the Midwest Community Council, a Black community organization. Jakes organized funds from a number of churches and community groups to cover Mearday's bail, and he was released the next day.

William Nolan, president of the Fraternal Order of Police, told the press that Mearday's arrest proved the two fired cops had been victimized. Nolan called Mearday a "gangbanger" and "scumbag."

The cops who arrested Mearday claimed they did not know who he was. They told the press Mearday was wearing a sweatshirt with the hood pulled up, they were looking for a shooting suspect, and while Mearday was not a suspect, he looked suspicious. But the television footage of Mearday being brought into the police station made it clear the young man's jacket didn't have a hood.

Everyone in the neighborhood who came forward to say they saw the arrest backed up Mearday's description of what happened.

Alfonso López, a 23-year-old worker at a used car lot nearby, told the *Chicago Tribune* that Mearday waved the cops off and "the next thing you know, they jumped him. He was screaming, 'I'm Jeremiah, I'm Jeremiah Mearday.' And they were saying they didn't care. They were laughing."

The Committee Against Police Brutality held a press conference the day after the arrest to demand the federal Justice Department investigate this harassment and other charges of police brutality in Chicago.

That afternoon, March 20, cops began scouring Mearday's neighborhood passing out subpoenas and telling area residents they had to show up before a grand jury the next Monday, March 23, or go to jail. Mearday supporters called a rally for that Sunday night at the New Mount Pilgrim M.B. Church to organize to fight this effort to intimidate witnesses to the cop beating.

The featured speaker at that rally of 300 people was former Illinois appellate court judge Eugene Pincham, who volunteered to serve as attorney for all those who had been served a subpoena. The rally was the broadest since the Mearday fight began. All three of Chicago's Black congressmen attended, as well as dozens of area ministers and po-

litical figures. Another meeting was called for the following night.

A videotape was shown of the TV coverage reporting the cops' claim that they didn't recognize Mearday because his face was covered by a hood, followed by the footage of Mearday being brought into the cop station. The crowd chanted, "No hood! No hood!"

Monday morning Pincham appeared before Judge Thomas Fitzgerald flanked by 80 opponents of police brutality. The cops had to admit that the subpoenas they had served had no names on them and no identification of any grand jury for witnesses to appear before. The judge ruled that the subpoenas were invalid, and no one could be forced to appear before a grand jury without an opportunity to consult with Pincham first.

Two hundred people rallied at the Old St. Paul M.B. church to celebrate the victory and decided to organize a march in Mearday's neighborhood the next evening. More than 100 people joined that action. Many area residents marched and several shouted support from their porches.

The Committee Against Police Brutality held the tribunal on police violence at the Quality Inn near downtown March 29.

John Studer is a member of the United Steelworkers of America Local 1011.

Activists protest death penalty in Florida

BY GLEN SWANSON
AND RACHELE FRUIT

MIAMI — "The state of Florida is about to carry out the legal murder of four people in the eight-day period beginning March 23," stated Angel Lariscy, who represented the Socialist Workers Party at the Militant Labor Forum here March 20.

Judy Buenoano, Gerald Stano, Leo Jones, and Daniel Remeta are scheduled to be electrocuted in Rayford, the site of Florida's electric chair.

The State Senate unanimously endorsed continued use of the chair they affectionately refer to as "Old Sparky," on March 18. Last year, foot-high flames shot up from Pedro Medina's head as he was executed, causing months of debate about the use of the 75-year-old instrument of death. The state Supreme Court ruled 4-3 last fall that the chair could remain in use.

Most of the discussion in the media focused on what is the "best" method to kill death row prisoners. Florida is one of only six states in the nation that mandates electrocution as the method of execution.

"The unanimous decision of the state Senate and the ease with which it is dis-

cussed is part of the nationwide push to increase the use of the death penalty," Lariscy said. "These legal lynchings have nothing to do with fighting crime. They are meant to dehumanize the working class and to stifle resistance. Capital punishment is meted out to those without capital, while the crimes of capital go unpunished."

"From the workers who are maimed and killed from unsafe working conditions to the millions of children who die from preventable diseases because of lack of medical care, these are among the greatest crimes committed today," Lariscy added. "The class that wields economic and political power gets away with mass murder every day. As we sit here, the workers of Iraq continue to face the trigger-happy U.S. government."

Also speaking at the forum was Ray Taseff from the American Civil Liberties Union. He stated that although in the polls support for capital punishment seems high, "public support for the death penalty goes down once you start to probe it with questions like, 'Do you support the execution of juveniles or the mentally retarded?' Some politicians, however, such as U.S. Senator Bob Graham, have made their careers on the

death penalty." Both speakers pointed to U.S. president William Clinton's attendance at the Arkansas execution of Ricky Ray Rector, who was mentally incompetent, during Clinton's first presidential election campaign. "Fifty percent of all the executions carried out since 1976 have taken place since Clinton became president," Lariscy stated.

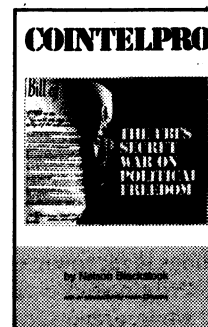
Taseff said that there is a debate now among progressive lawyers whether competent, zealous attorneys should be involved in death penalty litigation at all. "Does our involvement give credibility to the institution, does it feed the machinery of death, or is it our obligation to save even one life if we can?"

Lariscy said that the legal fights against the death penalty are important but that ultimately a political fight by the labor movement, which is the eventual target of the state's death apparatus, will be required to stop it. "The 1972 Supreme Court decision, which temporarily halted the use of the death penalty, came on the heels of the massive working class-based civil rights movement that exposed institutionalized racism in the U.S. and demanded a new respect for human life."

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ANC economic policy tackles racist legacy

Black workers, peasants in South Africa fight for better wages, working conditions

BY T.J. FIGUEROA

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — Having buried the apartheid white minority regime in 1994 after decades of mass struggle, the black majority conquered broad democratic, social, and political rights that are today being written into law by the country's first nonracial parliament. This has opened the way for workers and peasants to tackle the harsh social and economic conditions imposed on the black majority by the racist regime and the white capitalist ruling class under apartheid.

Blacks — Africans, Indians, and so-called Coloreds — constitute 86 percent of the population. Their daily lives remain worlds apart from those of whites living in South Africa. The poorest 20 percent of the population, virtually all black, receives only 1.5 percent of national income; the richest 10 percent, nearly all white, takes fully half.

Since the 1994 elections, the African National Congress-led government, in addition to drafting a democratic constitution, has advanced measures to alter the conditions of life for blacks in city and countryside. The ANC government's economic policy aims to advance a capitalist economy while using a large percentage of the national income for programs that address the basic needs of workers and peasants. Within this framework factors hindering progress in transforming this country, ridden with apartheid's legacy, are the existence of the old civil service, army, and police.

For example, in just nine months last year, 534 people died in police custody. And as the *Militant* went to press, South African news agencies reported that a number of top army generals from the old order might be fired for their role in producing a recent "intelligence" report. The bogus report — in the smear-campaign tradition of the apartheid military apparatus — alleged that senior ANC members in the military were planning a "coup" against the government. The ANC's economic policies are summarized in the government's Growth, Employment, and Redistribution (GEAR) program, which relies on many market-driven "solutions," puts sharp fiscal and political constraints on the government, and sometimes clashes with demands put forward by working people.

In a speech before an ANC Congress held at the end of 1997, ANC leader and South African president Nelson Mandela explained that although the parties that ran the government under apartheid are professing to support a course to build a nonracial South Africa and to address the legacy of apartheid rule, they have instead sought to impede every step made by the ANC government. He condemned these moves to retain the social relations and privilege of the white minority, and reaffirmed the ANC's determination to carry out its goal of uprooting what apartheid wrought on the country.

In his speech opening parliament February 6, Mandela highlighted a number of the government's initiatives to date, including:

- Water. About 12 million people still do not have access to potable water. "Last year, we increased the [new] supply of clean and accessible water from 700,000 to 1.3 million South Africans," Mandela said. Kader Asmal, minister of water affairs, reports that by the end of the year, the number will increase to 2 million.

- Telephone access and electricity. "From 250,000 in 1996, we are in line to make 421,000 [new] telephone connections this financial year," Mandela reported. There were 400,000 electricity connections in 1997, and today the country has reached a 58 percent electrification level. As recently

as 1994, the Central Statistical Service said that almost 60 percent of Africans used either paraffin or candles as their main source of lighting.

- Education. "Today, children starting their schooling can for the first time do so just as children — not as black piccanini or a white klein-baas [Afrikaans for 'little boss']," However, Mandela added, "we have only scratched at the surface of the legacy of apartheid education." Tens of thousands of students have taken to the streets in protests this year alone. Among them were 8,000 high school students organized by the Congress of South African Students who marched in Johannesburg in early February to protest a lack of textbooks. Thousands of university students waged protests in January and February demanding enrollment. University administrations refused to admit them unless they pay their fees, which most cannot not afford.

- Housing. Mandela reported that nearly 400,000 houses have either been finished or are under construction (approximately 236,000 have been completed), and that 700,000 subsidies have been granted. The government subsidy is granted to people earning less than 3,500 rands per month (R1=\$0.20), and ranges from R5,000 to R17,500. It is combined with bank loans. An estimated 1.2 million people have gained housing since 1994, when it was estimated that 7 million people were living in squatter shacks. New squatter camps are growing up, however, as rural working people move to cities in search of work.

- Health care. Five hundred new clinics were built or upgraded in 1997. Mandela said that by the end of this year, 90 percent of women with children would have access to free medical care. Some 43,000 deaths are reported annually from diarrhea alone, largely due to lack of access to clean water in rural areas and inadequate sanitation.

Basic services versus fiscal constraints

There are other visible changes in a country where for decades the majority of national income went to service the white minority and black areas were completely ignored. In Mamelodi township, outside Pretoria, many roads are being paved for the first time, clinics are being built, and sidewalks are being laid. The same is true in Soweto, the largest township in the country. Sanitation crews are picking up the garbage — sometimes. Metropolitan authorities complain that they don't have the funds to finance regular garbage collection, and as a result, heaps of trash still accumulate.

Measures such as these are crucial for drawing broader layers of workers and rural toilers into social and political life, who otherwise face economic conditions and social obstacles to employment, education,



Rally against job cuts in Cape Town, South Africa, in 1996.

Militant/Greg Rosenberg

and housing that mean that simply scratching out an existence consumes the vast majority of one's life.

While the lion's share of government spending goes toward providing basic services to the black majority, the government operates under difficult constraints. The largest item in the government budget is spending on education. The second is servicing debt incurred by the apartheid regime — 95 percent of which is owed to domestic banks, insurance companies, individual capitalists, and pension funds — to the tune of R40 billion per year in interest payments.

Mandela said the government would stick to GEAR's 4 percent deficit target, even though this "test(s) our capacity and will," but that "there is no other route to sustainable development." In order to do this, Mandela said that the central government would propose layoffs in the public service, the size of which under apartheid "had nothing to do with public service."

Despite earlier talk among some in the government about wholesale privatization of much of the heavily state-run economy — such as the steel industry, railroads, airlines, and petroleum refining — the government has of yet privatized only one company — Sun Air — and obtained private partners for South African Airways and the telephone company. A few other such measures are in the pipeline. "The issue of restructuring of state assets is not driven by ideology," said Mandela. "We shall privatize where necessary. But we shall also set up new state enterprises where market imperfections and failures... undermine social programs. Such is the case with elements of the liquid fuels industry and the servicing of housing construction, which has not received the optimum support from the banking industry."

The GEAR policy targets 6 percent growth and the annual creation of 400,000 jobs by year 2000. In the context of the current world economic crisis, deflationary pressures, and the unequal trade relations imposed by imperialist capital, these goals are proving difficult to achieve. Last year, for example, there was a net loss of 116,000 jobs and growth averaged only about 2 percent. While foreign investment in the stock and bond markets is growing, foreign direct investment is a different story. The Sept. 9, 1997, *Sunday Times* reported that "SA was a recipient of just \$330 million of the \$5.3 billion foreign direct investment that flowed into Africa last year."

Jobs and affirmative action

Mandela said a "jobs summit" later this year involving the government, unions, and employers would be a top priority. Latest figures put unemployment at 34 percent and rising.

At the initiative of the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM), a "gold summit" was

held February 26–27. The union demands action to prevent the mining houses' announced plans to lay off tens of thousands of miners by July. Last year, more than 50,000 miners were retrenched, and according to the NUM, 30,000 more were laid off in January 1998 alone.

The NUM called for, and won, a moratorium on retrenchments prior to the "gold summit." The union said it would initiate a national strike campaign if an agreement to protect jobs and provide retraining was not reached. The summit formed a "crisis committee" composed of the NUM, Chamber of Mines, and the government to regulate layoffs and a "social plan" to cushion the impact on mineworkers. A one-week moratorium on layoffs was agreed to. The ANC has introduced the Employment Equity bill into parliament, the first legislation aiming to enforce affirmative action on the job. The bill requires every company employing more than 49 people to meet with trade unions and/or employees to: prepare a profile of its workforce, lodge a summary affirmative action plan with the Labor Department, and report annually on the results. While the bill would not impose quotas, the meetings with the employers and workers are mandated to develop numerical targets and other measures for every workplace for employment of blacks, women, and disabled persons.

"Equitable representation" is required in all job categories and at all levels of employment, as are "measures to retain, train and develop" blacks, women, and disabled workers. The bill would impose fines on employers of up to R900,000 for contravention of the law.

Land reform

Land reform presents one of the greatest challenges to South Africa's democratic revolution. There are currently half a million subsistence farmers and 11 million landless working people in the countryside. More than 80 percent of agricultural land is owned by whites, much of this held in capitalist farming estates. The ANC's land reform plans fall broadly into three categories: strengthening of tenure rights for the rural populace; restitution of land (or compensation) to those who can prove their land was stolen under apartheid from 1913 on; and redistribution of 30 percent of agricultural land to landless peasants. These three goals were to be achieved by year 2000. It is widely acknowledged that progress on this has been slow.

Mandela reported that land tenure legislation passed in 1997 would help protect the rights of 6 million rural dwellers, many of them farm workers. The seventh restitution claim was only finalized in February. Seven hundred families whose Northern Cape land was expropriated under apartheid won their land back. Another 23,000 claims, most of them urban, still have not been processed. Meanwhile, Land Affairs and Agriculture Minister Derek Hanekom says the government will transfer about 500,000 hectares (1 ha = 2.47 acres) of agricultural land in 1998, benefiting about 50,000 households.

Current land redistribution policy, as distinct from land restitution, is based on a "willing-buyer, willing-seller" mechanism. The government provides peasants and other aspirant farmers a 20 percent subsidy for purchase of land from "willing" white farmers. But working people in rural areas find it very difficult to come up with the other 80 percent of the purchase price, as well as funds for seed, fertilizer and equipment.

An opinion column by Ray Goforth in the November/December 1997 issue of the ANC magazine *Mayibuye* drew attention to some of the failures of the land reform to date. "Currently, the Commission on Restitution of Land Rights estimates it could take up to 15 years to complete the adjudication of pending land claims affecting more than 1 million people." The article said only 2 percent of government land of the 30 percent target slated for redistribution had changed hands.

"Those who bore the brunt of apartheid oppression say that things are a lot better," Mandela told parliament. "But they also say, and are justified to say so, that what has been done is not enough.... The most critical challenge is whether we are succeeding as leaders to mobilize the people in actual practice to be their own liberators."

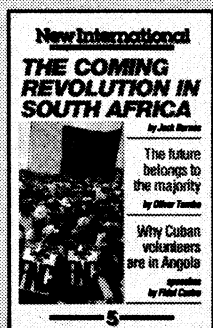
The Coming Revolution in South Africa

BY JACK BARNES

The one-person, one-vote elections in 1994, and the sweeping victory of the African National Congress, were historic steps in the democratic revolution in South Africa. This article explores the social character and roots of apartheid in South African capitalism and the tasks of the toilers in city and countryside in dismantling the legacy of social and economic inequality. Only among the most committed cadres of this ANC-led struggle, Barnes writes, can the working class begin forging a communist leadership. In *New International* no. 5. Also includes "Why Cuban Volunteers Are in Angola": 2 speeches by Fidel Castro. \$9.00

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'Socialism cannot be exported, but Cuba is a powerful example'

BY MICHEL PRAIRIE

MONTREAL — "Socialism can't be exported," said Aleida Guevara March. "But Cuba is a powerful example for all oppressed and exploited around the world. If Cuba succeeded, they can say to themselves, why not us? This is why U.S. imperialism remains so hostile to the Cuban revolution until this very day."

Guevara March is the daughter of Ernesto Che Guevara, who was a central leader of the Cuban revolution and one of the outstanding communist leaders of the 20th century. She kicked off a three-week tour of Canada with two very successful events in Montreal March 23.

In the evening, she spoke at a packed hall of some 200 at the University of Quebec in Montreal (UQAM). Another 200 people who were unable to get in stood in the corridor and filled an adjoining cafeteria to full capacity, where they viewed her presentation live on a closed-circuit television.

The same morning, she addressed a well-attended press conference at the Cuban consulate. Some 60 journalists, Cuba solidarity activists, representatives from trade unions and other organizations, Cubans living in Canada, and other guests attended the event. The Cuban ambassador to Canada, Bienvenido Garcia, and the Cuban general consul in Montreal, Gabriel Tiel, were also at hand.

Aleida Guevara March, 36, is a doctor who works as a pediatrician-allergist at the national hospital for children William Soler in Havana. She has participated in two internationalist missions.

The first was in Nicaragua during the "contra" dirty war organized, financed, and led by Washington to overthrow the workers' and farmers' government established through the 1979 revolution in that country.

The second was in Angola in the late 1980s, as part of the Cuban effort to help repel the invading forces of the South African apartheid regime. The combined Angolan, Cuban, and Namibian forces eventually inflicted a crushing defeat on Pretoria's racist armed forces in the battle

of Cuito Cuanavale in 1988 — exactly 10 years ago.

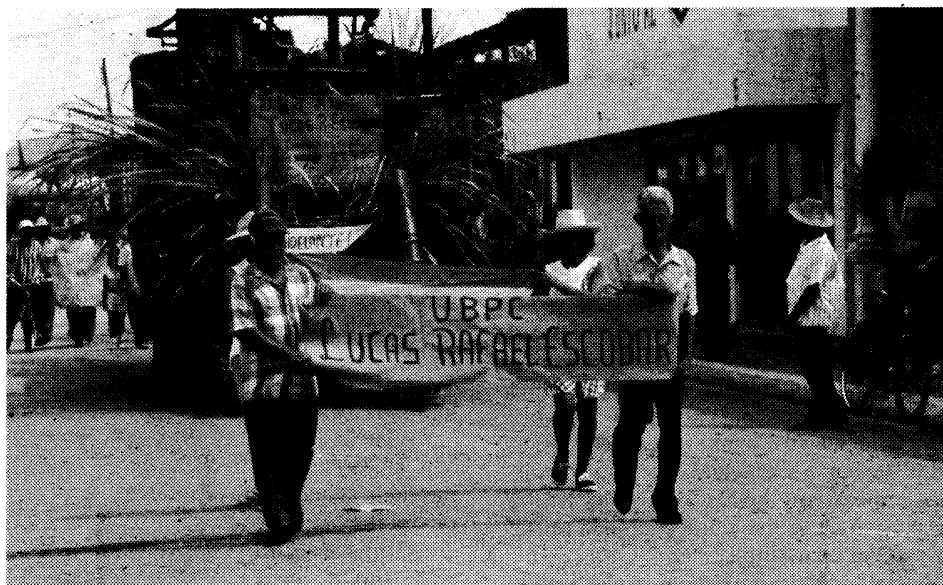
In both her talk and press conference, Guevara March spoke extensively about the major gains in health care and education made by the working people of revolutionary Cuba and the challenge they face under the impact of the more than 35-year-long embargo imposed on their country by the U.S. government.

"Cuba, before [the revolution of] 1959, was like Haiti and the Dominican Republic today," she explained. "It was a neocolony of the United States. All of the wealth extracted from the island — such as sugar and nickel — was sent to the U.S. to be processed and then sold back to us at very dear prices." This was completely changed when the revolution broke the domination and power of the big landowners and of imperialism on the island. The needs of working people began to be put first. "The capitalist system never solved anything in Cuba. Socialism did, even with the errors we made. That's why we are not going back to capitalism today."

"Today," said Guevara March, "there are teachers in all corners of the country. There are universities in each of the 14 provinces. The infant mortality rate is one of the lowest in the world, at 7.2 deaths for 1,000 live births."

In the press conference, she described the impact of the U.S. rulers' economic embargo on the Cuban people. "In order to buy powdered milk at affordable price and without pressure from the U.S., we have to go to the other side of the world. Because of that, we pay more for shipping and for all the middlemen we have to go through because Washington forbids any direct sale of U.S. or U.S.-patented products to Cuba. This is also true for pharmaceuticals. Trading directly and normally with the United States, Cuba could save up to \$400 million a year."

"Was Che right?" asked a journalist. He was referring to the military campaign Che Guevara led in 1966-67 in Bolivia against the U.S.-backed military dictatorship that ruled that country, which aimed at forging a



Militant: Top/Argiris Malapanis; Right/Martin Koppel
Capitalism "never solved anything in Cuba. Socialism did," said Aleida Guevara March, right, during tour in Canada. Above, workers from Lucas Rafael Escobar farm cooperative in Villa Clara, Cuba, march in 1997 pre-May Day rally. One of the first acts of the Cuban revolution was to expropriate the big landowners.



leadership capable of leading a continent-wide revolution. Che was captured in October 1967 by the Bolivian army and murdered in consultation with the CIA.

"There have been attempts at changes without arms in Latin America," said Guevara March. "They failed. There will be a major social explosion in Latin America. Look at Brazil; it is a very rich country, but only a minority can take advantage of it. Millions of children live in the streets. Many will come to the conclusion that it is better to die fighting than to live in these conditions."

At both events, people asked what will happen in Cuba when Fidel Castro dies. "Fidel represents the consolidation and the persistence of Cuba's historic revolutionary changes," she answered. "He is also a magnificent educator. But Cuba has got where it is today because there are other people willing to continue this struggle. I know some of them. For example, the Communist Party secretaries in the provinces of Matanzas, Cienfuegos, Santiago, and others are men and women of 35, 40, 45 years old. Some of them have been elected to the Central Committee and even to the Political Bureau."

Aleida Guevara March's presence in Montreal was widely covered by the local media, beginning with a front page inter-

view with a color photo in *La Presse*, the main French-language daily in Quebec.

Guevara March's tour will take her to Montreal, Quebec City and Trois-Rivières in Quebec; Halifax, Nova Scotia; Toronto and Ottawa in Ontario; Winnipeg, Manitoba; and Vancouver, British Columbia. The Quebec leg of her tour is organized by the Quebec Network of Cuba Solidarity Groups in collaboration with various student, solidarity and political groups and individuals, as well as the Cuban Institute of Friendship with the Peoples (ICAP) from Cuba.

One of the goals of her tour is to promote the First Canada-Cuba Friendship and Solidarity Conference to be held August 14-21 in Havana under the auspices of ICAP. This conference is open to "interested representatives of fraternal friendship and solidarity organizations, personalities, and the Canadian public."

Michel Prairie was a member of the Aleida Guevara March Tour Committee in Montreal.

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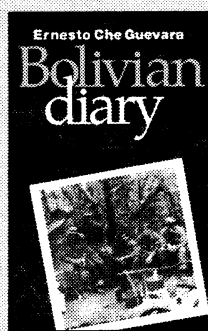
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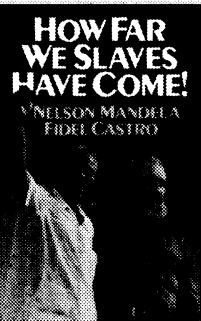
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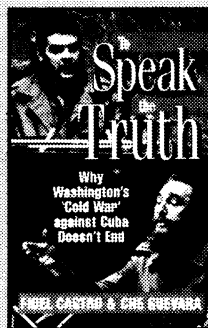
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'We'll give up our lives, but we won't give up Kosovo'

More than 100,000 march in Pristina

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

"We just came back from the demonstration. It was one of the largest in Pristina. Some people said it was up to 200,000. We marched at the center of the city. We demonstrated against the terror by the Serbian regime, for peace, and for independence of Kosovo." That's how Miljat Cakaj, a member of the Independent Students Union (UPS) at the University of Pristina, described the April 9 mass mobilization in Pristina, Kosovo's capital, in a telephone interview from that city the same day.

"We'll give up our lives, but we won't give up Kosovo," was among the main slogans, as in previous marches.

This was the largest protest for self-determination of the Albanian majority in Kosovo since early March, when tens of thousands poured into the streets of Pristina and other cities and towns of Kosovo in daily protests against assaults by special police forces Belgrade sent to the Drenica region. Eighty-five Albanians were killed then, a third of them children. Another dozen Albanians have been killed since that time in smaller-scale police sweeps throughout Kosovo.

Demonstrations for national rights of Albanians had subsided for a couple of weeks leading up to April 9. The police did not interfere with the latest action, Cakaj said, which was larger than the March 13 mobilization when 100,000 people rallied in the Dragodan neighborhood of Pristina.

At the same time, however, Belgrade has been boosting its special police forces in Kosovo according to Cakaj and reports from the Kosovo Information Center. The Serbian army has also reportedly deployed hundreds of additional troops at Kosovo's border with Albania and has held military exercises in the region.

The April 9 mobilization was sponsored by the Democratic League of Kosovo (LDK), the main political party among Albanians there. It took place two days after the parliament in Belgrade approved a proposal by Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic to hold a referendum on how to conduct negotiations with Albanians in Kosovo. The LDK and other political parties that predominate among Albanians in Kosovo have turned down talks with Belgrade and are demanding participation by "international mediators" in any negotiations. Holding such talks is one of the preconditions for lifting the arms embargo the United Nations Security Council imposed on Yugoslavia March 31, on Washington's initiative.

The U.S. government and other imperialist powers are working hard to exploit the turmoil in Kosovo to deepen their intervention in the Balkans under the guise of supporting the struggle for national rights of Albanians. For Washington this is tied to expanding NATO into Eastern and Central Europe, tightening the encirclement of Russia, and maintaining U.S. hegemony in Europe.

Polarization inside Serbia

"The United States has always... supported our enemies, and now it wants to destroy the Serbs," said Stevo Dragisic, a member of the Yugoslav parliament from the ultrarightist Serbian Radical Party. He spoke at the April 7 session of the assembly that approved the referendum on talks about Kosovo's status. "If we accept U.S. mediation we would be signing our capitulation."

The general secretary of Milosevic's Socialist Party, Gorica Gajevic, called on people in Serbia and Montenegro — the two republics that now comprise Yugoslavia — to reject international mediation in any talks on Kosovo at the April 23 referendum. Foreign powers are supporting Albanian "terrorists" who want to split the country, Gajevic said.

On March 24 the Milosevic regime had

invited Vojislav Seselj's Radical Party to form a coalition cabinet with the governing Socialist Party, showing a convergence between the SP and the rightists over Serbian nationalism. Seselj's group accepted the offer and was given 15 posts, including the ministries of information and privatization. The Radical Party had organized paramilitary squads that carried out "ethnic cleansing" during the 1992-95 war in Bosnia and is one of the loudest advocates of a "Greater Serbia."

These moves have been combined with a massive propaganda offensive through the state media in Belgrade painting Albanians as "terrorists" and pawns of foreign powers. Demonstrations by pro-government Serbian students supporting Belgrade's stance on the referendum have also been held across Serbia. These actions have also condemned an education agreement Belgrade signed with LDK leaders in March. If implemented, the accord will end the ban on instruction in the Albanian language at state high schools and the university system. These reactionary marches, though, have been small — in the thousands — despite great effort and resources by the government to show it has massive support.

"The calling of this referendum is another indication that the regime in Belgrade still intends to wage war on us," Cakaj stated. "But we will continue to resist." Cakaj said the Independents Students Union in Kosovo has kept in touch with a number of student leaders from the University of Belgrade who over the last two months have organized small delegations of Serbian students to join actions in Pristina supporting self-determination for Albanians. "These students, however, don't have enough support yet to organize demonstrations in Belgrade supporting our struggle," Cakaj said. "They are worried about provocations from the ultranationalists. We will continue our work with them to broaden that support inside Serbia."

UCK gains strength

At the same time, press reports indicate that the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK) has been gaining strength and recruits throughout Kosovo. The UCK was formed out of frustration with the ineffectiveness of the strategy of the LDK leadership, headed by Ibrahim Rugova, over the last few years. The LDK's course has consisted of dialogue and "passive resistance" to the authorities in



Belgrade and accommodation with U.S. imperialism. The Independent Students Union, one of the main organizations that has sponsored mass actions over the last year, launched street protests last fall over the objections of Rugova. Many students have expressed skepticism or outright disagreement with Rugova's reliance on "help" from the "international community" to win self-determination.

The Independent Students Union, though, has joined forces with the LDK, other political parties, the Independent Trade Union of Kosovo, and other organizations to denounce the ongoing brutality by Belgrade and demand independence.

The demand for independence gained overwhelming support following the brutal repression by Serbian police in the Drenica region in early March. Until then, many Albanians supported return to the status of autonomy Kosovo had.

Kosovo is a region that is formally part of the Republic of Serbia. Its population is 90 percent Albanians. Under the formerly federated Yugoslavia, Kosovo had autonomy and its own self-government that had been granted in 1974. The Milosevic regime revoked Kosovo's autonomous status in 1989 and imposed a state of emergency that has been in place ever since. Instruction in Albanian was banned at high schools and colleges and most Albanians were fired from state administration, health-care facilities, and factories for refusing to sign "loyalty oaths" to Serbia.

Imperialist intervention

In an April 3 press conference, Rugova praised the UN Security Council for adopting the arms embargo against Yugoslavia and welcomed the "energetic engagement of U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright." Rugova also described the UCK as small groups of "desperate people" who



March 13, 1998, demonstration of nearly 100,000 in Pristina, Kosovo's capital, demanding self-determination for Albanian majority in Kosovo (top). Sign in Albanian says, "We'll give up our lives, but we won't give up Kosovo," which has become common at recent mass mobilizations there. Agim Maliqi (above), farmer in upper Prekaz village in Drenica region of Kosovo, shows militant reporters his tractor that was broken up by Serb police during March 5 assault there that resulted in 54 deaths. "We are farmers. We are poor. We don't have guns," Maliqi said. "But we won't be intimidated into leaving our land."

may be encouraged or used by Belgrade's secret services.

The Milosevic regime has been exploiting Rugova's openly pro-Washington stance to garner popular support for its repressive measures against Albanians. In doing so, Belgrade is also trying to deflect criticism of its devaluation of the dinar, the Yugoslav currency, by pointing to the threat of additional sanctions by imperialist powers that are opposed by a big majority in Serbia. The April 1 devaluation of the dinar by 45 percent has already caused a rise in prices of gasoline and many other goods in Yugoslavia, which affect adversely working people for the most part.

For its part, Washington is seeking tougher sanctions against Belgrade and is laying the groundwork for deepening U.S. intervention in the Balkans. This includes

Continued on Page 14

Korean officials set to meet in Beijing

BY NAOMI CRAINE

Talks between officials of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) and the south Korean government are slated to take place in Beijing April 11. This is the first meeting between representatives of Pyongyang and Seoul in nearly four years.

The talks are at the initiative of the north Korean government. The regime in Seoul at first tried to move the site to the village of Panmunjom along the misnamed "Demilitarized Zone," where U.S. and south Korean troops enforce the partition of the Korean peninsula, but eventually backed down and agreed to meet in the Chinese capital.

Issues to be addressed in the talks include the DPRK's request for international assistance in the face of severe food shortages. A series of natural disasters, including two years of flooding followed by a drought, has had a devastating impact on agriculture in the north. The United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization stated in early March that north Korean food reserves were close to exhaustion, and international aid would be needed until this fall's harvest, confirming reports from DPRK agencies.

Since the food crisis began, Washington and Seoul have openly worked to undermine the DPRK's request for assistance.

South Korean officials assert that their main aim in the talks will be to push for measures to reunite the millions of families who have been separated for more than 50 years — since the 1945 forced division of Korea leading into the U.S.-led war against the Korean people in 1950-53. Although Seoul tries to place the blame for this continued division on the DPRK, it is the south Korean government that maintains laws banning any unauthorized contact by Koreans from the south with those in the north. Seoul has jailed many supporters of Korean reunification for such contacts, even when they took place in third countries.

Last month, projected talks involving Washington, the two governments on the Korean peninsula, and Beijing were scrapped because of the U.S. government's refusal to place discussion of the withdrawal of U.S. troops from Korea on the agenda, as requested by the DPRK. Washington maintains a force of 37,000 soldiers and massive weaponry in south Korea and the surrounding waters.

As part of a series of new armaments purchases, the Seoul regime has just ordered two tactical trainers from the U.S. arms maker Raytheon Systems Co. These are to be used in training officers for commanding naval warfare.

A commentary in the March 27 issue of *Rodong Sinmun*, the paper of the Workers Party of Korea, noted that U.S. defense department and military officials have repeatedly announced their intent to keep the U.S. troops in south Korea. "What the United States seeks in this is to maintain its military prerogative of supreme command and colonial domination over south Korea for an indefinite period, start a military adventure against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, and thus realize its Korea strategy with strength," the paper stated. "Reinforcing its armed forces in south Korea, the U.S. recently reorganized its Eighth Army, the nucleus of the forces, into a field army system...."

"As long as the U.S. continues war moves against the DPRK, leaving its troops in south Korea, the abnormal hostile relations between the DPRK and the United States cannot be removed."

'Family values' drive in New Zealand is attack on social gains

BY FELICITY COGGAN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Prime Minister Jennifer Shipley used the occasion of the opening of parliament in Wellington February 17 to announce her government's intentions to push ahead with new attacks on the social wage. This followed her announcement the previous day that New Zealand military forces would join Washington's military build up against Iraq.

A centerpiece of Shipley's February 17 speech was the launching of a proposed "Code of Social and Family Responsibility" in the form of a questionnaire to be posted to all New Zealand households, with the results supposedly to be collated for a report to the government in late July.

The code defines 11 "key issues" that the government claims are of concern to "New Zealanders," and asserts an "expectation" for each area. It poses several leading questions for respondents to answer, and asks whether the code should be passed into law, or adopted as a policy guide for government.

The central theme of the code is that working people are to blame for the social crisis bred by capitalism, and that the solution is for individual workers and their families, not the government, to take responsibility for meeting social needs.

With questions like: "What more can the government do to encourage beneficiaries into work?" and "Should the courts have the power to make parents set curfews or attend parenting courses?" the form is being used by the government to establish a mandate for attacks on social and democratic rights.

One of the supposed expectations presented is that "People will do all they can to keep themselves physically and mentally healthy," because "society also pays when we don't take care of ourselves. There are huge demands on our health system." The implication is that working people are to blame for the declining availability of health care. In a similar vein, another expectation states, "People will take responsibility for developing the skills and knowledge they need to help them get a job, or take on a new job."

A particular target throughout the code is working people who receive unemployment, sickness, and single parent benefits. In the section "Managing Money," it says, "Most people manage their money well. But there are some who don't.... People who budget well have greater control of their lives. They are less dependent on other people, including taxpayers." Then it asks, "If a person on a benefit keeps applying for special needs grants, but refuses budget advice, should their benefit be paid through a money manager until the problem is sorted out?"

Two-decade offensive on social gains

The "Code of Social and Family Responsibility" is the latest initiative in a two-decade offensive by National Party and Labour Party governments to make inroads into the social gains of working people. This has included measures to reduce access to public health care, cut spending on education, and lower benefits paid to the unemployed, the sick and disabled, single parents, and the elderly.

Following the formation of the National-New Zealand First coalition government in December 1996, rightist New Zealand First

leader Winston Peters, the deputy prime minister and treasurer, said that the coalition government would be distinguished by the prominence it gave the value of self-reliance and the need to shift people "from state dependence to independence," according to the *New Zealand Herald*. A number of proposals, including introducing a "work for the dole" scheme, were written into the coalition agreement between the two parties.

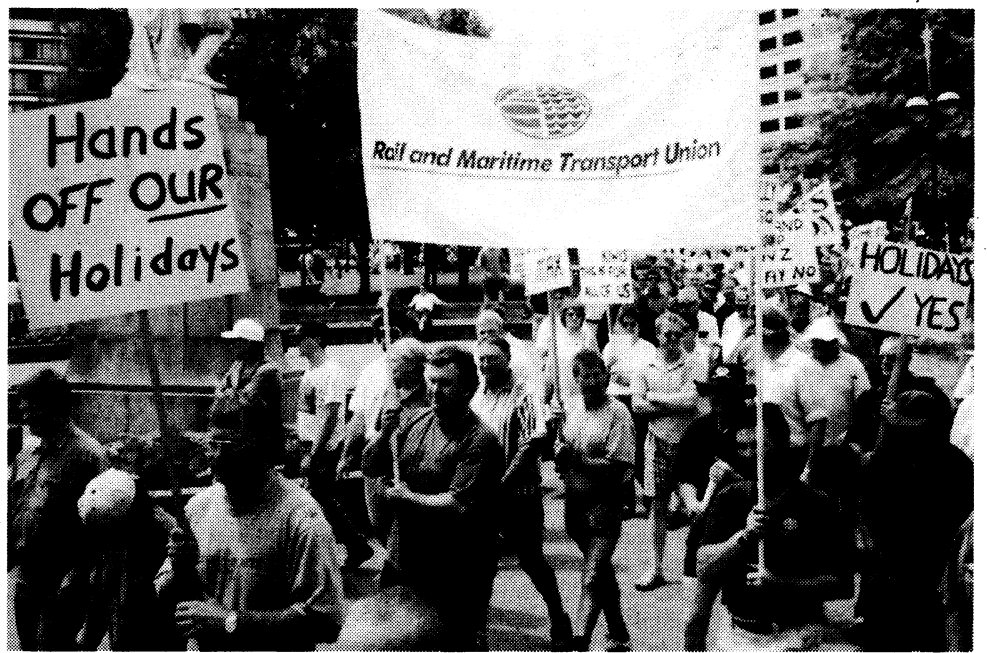
In March 1997 the government hosted a "Beyond Dependency" conference to promote schemes to cut social benefits. One example presented was the "Wisconsin Works" program in the U.S. state of Wisconsin, which includes time limits for benefits, work for the dole schemes, and requiring single mothers to seek work when their infants are 12 weeks old.

The "Code of Social and Family Responsibility" was first proposed by Peters in his June 1997 budget. At that time it was to apply to beneficiaries only, as a "contract" between them and the "taxpayer."

"If you are a beneficiary who has certain obligations that you are not fulfilling, then we've got a very clear message to you: the taxpayer expects better and we're going to get better out of you," Peters said. The code was later widened to include all New Zealand residents. However, who its central targets are — working people on benefits, women, and Maori — was made clear by Peters in a speech to the Maori Council in March. He said that welfare dependency had seen many Maori lose hope, so they no longer try for a job or dream of a higher education. "The code of responsibility is about breaking that cycle. We need to encourage them to work hard, to get a good education, to build a future and attain a higher standard of living."

The replacement of National Party prime minister James Bolger by Jennifer Shipley last December was greeted in ruling circles as an opportunity to take further steps to shore up capitalist profits and stability, in particular by cutting government spending on social services. Many big-business voices had criticized the Bolger-led government for stalling on this course. The Bolger government had faced a series of protests against the impact of cuts in health and education spending and its plans to gut workers' holiday entitlements.

When she took over as prime minister on December 8 last year, Shipley stated in an interview in the *New Zealand Herald* that a fresh attack on "welfarism" was at the top of her agenda. Five days later, she an-



Militant/Annalucia Vermunt

Thousands of workers protest New Zealand government's attack on holidays December 17. The move is part of a broader assault on entitlements won through struggle.

nounced a 70 percent increase in the levies paid by workers towards government-funded accident compensation, and a 10 percent decrease in employer contributions. Prominent business figures have issued strong reminders to Shipley to stay on this course. This stance is echoed by the International Monetary Fund, which in a January report urged the government to trim its spending program and cut expenditure on superannuation (retirement pensions) and other benefits, particularly in light of the Asian currency crisis.

The release of the "Code of Social and Family Responsibility" coincides with other government moves against social benefits. These include introducing more work testing, reducing higher-paid benefits to the level of the lower-paid unemployment benefit, and combining the government Employment Service, which registers unemployment, with Income Support, which pays benefits in order to better police unemployed workers.

Downturn in New Zealand economy

These moves come at a time when the New Zealand economy is heading into a downturn, with declining business confidence and a wave of factory and retail store closures largely as a result of the Asian crisis. Official unemployment stands at 6.7 percent of the workforce. Twenty-one percent of the working-age population receives benefits, while 30 percent of children live in families that depend on such benefits for income.

Shipley uses this fact to claim that "the community is crying out for 'pegs in the ground' in terms of what is fair, what can reasonably be expected from each of us and from government on behalf of all taxpayers." In fact, the government cutbacks in entitlements already in place have been reflected in a significant slowing of growth in numbers on benefits. And payment levels

have only just caught up with the amounts paid before the welfare cuts imposed by the National government in 1991, not allowing for inflation.

The combined impact of the economic crisis and benefit cuts was reflected in an April 1996 study, which showed that 20.5 percent of the New Zealand population lives below a poverty line of NZ\$16,891 a year for two adults and one child. (NZ\$1.00 = US\$0.56) The incidence of poverty was two and a half times higher among Maori and three and a half times higher among Pacific Islanders.

Promotion of "family values" and the "work ethic" has been a theme of spokespeople from both coalition parties in promoting the code. Speaking in Wellington March 26, Shipley called for the reintroduction of religion in state schools and praised those that were already breaching the law. Secular education had "created an amoral environment," she said. Public education in New Zealand has been secular since 1877.

Rightist voices have been emboldened in this atmosphere. One rightist group, Catholic Action, has been organizing weekly protests outside the newly opened national Museum in Wellington to demand that two art works on display, that it describes as "blasphemous," be banned. The controversy has fueled public debate on censorship.

The opposition Labour party has stated its opposition to the code. However, last year it issued a warning to working people to lower their expectations of a Labour government if elected, explaining that it was cutting back its spending plans announced at the last election. The Alliance party and the Council of Trade Unions have also criticized the code, while the right-wing party ACT endorses it, though saying it does not go far enough.

Felicity Coggan is a member of the Engineers Union in Auckland.

Chilean immigrants fight deportation in Canada

BY CARLOS CATALAN

MONTREAL — "I don't feel like an immigrant.... In coming here we are only taking back what has been stolen from us a thousand and one times for centuries," said René González, speaking at a Militant Labor Forum here titled, "No More Deportations: Solidarity with Chilean Hunger Strikers." González had been part of a hunger strike here to underline the threat of immediate deportation of more than 160 families from Chile who have been denied political refugee status by Canadian immigration authorities. The Canadian government has denied a record number of refugee claims in the last year.

The strike was supported by the "No to Indifference" committee, which organized a number of actions in support of the hunger strikers. Support was strongest among young people. Valentina Mardones, an 18-year-old student who took part in a 23-hour occupation of the Quebec Ministry of International Relations on March 18, told the *Militant*, "Fifteen people participated in the occupation including students from the University of Montreal, the University of Quebec in Montreal, and Vieux-Montreal College. In organizing this action we wanted to protest the policies of the Canadian government towards the Chilean refugees."

Antoine Letellier, a 19-year-old student at the University of Montreal, active in or-

ganizing the latest wave of student actions here in Quebec, added his comments. "I think that the Canadian government is hypocritical," Letellier said. "For as long as we can't change Canada's role in Chile and as long as things haven't changed for Chile, I think that they [the refugees] should all have the right to stay here and we should be ready to welcome those who would like to come."

The hunger strikers ended their 38-day fast March 24, with the promise that a support committee, including Roman Catholic Church Cardinal Jean-Claude Turcotte and Gérard Larose, President of the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN), would survey their cases as they are submitted to immigration procedures. Throughout the strike Federal Immigration Minister Lucienne Robillard has denied any special treatment for political refugees from Chile. Immigration official Eric Tetrault immediately reaffirmed this policy at the end of the hunger strike, declaring, "No special status is accorded to the Chileans."

This fight has put a sharper focus on Canada's repressive immigration policy, especially the situation for Chileans. The Canadian government has refused political refugee status to 90 percent of the more than 5,000 Chileans who have requested it since 1989, when the dictatorship formally ended there. More than 2,500 of these people have already been forced to leave Canada.

Chile has always been an important area of investment for Canadian capitalists. Since the Canadian government signed a free trade accord with Santiago last year, Canadian bosses have become the second-largest foreign investors, with \$8.4 billion in total investment and \$4.8 billion in mining interests alone. Pedro Segura, a member of the No to Indifference committee, commented, "It's clear that the Canadian government puts profits before the refugees, before human beings."

This fight comes as Ottawa prepares to further restrict immigration rights in Canada. Proposals being considered include barring immigrants who do not speak English or French, those who have not completed two years of post-secondary education, or are more than 45 years old. Refugee claims would become the responsibility of Immigration Department officials, further limiting rights to appeal.

The conclusion of the Militant Labor Forum centered on the need to keep up the fight. Members of the No to Indifference committee explained their willingness to speak to unions, schools, and elsewhere. Invitations and messages of support can be extended to the Committee by phone: (514) 995-0968, or fax: (514) 527-9609.

John Riddell from Toronto contributed to this article.

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Nurses strike against union busting in N.Y.

BY RUTH NEBBIA

BROOKLYN, New York — "No Contract, No Real Nurses," "Until they talk, we will walk. If they don't talk, we will walk," and "We care for patients, who cares for us?" chanted 50 of the more than 600 nurses on strike against the Maimonides Medical Center.

Members of the New York State Nurses Association, who have been negotiating for a new contract since October, walked out March 30. Maimonides is Brooklyn's second-largest hospital.

Joanne Palmorico, 42 and a nurse at Maimonides for 18 years, explained that the biggest issue of the strike is the proposed cut of long-term medical care the nurses won during their last contract, and for which they gave up six hours of sick leave.

"We're supposed to provide care but they don't want to give us care," she said. Maimonides also "wants to float nurses from one department to another, but a nurse from one area may not be familiar in treating patients with illnesses in another area of the hospital."

"The nurses are trying to stand together," Palmorico said, "because if they can do it here, they can do it elsewhere. Just because we are women doesn't mean they can mess around with us."

Pepi Hofman, 46 and an orthopedic nurse for 20 years, agreed. She said that nurses specialize in areas of care, and floating them

could be detrimental to the patients.

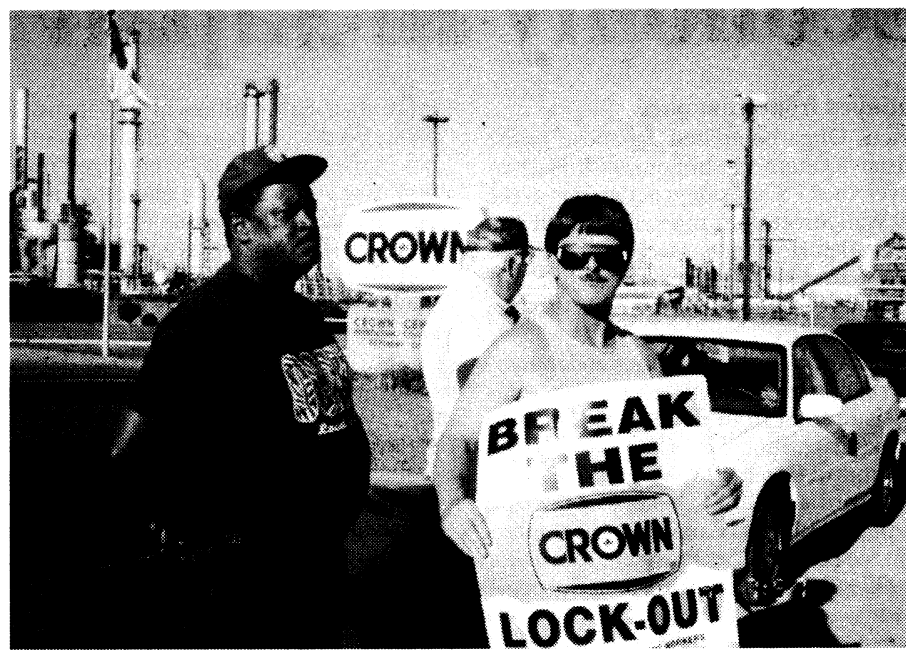
"Other unions have come out to support us," said Carmen Lazarini, 50, who works in the medical unit. "The teachers came out today, [Hospital Workers Local] 1199, Lynch College nurses, nurses from Brooklyn Hospital and from other New York hospitals, and other unions."

Among the issues in the contract dispute are cuts in uniform allowance and requiring nurses to pay more for employee parking. "This makes it harder for many nurses," explained Lazarini, who has 17 years at Maimonides, "because many are single with children."

"We're not asking for anything unfair, otherwise other unions would not back us," Lazarini told the *Militant*. "We have been without a raise for four years and they are asking for two more years without a raise."

"We want a contract," stated Rose Apura, 34 and a nurse in the Intensive Care Unit. She emphasized that the main concern for the nurses is the proposed cuts in medical benefits.

Maimonides was prepared to break the strike, busing in replacement nurses from the first day. The hospital administration has also accused nurses of sabotaging some of the equipment. "They say we damaged some equipment," one nurse who wished not to be identified told the *Militant*, "but we reported that equipment damaged months ago."



Militant/Jerry Freiwirth

Some of the 200 refinery workers who continue their weekly picket at Crown Central Petroleum outside of Houston. Two years ago Crown locked out 252 workers belonging to the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers union Local 4-227, when negotiations deadlocked over management's insistence on gutting seniority and replacing union workers with temporary contract labor. Last January Crown filed a civil lawsuit against 14 operators, a union official, and the local union, charging them with more than 400 acts of sabotage and conspiracy to commit sabotage. The unionists have initiated open meetings to plan a public defense of these workers and their union.

At the picket line, strikers handed out a flier to passersby asking the backing of the community, and many cars honked in support.

Representatives of the Teamsters who

drive for UPS are reported to have stopped by with a \$60 donation to the strike fund, which was then used to buy pizzas for the nurses on the line.

"We are impressed and inspired by your courage to do what is necessary, in spite of the difficulty of making a decision such as you did," reads a letter of support from the Committee of Interns and Residents passed out at the picket line. "Your strike sends a strong message throughout the healthcare community that employees cannot be downsized, discarded, and disregarded as hospitals strive to improve their financial position in the 'market.'"

The strikers are planning a solidarity rally for April 14.

Ruth Nebbia is a member of United Transportation Union Local 1447.

'Militant' supporters discuss contract fight with UAW members at Case Corp.

BY AMANDA ULMAN AND RAY PARSONS

EAST MOLINE, Illinois — A team of *Militant* supporters from Chicago and Des Moines discussed strike preparations and contract issues with members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) at Case Corp. here April 4. That day, they sold 31 copies of the *Militant* and one subscription to the unionists, who have been working without a contract since March 29.

Some 3,300 workers are affected at five Case plants in Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, and Minnesota. Case, a major builder of farm and construction equipment, is seeking increased mandatory overtime and cuts in retirement benefits.

Five plant gate sales of the socialist newsweekly have been organized in East Moline and Burlington, Iowa, since March 3. UAW members in these plants have purchased three subscriptions and 130 copies of the *Militant*.

First time and repeat buyers of the *Militant* have been attracted to coverage of the fight of the UAW at Caterpillar and growing labor struggles internationally. In addition, coverage of broader struggles of work-

ing people, like the independence fight of Albanians in Kosovo, and of the Québécois in Canada are of interest. One worker explained his reason for buying the socialist newsweekly was to see where it stood on U.S. president William Clinton's visit to South Africa.

Through these plant gate sales, *Militant* sales people have learned more about solidarity actions organized in recent weeks.

According to the Local 1304 newsletter *Union Voice*, an informational meeting and strike vote was held March 15. The East Moline unionists voted 98.6 percent in favor of striking if necessary, and the overall vote of all locals was 99.2 percent.

Since early March UAW Local 1304 in East Moline has organized solidarity rallies every Thursday. At times, the union has held four meetings a day to reach production workers on all three shifts, and some 900 local members have turned out the last two Thursdays. With a total of 1,300 workers in the plant; 1,160 are members of Local 1304, and two other UAW locals represent clerical and skilled trades workers.

Unionists have used the rallies to raise questions about their rights while working

without a contract.

Amanda Ulman is a member of UAW Local 450 and Ray Parsons is a member of UAW Local 310 in Des Moines, Iowa.

Workers push back Case's contract demands at UK plant

BY PAUL GALLOWAY

MANCHESTER, England — At a mass meeting in early March, shop stewards of the Amalgamated Engineering Electrical Workers Union (AEEU) reported they were deadlocked in negotiations at the factory formerly known as Fernec, which is now owned by Case Corp., a U.S.-based manufacturer of heavy construction equipment.

Case had offered a 3.8 percent pay raise, combined with the introduction of annualized hours. The unions' demand had been for a "substantial" pay increase. "Annualized hours" means the company can impose mandatory overtime without extra pay during part of the year, and time off when orders are slack. The workers rejected this demand and voted to call in the union's district official, taking the negotiations to a higher level.

At a second mass meeting March 13, union officials announced that Case has withdrawn the demand to introduce annualized hours, but reduced the pay offer slightly to 3.5 percent. The union members voted to accept this settlement, which also included increased pensions. Earlier, white-collar staff had been granted a "holiday" from contributing to the pension fund because the company's stock prices are high, including the prices of shares bought by the pension fund with the workers' and company's contributions.

The bosses made clear that they intend to keep coming back to the table with their demands around annualized hours of work, as they probed in the negotiations. Case also indicated its plan to begin hiring temporary workers from an employment agency. Only one agency worker was hired during the period of the negotiations. The 500 workers at the plant currently include permanent workers and temporary workers directly hired by Case. The AEEU agreement with the boss states that only 25 percent of the

workforce at any time can be made up of temporary workers; above that management must grant permanent contracts.

There is real interest among workers here in the struggles of workers at other plants owned by Case. After hearing about the contract fight by United Auto Workers members in the United States, AEEU shop steward Owen Sheldon, said, "It would be great if workers at the Case plant in Iowa got to hear about what was going on in Manchester."

Case workers in Manchester are also discussing — and trying to learn more about — the struggle of workers at another Case-owned plant, Crappé, in Paris. Management here is continually trying to pit workers at the Case plants in Britain against those in France.

Paul Galloway works at Case-Fernec and is a member of the AEEU.

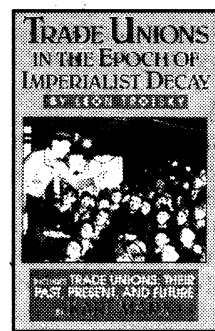
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Economy in Japan

Continued from front page

cession, Ohga compared Japanese prime minister Ryutaro Hashimoto with Herbert Hoover, the U.S. president at the start of the 1929 Wall Street stock market crash. "If you look at what Hoover was saying at the time of the great depression and what Mr. Hashimoto is saying at the moment, they are very similar."

Other world capitalist figures and mouthpieces expressed similar apprehensions. "Japan is suffering from the debt deflation of the kind that afflicted the US in the 1930s," the editors of London's *Financial Times* asserted April 4. "But the history of the past 18 months in Japan bears a closer comparison to the period under President Roosevelt in 1937 when industrial production collapsed."

Japan has the world's second-largest Gross Domestic Product, as well as the second-highest exports of goods and services behind the United States.

This would make it hard for the U.S. rulers and their rivals in Europe to avoid a profit squeeze if the crisis deepens in Tokyo's financial system. A financial collapse in Japan, whose economy totals \$5 trillion, would have a sharp impact on the United States and the rest of the world.

The day after the Sony chairman made his comments, the international credit rating agency Moody's Investor's Service lowered its "view" of Japan's sovereign debt from "stable" to "negative." Last November, the investment bank Yamaichi collapsed less than three weeks after Moody's warned it was considering downgrading Japan's fourth-largest securities company to "junk bond" status.

Deepening banking crisis

The shift in Moody's "view" of Japanese debt falls short of a formal debt-rating review. Nevertheless, it could raise borrowing costs for Japanese banks, deepening the crisis for these institutions that already hold

more than \$600 billion in bad loans. The banks invested hundreds of billions of dollars in speculative loans to build golf resorts, high-rise office towers, and other real estate ventures dating back to the 1980s, which remain on the books as assets. Vastly inflated commercial real estate prices plummeted in the late 1980s and early 1990s, sending the economy into a decline.

The Japanese capitalists could face defaults on the loans they extended throughout Asia due to the wave of currency devaluations that was triggered when the government of Thailand released the baht's peg to the U.S. dollar last July. The currency devaluations make it more difficult for companies to pay back loans and the compounded interest.

Japan's top 19 international bank wrote off a record \$76.7 billion in bad loans, according to a survey published by *Nihon Keizai*, Japan's major financial newspaper. The Industrial Bank of Japan, one of the nation's largest and most prestigious banks, announced April 2 that it planned to write off \$4.7 billion of "problem" loans for the fiscal year — more than 50 percent higher than previously projected. The Bank of Tokyo-Mitsubishi Ltd. said it expects to lose \$10.1 billion from bad loans for the same period.

The Japanese rulers have been derided by their rivals in Washington and Europe for lacking a decisive course of action to resolve the crisis. "Japan has entered its first economy-shrinking recession for almost 25 years; and the latest news suggests that no one in authority is capable of doing anything about it," opined the editors of the March 21 *Economist* of London.

"You simply can't stay with a strategy that is clearly not appropriate to the times and expect it to get the results that are needed for the country," said U.S. president William Clinton at an April 3 news conference.

"There is a growing sense that [Tokyo is] not up to the task, that they do not under-

Indonesian gov't bans students from politics



After months of student protests calling for the ouster of Indonesian president Suharto, like March 19 action in Surabaya above, Education Minister Wiranto Arismunandar said Jakarta would call on state-run universities to enforce a ban on campus political activity. A former rector at Bandung Institute for Technology, Arismunandar expelled 12 students and suspended 61 who participated in recent demonstrations. Meanwhile, some 500 people lined up outside Bank Danamon, after Jakarta suspended seven banks and put seven more under government control. The move is aimed at attempting to halt the downward spiral of that country's economy in the past nine months.

stand the gravity of the situation for Japan and the rest of the world," another White House official chimed in.

The Clinton administration has been squeezing Tokyo to pry open its financial markets for U.S. investors who seek to buy up its ailing financial institutions and other enterprises. Tokyo's "Big Bang" program of deregulations and reduced control over foreign investments, which officially began April 1, is slated to open \$10 trillion of privately held investment capital in Japan to foreign investors. Merrill Lynch, the U.S.

investment bank, is already probing to see if it can purchase the failed Yamaichi brokerage firm and "seriously explore opportunities available in Japan."

Meanwhile, 1,500 pilots at the All Nippon Airways, Japan's second-largest airline, went on strike April 6, to protest a pay cut the company tried to impose the previous week. The pilots say the earliest they would return to work was April 9, the day that pilots at the Japan Airlines Company, the country's largest airline, and the Japan Air System Company plan to strike.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

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Puerto Rico: 100 Years of U.S. Colonialism. Speakers: Iván Camilli Rivera, Puerto Rican pro-independence movement activist, political cartoonist for *Claridad*. Mark Friedman, Socialist Workers Party, member of International Association of Machinists. Video on Puerto Rican prisoners in U.S. jails. Fri., April 17, 7:30 p.m. 2546 W. Pico Blvd. Donation \$4. Tel: (213) 380-9460.

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Report Back from International Women's Solidarity Conference in Havana, Cuba. Panel discussion. Fri., May 1, 7:30 p.m. 1906 South Street (at 19th). Donation \$4. Tel: (215) 546-8218.

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Cuba in 1998: Workers and Farmers in Power Confront the World Capitalist Crisis. Speaker: Rosa Garmendía, Socialist Workers Party, member of United Food and Commercial Workers Union. Special event to benefit the Militant Fund.

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Christchurch: 199 High St. Postal address: P.O. Box 22-530. Tel: (3) 365-6055. Compuserve: 100250,1511

SWEDEN

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

Plain-talk dep't — "Canberra, Australia (AP) — Australia's High Court ruled that laws unfavorable to Aborigines — or any other race — are still constitutional. The de-



Harry Ring

cision is expected to strengthen government plans to restrict Aboriginal rights."

Flunked loyalty test — Michael

Cameron was suspended for a day at Greenbrier High in Evans, Georgia. Evans is east of Atlanta, headquarters of Coca Cola. The principal said Cameron had been rude and insulting during Coke Day. When students formed the word Coke for a picture, Cameron ruined it by taking off his jacket, revealing a shirt-pocket logo, "Pepsi."

Well managed care — The top dogs at leading HMOs enjoyed an average take of \$6 million plus in 1996.

Spring house cleaning — "Tokyo (AP) — Japan's 19 biggest banks will clean up their balance

sheets by writing off a record 10.2 trillion yen (\$76.7 billion) in bad loans, a leading financial daily reported. The amount is almost 2.5 trillion higher than previously expected."

Nice, huh? — The California Medical Assistance Commission meets twice a month for two to three hours, approving state health care contracts. As political appointees, the members draw wages identical to state legislators. Their annual pay will now swell from \$78,000 to \$99,000, matching the increase just granted the lawmakers.

...meanwhile — California state

workers got a 3percent increase in 1995. Since then, nothing.

Breathe heavy — A *Family Circle* article describes widespread company spying on employees — checking phone calls, e-mail, voice mail, etc. Federal law supposedly bars tapping employee's personal calls. But there's also a court ruling that employers can listen in for up to 10 minutes to determine if it's really a personal call.

Capitalist realism — For May Day, Barney's, the upscale clothier, is considering a window display featuring a \$13 hardcover edition of the *Communist Manifesto*, along with

a red lipstick, preferably with a Russian-sounding name, as "conceptual art." If the concept doesn't grab you, check out the Pathfinder Press pamphlet. No lipstick, but a valuable introduction by Leon Trotsky. \$3.95.

Workers' champions — It will cost \$1 million to redo the official residence of Lord Irvine, the British Labour government's new speaker of the House of Lords. (Twin oak beds, 19th century style; \$25,000. Hand-woven wallpaper, etc.) But His Lordship won't be splurging on art. Instead, 87 works will be "borrowed" from Scottish museums.

Cuba's defeat of Yankee attack at Playa Girón

Below we print excerpts from "Angola: African Girón, April 19, 1976" in *Fidel Castro Speeches: Cuba's Internationalist Foreign Policy, 1975-80*. This speech was given in commemoration of the 15th anniversary of the Cuban victory at the Bay of Pigs (Playa Girón). On April 17, 1961, 1,500 U.S.-based Cuban-born mercenaries invaded Cuba at the Bay of Pigs on the southern coast. The action, organized by Washington, aimed to establish a "provisional government" to appeal for direct U.S. intervention. However, the invaders were defeated within 72 hours by Cuba's militia and the Revolutionary Armed Forces. On April 19, the last invaders surrendered.

BOOK OF THE WEEK

African Girón refers to the battle on March 27, 1976, in which the apartheid South African army was pushed out of Angola. Shortly before Angola's independence from Portuguese colonial rule was to be formally celebrated on Nov. 11, 1975, the country's new government was attacked by South African and Zairian troops. After the Angolan government requested aid, Cuba sent more than 300,000 volunteer troops. Later, in 1988 combined Cuban, Angolan, and Namibian liberation forces dealt a decisive military defeat to South Africa's invading troops at Cuito Cuanavale in southern Angola. Copyright © 1981 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted with permission.

BY FIDEL CASTRO

Precisely fifteen years ago, at this very hour, you could still hear the echoes of the last shots of the battle that smashed one of Yankee imperialism's most sinister and traitorous actions against a Latin American people. Girón went down in history as the first defeat of Yankee imperialism on this continent.

It would be useless to try to find the slightest ethical principle in a system whose every act is characterized by exploitation, plunder, deceit, and crime....

By these treacherous means, it seized the wealth of all America, imposed a relentless system of exploitation on our peoples, and initiated neocolonialist methods of domination in this continent, for the first time ever in the world.

Everything concerning the Girón episode was treacherous, a flagrant violation of international law, a perfidy, and a crime. The sinister CIA invested tens of millions of

dollars to recruit, train, and equip mercenaries: landowners, bourgeois elements, traitors, war criminals, drug addicts, common criminals, and lumpen. Its strategy was accompanied by hair-raising plans to assassinate leaders of the Cuban revolution, in which they did not hesitate to use known Mafia leaders, poison, bacteria, explosives, and the most refined criminal methods. Beforehand, at every hour of the day and night, in planes or boats, scores of agents and thousands of arms were systematically brought in. They established their training bases in one Central American state and the embarkation points and air bases in another.

One quiet, clear dawn, on April 15, 1961, Yankee bombers bearing Cuban insignia attacked our air bases where a few rickety old planes, with barely half a dozen pilots, constituted our air forces. With unparalleled cynicism, the United States representative declared in the United Nations that those planes were part of our own air force that had rebelled....

The United States has established throughout the world a system of military pacts, bases of aggression, centers of corruption, bribery, subversive propaganda and espionage, overt or covert actions, terror, and threats, which imperialism, because of its rapacious and exploitative nature, cannot do without....

The option between the past and the future, reaction or progress, treason or loyalty to principles, capitalism or socialism, imperialist domination or liberation, was what was decided at Girón on April 19, 1961. Three days earlier, at the grave of the first martyrs of that brutal aggression, the people proclaimed the socialist nature of our revolution, and the men and women of our homeland expressed their readiness to die for it. No one knew how many mercenaries there were; no one knew how many Yankee marines and soldiers would come in after them, how many planes, how many further bombings it would be necessary to bear. Never, as at that moment, was the slogan of "Patria o muerte" [Homeland or Death] more dramatic, real, and historic. The decision to win or die, embodied in a whole people, was stronger than all the risk, suffering, and danger. This made that day doubly historic, because our Marxist-Leninist party was really born at Girón; [Applause] membership in our party is recognized from that day on, from that day on, socialism was cemented forever with the blood of our workers, peasants, and students; from that day on, a new and completely different destiny opened up before the people of this continent because of the liberty and dignity that one of them had conquered in the face of aggression from the powerful empire that subjected all. Be-



Angolan troops pose in August 1976 after beating back South African army with the aid of thousands of Cuban soldiers.

cause, say what you will, after Girón, all the peoples of America were a little bit freer....

In commemorating this, the fifteenth anniversary of the heroic, glorious victory at Girón, our people have an additional reason to be proud, which constitutes their finest expression of internationalism and transcends the boundaries of this continent: the historical victory of the people of Angola, [Prolonged applause] to whom we offered the generous and unlimited solidarity of our revolution.

At Girón, African blood was shed, that of the selfless descendants of a people who were slaves before they became workers, and who were exploited workers before they became masters of their homeland.... Those who once enslaved man and sent him to America perhaps never imagined that one of those peoples who received the slaves

would one day send their fighters to struggle for freedom in Africa.

The victory in Angola was the twin sister of the victory at Girón. [Applause] For the Yankee imperialists, Angola represents an African Girón. At one time we said that imperialism had suffered its great defeats in the month of April: Girón, Vietnam, Cambodia, etc.¹ This time the defeat came in March. On the twenty-seventh of that month, when the last South African soldiers crossed the Namibian border, after a retreat of more than 700 kilometers, one of the most brilliant pages in the liberation of Black Africa was written.

¹ National liberation forces defeated U.S.-backed regimes in both Vietnam and Cambodia in April 1975.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



April 20, 1973

ATLANTA, April 7 — Hundreds of Black workers walked off their jobs April 2 at most of Rich's department stores in the Atlanta area.

Rich's is Georgia's largest department store chain. It is also one of its biggest employers, with more than 10,000 workers in the Southeast, and with at least eight stores in Atlanta alone. Its sales last year totaled more than \$250 million.

Strikers are calling for a boycott of all Rich's department stores until the workers are able to win their demand for an end to racist hiring, promotional and firing practices, and low wages. The boycott has already cut into normally lucrative Easter sales.

Most of the strikers are from the downtown store and have been picketing it daily. Picket lines have been as large as 300. Spirited mass meetings have been held nightly, with 300 to 400 workers present.

Delegations of strikers from most of the stores have come to the meetings to explain the effect of the boycott and to participate in the chanting and singing that mark these meetings.




April 19, 1948

The House Un-American Committee has unanimously agreed on an omnibus witch-hunting bill to be introduced shortly to Congress.

The aim of this vicious legislation, as announced in the press, is "to jail Communists." To accomplish this end — expressly prohibited by the Constitution — the bill will have a lengthy preamble defining the Communist (Stalinist) Party, as an illegal conspiracy.

The present Smith "Gag" Act which makes it a crime to seek the "overthrow of the government by means of force and violence" will be amended to make it criminal to seek the "overthrow of the government by any means."

In its definition of "illegal conspiracy" the committee includes disruption of "trade, commerce or government in the United States with intent to further the objectives of the world Communist movement." When asked by reporters if this "disrupting trade" clause included strikes, Congressman Nixon of the Un-American Committee replied that it could in strikes that were "primarily" political.



Cuba's Internationalist Foreign Policy, 1975-80
Fidel Castro

Castro discusses the historic importance of the anticapitalist revolutions in 1979 in Grenada and Nicaragua; Cuba's internationalist missions in Angola and Ethiopia; relations with the U.S. government and with Cubans living in the United States; the fight within the Nonaligned Movement to forge a front of struggle against imperialist exploitation; and the proletarian internationalism that has guided the foreign policy of the Cuban government since the 1959 revolution. **\$20.95**

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Defend Social Security!

Continued from front page

why the employers and the politicians who represent them want to roll it back, and put more of the burden for care of the young, the old, and the disabled on individual families.

Making Social Security an entitlement — available to all — was also part of knitting working-class solidarity and undercutting the dog-eat-dog competition fostered by capitalism. That's precisely what individual accounts that can be gambled on Wall Street do: tear down the fabric of human solidarity workers have fought bloody battles to weave.

Like other social gains such as Medicare and Medicaid, Social Security was enacted as a result of the massive labor battles that forged the industrial unions in the United States in the 1930s, and later extended in the course of the struggle by Blacks for civil rights in the 1960s and '70s.

The U.S. rulers are hesitant to take on Social Security — which 44 million people depend on for most or all of

their income — directly. They probe at ways to encroach on this entitlement, from raising the retirement age to floating various "privatization" and means-testing schemes.

By criticizing the most extreme "privatization" proposals, the Democratic president tries to pose as a defender of Social Security. But the course of the Clinton administration has been to consistently set the stage for greater inroads into the social wage. He promotes the myth that there's "just not enough money to go around" and brags about "ending welfare as we know it," referring to his signature on legislation that ended Aid for Families with Dependent Children, a piece of the 1935 Social Security Act.

Fighting to defend and extend social entitlements is part of defending the social protections needed to hold the working class together in face of economic crises and the divisions promoted by the bosses. The entire labor movement should join in exposing Clinton's attack on Social Security and organize to defeat it.

'We won't give up Kosovo'

Continued from Page 9

organizing to open a new NATO training center in southern Macedonia, to be used for a U.S.-led Balkans rapid deployment force that could be dispatched to Kosovo; maintaining U.S. troops in Macedonia even if the current 1,000-strong UN "peacekeeping force" there leaves; and dispatching NATO advisers to Albania to "train" that country's army. The April 1 *Washington Post* reported that a number of U.S. troops in Macedonia have been shifted to observation posts at the Macedonian border in direct sight of Kosovo. Washington also maintains 8,000 troops in Bosnia that dominate the 30,000-strong NATO force occupying that republic.

The U.S. push for deeper intervention into the Balkans has stirred opposition from Moscow, which has balked at additional sanctions on Belgrade at the UN Security Council. The pro-capitalist government of Russia has been on a collision course with Washington over expansion of NATO into Eastern Europe and U.S. attempts to not only dominate the oil in the former Soviet republics of the Caspian Sea region, but to establish a stronger regional line of influence and pressure along the southern flank of Russia — from the Caspian Sea all along the Silk Road.

"NATO expansion is the equivalent of the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution that authorized the war in Vietnam," said Michael Mandelbaum of the John Hopkins institute recently.

Within NATO, Paris has diverged with Washington over tactics in the Balkans and Iraq — divergences that reflect the continuing U.S. push into Europe and the Middle East. As a March 12 article in the *Wall Street Journal* put it, "Poland's unwavering support for possible U.S. military action in Iraq was celebrated in Washington and lamented in Paris, where the newspaper *Le Monde* warned of a new American-British-Polish alliance committed to the 'rejection of a European policy dominated by France and Germany, to the benefit of a NATO under U.S.-U.K. control.'"

Poland, along with Hungary and the Czech Republic, has been approved for NATO membership by the Atlantic military alliance. The accord awaits ratification by the U.S. Congress.

Washington's main aim in the Balkans and with the

encirclement of Russia is to use its military might to reestablish capitalist social relations in these countries — a goal that remains far away eight years after the collapse of the Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union.

'Better under Soviet times'

An article in the March 28 *Economist* of London, titled "A truly dreadful perspective," cited a poll in the Ukraine expressing the deep dissatisfaction among working people and other layers of the population over "market reforms" in that republic of the former Soviet Union. In response to the question "When were you and your family better off?", 79 percent said in Soviet times and 4 percent said now. A majority also said they expected they'll be worse off a year from now under the current course of the regime there. A plurality, 32 percent, said they favored union with Russia and only 3 percent supported NATO membership for the republic.

A number of articles in the big-business press have been recently pointing to similar attitudes among broad layers of workers and peasants throughout Eastern Europe and the former Soviet republics — from Yugoslavia to Slovakia and Belarus.

"Entry of new competitors into the market is inhibited by state regulations and a shortage of entrepreneurial talent," said an article in the April 7 *Wall Street Journal*, for example, referring to Romania. "Not to mention the welfare-state psychology that has conditioned so many Romanians against undertaking risky new ventures."

The financial daily and other mouthpieces for the U.S. capitalist class are worried about the resistance working people are putting up to the attempts to bring back the system of wage slavery — from the workers states of Central and Eastern Europe to Siberia. Some 3,000 agricultural workers marched through Bucharest, Romania's capital, April 8 to protest low wages and government austerity policies.

"Give us subsidized credits," many shouted. And more than 10,000 workers demonstrated in two Romanian cities the day before to demand wage raises, higher pensions, and lower taxes.

Clinton on Social Security

Continued from front page

Gore. They are billed as a prelude to a White House conference on Social Security in December and bipartisan negotiations with congressional leaders early next year.

In the forum, Clinton argued that funds for this entitlement will run out by the year 2029. Like other politicians in the bipartisan debate on curbing Social Security, he cited higher life expectancy and the greater number of people who will retire in the coming decades as the problem.

Declining to advocate specific proposals to cut Social Security right now, Clinton said his goal was to launch a "period of educating the whole electorate." Marilyn Moon, one of the administration officials who oversee the Social Security system, complained that "people have strong opinions" about this social program but that "there's a lot of misunderstanding," that is, opposition to cutting it.

While advocating "universality and fairness," Clinton did suggest some proposals that would undermine Social Security as a universal entitlement. "I believe that those of us who have higher incomes should pay more in Social Security," the president argued. He presented such a measure as an alternative to those who call for raising the 12.4 percent Social Security payroll tax, which is split between workers and employers.

Clinton said he opposed the wholesale dismantling of Social Security by "privatization" — individual private savings schemes that would be the responsibility of work-

ers rather than a nationwide entitlement backed up by the federal government — as advocated by some capitalist politicians. Instead, he expressed support for "allowing" voluntary individual retirement savings accounts along with the Social Security system.

The White House has also advocated raising the retirement age, which is currently 65 and is scheduled to rise to 67 by 2022.

The Social Security debate in capitalist circles has shifted in recent years more to "privatization." Republican senator Richard Santorum, for example, who joined Clinton at the Kansas City meeting, advocates a scheme to allow individuals to invest 5 percent — nearly half — of their 12.4 percent Social Security tax in the stock market or elsewhere. Liberal Democratic senator Daniel Moynihan calls for a cut of up to 30 percent in future Social Security benefits by reducing payroll taxes and promoting individual retirement accounts. Alternately, his proposal would let workers get an increase in take-home pay instead of paying Social Security taxes. Moynihan also proposes raising the retirement age in stages to 70.

Other proposals include cutting back cost-of-living increases in Social Security benefits. This gain was won in the 1960s as a result of massive social struggles by working people, particularly Blacks fighting for civil rights. Social Security and other entitlements were won through the wave of labor struggles of the 1930s.

British troops out of Ireland!

The following statement was issued March 28 by the Communist League candidates in the May local council elections in London, Celia Pugh for Canningham ward, Hammersmith and Fulham, and Pete Clifford for Angell ward, Lambeth.

A United Nations Commission for Human Rights report has been forced to confirm what many people have known for a long time. That there is an organised relation between the loyalist death squads and the British security forces. It confirms that Brian Nelson, who was head of intelligence for the Ulster Defence Association (UDA), was a British army agent. He was involved in the murder of 15 people, 15 attempted murders and 62 conspiracies to murder. Most well known of these murders, whilst under army orders, was that of Belfast solicitor Pat Finucane. Finucane was killed by the UDA on Feb. 12, 1989, just three weeks after Douglas Hogg, a government minister, had complained in parliament about solicitors who were sympathetic to nationalists.

These revelations come against a background where the truth about British rule in Ireland is unraveling. In recent months:

- The government has finally conceded a new public inquiry into the killings of 14 civil rights protesters by the British army on Bloody Sunday, Jan. 31, 1972. This move only came as a result of the international campaign for justice led by relatives of those who died.

- Under pressure from nationalist residents to deal with the rightist Orange marches the government has set up a 'Parades Commission' to look at their rerouting. Yet it has appointed to the commission former UDA leader Glenn Barr and the only two Catholics appointed have previously worked for the RUC police, giving it a obvious bias. Residents of the Garvaghy Road, where Orange marches go every July, gave a clear answer to this : 4,000 marched there on March 22 to say they will oppose these Ku Klux Klan-type reactionaries trampling down their streets.

- David Keys, the Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF) supporter murdered inside Long Kesh (Maze) prison by his fellow LVF inmates was a former British soldier and suspected RUC informer. The three others held for the Poyntzpass murder of a Catholic and Protestant were also former British soldiers.

Whether British withdrawal is secured in this round of the talks or in the future, depends on Britain's rulers coming to terms with the need to end their brutal and bloody rule of Ireland. As the current talks reach their conclusion it gets clearer there is only *one* key question: whether there is to be a united Ireland. Britain is not and has never been the neutral arbitrator in Ireland, shouldering the 'white man's burden' in civilising the natives. After centuries of plunder Britain artificially divided Ireland in 1921. Its rule has been maintained through tens of thousands of troops and an armed police force. Behind that is an institutionalised system of discrimination exists against Catholics at all levels from jobs and housing to education. This is what is meant in practice by 'Unionism' and what Britain is seeking to defend. It has only been through the 30 year long fight by nationalists, led by Sinn Fein, that the final chapter of this murky history is being written.

Working people in Britain have every interest in taking the side of those fighting against the British government for the unity and independence of Ireland. It is the same government that cuts disability benefits, scapegoats single mothers, covers up the beating of prisoners, and allows racist murderers to get off scot-free. As the recent events over Iraq show, this same government is also preparing to take us to war for them in the coming months and years. As working people resist here they will come up against the same policies used against the Irish, just as the miners did in their 1984-85 strike. Progress in the fight for Irish freedom is progress for all working people. One example of this is how the breaking of the police frame-ups of the Guildford 4 and Birmingham 6 opened up a can of worms in the British injustice system, leading to many others winning their freedom.

That's why the Communist League candidates in the May 7th Council elections will put at the centre of their campaign the call for Britain to go: the troops must come out, the RUC must be disbanded, the prisoners released, and repressive legislation ended. Today we especially join the call for an independent public inquiry into the Brian Nelson affair.

Australia dockers

Continued from front page

and a small delegation of state parliamentarians, mostly from the Labor Party, visited the pickets.

Defying a one-week Federal Court injunction against the sacking of its workforce and plans to use replacement workers, Patrick used nonunion labor at its Freemantle wharf to unload a container ship in face of a rowdy protest by 80 union members. The Australian Council of Trade Unions is planning a national campaign to support the MUA. In Victoria a statewide work stoppage is planned.

Linda Harris and Bob Aiken, members of the Australian Manufacturing Workers Union, contributed to this article.

Engineers win strike in New Zealand meatpacking plants

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

We invite you to contribute short items to this column as a

the rolls of agencies that specialize in providing temporary, "fill-in" workers to employers. Explaining that "we're striking to retain our rights," the leaflet read "we are seeking your support, not to do our work, not to cross our picket line,

ganized by the national trade union movement in December of last year, against changes to the Holidays Act proposed by the conservative National Party-New Zealand First coalition government. These changes would have made inroads on workers' rights to certain guaranteed holidays every year. The government is reportedly backing off these widely unpopular measures.

ON THE PICKET LINE

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.

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand — Sixteen Engineers Union (EU) members at the Sockburn meatpacking plant in Christchurch took down their picket line March 20 and celebrated their success in staving off attacks on their wages and working conditions by the Alliance meat company.

They were among 160 EU members who struck Alliance for four days at its six South Island plants, where sheep and cattle are slaughtered for export. Alliance used a helicopter, vans under police escort, and large numbers of security guards to mobilize scabs, but with the active solidarity of thousands of members of the Meat Workers Union (MWU), the engineers prevailed.

The Engineers Union members are skilled workers employed to maintain the machinery in these factories, including the moving chains off which the slaughtered animals hang.

The strike began on March 17. Workers on the picket line at Sockburn explained that the company's attempt to put them on an annual salary — and in the process cut their incomes — was at the heart of the dispute. The company also wanted to take away a week of their annual holiday leave. A leaflet issued by the Alliance Trades Group Employees explained, "We are claiming a two-year contract — 3 percent rise for the first year and 2 percent for the second year.... But the Alliance are insisting they put us on salary and are looking to save \$1 million off their wage bill."

The leaflet addressed truck drivers and other suppliers, and especially workers employed to do the struck work. These workers were on

and to advise the Alliance to treat their employees fairly."

In its attempt to break the strike, Alliance used a helicopter to bring "strikebreaking engineers over the heads of angry picketers" at the Pukeuri works in Oamaru, according to the Christchurch Press. Armored vans under police escort were used to bring strikebreakers into Sockburn.

Meat Workers Union members, advised that to stop work in sympathy with the engineers would be illegal, found other ways to throw their weight behind the strike. They foiled attempts by Alliance to keep the scabs quarantined from their influence. On the first day of the dispute at Sockburn, for example, several fire alerts allowed them to mingle and exchange views with the scabs.

Scabs who ventured into production areas got a fiery response. The Press reported that "at one point casual staff were forced to climb through a ceiling space to get past" angry MWU members at Sockburn. At the Lorneville plant in Invercargill, scabs who entered the slaughterboard area were pelted with meat and other projectiles.

Faced with a united wall of EU pickets and meat workers, many of the replacement workers decided not to return. Those who stayed proved unable to cope with machinery breakdowns, and in several plants whole "chains," or production lines, were shut down.

After four days negotiators for the union and Alliance reached an agreement. Workers voted by a large majority to accept the deal, under which they retain their existing conditions. They will receive a pay rise of 2 percent each year for the next two years. According to the Press, "a commitment was also made that ... the company and the union would look at the introduction of a salary scheme during the next two years." This was very close to the position taken by the union at the onset of the dispute.

Meat Workers Union members were at the forefront of protests or-

Chrysler workers walk out to protest harassment

STERLING HEIGHTS, Michigan — Some 1,400 members of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 1700 walked out of the Chrysler assembly plant here April 3. The unionists refused to work shortly after the afternoon shift began at 3:30 p.m., and had left the plant by 5:30 p.m.

Press reports indicate that the work stoppage began after three local union officials were disciplined. A skilled trades union representative was suspended for 30 days, and the local union president and chief steward received written warnings over a protest March 21 of the company using outside contractors to do work usually done by local union skilled trades members.

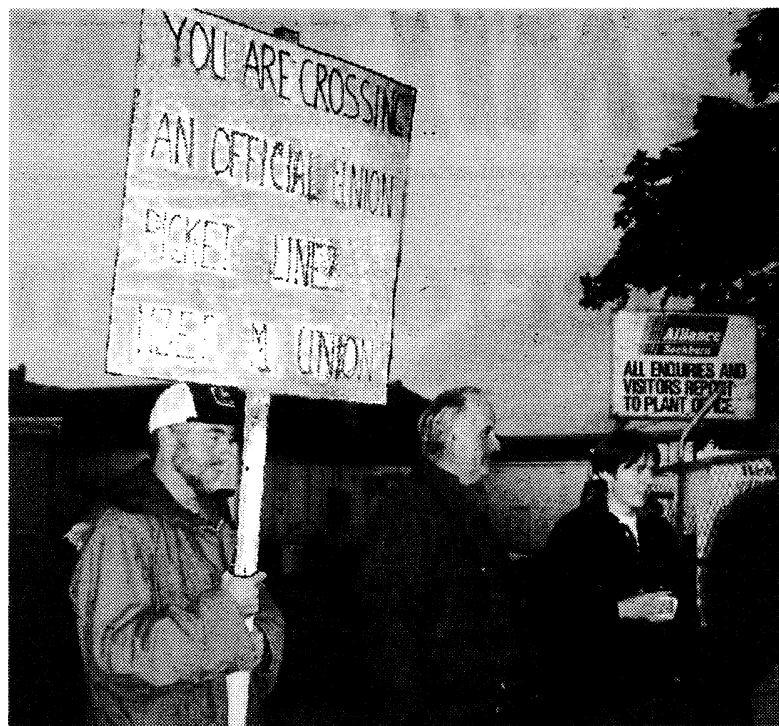
Plant management quickly began talks with local officials and the international union to end the walk-out. Workers on the day shift returned to work the next morning at the urging of union officials. The unionists work every other Saturday and were scheduled to work on April 4.

Company spokespeople reported that this was the first strike in a UAW-organized Chrysler plant since the 29-day strike at the Mound Road Engine Plant eight miles south of here in Detroit in April 1997.

Striking machinists reject company offer in Quebec

MONTREAL — On April 2 workers at Peerless Luminaires in suburban Lasalle voted 76-21 to reject the company's latest offer. The 110 members of the International Association of Machinists Local Lodge 2133 have been on strike since January 28 against demands for important concessions on salaries, holidays, and seniority provisions in the contract.

The tentative agreement that was voted down would have maintained the status quo on most issues, ruling out most of the concessions Peerless was seeking, but there was



Militant/Annalucia Vermunt

Engineers Union members on the picket line March 20 at Sockburn meatpacking plant in Christchurch, New Zealand.

no real salary increase. The company wanted workers to accept lump sum payments of \$200 in each of the first two years of a three-year contract and a \$50 lump sum with an wage increase of 10 cents an hour in the third year. Several workers who Militant reporters spoke to before and during the meeting expressed opposition to returning to work with no increase after spending nine weeks on the picket line. After the meeting Kiranpal Singh explained that the proposed contract was "not good for the new guys" because the lump sum payments "are temporary, they are not added to our salary."

The boisterous union meeting was conducted in both French and English with translation into other languages. After the results of the vote were announced many of the workers filed out smiling and chanting "solidarity, solidarity." Seventy-eight percent voted against the contract this time, as opposed to over 90 percent during the previous vote.

Juan Antonio thought that the No vote would allow the workers to force a better offer from the company. He said, "The reason more people voted yes was because strike pay is going to be reduced. People will have problems getting by on \$150 a week." The length of the strike has depleted the local's special strike fund to the point where strike pay will be reduced from \$200 to \$150 in the coming weeks.

As we went to press, the Militant learned that the company gave in on the salary demands the day after the meeting described above. Workers won the 20 cent raise in each year of the three-year contract that they were demanding in the place of lump sum payments. They

have since returned to work.

Auto parts boss closes plant after 8-month strike

FRASER, Michigan — Since Aug. 1, 1997, 250 members of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 155 have been on strike against MascoTech, a key automotive industry supplier. "They tried to get rid of us," is how Kola Gjurashaj put it. "They made us work 12 hours with one break, seven days a week mandatory. They wanted us to work five years with no raise, and they were making experienced workers take a test to keep their job."

The new CEO of MascoTech, Frank Hennessey, announced he was closing the plant in Fraser soon. Industry analysts estimate MascoTech will have 1998 sales of \$1.7 billion. The company merged with TriMas Corp. in late January, and has been having talks with American Axle & Manufacturing about a joint venture. The company has been moving equipment out for several months. On the March 23 picket line, Gjurashaj and Pjetr Gjokaj briefly blocked a truck from leaving company premises. Gjuraashaj explained, "We have to try to strike together and stick together. We have to try to get stronger."

Joan Shields, a member of the MWU at the Alliance works at Sockburn, and Patrick Brown in Christchurch; John Sarge, a member of UAW Local 900 in the Detroit area; Grant Hargrave, member of IAM Local Lodge 1758 in Montreal; and Frank Gorton and Martha Ressler, members of the UAW near Detroit, contributed to this column.

LETTERS

Stalinism and Indonesia

The "Book of the Week" column of the April 6 issue of the Militant printed selections from the article "Lessons of the Defeat in Indonesia" by Ernest Mandel. The article appeared in the 1966 Pathfinder pamphlet, *The Catastrophe in Indonesia — Three articles on the fatal consequences of Communist Party policy*.

The article illustrates the depth of the catastrophic defeat that the working class and peasantry suffered in Indonesia in 1965 at the hands of capitalists, landowners, and their army.

But that article fails to draw the central lesson: the treacherous role of Stalinism in leading the masses to a defeat without a battle. Mandel's article does not mention Stalinism; reading it one gets the impression that the problem with the Communist Party of Indonesia was that it did not understand certain theoretical questions.

However, other parts of the pamphlet do take up the question of

Stalinism. For example, an article written by a young member of the Indonesian Communist party who had succeeded in making his way into exile points out, "During the struggle against the Japanese military occupation [during World War II], the PKI [Partai Komunis Indonesia] was instructed or 'advised,' under Stalin's guidance, to cooperate with the Dutch imperialist government, to carry out 'joint actions' against Japanese imperialism."

Thus they sold out political independence of the working class and its march toward power to the class collaborationist dictates of the Stalinist bureaucracy in Moscow.

In his introduction to the pamphlet, Joseph Hansen explains the role of Stalinism in the defeat of the workers in Germany in 1920s and '30s and the defeat of the Spanish revolution in the '30s.

Hansen then writes, "In relation to Indonesia, Mao played a role comparable to that of Stalin in the German events. Just as Stalin, out

of passing diplomatic needs, blocked the German Communist party from developing a revolutionary policy that could have stopped Hitler and put the German working class in power, so Mao out of similar passing diplomatic needs (an alliance with Sukarno and the Indonesian bourgeoisie) blocked the Indonesian Communist party from developing a revolutionary policy that could have stopped the reactionary generals and put the Indonesian working class in power."

The role played by Stalinism in the defeat suffered by the toilers in Indonesia is not simply a question of history.

Now that masses in Indonesia are recovering from the effects of that catastrophic defeat and are beginning to fight back against the capitalist assault on their living conditions, they no longer have to cope with such an ubiquitous counter-revolutionary agency on a world scale that, using the prestige of great Russian and Chinese revolutions, could derail their struggles into re-

formist paths and to defeat.

In fact, imperialism has been weakened by the collapse of Stalinist apparatuses worldwide.

Ma'mud Shirvani
New York, New York

Corrections on France

The April 13 Militant incorrectly said in a photo caption box that the five "provincial presidents" elected with the votes of the fascist National Front had resigned. The article further stated that these presidents were members of both the Gaullist RPR [Rally for the Republic] and the conservative UDF [Union of French Democracy].

The elections were to choose regional (not provincial) presidents. The five elected with the votes of the National Front [FN] were all members of the UDF. None were members of the RPR.

Following the election, three additional presidents were elected with the votes of the National Front, but all three immediately resigned,

saying they would not accept the National Front support.

Of the five who tried to form regional governments following their election with National Front support, two have resigned under pressure and three have made repeated statements that they would not resign and are continuing their efforts to form regional governments with FN support. They have all been expelled from the UDF.

The former general secretary of the RPR has also been expelled from the RPR because he called for the traditional conservative parties to make a common bloc with the National Front.

Nat London
Paris, France

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.

Puerto Rican youth demand U.S. military leave Vieques island

BY ROLLANDE GIRARD
AND RON RICHARDS

MAYAGÜEZ, Puerto Rico — About 60 young people briefly blocked the entrance to the U.S. military base on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques April 5, in a protest organized by the Federation of Pro-Independent University Students (FUPI). "This was good," said Ismael Guadalupe Ortiz, an activist in the fight against the U.S. military presence on the island, in a phone interview following the action. "This was the first time since 1974 that young people organized an activity against the base."

Vieques, off the east coast of Puerto Rico, was first colonized by Spain in 1832. On July 25, 1898 the United States invaded Puerto Rico through the southern port of Guánica. With little fighting, the Spanish government, having already lost to the United States in Cuba and the Philippines, surrendered. Puerto Rico, including Vieques, was transferred as a colony from Spain to the United States. Soon after, the invading forces started to make military, scientific, and economic studies of the islands of Vieques, Culebra, and the main island of Puerto Rico. Vieques totals about 33,000 acres.

Ever since their invasion of the country, the U.S. rulers have met resistance from the workers and farmers of the islands that make up the Puerto Rican nation. In 1915 the first sugar cane strike occurred in which four workers from Vieques were killed by cops.

In 1941 the U.S. Congress approved the setting up of a Navy base on the island of Vieques. They started the expropriations soon after. Four thousand people were expropriated from the eastern side and relocated in the center of the island to make space for the Navy in the early 1940s. The population lost their land, homes, harvests and livestock with very little compensation.

Over the years the U.S. military took over nearly 70 percent of Vieques for military purposes. It is especially used as a naval training center. The Navy uses the island as a warehouse for their bombs, and as a place to practice bombings, and disembarkments. The U.S. military has also tested napalm in Vieques. Napalm is jellied gasoline that sticks to human skin. Thousands of civilians were killed or maimed for life in Vietnam by Washington's use of napalm.

The fight against the U.S. Navy bases in Vieques has been part of the fight for independence of Puerto Rico. The U.S. government has responded by imprisoning many of the movement's leaders and violently attacking demonstrations against its military presence and supporting independence. The massacre of Ponce on March 21, 1937, where 21 protesters were killed and some 200 wounded, is the bloodiest example.

Ismael Guadalupe Ortiz is active in the fight to demilitarize Vieques today. He was the past president of the Crusade for the Rescue of Vieques, which was formed in 1978 in response to the rising use of the island for bombing practices. In a March 28 interview here, he told the *Militant* that in



Militant/Ron Richards

March 1997 protest in Juana Díaz, Puerto Rico, against planned radar at U.S. military base. Radar scheme has been focus for opposition to U.S. military presence in Vieques.

the 1970s the population of Vieques organized several challenges against the Navy maneuvers. Local fishermen, for example, tried to impede the big U.S. navy ships from carrying out maneuvers by crossing in front of them in their fishing boats.

On May 19, 1979, Guadalupe was part of an ecumenical event to protest the presence of the Navy on the island. The police arrested 21 of the demonstrators. "Thirteen of us were jailed, and one of us, Angel Rodríguez Cristóbal, was later killed in a U.S. jail in Tallahassee, Florida, on Nov. 11, 1979." On July 26, 1979, *El Nuevo Día* reported that "in the last eight months, the U.S. army dropped 27,200 bombs in the artillery exercise zone of Vieques." After the arrests the Vieques protests died down until 1993 when the Committee for the Rescue and the Development of Vieques was formed.

Guadalupe, who is a teacher, explained: "The Navy wants us to leave the island. When they are preparing to invade a country they first practice in Vieques. We have many people who emigrate to the main island and to the U.S. in part because of unemployment. There is only one General Electric plant on the island, and since the U.S. takes three fourths of the island, it forces people to emigrate. There are only 8,000 inhabitants today." In 1947, the population was 15,000. In 1990, the median income for households was \$5,864. Only 59 percent of the homes have telephones.

The Navy has started construction of an enormous Relocatable Over the Horizon Radar (ROTHR) that will allow them to monitor aircraft as far south as Bolivia. The transmitter will be located in Vieques and the receiver in Ft. Allen on the main island

of Puerto Rico. Over the last several years there have been numerous protests against the ROTHR in Vieques and other parts of Puerto Rico. The Navy had planned to put the receiver in Lajas, but in face of protests was forced to back off its expansion plans and instead relocate the receiver to an existing military base, Ft. Allen in Juana Díaz.

Carlos Ventura, president of the Vieques South Coast Fisherman's Association, said that the ROTHR will create only 20 jobs in Vieques and by increasing the militarization of the island it will block future development. The people of Vieques are "like 8,000 laboratory rats," he said. "We have the highest infant mortality, the lowest per capita income, and the most cancer in Puerto Rico. We have no industry." Unemployment is well over the national average.

Pedro Zenón, Cacimar Zenón, and Ismael Guadalupe Torres are members of the Federation of Pro-Independence University Students. Originally from Vieques, they are presently studying on the main island at the Mayagüez and Cayey campuses. They gave a presentation at the 24th Congress of FUPI in Mayagüez on the political, social, and environmental impact of the U.S. naval bases on the population of Vieques.

"They practice there just as if it was a war," said Cacimar Zenón. "And it is a war against us but we are unarmed."

"Neither the Navy nor the best army of the world will exterminate a people when it is united. We need to take on the fight," said Pedro Zenón.

"This is needed not only for Vieques but for the whole world. We can win because our struggle is just." In order to be more effective in the struggle, "we need education, not only through books but through actions. We need to stand up," added Guadalupe.

Rollande Girard is a member of the United Steelworkers of America Local 7609 in Miami. Ron Richards is a member of the American Federation of Government Employees in Puerto Rico.

Workers in Greece protest gov't moves to impose concessions at Olympic Air

BY GEORGES MEHRABIAN

ATHENS, Greece — Trade unions in Greece are planning strikes and protests for April 7-9 in response to the latest attack on public sector workers by the social democratic government. The parliament is currently debating an emergency bill put forward by Prime Minister Constantinos Simitis of the Pan Hellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK) aimed at legislating a series of concessions to be imposed on the unions at Olympic Airways.

The emergency bill was presented in the midst of negotiations between the unions and the national airline. It calls for an 18 percent wage cut, a reduction in seasonal employment, and increased and "flexible" work hours — a code word for doing away with the eight-hour work day. If the legislation is adopted, 7,000 Olympic Airways workers would have five days to sign individual agreements accepting these conditions or face firings.

The emergency bill draws on laws still on the books from the period of the military dictatorship that ruled Greece in 1967-73. In early February this year, parliament declared it had the legal right to legislate labor contracts, in a prelude to the current attack on the unions.

When the emergency measure was announced March 31, Olympic Airways employees stopped work for three hours and about 200 descended on the airline headquarters in an impromptu rally. Several hun-

dred workers marched on parliament April 2, as workers at utilities and other public enterprises struck for three hours.

A number of union actions are planned for April 7-9. The General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE) has called for a general strike and a march on parliament April 9. The port workers plan to stop work April 8-9 in response to privatization plans for the ports.

The PASOK government announced a 14 percent devaluation of the Greek drachma March 14 and said Athens would enter the European Exchange Rate Mechanism. This is part of the Greek capitalists' attempt to drive through major austerity measures in the name of qualifying to join the European Monetary Union by 2001. The attacks on Olympic Airways workers are seen as a test case for future assaults on other public and private sector workers. "By 1999, we will restructure all public services and privatize all those which are not of strategic importance," stated National Economy Minister Yiannos Papantoniou. "We are the party of radical reform," he continued.

The stock market has risen sharply in response to the government's recent moves.

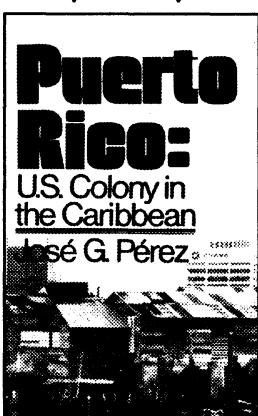
The current face-off with the Olympic Airways workers coincides with negotiations between the manufacturers association and the GSEE over the private sector workers' contract. The bosses are offering a two-year contract with a 3.5 percent wage increase for 1998. The GSEE is demanding a

5 percent increase. The bosses and government feel emboldened by the decline in union membership over the last years. The capitalist daily *Kathimerini* bragged March 12, "Dwindling union membership — third lowest in the European Union, down from 33.8 percent of the workforce in 1985 to 24.3 percent — has reduced labor's clout. Strike turnout has been low, and attendance at last year's May Day rally, traditionally a union show of strength, was embarrassing."

Meanwhile, the PASOK government has launched attacks on immigrant workers in Greece. Blaming crime on immigrant workers, Simitis has ordered a wave of deportations. Albanian immigrants are particularly targeted, with more than 3,000 being deported in the last week of March alone.

The measures have put wind in the sails of various right-wing forces. Three rural municipal town village councils have already taken unconstitutional measures against immigrant workers ranging from curfews to roundups and beatings by vigilantes. The targets are overwhelmingly Albanian workers. In the village of Yiannitsohori, near Pyrgos, a group of Albanian farm workers were rounded up by vigilantes and taken to the police after one of them refused to work extra hours in the fields. In response, the teachers federation OLME in Athens has called a demonstration for May, and a coalition of political groups opposing the racist anti-immigrant attacks are planning a demonstration April 14.

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