

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Britain sinks into economic depression

— PAGES 8-9

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 56/ NO. 16 APRIL 24, 1992

## Union activists fight cop charges

BY PAUL MAILHOT

ST. LOUIS, Missouri — A broad defense effort is being organized to press county officials in Peoria, Illinois, to drop charges of criminal trespass and obstructing police against two socialist and trade union activists. Kate Kaku and Mary Zins were arrested at the March 22 solidarity rally in support of striking Caterpillar workers. Police falsely accused them of distributing campaign literature inside the public rally. The charges carry penalties of up to 13 months in prison and \$1,500 in fines.

Kaku is the Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Senate in Illinois and is also a member of the United Steelworkers union in Chicago. Zins, a laid-off coal miner and long-time activist in the United Mine Workers union, is a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union from St. Louis. The two were at the rally to show their support for the Caterpillar workers and let people know about the socialist campaign.

A defense committee has been established and prominent Peoria attorney Clayton Moushon is their attorney.

Ernie Mailhot, former Eastern Airlines strike coordinator for International Association of Machinists Local 1018 at LaGuardia airport in New York, is coordinating the

Continued on Page 4

## Caterpillar strikers resist union-busting campaign

BY PAUL MAILHOT

PEORIA, Illinois — Refusing to bow to Caterpillar's drive to break their union, thousands of striking United Auto Workers members mobilized, forming gauntlets outside factory gates in six cities in Illinois to discourage any workers from crossing the picket lines and accepting the company's final contract offer.

Caterpillar claimed the number of strikers crossing the picket line in East Peoria, Moline, Mapleton, Decatur, Aurora, and Pontiac was 400 for most of the week and 750 by Friday. Union members, who kept a tally at each of the plant gates, insisted the figure was far lower than the company was trying to promote.

"We're making history here," declared Larry Solomon, president of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 751 in Decatur. "The tone for the labor movement in the '90s is going to be set by the outcome of this strike. We won't accept defeat. We're a little tired after five months on strike but we have to think that if we lose here it's not only us but a lot of other workers who'll be affected."

The half dozen union members who have crossed the picket line in Decatur have had to pass by 2,000 UAW members and their supporters every day lining the street to the plant entrance. Hundreds of supporters from the United Rubber Workers, International Association of Machinists, Allied Industrial Workers, and unions of letter carriers, firefighters, and state workers have swelled the

Continued on Page 4



Militant/Paul Mailhot

Caterpillar strikers at plant-gate rally in Peoria. United Auto Workers members mobilized in six cities in Illinois to discourage any workers from crossing the picket line.

## Warren and DeBates join Caterpillar pickets

BY PAUL MAILHOT

PEORIA, Illinois — Socialist Workers Party candidates James Warren and Estelle DeBates brought their campaign for U.S. president and vice-president here April 6 to show their solidarity with striking Caterpillar workers. The candidates joined United Automobile Workers union members on the picket line at 6:30 a.m. as they gathered in front of Caterpillar's huge complex in East Peoria. UAW members have responded to Caterpillar's demand that they return to work under a concession contract by organizing expanded picket lines of several hundred workers at each entrance.

Warren and DeBates were introduced to strikers by union activists from St. Louis, Chicago, and Detroit who came along with the candidates to get a first-hand account of this important labor battle and win more solidarity for it back in their locals.

Warren, a member of the United Steelworkers of America who won a leave from his job to run for president, explained to workers why he had come to Peoria by saying, "I'm here to find out what workers think about the strike against Caterpillar and to offer my solidarity with your fight. I plan to make support for this strike a major feature of my campaign as I speak around the country."

Workers gave Warren and DeBates a friendly reception. Mack Conway, a 19-year employee at Caterpillar, told Warren he

Continued on Page 5

## 2,000 at Buffalo pro-choice rally



Militant/Bridget Brunner

April 11 pro-choice rally in Buffalo

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

BUFFALO, New York — Despite the pouring rain, 2,000 people marched and rallied here April 11 to defend abortion rights. The antiabortion group Operation Rescue is scheduled to begin blockading Buffalo abortion clinics on April 20.

Protesters expressed their anger at Mayor James Griffin, who has welcomed Operation Rescue and its founder Randall Terry to Buffalo

Continued on Page 2

## Hundreds sign up for 'Militant' as int'l subscription drive opens

BY GREG McCARTAN

From picket lines in Peoria, Illinois, to college campuses in New Zealand, to the largest women's rights march in history April 5, hundreds of unionists, young people, and other fighters signed up for a subscription to the *Militant* during the first week of the international circulation drive.

Thousands more purchased single copies of the paper from campaigners for the socialist alternative in the 1992 elections: James Warren for president and Estelle DeBates for vice-president and dozens of candidates for U.S. Senate, Congress, and state offices across the United States.

**From Peoria, Illinois:** At least 150 single copies and 15 subscriptions were sold this week to working people, students, and supporters of the United Auto Workers strike against Caterpillar's union-busting drive. Socialist candidates and their supporters from St. Louis, Chicago, Minneapolis, Detroit, Cleveland, Cincinnati, and New York joined together for campaign sales teams, distributing last week's issue, headlined, "Join the battle to defeat Caterpillar's war on labor."

**International Ladies' Garment Workers' Union member Angel Lariscy reports:**

"We sold on the picket line every morning as strikers gathered to show their determination and unity against Caterpillar. At the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana, we set up a table with signs supporting the 1992 socialist alternative to the reactionary course of the Democratic and Republican parties. Thirty-nine single issues and two subscriptions were sold. Three other people expressed interest in helping out on the campaign. The leader of a student group organizing a strike support rally on campus invited

the team to the rally organizing meeting later in the week."

Because getting the *Militant* into the hands of strikers and others strengthens the fight, supporters are encouraged to find a way to join teams in the area in the coming weeks. Call the St. Louis number listed on page 12 for more information.

Supporters in New Zealand faxed the following message: "The highlight of the first week, in which 14 subscriptions were sold here in Auckland, was a trip to Waikato University. Protests against the government's cutting of student allowances are being held on the campus."

"Many students had heard a little about the ultrarightist challenge of Patrick Buchanan and were glad to see the *Militant's* coverage. The fact that Buchananism is one face of an incipient fascist movement aroused a lot of interest."

**Just called in from Sweden:** "We're ahead of our goal after the first week. Subscriptions were sold around the article on Buchananism in the 'International Socialist Review' supplement to the *Militant* and the coverage of the presidential elections in the United States. Many people were interested in discussing these questions because of the recent gains made by ultrarightists in the elections in Germany, Italy, and France."

**United Food and Commercial Workers member Sara Lobman in Des Moines writes:** "Three subscriptions and a copy of *New International* no. 7, entitled 'Washington's Assault on Iraq: The Opening Guns of World War III,' were sold on a bus from Iowa City to the April 5 march to defend abortion rights in Washington, D.C. The woman who

Continued on Page 6

Volunteers move Pathfinder into its new offices — page 10



# Cops who beat King were 'out of control'

BY HARRY RING

LOS ANGELES — As the four cops who beat Rodney King present their defense, the rift between them has become a focal point of the trial.

Three of the cops contend that the beating of King was necessary because he was resisting arrest and endangering them. The fourth, Theodore Briseno, asserts he tried to subdue King because the others were "out of control" and might have killed King. Briseno is seen in the famed video kicking the prostrate King in the head.

Stacey Koon, the sergeant who took charge of the brutalization of King and who shot him several times with a high-voltage Taser stun gun, claimed the victim was resisting with "superhuman" strength. Laurence Powell, who is seen on the video using his club against King like a baseball bat, testified that he "feared for his life." The fourth defendant, Timothy Wind, chose not to take the stand in his own defense.

Two cops, who previously said nothing to investigators, came forward at the trial to testify that the day after the beating, Briseno had boasted: "We had to kick a little ass last night," adding, "the asshole

deserved it anyway."

Two other cops testified in support of Briseno's contention that he had been upset by the brutality of the other defendants.

The video of the beating makes plain that all the cops are lying about what happened that night. The extent of the lying is now underlined by the flatly contradictory testimony of the various cops, and their open trading of accusations from the witness stand.

The jury was given added insight into the mentality of cops with the introduction into evidence of messages exchanged soon after the beating between Sergeant Koon and a computer operator at the police station.

In a later report to his commanding officer — made before he knew the incident had been filmed — Koon had advised that King had suffered "a split lip," in a fall to the pavement. Actually, King suffered facial lacerations, broken bones and bruises.

In his computer message, some 10 minutes after the beating, Koon bragged, "Just had a big time use of force. . . . Tased and beat the suspect. . . . big time."

The computer operator responded, "Oh well, I'm sure the lizard didn't deserve it. Ha ha." From the witness stand, she explained

she had learned from cops that "lizard" is commonly used to describe "the low-life criminal element." She couldn't explain how she knew King was such an element.

Presiding Judge Stanley Weisberg rejected a defense motion that unsubstantiated police allegations against King be introduced as evidence. The smear charges, however, have been publicized in the media.

Earlier, Weisberg ruled that the defense could tell the jury that at the time of the beating King was on parole.

In the trial proceedings, but not in the presence of the jury, it was disclosed that soon after the TV showing of the videotaped beating, a meeting was held of all the cops at the scene. The meeting was held at the offices of the cops' "union," the Police Protective League, with the league's lawyer participating. What transpired at this meeting

was not disclosed.

The league is paying the substantial legal expenses of the four defendants.

The trial is being held in a tiny courtroom in the town of Simi Valley, an hour's drive from here, and there are but 17 seats available to the public.

Continuous live TV coverage of the trial is being presented on two channels and has a huge viewing audience. One TV audience rating agency reported that an average of 205,000 households have been tuning in to the trial each day. A *Los Angeles Times* reporter found this has been particularly true in the Black community.

He cited a postal carrier, who said, "The trial's on at about every house I've delivered mail to this morning. These folks aren't interested in the soaps. They want to watch this trial."

## Meeting hears about fight to free framed-up journalist

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

PHILADELPHIA — One hundred people attended a March 7 meeting to hear about the fight to free police frame-up victim Mumia Abu-Jamal and to raise funds for his defense.

In 1982 Abu-Jamal, a journalist who is Black, was convicted of killing a Philadelphia police officer and sentenced to death. Abu-Jamal has always maintained his innocence. Incarcerated at Huntingdon State Prison, he is currently one of 137 people on death row in Pennsylvania and one of 2,000 nationally. All of his direct appeals have been exhausted. His October 1990 petition to the U.S. Supreme Court for a rehearing was denied. A death warrant can be signed anytime.

His frame-up stems from an incident that took place ten years ago. On the morning of Dec. 9, 1981, Abu-Jamal was driving a cab when he saw a police officer beating his brother who had been stopped for making a wrong turn, according to eyewitnesses at the trial. At that point someone entered the scene, shot the police officer, and fled. Abu-Jamal was found bleeding from a gunshot wound when the police backup arrived. Witnesses said that Abu-Jamal was beaten at the scene by the cops. One witness testified that forty-five minutes transpired before he was taken to the hospital, where, according to hospital staff, the cops again beat him. It took two hours of surgery to remove the bullet that had perforated Abu-Jamal's liver and lodged in his back.

Abu-Jamal is a well-known political activist in Philadelphia. In 1970, at age 16, he was a leader of the Philadelphia chapter of the Black Panther Party. As a journalist he won the enmity of the cops with his coverage criticizing the 1978 police attack of the Powelton Village commune that belonged to MOVE, a Philadelphia Black organization.

At the time of his arrest Abu-Jamal served as president of the Philadelphia Association of Black Journalists. He continues to write for papers in Philadelphia and around the country.

Prison authorities have subjected Abu-Jamal to severe disciplinary action for refusing to cut his dreadlocks. He is denied

family phone calls and access to television and radio. Books are deemed contraband and routinely denied.

In February of this year, prominent attorney Leonard Weinglass agreed to take the case and prepare a retrial. Weinglass explained to the audience at the meeting, "Within one hour after the [1981] incident, Mumia's conviction was sealed." Weinglass said that four people were picked up by the cops that morning to testify against Abu-Jamal. All of them had prior or pending charges against them and thus were susceptible to police pressure.

"All four said Mumia shot the police officer but could not explain how Mumia was shot," Weinglass noted. "A fifth man with no record not only said Mumia didn't do it, but said the gun they said was used was still snapped into its holster. The fifth man was not called as a witness."

"The facts about Mumia's case are not known and never did surface," Weinglass added. "As I read the court records I was astounded by what I found. The money the state paid to investigate that case totalled \$175. No lawyer could ever try a case with that little money. Practically all African Americans were excluded from the jury and this case was sent to a judge leading in sending people to the death chamber."

Although 40 percent of Philadelphia residents are Black, all but one juror were white. Eleven Black jurors were excluded by the prosecution. During the trial the fact that Abu-Jamal had no prior record was never mentioned.

The meeting was hosted by Thera Martin Connelly of WDAS-FM radio and chaired by Shafik Abu-Tahir, chairperson of the Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, the group that sponsored the event. Other speakers included State Representative David Richardson, Karl Baker of the National Conference of Black Lawyers, and Father Paul Washington.

For more information about the defense campaign contact: Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, P.O. Box 19709, Philadelphia, PA 19143. Tel: (215) 552-8985.

## 2,000 at Buffalo pro-choice march

Continued from front page

despite the fact that the group organized a violent six-week siege of abortion clinics in Wichita, Kansas, last summer. Since January, pro-choice supporters have been organizing to insure that the street mobilizations by Operation Rescue are met by a massive peaceful countermobilization of those determined to keep the clinics open. "Terry says get back, we say fightback," and "Hey, hey! ho, ho!, Jimmy Griffin's got to go!" were two of the more popular chants picked up along the spirited march from a city park to the rally held on the steps of Buffalo's city hall.

Buffalo United for Choice, a broad coalition whose members include the National Organization for Women, the Women's Resource Center at Buffalo State College, the University of Buffalo Pro-Choice Action Committee, Workers World Party, Act-Up, and the Women's Health Action Mobilization, organized the April 11 demonstration.

Buffalo United for Choice was formed in January to defend the city's abortion clinics against Operation Rescue's aggressive illegal actions, which aim "to deprive women of the fundamental human right to control our

bodies and our own lives," Sharon Fawley, one of the co-chairs of the rally, explained.

Buffalo United for Choice is urging abortion rights supporters from across the United States to come to Buffalo between April 17 and May 2 to help keep the clinics open. Rally co-chair Valerie Colangelo thanked all those from outside Buffalo who attended the rally. There were delegations from many different cities in New York state, as well as people from California, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Canada.

At least 50 people came from nearby Rochester, where pro-choice supporters will picket a public meeting featuring Randall Terry at the Cornerstone Church April 16. At the rally, Randall Terry's aunt, Dawn Marvin, explained from her personal experiences why she was active in fighting against Operation Rescue.

One striking feature of the crowd was its youth. Elizabeth Becht, a seventh-grade student, told the *Militant* she was there because "this is something I believe in and it will affect me for the rest of my life."

All those wanting to participate in the fight to defend abortion rights in Buffalo should contact Buffalo United for Choice at 716-855-4033.

## Get the facts. Subscribe now.

The *Militant* reports on:

- the new U.S. war moves
- how to fight Buchananism
- the Caterpillar strike
- the battle to defend abortion rights



☐ **Special introductory offer: \$10 for 12 weeks**

☐ \$15 for 12 week renewal ☐ \$27 for 6 months ☐ \$45 for 1 year

Name

Address

City  State  Zip

Union/School/Organization  Phone

Clip and mail to The *Militant*, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014

12 weeks of the *Militant* outside the U.S.: Australia and the Pacific, \$A10 • Britain, £6 • Canada, Can\$12 • Caribbean and Latin America, \$10 • Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, £10 • France, FF80 • Iceland, Kr1,000 • New Zealand, NZ\$15 • Sweden, Kr60

## The Militant

Closing news date: April 13, 1992

Editor: GREG McCARTAN

Managing Editor: GEORGE BUCHANAN

Business Manager: Brian Williams

Editorial Staff: Derek Bracey, Estelle DeBates, Seth Galinsky, Martin Koppel, Paul Mailhot, Argiris Malapanis, Brian Williams. Published weekly except for next to last week in December and biweekly from mid-June to mid-August by the *Militant* (ISSN 0026-3885), 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Telephone: (212) 243-6392; Fax (212) 727-0150; Telex, 497-4278.

Pacific edition printed in Wanganui, New Zealand, by Wanganui Newspapers, Limited.

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

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

bank, to above address. By first-class (air-mail), send \$80. Asia: send \$80 drawn on a U.S. bank to 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Canada: send Canadian \$75 for one-year subscription to Société d'Éditions AGPP, C.P. 340, succ. R, Montréal, Québec H2S 3M2. Britain, Ireland, Africa: £35 for one year by check or international money order made out to *Militant* Distribution, 47 The Cut, London, SE1 8LL, England. Continental Europe: £50 for one year by check or international money order made out to *Militant* Distribution at above address. Iceland: Send 4,000 Icelandic kronur for one-year subscription to *Militant*, P.O. Box 233, 121 Reykjavík. Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark: 400 Swedish kronor for one year. Pay to *Militant* Swedish giro no. 451-32-09-9. New Zealand: Send New Zealand \$90 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand. Australia: Send Australian \$75 to P.O. Box 79, Railway Square Post Office, Railway Square, Sydney 2000, Australia. Philippines, Pacific Islands: Send Australian \$75 or New Zealand \$100 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand.

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



# Socialist presidential candidates speak

'We will tell the truth: Gulf war sounded opening guns of World War III'

The following are the speeches given by James Warren and Estelle DeBates, Socialist Workers Party candidates for president and vice-president of the United States. They were delivered at a rally of campaign workers in New York City, March 29.

## Estelle DeBates

Are we ready? Are we ready to start campaigning?

[The audience responds — Yes!]

Are we ready to go everywhere we can with the socialist alternative in 1992?

[The audience responds — Yes!]

Every person on this platform today, every person in this room, is a fighter, capable of going out, telling the truth, and enlisting other fighters in this campaign.

This campaign is for those who want to go out and answer the more and more reactionary policies and direction of our opponents in the Democratic and Republican parties, the slavish politicians of the ruling rich. They speak only to solving *their* problems, the problems of the ruling rich, not *our* problems, the problems of working people. Our opponents' goal is to advance only *their* position in this world, not *ours*.

This campaign is for those who reject being the objects of history but seek to be the makers of history.

The stakes in this fight are high. The deeper the world crisis of capitalism gets the farther to the right the capitalist politicians move. If they are not opposed, and if in the process the forces that can finally defeat them are not gathered, their course will result in fascism and the unthinkable disaster of a third interimperialist world war. Patrick Buchanan represents what's in store for us if they are allowed to continue to rule unchallenged.

Buchananism is the future coming toward us.

Many young people around the country have told me the future looks pretty scary. If you think of yourself only in the context of the factory where you work, or your union, or the school, the city, or the country you happen to be in, the future does look scary.

I know from traveling to Spain, Britain, Sweden, and Iceland last month; I know from going around this country speaking in defense of abortion rights; I know from going to the rally to defend Caterpillar workers on strike in Peoria, Illinois, last week; I know from meeting fighters in all these places that there are tens of millions of people in this world who are beginning to see what the future will be. Who are seeing this system for what it is: a dying empire. Millions of people are turning to fight against what the ruling rich are willing to do to save a system in its death agony.

Thousands of Iraqis buried alive by U.S. troops during the Gulf war. One hundred million killed in imperialist wars in the last



SWP candidates: James Warren for president and Estelle DeBates for vice-president

century. More than 40,000 infant children dying on this earth every day of starvation or curable diseases.

The people who run this government, who run this country, have proven over and over again — they are unfit to rule.

Around the world millions are questioning: "Can't we do better?" Some are going into action — resisting. That's where we have to go — to the action. But we're not going just to participate. We will bring to the action what we know: a perspective to fight for a better world that is so eloquently explained in Pathfinder books, in *New Internationalist*, and in the *Militant* newspaper.

And we will tell the truth; that there are no solutions for the problems we face that can be found within the confines of this country. There is nothing we can do acting solely within this country to turn the situation around. We are not Americans — first or last; we're part of a totally interdependent world; we're part of an international working class.

They want to depress the living conditions of working people further and decrease the democratic space we have to organize resistance to them. We are committed to fight together with other working people and youth to resist their attacks.

We know above all that *their* interests and *our* interests, nationally and internationally, are irreconcilable. They fight for a powerful American capitalism in a disintegrating world; we fight for the interests of working people worldwide and with working people everywhere resisting the horrors of the world market system. We start from the moral high ground, not the "national interest."

Problems cannot be solved within the context of your union or your factory alone. It

is only the battles fought by working people and what we do to be part of them that will determine whether this world will head toward World War III or whether we can stop it.

They tell us that what we do as workers or as young people doesn't make a difference. But what we do in this world makes all the difference, don't ever let anyone tell you otherwise.

So let's get this show on the road! Pick up the endorsement cards and endorse the socialist campaign now. Sign up, kick in some funds, and help get the socialist ticket on the ballot in states across the country.

If you think we can do better than what we face today — sign up. If you want to stop fascism and World War III — sign up. If you want to join in building an international movement against war, racism, and economic depression — sign up.

This is *your* campaign. James Warren, myself, and the other socialist candidates are at your service. We are not here to use you. We will be going out to have you use us to help reach out to others. We want you to bring us to the fights and meet other fighters. Together we can build a revolutionary, socialist movement throughout this world that will save humanity and open up the fight for a world without borders.

## James Warren

What do you think about a guy named Bush, another named Buchanan, another named Clinton, and another named Jerry Brown?

[Audience responds with loud boos.]

Well, they think exactly the same thing

about you, about working people.

One of them will most likely be chosen to represent the interests of the ruling rich in November. Unless there is some divine intervention one of them will be elected president.

If you listen to what they have presented so far you will not hear any of them offering a solution or even saying there is a solution to the crisis of their system. There is no solution to the crisis of their system. What they offer is a deadly perspective of war, racism, and depression.

With this campaign we'll counterpose our own international perspective to their "family, faith, and nation" perspective.

We are affected by the crisis every day. One of the guys I work with always corrects me when we get into this discussion. "Look Jim," he says. "Me and you, we live in the same conditions; you don't have to convince me that things are bad. My question for the socialist party is: 'What is your solution to the crisis?'"

But *we*, no more than *they*, cannot solve the crisis of the capitalist system. We say the crisis will not only not go away but will get worse. The rulers will fight to impose their so-called solutions on our backs, which just means more of the same — more unemployment, poverty, racism, assaults on women's rights, and police brutality.

We begin with two things in this election campaign. One is we will do everything we can to explain to fighters the fact that the U.S. rulers will go to war as they did in Iraq; and we won't be surprised if they do it before this election campaign is completed.

We must fight against that; we must oppose it, because it will be their war not our war. It will be their war against working people like us, somewhere else in the world. Workers, not capitalists, will die and will suffer. And if they are supported by workers here it will only embolden them to heat up the war against us at home.

We begin with the fact that the crisis must be confronted by working people. We can't weather it, we can't hide from it, we can't get an extra job and get through it, we have to confront this crisis head-on.

What we offer is not a perspective for the American workers. It is not a perspective for the British workers. It is not a perspective for the Japanese workers. It is a perspective for workers and toilers the world over, no matter what nation they happen to reside in, as part of a single class of toilers, oppressed and exploited by the same world capitalist system.

We think one of the most decisive things working people must do in the world is to fight to cancel the foreign debt of the third world countries, of the oppressed nations, a debt which is owed to the imperialist banks.

Second, we should fight for a form of positive action, of affirmative action, to address ourselves to the conditions of life that have been imposed on those who are discriminated against and oppressed by the capitalist rulers.

Third, we should fight to shorten the workweek with no reduction in pay as a way of addressing ourselves to the decisive question of jobs. This is the question of questions from the point of view of working people in capitalist society.

If you go to Africa, Latin America, or the Caribbean you get a very positive response to the idea of canceling the debt. You raise it back where you work in this country, then you get some questions. It makes for a very interesting discussion when you mention the fact that the cancellation of the debt is something that working people in the United States have an interest in fighting for and that we cannot defend ourselves in the long run without taking this question up.

It is the rulers who benefit. We gain nothing from them collecting the debt in the Third World. This is what I told this guy I work with: "What do you mean the people of Latin America and Africa owe 'us' money?" I asked him. "Do you think you are going to get some of it? They rob people in Latin America and the rest of the third world of billions of dollars; the capitalists don't share it with us. They use it to take more from us here. The only way for us to defend ourselves, the only way to weaken them in the fight we carry out in this country is to prevent

Continued on Page 5

## Support the Socialist Workers 1992 Campaign

The Socialist Workers 1992 Campaign appeals to all youth and working people to join us in the internationalist alternative to the wars, racism, and world economic catastrophe capitalism has created. The Socialist Workers campaign is fielding candidates for President and Vice-president, U.S. Senate, Congress, and numerous state positions. Join us!

Please clip and mail to regional offices listed below or give our campaign volunteers a call.

- ☐ Enclosed is my contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_. ☐ I endorse the Socialist Workers 1992 Campaign.
- ☐ I would like to: \_\_\_\_\_ Campaign for the socialist candidates in my area. \_\_\_\_\_ Help petition to put the campaign on the ballot.
- \_\_\_\_\_ Set up a meeting for a candidate in ( ) my union, ( ) school, ( ) church, or ( ) community.
- ☐ Please send me \_\_\_\_\_ campaign brochures at \$.10 each. Enclosed is \$ \_\_\_\_\_.  
August 5-9 in Oberlin, Ohio.
- ☐ I would like to subscribe to the *Militant*, the weekly socialist paper that covers the campaign. Enclosed is \$10 for 12 weeks.
- ☐ Please send me a six-month subscription to the Spanish-language *Perspectiva Mundial*. Enclosed is \$10 for six issues.

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_  
Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

For local information,  
see addresses on page 12.

Send to the Socialist Workers 1992 Campaign at: 191 7th Ave., New York, NY 10011, Phone (212) 675-6740 • 2546 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90006, Phone (213) 380-9460 • 545 W. Roosevelt Rd., Chicago, IL 60607, Phone (312) 829-6815.

Paid for by the Socialist Workers 1992 National Campaign Committee



# Caterpillar strikers resist union-busting

Continued from front page  
UAW's 5:00 a.m. mass picket.

In the Peoria area, the heart of Caterpillar's production facilities, UAW members received a boost from Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers union members, coal miners and union members from other UAW-organized plants. A group of students from Spoon River College also arrived to show their solidarity. "I'm behind these guys," said student Lisa Barnes. "The company is being really stupid."

Caterpillar is the largest private employer in the state of Illinois and a huge multinational manufacturer of earth-moving and construction equipment with plants in Japan, South Africa, Belgium, Germany, and other countries. The company escalated the showdown with the union April 7, demanding union members return to work without a contract or face being replaced by scabs. According to a spokesman for Illinois Bell, tens of thousands of phone calls were placed to the company on the first day, responding to Caterpillar ads for \$16 to \$18-an-hour jobs.

Some 13,000 members of the United Auto Workers are now out on strike against Caterpillar. Most have been either on strike or locked out for more than five months, and living on \$100 a week in strike benefits. Money donated to the UAW's adopt-a-striker fund has recently made it possible for every striker to get an extra \$2,000 from the union. Although there have been many strikes against the company in the past 30 years, this battle has been the most bitter, with the highest stakes for the entire labor movement.

"This is different from the other strikes," said one striker on the picket line in front of the Mossville plant. "In 1982 we were out for seven months but we knew they were just getting rid of their inventory. They weren't going to bring in scabs and try to replace us."

## Caterpillar's takeaway demands

The company tries to portray the strike as mainly over union demands for higher wages and a "lack of understanding" of the company's need to remain "globally competitive" in an increasingly difficult world market. Strikers see their struggle differently.

"Money is not a big issue for me. I don't think money is that big of an issue for anybody, really," said Rodney Orr, a union member at the transmission plant in East Peoria. Orr and other UAW members at the early morning picket line point to the company's many takeaway demands as intentionally forcing the strike.

Caterpillar's final offer includes plans to cut the number of jobs protected from layoff; changes in the seniority system that take away the right of laid-off workers to bump into a job at other Caterpillar facilities before the company can hire new workers; and a two-tier wage and benefit system starting workers out at \$7 an hour, to be instituted at several plants. The union is fighting for a contract patterned after the pact recently signed between the UAW and Deere and Company, another manufacturer of heavy construction equipment.

"It's true we make over \$16 an hour," Bill Hammon, a member of the Decatur local, said. "But I hired at \$2.84 an hour some 20 years ago. The wages we have today are because a lot of people have stood their ground. A lot of people that I don't even know have fought and sacrificed. This company never gave any of us anything out of the goodness of their heart."

Larry Solomon added, "We've made this company rich over the years and we're just asking for what is fair."

The vast majority of union members are staying united and not crossing the picket line. But because of Caterpillar's determination to press the assault and the length of the strike already, there is discussion among some union members who are considering crossing the picket line. Overall, the mood among strikers remains determined.

"We're out here for the next generation," said Wayne Stevens, a UAW Local 974 member in Peoria. "These people crossing the picket line are selling out their kids."

Strikers are also trying to convince union members who have crossed to reconsider and rejoin the strike. When a worker left the Mossville plant two strikers who knew him jumped into his truck and convinced him that

he would be accepted back by his coworkers if he rejoined the strike. After half-hour discussion the three came back to the picket line and were greeted with handshakes and hugs from other union members.

## The world is watching

Caterpillar's decision to begin hiring replacement workers, attempting to scare enough union members to cross the picket line and break the strike, is being cheered on by the big-business media and the major corporations in the United States and around the world. The *Wall Street Journal's* lead story April 7 summarized the stakes in the fight in its headline: "Showdown—Labor makes a stand in fight for its future at Caterpillar Inc."

According to the *Journal*, "The showdown between Caterpillar and the United Auto Workers amounts to more than a frontal assault by a company on one of the few remaining powerful unions in America. With other corporations and unions looking on, it has become a critical battle that could shape labor relations for years to come. . . . Chief among the supporters of Caterpillar's position are the executives of the Big Three auto makers, who employ some 400,000 UAW members."

General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler are hoping for a big win by Caterpillar against the UAW in order to put themselves in a stronger position when contracts with the union come up next year. The auto giants are hoping that a setback for the union in this fight will set in motion another round of takeaway contracts for union members.

## Clinton comes to town

Many strikers saw as a hopeful sign the arrival of Democratic Party presidential candidate William Clinton April 8. Clinton spoke to company and union officials and visited striking workers in front of the plant. He released a letter to the union stating his position in favor of legislation that would bar companies from hiring replacement workers during strikes. His letter to the union also made the point, "Unions should be willing to abandon outmoded work rules that stifle productivity."

Clinton's visit was portrayed in the media as favoring the union's position since he told company representatives, "If this strike comes to the point of replacing workers permanently, it will have a devastating effect." But as he left town, he answered a reporter's question as to who he supported in the strike by saying, "I didn't take anybody's side on any issue."

On the picket line the next day a group of strikers had mixed responses to Clinton's visit and what it accomplished. One striker said, "It brought some national publicity to our fight. I'm for him, I think he's honest." But another union member thought, "The guy just wants to get in front of T.V. It's hard to believe Bill Clinton is really for labor when he's the governor of Arkansas, which has anti-union right-to-work laws."

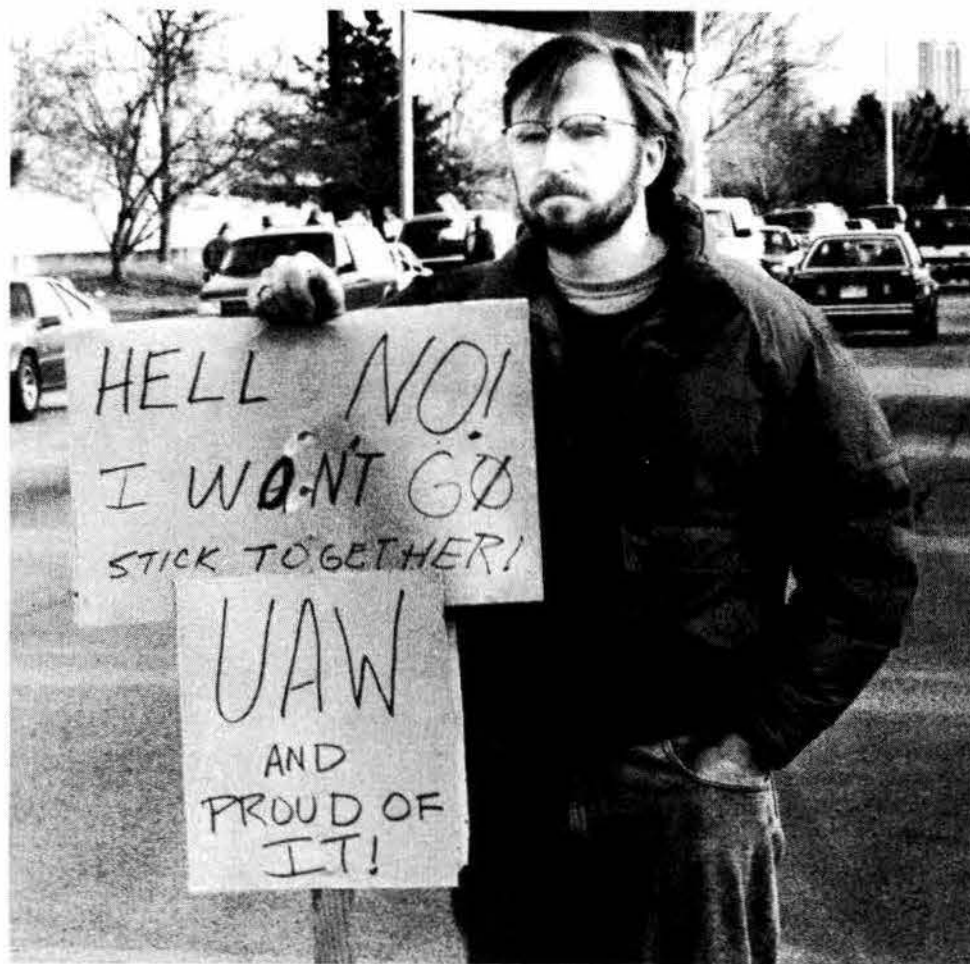
## Caterpillar raises the stakes

On April 9 Caterpillar announced it would meet with a federal mediator about the dispute with the union.

The company's decision was met with some optimism among UAW members since just two days earlier Caterpillar chairman Donald Fites had said, "The time for mediation has passed." But in agreeing to meet with the mediator Caterpillar emphasized its position "that the company's final offer is still on the table and we continue to believe that negotiations with the UAW are at an impasse." The company is going ahead with plans to mail out letters to 2,400 laid-off workers asking them to come in and replace striking UAW members, and saying that new job applications will continue to be taken.

The company's main efforts have aimed to weaken and break the strike rather than resolve the conflict. The company announced April 10 that a UAW member had been fired for alleged "acts of violence on the picket line." Caterpillar also announced it will be asking a judge to find Peoria UAW Local 974 officers and 15 members guilty of contempt of court for having more than 10 members on the picket lines.

Union members see the large rallies on the



Militant/John Sarge

Some 13,000 members of the United Auto Workers are on strike against Caterpillar

roads leading up to company entrances as extremely important to discourage people from entering the plant and scabbing on the strike. Union members see these events as key to keeping up the fighting spirit and demonstrating to Caterpillar that the union remains strong.

## Need for solidarity

The company has spent millions of dollars every month on Vance Security union-busting goons and media advertisements to coax strikers back to work. The company gets plenty of help from the local newspapers, which put pressure on union members to return to work. On April 7, after only a couple of hundred strikers had crossed the picket line, the *Peoria Journal Star* printed four articles about workers who had crossed the picket line claiming that family obligations had forced them to return to work. Four days later the paper ran an editorial denouncing efforts by union members to persuade people not to cross the picket line. "People have the right to go to work free of fear," the editorial

stated, attempting to pin the label of violence on the union.

While the mass rallies in front of plant entrances have continued every day it is evident that powerful forces are being put up against the United Auto Workers. Many strikers see this fight as a battle with high stakes for the entire labor movement. A discussion of the strike among a group of strikers in front of the transmission plant one morning quickly turned to the importance of this fight for other unions. "We're not going to lose here," explained Wayne Stevens. "We appreciate the support we're getting from other unions because this fight is more than about ourselves."

Another striker in the group pointed out, "At first I didn't believe that Caterpillar was going to bring in replacement workers and try to break the union."

"But that's what they're really after," he said. "We need people here supporting us from every union, not just from the UAW. We need other unions because everyone has a stake."

# Union activists facing cop charges reach out for support and funds

Continued from front page

defense effort from here. He explained, "A broad campaign among unionists and others is needed to get the charges dropped. What was done to Kaku and Zins shows what Caterpillar and the police have in store for striking United Auto Workers members in their fight."

Rudy Jansen, a member of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 325 at the Ford assembly plant in St. Louis who has joined the defense effort, agreed: "The way I see it, Kaku and Zins are the first arrests of the Caterpillar strike. They are innocent and the charges should be dropped. All workers should defend them. They are workers who are standing up for the rights of working people."

Another supporter of the defense effort is David Yard, a member of United Mine Workers Local 1969 in central Illinois. He pointed out, "I thought McCarthyism was dead until I heard about these arrests. Every unionist and supporter of the Caterpillar strike should support the charges being dropped."

Some Caterpillar strikers have lodged protests against the arrests through phone calls and written letters to the county prosecutor. Fur-

ther protests are needed to keep the pressure on and convince authorities to drop the charges when they come up for review at a hearing in Peoria April 20.

Messages to demand that the charges against Zins and Kaku be dropped should be sent to Kevin Lyons, Peoria County State's Attorney, 324 W. Main, Rm. 111, Peoria IL 61602. Copies of these, and donations, which are urgently needed to cover more than \$1,500 in initial legal and publicity expenses, should be sent to the Committee to Defend Kaku and Zins, P.O. Box 314, Madison, IL 62060.



Militant

Kate Kaku, socialist and union activist. The arrest of Kaku and Mary Zins shows what cops plan for Caterpillar strikers.



# Socialist candidates join Caterpillar pickets

Continued from front page

hadn't heard about his campaign before but would check it out. "We need a shake-up, that's for sure," he said.

Several workers expressed to the socialist candidate that things had been going downhill for working people ever since Reagan became president. Warren made the point that the assault on labor during the Reagan years had been the work of both the Democratic and Republican parties. The challenge for the labor movement, he said, is how to fight for our own interests independently of these two big-business parties. Conway added, "I don't know if it is just the Republicans; I'm afraid it's not just them. I'm saying that and I'm a Democrat."

Many strikers talked to Warren about how few workers had crossed the picket line and the importance of their fight. "Crossing the picket line has run through everyone's mind. Everybody is hurting. But at some point you just say, 'I can't,'" explained Lin Lacefield. "It's not just about our jobs, it's about the next generation, our kids' jobs. Anyone who crosses is throwing away what they and other people have fought for in the last 40 years. If they replace me at least I'll have a clear conscience."

Strikers also discussed with Warren that one of the main arguments that Caterpillar uses against the workers is the need for the company to be globally competitive. "The company says we have to compete against workers overseas. But what can you say to that? You really can't compete with what workers are working for

overseas," Conway explained.

Warren answered, "One thing we can answer is that we should reach out to workers in other countries and say we have a common struggle. Look at Caterpillar with plants all over the world—they've got them in Belgium, South Africa, Japan, and other countries. This strike is an international question. It affects workers all around the world. We can turn Caterpillar's 'global competition' argument around on them by fighting for global solidarity."

DeBates met several workers who thought the stakes were much higher in this strike than previous fights against the company. "This strike is different," one striker explained. "We've never had to face what Caterpillar is doing against us this time. In all the strikes we've had against this company they've never



James Warren (center), socialist presidential candidate, with Caterpillar strikers in Peoria, Illinois.

Militant/Paul Mailhot

tried to hire replacement workers."

DeBates said she would use her campaign to help get out the word about the strike. "I'm going to talk about the importance of this fight wherever I go. I'll be making a campaign trip to North Korea and Japan next week. I hope that while in Japan I'll be able to talk to some Caterpillar workers there and let them know about your struggle."

Several workers expressed their appreciation to the socialist candidates for stopping by and offering their solidarity and many wished them well in their campaign. One striker who had heard that Warren was on the picket line that morning came over, shook his hand, and said, "I've never met a presidential candidate before. I want to thank you for coming down to show your support. And good luck!"

## Speech by James Warren

Continued from Page 3

them from collecting it, stop them from collecting it."

The second question is the fight for affirmative action. This is becoming a bigger question in politics throughout the world. One of the places where it will become a major question is in South Africa, in the framework of the decline of apartheid—which will leave a deep legacy still to be fought.

Affirmative action is also a central question here. For working people in this country affirmative action must be presented as a tool to organize, to defend, and unite the class in face of the assault by the employers. Without this tool we will not be able to resist them.

It is out of the question that the workers at Caterpillar, the workers at Boeing, the workers in the mines, in the Steelworkers union, can defend ourselves and maintain our standard of living when the conditions of life for the vast majority of working people, especially for people of color and women, is being driven down. It is a question of survival for the working class as a whole.

Third question. The fight for shortening the workweek with no reduction in pay. The idea of a sliding scale of wages and working hours. You get a good response to this from people you talk to in this country and anywhere you raise it.

This also has to be understood for what it is. The single biggest division working people face is the division between employed and unemployed. The politicians blame this situation on scapegoats. They can get a response among working people for Japanese-bashing, for anti-immigrant prejudice and action, for opposition to women's equality. The single biggest issue that divides us within nation states and across borders is the question of jobs.

During the 1988 campaign, when I raised the question of the shorter workweek as the way to eliminate this division, reporters would always tell me. "This is unreasonable. They will never go for it." So I would respond. "Who are you referring to as 'they'?" Working people I talk to go for it all the time. We are not interested whether the bosses will go for it. If working people are capable of fighting for it, then it can be accomplished in the context of all kinds of other things being accomplished in politics.

Our campaign will be going back to Peoria, Illinois, we'll go to Washington, D.C., next weekend for the abortion rights march, and we'll be talking to tens of thousands of working people. We'll take our perspective to fighters against police brutality in Des Moines and in Los Angeles. We'll take the

campaign to Japan and Korea, New Zealand and Australia, to anyone and everyone who has begun to fight. Above all we will tell the truth that the war against Iraq sounded the opening guns of World War III, that the war by the West to impose capitalist oppression and exploitation on working people in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe has just begun, that we all face the conditions of the opening of a world depression that will get worse, and that to all these realities resistance will increase.

The success of this resistance, above all, will depend on recognizing that their interests are incompatible with ours, that ours are worldwide in scope, and if we organize politically independent of them, we can win.

We'll raise this perspective, we'll participate in actions, but we'll also raise the necessity of conquering politics and of conquering the only science that can be the tool that will be used by working people in the world, which is Marxism. We present the ideas of the most outstanding revolutionaries and fighters throughout the history of the working-class movement. This, we think, is part of the contribution we can make to the discussion that is developing in response to the world disorder being organized by capitalism today. It is the contribution we can make in the fight against their push toward World War III.

One of the things they try to do with their propaganda is to say that it is not possible for ordinary people to have much of an impact on society. They say the best thing you can do is to hope to get someone who is sympathetic to you, who claims that they will do the best they can for you in the context of what exists in capitalist society. And if you can find someone like this you should get on your knees and be very thankful for their presence.

We say it's not true. You can fight against the horrors of this system. It's proven by what's happening in South Africa today, it's proven by what's happening in Cuba today, it's proven by those who resist and fight in Peoria, Illinois, by the actions of a fighter like Mark Curtis and what he has accomplished and continues to achieve as part of the working-class movement in this country. We think you can accomplish the same thing.

We want to invite you to be part of the campaign that is determined to build an organization, a party, a movement of youth and fighters that will take this campaign around the country and around the world to anyone who is willing to hear this. Out of that we'll have a much bigger impact in politics in the coming period.

Join us in this effort.

## U.S. court convicts Noriega

BY DEREK BRACEY

Manuel Noriega, the former head of state in Panama, was found guilty April 9 of eight drug trafficking-related charges in Miami. This is the first time a court in the United States has convicted another country's head of state. If the conviction is upheld, he faces up to 120 years in prison. Sentencing has been set for July 10.

U.S. president George Bush immediately hailed the verdict, saying it sent "a lesson to drug lords." However, the conviction and the process leading up to it have come under wide criticism.

"This, in our opinion, is the modern-day version of the Crusades, that the United States will now trample across the entire world, imposing its will upon so-called independent, sovereign nations," said Frank Rubino, Noriega's chief defense lawyer.

"Unless the foreign governments are willing to kneel once a day and face Washington and give grace to George Bush, they too may be in the same posture as General Noriega," Rubino continued.

Rubino noted that the defense was prevented from raising anything considered "political" evidence by U.S. district judge William Hoever. "This was not a drug case," he said. "This was a political case. It always was, it always will be. We only wish we'd been allowed to present the evidence to address this case."

While Bush has claimed that drug trafficking has decreased as a result of the capture of Noriega, the General Accounting Office last summer released a report countering this.

Saying U.S. officials believed that "drug trafficking may be increasing," the report cited one Drug Enforcement Administration agent who "believes that trafficking may have doubled" since the United States invaded Panama in 1989.

The conduct of the government prosecutors is also being challenged. Jeffrey Weiner, president of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers, said he felt that misconduct by the prosecutors amounted to an obstruction of due process. "Everybody who has witnessed this case has been shocked at the government's behavior," Weiner noted.

Noriega's trial was the most recent phase of a U.S. government campaign against him that began in 1987. Washington began to put pressure on Noriega to force him to resign before control of the Panama Canal was scheduled to be turned over to Panama.

This has been agreed to in a 1977 treaty

signed by the U.S. and Panamanian governments, dictating a phased transfer of control of the canal.

In 1987 the U.S. government began a political campaign accusing Noriega of drug trafficking and other crimes. In February 1988, a federal grand jury indicted Noriega on charges of drug trafficking, money laundering, and racketeering.

Then the Reagan administration, followed by that of George Bush, began an escalating campaign of economic, political, and military threats and pressures to force Noriega to step down.

When they failed to force him out, Bush ordered the invasion of Panama in December 1989. Under the cover of massive bombing, 27,000 U.S. troops were sent to topple the Panamanian government.

In the first days of the invasion, thousands of civilians were killed and wounded. Whole neighborhoods were destroyed.

Two weeks after the invasion, U.S. occupation forces seized Noriega, flew him to Miami, and jailed him to await trial.

The defense lawyers asserted that the trial should be dismissed. They pointed to the illegality of his capture and the fact that U.S. courts don't have jurisdiction to try citizens of other countries who are charged with crimes occurring outside U.S. borders. They stated that Noriega was a prisoner of war.

Judge Hoever rejected these arguments and had the trial proceed. The government put restrictions on the defense's ability to present a number of pieces of evidence and call witnesses, on the grounds of "national security."

The trial started in September 1991, nearly two years after Noriega was brought to the United States. The prosecution was pressed by the fact that, despite U.S. forces confiscating 15,000 tons of documents in addition to other material, they had no evidence against Noriega.

Prosecution lawyers organized what some have called a "scorched-earth approach" in pushing for a conviction. They assembled a battery of more than 40 "witnesses" to testify, many of whom had been convicted or faced trial on drug-trafficking charges.

The prosecutors made major deals with many of the witnesses for their testimony. The General Accounting Office report profiled 15 witnesses who were "excused of crimes worse" than those Noriega was tried for, in return for their testimony to secure his conviction.



# Iranian jets bomb guerrilla base in Iraq

BY DEREK BRACEY

Iranian jets flew into Iraq April 5, bombing a base run by antigovernment Iranians. It was the first incursion into Iraqi territory by Iranian planes since a 1988 cease-fire between the countries.

Washington accused Iran of violating the 1988 United Nations cease-fire resolution that ended the eight-year war between Iran and Iraq.

The Iranian government stated that it bombed the base run by the People's Mojahedin in retaliation for an April 4 raid on two Iranian villages by the group. Mojahedin spokespeople said one person was killed and several injured when the jets fired rockets and cluster bombs on the base, which is 50 miles from the Iranian border.

Iraqi jets scrambled to intercept the Iranian planes. One Iranian plane was shot down,

with both Iraq and the People's Mojahedin claiming to have hit it.

Within hours of the bombing raid, supporters of the Mojahedin attacked the Iranian mission to the United Nations and diplomatic missions in 10 other countries.

They broke into embassies and consulates in Australia, Germany, France, Britain, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Canada, Denmark, Sweden, and Norway. In most cases, they smashed furniture and threw diplomatic papers out the windows.

Iraq has come under attack from Washington for using its military forces in response to the bombing raid, as well as for moving its military materiel closer to the Kurdish zone in the north of the country.

Iraq has been flying fighter patrols along the border with Iran since the April 5 attack. In addition, the Iraqi military

moved anti-aircraft missile batteries north to the city of Mosul and deployed more troops to the north.

The U.S. is demanding that the missiles be removed and has warned the Iraqi military not to launch any attacks in the Kurdish areas.

The Bush administration is also pressing Iraq to ground its military planes. The U.S. government said April 6 that Iraq is violating the terms of the cease-fire that ended the Gulf war last year, according to which Iraq is not allowed to fly fixed-wing military aircraft anywhere.

The bombing raid occurred one week before parliamentary elections in Iran, which took place April 10. The elections

for Iran's parliament, or *majlis*, have opened a debate on Iran's political and economic course.

An important question raised in the elections is the future of relations between Iran and the United States. Iran, led by president Hashemi Rafsanjani, has been expanding ties with the United States, including trade. In 1991, Iranian imports of U.S. goods were valued at \$527 million, almost nine times the amount imported in 1989.

Many of the candidates expressed opposition to this expansion of ties with Washington, pointing to the U.S. role in trying to destabilize Iran since the 1979 revolution. They call for continuing to treat the United States as an adversary of Iran.

The Iranian rulers are seeking to push many of the more radical anti-U.S. candidates out of the way. Last month, the Council of Guardians, a government oversight body, disqualified a number of candidates as not spiritually correct, including several current members of the *majlis*.

This included many candidates associated with the early years of the revolution, when tensions with the United States were at their peak. Among them were three candidates from Students Following the Line of the Imam, the group that led the takeover of the U.S. embassy shortly after the revolution.

The economy has also been a central topic of discussion in the election. The working people of Iran have been suffering from widespread unemployment, a severe housing shortage, and 50 percent annual inflation.

There have been struggles by workers for better conditions. One diplomat told the *Washington Post* that he had counted 2,000 ministrikes in the past six months.



President Hashemi Rafsanjani of Iran. Iranian raid on Iraq was first since 1988 cease-fire between the two countries.

## Hundreds sign up for 'Militant' as subscription drive opens

Continued from front page

bought the *New Internationalist* had been stationed in the Persian Gulf during the imperialist assault on Iraq. We overheard her explaining to several other young people the horrible things she had seen Washington perpetrate on the Iraqi people. She spent the rest of the trip reading the magazine."

### Opportunities and challenges

These responses indicate how — by becoming part of the struggles and protests today and discussing the central issues in world politics with other fighters — supporters of the *Militant* can present a working-class and internationalist answer to the rightist course of the two big-business parties, the Democrats and Republicans.

Every person looking for a way to resist the employer-government assault on working people at home and abroad needs the *Militant*. The paper is the voice of the socialist candidates; it provides the facts working people need to learn about other struggles both past and present; and it arms every reader with a course of action on how to unify the working class in the face of the world capitalist economic and social crisis.

With all areas now reporting, the international goals have been set: 3,500 subscriptions to the *Militant*, 750 to *Perspectiva Mundial*, 200 to *L'Internationaliste*, and 1,250 copies of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist*, for a grand total of 5,700. The drive runs for 10 weeks through June 13.

Results from the first week show both the opportunities and the challenge before all supporters. Subscriptions to the *Militant* stand 2 percent behind schedule; sales of *Perspectiva Mundial*, *L'Internationaliste*, and *New Internationalist* also need to be stepped up.

Putting campaigning and selling subscriptions at the center of supporters' political work is not only the way to achieve the goals, but how every campaigner can be most effective in politics today.

Those who sold the most subscriptions and signed numerous young people up as endorsers of the socialist ticket said that their success is based on confidently presenting the truth about world politics. They explained to potential subscribers that the imperialist war against Iraq last year was the opening guns of World War III and what young people, workers, and farmers can do in response.

At the center of the debate in U.S. ruling circles in this election year is how they can respond to the new world disorder that is accelerating out of the combined results of the war against Iraq, the fracturing of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, and economic trade wars. These trade wars are being sharpened by the world depression, which affects not only the Third World, but Europe, North America,

and Japan as well.

The divisions among the Democratic and Republican party candidates are simply over how best to unload more and more of the burden of the economic and social crisis onto the backs of working people around the world in a desperate attempt to salvage the crisis-ridden system of capitalism.

These world developments have sharpened political polarization and class tensions in the United States and other countries, providing broad opportunities for discussion and debate.

Having attractive and snappy campaign signs on literature tables and plenty of campaign leaflets to hand out, supporters point out, is one of the best ways to attract attention and get into discussions on college campuses and at protest actions and political events.

The best way to reach those looking for a way to fight back and for answers to the growing crisis is to get into the campaign spirit for the rest of the circulation effort.

### International target week

In order to get — and stay — on schedule, *Militant* supporters are organizing an international target week from April 25 to May 2. Gearing up now for this eight-day blitz by organizing campaigning teams, speaking engagements for the socialist candidates, trips to cities where Caterpillar workers are on strike, and actions such as the April 25 march in Buffalo, New York, defending abortion rights is necessary to get a real drive going.

Getting out to college campuses over the next several weeks will be especially important, as many schools begin to close down in May.

Carefully organizing the teams each week, preparing for meetings of all supporters for all-out days on Saturday, and having enough papers on hand for maximum sales are just a few of the organizational details that must be attended to as well.

Campaigning with the *Militant* is the best way to build the kind of movement necessary for leading youth, working people, and others in the struggles of today and tomorrow. Achieving the goals in this subscription effort is an essential part of the next steps toward that end.



Selling 'Militant' at farm protest in Canberra, Australia.

## Sales Drive Scoreboard

Areas	The Militant			Perspectiva Mundial		L'Internationaliste		New Internationalist		Total	
	Goal	Total Sold	% Sold	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
<b>UNITED STATES</b>											
Des Moines, IA	130	21	16%	25	1	2	0	40	3	197	25
Pittsburgh	90	14	16%	5	1	2	0	30	0	127	15
Cincinnati	20	3	15%	0	0	0	0	0	0	20	3
Birmingham, AL	80	10	13%	5	0	2	0	40	1	127	11
New York	250	31	12%	100	2	20	1	110	0	480	34
Seattle	120	12	10%	35	5	3	0	25	1	183	18
Cleveland	90	7	8%	10	0	2	1	20	1	122	9
Washington, DC	130	10	8%	20	0	10	0	55	4	215	14
Greensboro, NC	80	6	8%	8	0	2	0	15	0	105	6
Boston	135	10	7%	40	2	15	0	50	0	240	12
Detroit	140	9	6%	10	0	2	0	30	0	182	9
Miami	110	7	6%	30	2	15	1	45	0	200	10
Houston	80	5	6%	20	1	2	0	20	0	122	6
Los Angeles	180	11	6%	100	2	4	0	110	2	394	15
Newark, NJ	160	9	6%	50	0	12	0	70	0	292	9
St. Louis	100	5	5%	5	0	2	0	25	0	132	5
Twin Cities, MN	140	6	4%	20	0	2	0	30	0	192	6
Salt Lake City	130	5	4%	20	0	2	0	30	0	182	5
Chicago	150	5	3%	35	0	5	0	70	0	260	5
San Francisco	150	5	3%	50	3	8	0	70	5	278	13
Atlanta	90	2	2%	8	0	2	0	30	0	130	2
Morgantown, WV	80	1	1%	3	0	2	0	30	0	115	1
Baltimore	120	1	1%	12	0	5	0	40	0	177	1
Ft. Madison, IA	5	0	0%	0	0	0	0	2	0	7	0
New Haven, CT	10	0	0%	2	0	0	0	3	0	15	0
Philadelphia	85	0	0%	20	0	3	0	30	0	138	0
<b>U.S. TOTAL</b>	<b>2,855</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>633</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1,020</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>4,632</b>	<b>234</b>
<b>AUSTRALIA</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>BRITAIN</b>											
Sheffield	50	9	18%	3	0	2	0	25	5	80	14
London	80	3	4%	6	0	2	0	40	0	128	3
Manchester	50	1	2%	2	0	1	0	30	0	83	1
<b>BRITAIN TOTAL</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>95</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>CANADA</b>											
Montreal	65	14	22%	20	0	40	4	50	7	175	25
Toronto	90	8	9%	20	1	5	0	45	2	160	11
Vancouver	75	3	4%	15	0	3	0	25	0	118	3
<b>CANADA TOTAL</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>11%</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>453</b>	<b>39</b>
<b>FRANCE</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>ICELAND</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>15%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>MEXICO</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>NEW ZEALAND</b>											
Auckland	55	14	25%	5	0	1	0	13	0	74	14
Wellington	40	3	8%	1	0	1	0	10	0	52	3
Christchurch	40	2	5%	1	0	1	0	10	0	52	2
Other N. Z.	4	0	0%	0	0	0	0	0	0	4	0
<b>N. Z. TOTAL</b>	<b>139</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>14%</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>PUERTO RICO</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0%</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>SWEDEN</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,530</b>	<b>266</b>	<b>8%</b>	<b>763</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>1,300</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>5,793</b>	<b>325</b>
<b>SHOULD BE</b>											
<b>DRIVE GOALS</b>	<b>3,500</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>10%</b>	<b>750</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1,250</b>	<b>125</b>	<b>5,700</b>	<b>570</b>



# Peru's Shining Path uses terror to impose reactionary policies on working people

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

On February 15, members of the Shining Path organization assassinated the deputy mayor of one of the largest neighborhoods in Lima, the capital of Peru. María Elena Moyano, a leader of the United Left coalition, was blown to pieces by a five-pound charge of dynamite while attending a barbecue.

Moyano was killed for opposing Shining Path's call for an "armed strike" in Lima the day before. Fearing reprisals, many city bus drivers stayed home during the so-called armed strike. At the same time, the government responded with a show of force by deploying 30,000 troops on the streets and flying military helicopters over the capital.

Shining Path has stepped up its armed attacks throughout Peru. Based in the southwestern rural regions, it has gained ground in recent years, extending its activities into the huge shantytowns surrounding Lima. It has recruited members primarily among residents of rural towns, peasants, and slum dwellers.

Shining Path, known in Spanish as *Sendero Luminoso*, has waged a decade-long war against the government. It is a reactionary organization that uses terrorist methods to impose its policies on working people and to attempt to restrict their ability to engage in political activity.

Sendero Luminoso appeals to the most impoverished and desperate layers of society that have been ravaged by the economic and social catastrophe in the country. The group has gained a hearing because of the crisis of the major capitalist parties as well as the discrediting of parties that claim to speak for workers.

## Economic and social calamity

Peru, one of the poorest countries in Latin America, has been devastated by the world economic crisis. Six out of 10 working-age Peruvians are unemployed or underem-

ployed. Today 94 percent of workers in Lima are earning less than the 1970 minimum wage. More than half of the 22 million Peruvians suffer from hunger.

A cholera epidemic has swept the country since the beginning of last year, killing 2,500 people and afflicting another quarter million, with no end in sight. The easily preventable disease spreads because of inadequate sanitary conditions and lack of access to medical care for the majority.

Meanwhile, the wealthy businessmen and bankers who control Peru's economy have further squeezed working people. In August 1990, just two weeks after his inauguration, President Alberto Fujimori decreed a series of brutal austerity measures to meet the demands of the International Monetary Fund for the repayment of Peru's \$22 billion foreign debt.

The government cut subsidies and lifted price controls, leading to a 30-fold rise in gasoline prices and a 7-fold increase for rice, sugar, cooking oil, and other staples. Further sharp price hikes were imposed in December 1990 and February of this year. These blows have pushed down workers' incomes even further and driven small businessmen to bankruptcy.

Conditions are even worse for peasants, who are almost half the population and are exploited by wealthy landlords. Many peasants are forced to grow coca leaf, the raw material for producing cocaine, because they cannot survive on other crops. The prices they get for beans, corn, and rice are so low they cannot afford to plant. The 250,000 coca farmers in Peru account for 60 percent of the world's coca production, which enriches the small handful of drug-trafficking capitalists who control the business.

Miners, electrical workers, teachers, health workers, and other unionists have carried out strikes and protests to fight these oppressive conditions. Peasants have also organized stoppages and strikes in many areas.

## 3,300 Haitians still held at U.S. base

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Lawyers representing the 3,300 Haitian refugees still being held at the United States Navy base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, report that more than 50 Haitians whom the U.S. government ruled could apply for asylum had been deported to Haiti. In addition, U.S. authorities now claim they have lost the records of at least 2,500 of these refugees.

More than 18,000 Haitians have been detained by U.S. Coast Guard ships in interna-

tional waters since the military coup that overthrew the government of Jean-Bertrand Aristide September 30. Of these, 10,000 have been forcibly repatriated by the U.S. government, while another 4,150 have been allowed to enter the United States to apply for asylum.

In a partial victory for the thousands of Haitians seeking political asylum in the United States, a federal court judge has ruled that Haitians at Guantánamo have the right to legal counsel. U.S. authorities can no longer interview them without providing access to legal assistance.

BY TOM FISKE

MIAMI — Eighteen thousand Haitians in Miami turned out here March 21 to hear deposed Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide. Many came not simply to hear Aristide but to demand an end to attacks on democratic rights in Haiti.

At the end of the meeting there broke out a spontaneous demonstration of 1,000 Haitians, almost entirely youth, which wound through the Little Haiti area.

Two points of Aristide's speech got a strong response. At one point he asked if people were discouraged in their fight. They answered with a resounding "no!"

Secondly, when he mentioned the name of George Bush, the crowd broke out in boos. However, Aristide advocated no course to counter Bush's moves. For example, Aristide did not even mention the forced repatriation of many thousands of Haitian refugees to Haiti, or that the Bush administration was responsible for this.

Militant supporters sold 21 copies of the paper, as well as several copies of the French-language socialist publications *Nouvelle Internationale* and *L'Internationaliste* and some Pathfinder literature.



Shining Path members at training camp. The group appeals to the most impoverished and desperate layers of society. It wins a hearing due to the depth of the economic and social crisis in Peru and the bankruptcy of the major political parties.

The regime has responded with ferocious repression. Under the banner of combating terrorism and drug traffickers the regime has placed almost half the country, including Lima, under a state of emergency. Last December the Fujimori government issued emergency decrees granting the military sweeping powers, such as the right to requisition property, draft individuals, freely enter universities and prisons, and jail civilians for treason if they refuse to cooperate with security forces. These repressive measures were greatly extended with the government crackdown that began April 5 (see article on page 16).

In Lima, a *New York Times* report noted, "factories in the industrial zone look like maximum-security prisons" with watchtowers, armed guards, dogs, and sometimes army units standing guard.

## Government tortures, jails opponents

Torture, jailings, and summary executions have become a regular feature of the government's so-called antiterrorist campaign. Peru is the country with the highest number of people detained and "disappeared" in the world. In some cases the army has massacred the entire male population of a town where the guerrillas operated, claiming the villagers were Sendero Luminoso supporters.

Right-wing death squads linked to the armed forces have targeted journalists, human rights activists, lawyers, and peasant and trade union leaders. In addition the government has pressed peasants into "civilian defense" groups under army command in 500 towns.

The U.S. government has stepped up its military intervention in Peru under the guise of fighting drugs. Since 1989 U.S. Green Berets have trained 800 Peruvian police in "jungle drug interdiction." U.S. Marines have secretly trained Peruvian forces in river and jungle warfare and Drug Enforcement Agency officers are stationed at the Santa Lucía army base in the Upper Huallaga Valley, a Shining Path stronghold.

The White House and U.S. Congress reached agreement last fall on a \$24.9 million military aid package to the Peruvian regime.

A recent *New York Times* editorial proposed setting up a U.S.-led military force with other Latin American governments to intervene in Peru and elsewhere on the continent.

Since 1980 some 20,000 people have been killed and tens of thousands have fled the countryside as a result of the political conflict in Peru. The crisis has torn the political fabric of the country and undermined the regime's ability to govern.

The 1990 election of Fujimori was itself a result of the discrediting of the major capitalist parties. A little-known figure whose main campaign theme was honest government, Fujimori defeated President Alan García of the ruling American Popular Revolutionary Alliance (APRA) as well as the right-wing candidate, novelist Mario Vargas Llosa. Once elected he began to apply Vargas Llosa's "shock therapy" economic policies and allied himself closely to the hated military.

Most of the parties in Peru that call themselves socialist and communist, grouped in the United Left and the Unified Mariategui Party (PUM), have also been seriously discredited. They supported Fujimori in the elections as a lesser-evil candidate. The

United Left then broke up as some of its wings accepted ministerial posts in the new government. These parties have been further undermined politically by their support to the regime's "antiterrorist" campaign of repression.

These are the conditions that have led to the growth of Shining Path.

This group began its guerrilla war in 1980 in the southwestern city of Ayacucho. The organization was founded by a group of university professors and students led by Abimael Guzmán, a philosophy teacher. It originated with a split in the Stalinist Peruvian Communist Party in the mid-1960s between supporters of the ruling bureaucracies in Moscow and Beijing. Guzmán's faction then split from the pro-Chinese group and took on the name Communist Party of Peru — Shining Path (PCP).

Shining Path wraps itself in the Stalinist phraseology of what it calls "Marxism-Leninism-Maoism and principally Maoism." The cult around Guzmán, known as President Gonzalo, is called "Gonzalo Thought."

While using a lot of rhetoric about fighting on behalf of workers and peasants, Shining Path is thoroughly anti-working-class in its political perspective and its actions.

In a recent pamphlet the group explains, "The war being conducted by the PCP is mainly a peasant war. Although it also includes combat and other work in the cities, it is based in the countryside and its fundamental strategy is to surround the cities from the countryside." Lima, where one third of the country's population lives, is viewed along with other cities as "bastions of reaction" to be strangled from the outside.

## 'Selective annihilation' policy

Shining Path focuses its actions in the cities on "selective annihilation of recognized enemies of the people (officials of the armed forces, government functionaries, mayors of villages and towns who ignore the Party's invitations to resign, etc.) and of informers," as one of its documents puts it. The guerrillas have assassinated 250 mayors and other local officials in the last three years. They have blown up schools, health clinics, and post offices.

The group also directs its terrorist methods against unions, peasant organizations, and left-wing political parties. Between 1987 and 1989 it murdered five leaders of the mine workers union and the president of the textile workers union, as well as numerous members of the Peruvian Peasant Federation. Sendero has gunned down leaders of the PUM and United Left and launched attacks against the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Organization, another guerrilla group.

Shining Path justifies its antilabor course by attacking trade unions as "the labor aristocracy." The group has no presence in the labor movement and has played no part in the numerous mass strikes and union demonstrations of the last decade. Instead it calls its own "armed strikes" and sets up its own front groups, threatening workers who do not participate in them.

Guzmán stated in a 1988 interview, "The masses have to be taught through overwhelming acts so that ideas can be pounded into them."

In its war against the government, Shining Path views any struggle by working people

Continued on Page 13



U.S. judge ruled Haitians at Guantánamo base (above) have right to lawyer.



# London backs Washington's war moves as British economy sinks into depression

The article on these pages was written before the general election in Britain, which took place April 9. The Conservative Party won a clear majority in the new Parliament, with a record 14 million votes.

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

SHEFFIELD, England — London joined Washington in proposing the resolution to the United Nations Security Council that was adopted March 31, beginning the process of launching sanctions against Libya.

In much the same way that these powers utilized Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, London and Washington are preparing military action against Libya. Sanctions are a first step. Already U.S. warplanes based in Britain have begun bombing exercises to prepare for an attack on Libya.

No controversy has been generated in Britain by the news of these bellicose moves. In the election campaigns of the capitalist parties it is accepted as natural that there is agreement on such matters, just as there was agreement among these parties for the assault on Iraq.

Indeed, on all the major questions facing working people, the capitalist parties are united. For example, both the budget legislated by the government just before the election campaign started and the one proposed by Labour provide for broadly the same levels of government borrowing, spending, and taxation.

The party manifestos also reflect the bipartisan approach. The Conservatives stand on the government's "record" and propose more of the same. Labour proposes to maintain the anti-union laws enacted over the past 13 years, to continue with Britain's nuclear arsenal and place within NATO, to defend the government's stand in favor of integration into the European Community, to beef up the police just as energetically as the Tories have done, and to tighten immigration controls. Both parties agree that the British occupation of Northern Ireland is not an election issue.

As a result, the election has generated little interest among working people. But discussion in the workplaces and unions often comes around to the view that Labour and Tory alike are minimizing the depth of the crisis and avoiding the fact that the lives of working people are being devastated by it.

Millions of workers are coming to realize that we are living not simply through a recession but have entered into a depression. The worldwide depression will continue through the ups and downs in the business cycle. Depression conditions simply mean that the troughs of the business cycle will be

deeper and the recovery shallower.

The British economy is especially vulnerable to an economic downturn that has gripped other major imperialist powers. Britain's capitalist rulers are more dependent than most on repatriated profits from overseas investment, because of the high proportion of their investments that are tied up in other countries. In the United States, for example, Britain is the largest overseas investor. The capitalists have a problem in that no sooner had the British economy started going into recession in the spring of 1990, than the U.S. economy dipped for a second time.

## Britain's exports tumble

Since the beginning of the recession, the gross domestic product in Britain has declined by 3.9 percent. Manufacturing output has fallen for six consecutive quarters, and declined by a total of 5.2 percent in 1991.

The capitalists' hopes that the export of capital goods would pull the economy out of recession have been dashed not only because of the "double dip" in North America but because imperialist powers such as France, Germany and Japan, which were not part of the initial downturn, have now headed toward or into recession.

Britain's exports tumbled as a result of the spreading of the recession. Exports to the European Community, which make up more than half of all British exports, dropped by 7.5 percent in January.

Government hopes of a consumer-led boom have also proved illusory. Working people have been trying to pay off debt rather than taking out new loans. This is not because of the price of credit — interest rates have been declining in Britain — but because of anticipation of what the future holds.

This consciousness of broad layers of working people arises from the accumulated effects of mass unemployment, deteriorating social conditions, and the growing vulnerability of the most exploited. These attacks on living standards have been the rulers' response to the long-term decline in their rate of profit — a decline over several decades — and in particular to the sharp recessions of 1974–75 and 1980–82. These conditions are an indication that a depression has already begun.

At the heart of the declining prospects that the rulers all sense is the fact that their biggest "victory" — the alleged defeat of socialism and the spread of the market system into Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union — has not solved their crisis but only brought new problems. Russia and other members of

the Commonwealth of Independent States are facing an economic and social catastrophe.

The attempt to impose capitalism on the former Soviet Union has not led toward a new period of international capitalist expansion but has become a drain on the capitalist powers, reinforcing pressures to draw the world capitalist system into a downward spiral.

The steep economic decline in Germany since unification, one of the sharpest examples of this process, is one of the great reversals in the history of capitalism. From a stable

at the Maastricht summit at the end of last year, where leaders of the 12 European Community nations agreed to a treaty pledging "ever closer union" on the level of economic, foreign, and other important policies.

At the summit meeting, the British government continued to be caught between its inability to rely on its special relationship with Washington as it had before, and the growing dominance of Germany in Europe.

This problem underlay the conflicts within the Thatcher administration. The decision of the Thatcher government, for the British pound to shadow the German mark



British Tornado fighters used against Iraq in 1991. U.S. planes based in Britain have begun bombing practice in preparation for military action against Libya.

and booming capitalist country dominating Europe, whose ability to digest the East German workers' state was simply assumed by the imperialist rulers, Germany is becoming the problem country of Europe.

Today it faces the decline of the German mark against the dollar despite having the highest interest rates since World War II. Last year German exports to Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union were cut by almost one third.

Germany is also experiencing a rapid growth of ultra-rightist political forces. The employers face resistance from the labor movement. Even the most optimistic economic forecasts in Germany do not anticipate any genuine upturn this year. The Deutsche Bank's chief economist said there would be no real change before 1993.

Originally, the capitalists considered that it was a help to the particularly weak British economy that the recession was not synchronized internationally as in 1974–75 or 1980–82. But this view has changed. As more countries get drawn into the vortex of the international economic crisis, the more the protracted character of the worldwide crisis renders the prospects for Britain bleak.

This partly explains the big drop in investment. Investment by manufacturing industries in capital goods fell by 15 percent last year compared with 1990.

According to figures provided by the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Britain had the lowest profit rates among the six largest capitalist economies.

As profit rates fall, competition between capitals sharpens. Price competition has intensified, nationally and internationally. Rivalry for dwindling markets is not only sharpening between the imperialist powers but is also involving capitalists in the more advanced semicolonial countries.

## Conflicts in European Community

Protectionist blocs and realignments are the ways the capitalist rulers seek to respond. But economic laws are stronger than the firmest trade agreements. One way or another, the capitalists must resolve the problem they call "overproduction" and "excess capacity," that is, more output than can be sold profitably. The United States government not only competes with Japan; it has imposed protectionist measures on Canada, its "free trade partner."

Similar conflicts are developing within the European Community. The deep-going uncertainty of the future was sharply exposed

was the only step the ruling class could take to adjust to this reality. While the government of John Major chose at Maastricht to keep Britain's options open on entry to the European currency in 1997–99 — a concession to the opposition of the Thatcher wing of the Tory party — the ruling class, if faced with such a currency today, would have no option but to enter it.

Yet the steps necessary to create such a currency are far from complete. Further removed are the possibilities of agreement on a common labor laws, a common foreign policy and a common defense force. Since the summit, the likelihood of its proposals being implemented became even slimmer when the German parliament threatened to reject the Maastricht agreement, of which German imperialism itself was the architect.

British finance capital's defense of its interests against its imperialist rivals leads both to greater integration into the protectionist European Community and to sharpened tensions and conflicts within the EC under the banner of "national interest" and "free trade."

While London is less able to lean on the "special relationship" it has enjoyed with U.S. imperialism since World War II, greater integration into the EC does not end that relationship. Just as Britain committed the second largest military contingent to the coalition waging the war against Iraq in order to secure a junior position alongside Washington in the Persian Gulf, it can be expected to be a faithful ally in any new strike against Iraq, Libya, or North Korea.

Britain will also jealously defend its nuclear capacity and involvement in NATO against Bonn's attempts to establish even a limited European armed force.

Experiences such as these have accelerated Germany's efforts to use military power abroad, as in the war in Yugoslavia. German imperialism was first to recognize Slovenia and Croatia and was instrumental in the moves to place the 14,000-strong military occupation force there under the banner of the United Nations.

International instability and the drive to war is shrinking the nuclear umbrella. The bipartisan support in Britain for purchasing the giant nuclear missile submarine Trident — formerly a hotly disputed issue among ruling-class circles — is an expression of this new reality.

## Drive to war

The drive to war is the extension in foreign policy terms of the rightward shift in capi-



G.M. Cookson

Miners demonstrating in 1984. In the six years since the 1984–85 strike, the National Union of Mineworkers has taken a series of blows. Through closures of coal mines and job cuts, the number of miners has fallen below 50,000.



talist domestic politics. This policy aims to shift the crisis onto the backs of working people.

Unemployment has risen for 22 consecutive months, resulting in 1 million additional workers without jobs. British unemployment is officially 10.6 percent but actually higher, and rising. Long-term unemployment is also increasing.

For those with jobs, take-home pay is declining as the bosses impose wage freezes or push settlements below the rate of inflation. Average pay settlements in engineering between November and January were 4.5 percent — about the same as the rate of inflation — compared to 10 percent a year earlier.

Through the 1980s, take home pay for 90 percent of workers kept pace with inflation. But this is no longer the case for a growing number of working people.

This coincides with a lengthening of the working week as bosses drive to increase absolute surplus value. The average length of a male worker's workweek is now 45.5 hours. Twenty percent of men and 5 percent of women work more than 48 hours a week.

The most vulnerable layers of the working class have been especially hard hit by the crisis. Government statistics reveal that the gap between the highest and lowest 10 percent of wage earners is widening. This gap is wider than it was in 1986, according to government figures.

Women working full-time earn, on average, only 70 percent of men's pay.

The lowest paid are also the most vulnerable to the erosion of the social wage and government's taxation policies, which place greater reliance on indirect taxes such as sales taxes. This particularly affects women, who make up the bulk of part-time workers; Blacks, especially Black youth, who suffer significantly higher than average unemployment; and immigrant workers.

#### Homelessness doubled in the 80s

Homelessness doubled during the 1980s. Of the official homeless 12 percent have jobs. In 1991, 75,000 homes were repossessed due to default on mortgage payments, an increase of 72 percent over 1990. Meanwhile, council house building (public housing) has ground to a standstill. Measures taken by the government have frozen £7.4 billion (1 British pound = US\$1.75) of local government funds to prevent the money being spent on housing.

Although overall government spending has continued to rise, working people in most need get less benefit, and education and health funding falls behind need at an accelerating rate. One index is that curable diseases like tuberculosis are reappearing in the inner-city areas.

In addition, a series of business scandals, such as those surrounding the Bank of Credit and Commerce International, and publisher Robert Maxwell, have erupted. As financial empires go down, the conspiracies, spying, corruption, and frauds, which are a normal part of the functioning of capitalism, get exposed. While the capitalist class labels Maxwell a crook in an attempt to present him as an exception, they cannot escape the fragility of the system revealed in the scandal. Today, the Canadian company Olympia & York — the biggest property developer in the world — faces a £20 billion crisis, one result of which could be the end of the Canary Wharf development in London, the largest in Europe.

Such crises impact not only on the company executives or workers. They deeply affect middle-class layers who have shares in the companies, deposits in the banks, loans or mortgages, or personal stakes in the pension funds.

The middle classes have also suffered the consequences of economic policies the government has pursued to defend capitalist interests in Britain in the face of sharp competition from abroad.

Through measures dubbed "people's capitalism" and "shareowning and homeownership democracy," the Conservative government won the support of the middle classes and of large sections of the highest-paid workers. These measures included a wage policy that favored the better-paid; sales of council



Labour Party leader Neil Kinnock (left) and Prime Minister John Major of the Conservative Party. On major questions the capitalist parties are united against workers.



houses and expanded mortgage facilities; and the low price attached to shares from privatization of industries.

The effects of high interest rates — used to protect the pound as a world currency — and increased taxes has led the "property-owning democracy" to be renamed the "property-owning democracy."

Tight monetary policies have also devastated small businesses. In 1991 almost 50,000 businesses collapsed, 65 percent more than the previous year and the highest number since records were established in 1980.

The crisis has also spread to the farms. Working people on the land face long-term depression conditions, driving 12,000 workers and working farmers off the land each year. Farm incomes plunged by 14 percent in 1991, hit by increased input prices and lower returns.

Among farmers, middle-class layers, capitalist magnates, and better-off workers, there are some people whose fortunes are advancing today. The depression does not affect all branches of industry equally; it does not mean that everyone will be reduced to the condition of the poorest sections of society. This was the pattern also in the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Despite this variation, the capitalist moneybags in all sectors are driving to increase the rate of exploitation of labor through speed-up, work discipline, increased flexibility, and longer hours. The shakiest firms do so to survive. The most profitable take advantage of depression conditions to increase their profit rates. In February British Telecom, with profits of £3 billion, announced that 25,000 jobs would be cut. This is why the depression affects all classes and all working people, despite its unequal effects. Another consequence has been the erosion of safety on the job. Over the last two years 1,016 workers have died at work. In only one case did the police investigate. Jasmin Zimnowski, whose brother was killed on a London construction site, noted that the law "seems geared to protecting companies — their interests, their profits and their reputations."

#### Labor in retreat but not broken

Under the attacks of the imperialist rulers and their governments, the labor movement has been in retreat. Strikes have declined: 1991 registered the lowest recorded number of days lost due to strikes.

The union officialdom is leading this retreat. As a result serious attacks have been accepted without a fight. For example, unions were derecognized at Unipart and BP Chemicals. British Rail won the right to bypass the union in certain traditional areas covered by collective bargaining. At Rolls Royce and Ford Iveco, employers won pay freezes. There was a three-fold increase in pay freezes and wage cuts in the third quarter of last year alone.

Union membership of affiliates to the Trades Union Congress fell by 400,000 last year; it now stands at 7.8 million compared with 12 million in 1979.

Despite the retreat led by the labor bureaucrats, the rulers have failed to drive the union movement off the center stage of politics.

One expression of this is the fact that the bosses are not able to unilaterally impose

their anti-union measures. Each probe they make raises the possibility of a fight. The rulers have to tread carefully as they proceed with their offensive. Pay freezes are still an exception, not the rule.

In the mines, the government is still a considerable distance from achieving its objectives despite defeating the union in the 1984-85 strike and carrying through huge attacks on miners since.

In the six years since the end of the 1984-85 strike the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM) has taken a series of blows. Through pit closures and job cuts the number of miners has been reduced to less than 50,000. Speed-up and other productivity measures have eroded safety.

Wage "agreements" have been forced on the NUM without negotiation. These do not maintain the level of take-home pay, while bigger and bigger portions of a mineworker's wage packet are made up of bonus and overtime payments. Contract working has mushroomed, further weakening the union. The goal of these measures is not the privatization of the mines — although that is a likely consequence — but the drive to increase profitability of the mines today and to weaken the union.

The government-commissioned Rothschild report predicts that the current "rationalization" of the coal mining industry could result in the number of pits being cut to as low as 14 or 12 by 1995, with the loss of 40,000 jobs.

However, resistance to these attacks con-

tinues. In the last few months there have been strikes at Frickley, and Whitmoor, and an overtime ban at Manton. At Ollerton in November and Bolsover in February, strike action involved both NUM and Union of Democratic Miners members.

The strikes are short and tend to be centered on working conditions and victimizations. However, the continued resistance means that British Coal has yet to win acceptance of its drive toward compulsory layoffs.

While the job-cutting program found plenty of volunteers in its earlier phase, depression conditions are convincing many miners that it is better not to volunteer today, despite lucrative "sweetener" payments.

#### Student protests

Many working people identified and sympathized with the wave of student occupations in the autumn of 1991. The student actions were prompted by the same depression conditions that face all working people: cutbacks in government spending and the growing poverty of students. Rents have risen year after year for substandard accommodation, grants have been frozen in real terms since 1989, and the right to housing benefit and income support during holidays has been abolished. Many students face the choice of fighting back or leaving college.

College managements have increased student enrollment to increase income from fees, while cutting services — resulting in overcrowding and shortages of books and equipment.

Students at 20 colleges joined the autumn protest. Following the occupations, a national student demonstration attracted 30,000 people.

In an attempt to weaken the resistance the rulers have sought to intensify divisions among working people and cut down space for organizing resistance. Attacks on democratic rights have been pushed through by each government in the last two decades. A feature of these attacks has been tighter racist immigration and nationality laws aimed at intimidating immigrant workers.

Anti-immigration measures were intensified during the imperialist assault on Iraq with the internment and expulsion of Iraqi and Palestinian nationals and racist media campaigns. These measures received bipartisan support in Parliament.

So did the government's Asylum Bill,

Continued on Page 12

## Japanese stock market plunge sends shock waves worldwide

BY SETH GALINSKY

Sending shock waves throughout already jittery financial markets around the world, the Japanese stock market plunged last week to its lowest level in more than five years.

The steep three-day drop followed a steady decline since its 1989 peak that has cut the value of stocks on the Nikkei exchange by 60 percent.

The "carnage" in the Tokyo stock market, as the *Wall Street Journal* called it, highlights the vulnerability of the world capitalist economy, the instability of the banking system, and the growing possibility that a partial crisis can precipitate a chain reaction across the globe.

Capitalists in Japan are especially worried. "We have been thinking about nothing else for several days," said one high-ranking Finance Ministry official. "But there is nothing we can do."

Among the hardest hit businesses were some of Japan's most prestigious banks. For example, the Dai-ichi Kangyo Bank, the largest commercial bank in the world, registered a 30 percent loss by April 7.

Japan's leading financial daily in its April 8 edition compared the Nikkei's performance over the last decade with Wall Street's from 1921 to 1932 leading up to the great depression. The plunge comes as the Japanese economy heads into a recession. Industrial production in March was down 4.6 percent from a year earlier.

Stock markets around the world — in France, Germany, the United States, Britain, Canada, Italy, Sweden, Switzerland, Hong Kong, Singapore, Australia, and New Zealand — were reeling from the Tokyo drop. The largest related fall was in France where 40 "blue-chip" stocks dropped 3.4 percent. Wall Street's Dow Jones dropped almost 3 percent in just two days. The only major exchange that did not drop was Mexico's.

"It's symptomatic of a weakening Japanese economy, which on top of a weakening German economy brings into question the strength and durability of the economic rebound in the U.S.," Michael Metz of Oppenheimer & Co. told the *Wall Street Journal*.

Japanese banks are among the top money lenders in the world and count many U.S. cities among their clients. With Japan's largest banks hardest hit in the stock plunge, credit could dry up, touching off an even deeper crisis. Even before the latest decline, Japanese investment in the United States fell to \$2.3 billion in 1991, down from about \$25 billion in each of the two previous years.

The interdependence of the capitalist economies was shown by the rapid action initiated by the U.S. Federal Reserve — lowering short-term interest rates — in an attempt to increase the flow of money and ease the impact of the Tokyo decline. The Federal Reserve decision helped to spark a small rally on the Nikkei exchange and other stock markets around the world April 10.



# Pathfinder moves into its new offices

Volunteers mobilize to aid move and begin next phase of reconstruction



An April 11 banquet and rally in New York City celebrated the completed reconstruction of the fourth floor of the Pathfinder Building, where the new offices for Pathfinder Press are now located. Pathfinder publishes books by Malcolm X, Che Guevara, Fidel Castro, Nelson Mandela, Karl Marx, Farrell Dobbs, and other revolutionary leaders. Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes (center, at podium)

Center photo for the Militant by Argiris Malapanis. Other Militant photos by Eric Simpson explained the importance of this project at the celebration. The other photos depict (clockwise from upper left): the new Pathfinder offices on the fourth floor; volunteers packing up files on the first floor so that old walls can be torn down; arranging furniture; some of the 150 volunteers who helped for two days. The next phase of the project will include the reconstruction of the Pathfinder printshop.



# Australia event shows support for Curtis

BY PAUL ROBERTS  
AND LINDA HARRIS

SYDNEY, Australia — "I had an opportunity in the last 48 hours to read the transcript of the trial and I am more convinced than ever that Mark Curtis is innocent," stated Tim Anderson at a March 18 meeting here. The event was organized by supporters of the Mark Curtis defense campaign in Australia to celebrate the recent victory won by Curtis in his lawsuit against the Des Moines police and to launch an effort to win wider support to his fight for parole.

Mark Curtis, a former meat-packer, is a unionist and political activist who was framed up on charges of rape and burglary in March 1988. At the time, Curtis was part of a fight to defend immigrant coworkers. He was beaten by the police while being interrogated in jail. One of the cops who beat him called him "a Mexican lover, just like

you love those coloreds." Curtis has served three and a half years of a 25-year sentence.

Tim Anderson, an endorser of the Mark Curtis defense campaign, is well known in Australia for his own defense campaigns against police frame-ups. Just last year he won a victory against the police attempt to frame him again, this time on murder charges from a 1978 Hilton Hotel bombing in Sydney. At the meeting, Anderson went through the evidence from the transcript that refutes the claims of the frame-up in some detail.

He gave an example from his own experience just prior to the Hilton bombing frame-up. He said he was walking home one night in Glebe, Sydney, when he was stopped by police, thrown up against a wall, and then arrested as a suspect for a case of break and entry that had occurred in the neighborhood. "The police didn't know who I was but they found out very soon after. They cooked up a

story and I was charged with offensive language and resisting arrest. I was eventually acquitted.

"I suspect police didn't know Mark was a political activist but they found out very quickly. He was in the wrong place at the wrong time just like I was at Glebe," Anderson said, "and he was a person the police didn't like. Activists like Mark put themselves in the front line and make themselves vulnerable to the state."

Chairing the rally, Megan Martin explained that Tim Anderson's and Mark Curtis's fights are battles against police frame-ups. "There are hundreds more unsung examples of battles against police frame-ups and hundreds more unnamed victims of police brutality," she said. "We know of some cases: the cases of Arthur Murray, Sonny Bates and the Brewarrina 17; and of all the Aboriginal deaths in custody."

Murray and Bates are currently appealing their conviction in the Supreme Court of riot charges, a frame-up stemming from a 1987 cop attack on a funeral wake for Lloyd Boney in Brewarrina. A Royal Commission was held to look into cases of Aboriginal deaths while in police custody.

Ron Poulsen, a member of the Food Preservers Union and speaking on behalf of the Mark Curtis defense campaign, took up this point. He said the court ruling against the police who beat Curtis occurred because "across the length and breadth of the United States as well as in Australia, there is resistance to the increasing incidence of police brutality and racist attacks."

"Mark Curtis's beating was not an exception," Poulsen explained. "We couldn't have asked for more vivid evidence of this, than last week," he said. The TV screening of the video "Cop it Sweet" described the racist attitudes and language of the cops patrolling Redfern, an Aboriginal community in Sydney. This was amplified by news clips of another video taken at a police party in Bourke, New South Wales, in which two cops appeared painted black with nooses around their necks. The cops posed as David Gundy, who was shot dead in a police raid, and Lloyd Boney, who died by hanging while in police custody.

Discussion followed in which a number of questions were raised from the floor, including a question about Curtis's alibi, to which Anderson responded.

Outside, a small number of supporters of the police frame-up against Mark Curtis unsuccessfully attempted to dissuade people from coming to the meeting. Almost \$100 was raised at the meeting of 22 people. Two participants bought the pamphlet entitled *The Frame-up of Mark Curtis*.

## Union of Young Communists holds its sixth congress in Havana, Cuba

BY ROSA GARMENDIA  
AND AARON RUBY

HAVANA, Cuba — Close to 1,500 delegates from across Cuba, representing more than 600,000 members of the Union of Young Communists (UJC), met in Havana from March 31 through April 4 to discuss out perspectives for meeting the challenges facing Cuba today.

The first day of the Sixth Congress of the UJC was opened at 7:00 a.m. with the delegates digging bomb shelters in Havana.

The gathering, dubbed the "Congress in the Streets", was organized to achieve the broadest participation by the Cuban people in its activities. "The challenge is to be inventive and not to copy. We seek to have all young people identify with the UJC as their organization," explained Enith Alern Prieto, a member of the newly-elected National Bureau of the UJC and of Cuba's national legislature.

In a change from previous congresses, all delegates were housed in private homes in Havana rather than in convention facilities.

Delegates rode to all the sessions and activities on the first 1,500 Cuban-made bicycles. Hundreds of thousands of bicycles have also been imported over the past several months, as part of government initiatives in response to the severe reduction of fuel supplies arriving from the former Soviet Union.

The UJC organized a broad public campaign which raised over \$15 million Cuban pesos to finance the congress. The organization donated everything they received over

the \$881,000 in conference costs to construction projects to meet social needs. Previous UJC congresses had been largely financed by the government.

The congress included a day of 17 separate meetings throughout the city of Havana which took up topics like the food program, tourism, religion, defense, and the challenges facing young women.

These sessions were open to many non-members, like the youth who are known in Cuba as *los roqueros* — the rockers. They are young people who like rock music, wear long hair and have faced discrimination because of this. At the initiative of the UJC, several hundred rockers had recently volunteered for a one-month stint working on an agricultural brigade producing food for Havana residents. (An article on the rockers appeared in the February 7 issue of the *Militant*.)

"This experience helped to forge a real friendship with the UJC," said Rita Maria Martinez, a 22-year-old rocker. "With the discussions at the congress I believe that the situation will improve," she said in reference to the problems of discrimination they have faced. "It never occurred to me to leave, because I am a Cuban and I think that communism is the best perspective. These are our problems and we have to find our solutions."

The congress voted to dissolve the National Committee of the UJC and to streamline leadership bodies at the municipal and provincial levels with the aim of making the organization more responsive and accessible to youth. A National Bureau of 26 was elected

and Roberto Robaina was reelected first secretary of the organization.

The congress was capped off with a speech by Cuban president Fidel Castro, carried live on national TV and radio. Later that evening tens of thousands of youth gathered in the Plaza of the Revolution where Robaina read the manifesto of the congress and a concert was held. Large segments of the congress itself were carried on TV during the week following the gathering.



Delegates rode bicycles to all sessions of Cuban youth congress. Roberto Robaina (pictured in center with hand in air) was reelected first secretary of the UJC.

## California SWP candidate: End use of death penalty! Halt the execution!

BY JOAN RADIN

SAN FRANCISCO — Joel Britton, Socialist Workers Party candidate for U.S. Senate from California, is demanding that California governor Peter Wilson call off the planned April 21 execution of convicted murderer Robert Harris.

Lurid media accounts of steps being taken to recommission the gas chamber at San Quentin prison have riveted attention on what could be the first use of the death penalty in California in 25 years.

The governor is facing appeals to stop the execution from Mother Theresa, actor Mike Farrell, San Francisco sheriff Michael Hennessey, and others. A cousin of one of Harris' murder victims stated his opposition to executing a person who is not sane.

Wilson has taken the unusual step of scheduling a "hearing" April 15 before announcing his decision on whether he will commute the death sentence.

Britton spoke at a Militant Labor Forum here April 11 on "Japan bashing: the stakes for U.S. and Japanese workers as the economic and social crisis deepens."

"We are opposed to the government of the capitalists having and using the death penalty weapon no matter who they use it against," he said.

"In the hands of the capitalist politicians, the death penalty is a weapon pointed ulti-

mately at all who might come forward to fight for workers' rights and social justice. We favor taking the death penalty weapon away from them and, as long as it is on the books, fight to block its use," the Senatorial candidate said.

"In a period marked by the kind of resistance to the employers' attacks on working people that we now see so dramatically in the Caterpillar strike, the rulers will drive toward using their death penalty weapon more often," he said. "In a period marked by Washington's determination to strike militarily at countries that refuse to bow to U.S. imperialism, the rulers will drive toward more frequent use of their death penalty weapon."

"In a period of economic and social crisis that more and more people view as a depression," Britton said, "the rulers will insist on using their death penalty weapon."

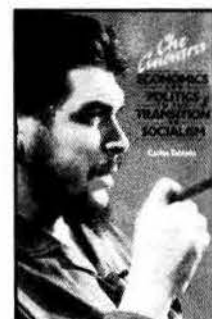
"Our campaign is opposed to making working people pay for their economic depression, to their drive toward another world war, to their union busting, to their attacks on democratic rights, to their incipient fascist movements such as that of Patrick Buchanan."

"We who seek to help mobilize to defend working people and to fight to take power out of the hands of the rulers," he said, "must say 'No!' to the planned execution of Robert Harris."

## further reading from Pathfinder on the Cuban revolution



**In Defense of Socialism.** In these speeches Castro argues that progress is impossible on the basis of the dog-eat-dog competition of capitalism. 142 pp. \$12.95



**Che Guevara: Economics and Politics in the Transition to Socialism,** by Carlos Tablada. Che Guevara saw political consciousness and control by working people as key to building socialism. 286 pp. \$16.95



**Che Guevara, Cuba, and the Road to Socialism.** An exchange of views on the place of Che Guevara's perspective. 204 pp. \$10.

To order a copy of these publications or obtain a copy of the complete Pathfinder catalog, visit the bookstores listed on page 12 or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Please include \$3 for postage and handling for first title, \$.50 each additional title.



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

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

## CALIFORNIA

### Los Angeles

**The Threat of War: U.S. Prepares to Strike Libya, Iraq, and Korea.** Speaker: Joel Britton, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Senate. Sat., April 18, 7:30 p.m. 2546 W Pico Blvd. Donation: \$4. Tel: (213) 380-9460.

## CONNECTICUT

### New Haven

**Workers on Strike at Caterpillar: A Fight for All Working People.** Speaker: Ed Warren, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Senate in New York and member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 174. Tues., April 21, 7:30 p.m. Dwight Hall, Library, 67 High Street. For more information: 772-3375.

## MARYLAND

### Baltimore

**Defend a Woman's Right to Abortion!** Speaker: Traci Castro, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., April 18, 7:30 p.m. 2905 Greenmount Ave. Donation: \$3. Tel: (410) 235-0013.

**Support the Caterpillar Strikers!** Speakers: A panel of unionists. Sat., April 25, 7:30 p.m. 2905 Greenmount Ave. Donation: \$3. Tel: (301) 235-0013.

## New Zealand

**The socialist answer to war, racism, and depression**

**Hear James Warren**  
**Socialist Workers Party**  
**candidate for U.S. president**

**Auckland:** Wednesday, April 22, 7 p.m. La Gonda Arcade, 203 Karangahape Rd. Donation: \$5. Tel: (9) 793-075.

**Christchurch:** Tuesday, April 21, 7p.m. 593a Colombo St. (upstairs). Donation: \$5. Tel: (3) 656-055.

**Wellington:** Rally to celebrate and raise funds for the *Militant* newspaper. Sunday, April 19, 7:30 p.m. Tararua Tramping Club hall, Moncrieff St. (off Elizabeth St.), Mt. Victoria. Donation: \$5. Tel: (4) 384-4205.

## MINNESOTA

### St. Paul

**Jew-Hatred: Its Origin and Place in U.S. Politics Today.** Speaker: Marea Himelgrin, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., April 18, 7:30 p.m. 508 N Snelling Ave. Donation: \$3. Tel: (612) 644-6325.

## NEW YORK

### Manhattan

**Eyewitness Report from the Picket Lines. Join the Battle to Defeat Caterpillar's War on Labor.** Speakers: Melissa Harris, SWP candidate for Congress; Angel Lariscy, New York State SWP campaign director. Sat., April 18, 7:30 p.m. 191 7th Ave. Donation: \$4. Tel: (212) 675-6740.

## PENNSYLVANIA

### Philadelphia

**Cuba 1992: Meeting the Challenges Confronting the Revolution.** Speaker: Mary-Alice Waters, Socialist Workers Party National Committee, and editor of *New Internationalist*. Sat., April 18, 7:30 p.m. 1906 South St. Donation \$5. Tel: (215) 546-8218.

## TEXAS

### Houston

**Racial Oppression: How It Began, How It Will End.** A panel discussion. Speakers: Representative of African Holistic student organization, Prairie View University; Jackie Floyd, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., April 25, 7:30 p.m. 4806 Almeda. Donation: \$3. Tel: (713) 522-8054.

**New Stage in the Struggle to End Apartheid.** Speakers: Hilton Mokoka, African National Congress; representative of Socialist Workers Party. Sat., May 9, 7:30 p.m. 4806 Almeda. Donation: \$3. Tel: (713) 522-8054.

## WASHINGTON

### Seattle

**Depletion of a Valuable Food Source: Who Is Responsible for Endangering Coho Salmon?** Speakers: Wilbur Slockish, Jr., Native American fishing rights activist; Mark Severs, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Senate and member of International Association of Machinists Local 2202. Sat., April 18, 7:30 p.m. 1405 E Madison. Donation: \$3. Tel: (206) 323-1755.

## CANADA

### Vancouver

**Join the Battle to Defeat Caterpillar's War on Labor.** Speakers: A panel of unionists. Sat., April 18, 7:30 p.m. 3967 Main St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (604) 872-8343.

## NEW ZEALAND

### Wellington

**Communist League Convention and Socialist Educational Conference.** April 18-19. For information phone Auckland (9) 379-3075, Christchurch (3) 656-055, or Wellington (4) 384-4205.

## SWEDEN

### Stockholm

**10,000 on Strike At Caterpillar.** Speaker: Erik Dahlrot, auto worker at Saab-Scania. Sat., April 18, 3 p.m. Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St Eriksplan). Tel: (08) 31 69 33.

# Fight against police brutality discussed at Miami forum

BY DAN FEIN

MIAMI — Several important battles in the fight against police brutality were addressed at the Militant Labor Forum here March 7.

The forum began with a video portion of the TV show "48 Hours" called "Cops on Trial," documenting the case of Bobby Jewett, a 36-year-old worker who was killed by West Palm Beach cops 90 seconds after being arrested for hitchhiking. Andy Towbin spoke about the 16-month struggle led by Jewett's mother to prosecute the cops. A court found the officers not guilty of criminal charges, but community demonstrations did force the chief of police to fire them.

Juan Abalante, a student at North Miami High School, spoke about his 16-year-old classmate, Andrew Morello, who was killed by two cops for allegedly stealing a car radio. He described how the school administrators and some teachers tried to prevent students from passing out leaflets announcing a candlelight vigil at the site of Morello's death.

Andrew Morello's father, Joseph, spoke in the discussion period. He said the cops who shot his son were "murderers who hide behind their badges." He described how the cops erased all the radio transmission tapes from that night to cover up their crimes.

Billy Hardemon, a long-time activist against police brutality, told some of the ugly history of racist police killings in Miami. In explaining the recent Antonio Edwards case, Hardemon said, "It is not a Black/white thing. Black cops under a Black police chief put a Black man, Antonio Edwards, in his present condition." Edwards has been in a coma for more than a month since Miami cops used the chokehold on him. Edwards's car was parked facing the wrong direction. The cops said his car matched the description of a car used in killing a cop a few days earlier.

Hardemon said the cops should be charged with murder. He noted that the suspended cops involved in the Edwards case were, in effect, "on paid vacation."

Kathryn Crowder reported on a rally she had attended in Des Moines, Iowa, to celebrate the victory in Mark Curtis's lawsuit against the Des Moines police who beat him. She explained that the community mobilizations against the recent Des

Moines cop beating of Larry Milton helped determine the positive outcome in Curtis's lawsuit.

*Dan Fein is a member of Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 3-681 in Miami.*

# U.S. colony in Pacific hides slave labor camp

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

A slave labor camp was discovered on the Mariana islands, a U.S. colony in the Pacific, the ANSA news agency reported.

The owners of a company on Saipan, one of the Mariana islands, confined workers to barracks surrounded by barbed wire fences. Security guards with attack dogs kept them under constant surveillance.

Workers were only allowed to leave their dormitories to go to the labor camp's work houses, also surrounded by barbed wire and watched by guards.

The Mariana islands, located south of Japan, have a population of 21,000. Together with a number of other Pacific islands, they were colonized by Japan until World War II, when they were seized by Washington, the present colonial rulers.

Saipan is under the jurisdiction of U.S. laws, exempting businesses there from tariffs and allowing them to manufacture clothing with a "Made in the USA" label.

While subject to U.S. labor legislation, the island, like other U.S. colonies such as Guam and Puerto Rico, is used by wealthy corporations as a source of superexploited labor and consequently high profits. The Tan family, owners of the slave labor camp, has six factories on Saipan.

# CALENDAR

## TEXAS

### Houston

**Celebrate May Day: Backyard Party for Mark Curtis Parole Now Fund Raffle.** Sat., May 2, 6-10 p.m. 1351 Goswell, Channelview, Texas. Watch video on frame-up of Mark Curtis. Drawing at 8 p.m. For more information: (713) 522-8054 or 452-7214.

# Britain sinks into depression

Continued from Page 9

although the enactment of this was postponed due to public opposition and street protests. The law would have enabled the immigration police to categorize asylum seekers as "political" or "economic" refugees, denying entry to the latter. As John Major explained it: "We must not be open to all comers just because Rome, Paris, and London are more attractive than Bombay or Algiers."

Similar racist slurs from Conservative Party officials were directed against Ashok Kumar, the Labour Party candidate in the Lanburch by-election last year. There is a strong anti-foreigner content to the "Britain first" framework of all bourgeois forces in relation to the European Community. One ideological campaign sponsored by ruling-class politicians as they compete with German imperialism is the resurgence of anti-German prejudice. For example, a law was recently enacted to intensify the search for Nazi war criminals, and statues have been erected to 'Bomber' Harris, the butcher of Dresden. Anti-German demagoguery is a prominent theme in the speeches of many labor officials.

Official racism and xenophobia are fueling racist attacks. According to Home Office figures, 6,000 recorded racist attacks took place in 1990 — a 25 percent increase over 1989.

Police brutality and frame-ups are increasing as part of this offensive. The Deane family from Newham — beaten by the police and then charged with assault — is one of several Black families campaigning against police brutality and frame-up. Blacks are at the sharp end of a common brutality that is meted out to all workers.

In response to the racist assaults a series of fights has been mounted by victims and

their families and friends. These fights are winning growing support from working people and youth, especially those who are Black. Demonstrations have been organized to demand the prosecution and imprisonment of those responsible for racist murders and assaults.

# IF YOU LIKE THIS PAPER, LOOK US UP

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

## UNITED STATES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**MARYLAND:** Baltimore: 2905 Greenmount Ave. Zip: 21218. Tel: (301) 235-0013.

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

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

**MINNESOTA:** Twin Cities: 508 N. Snelling Ave., St. Paul. Zip: 55104. Tel: (612) 644-6325.

**MISSOURI:** St. Louis: 1622 S. Broadway. Zip: 63104. Tel: (314) 421-3808.

**NEW JERSEY:** Newark: 141 Halsey. Zip: 07102. Tel: (201) 643-3341.

**NEW YORK:** New York: 191 7th Ave. Zip: 10011. Tel: (212) 727-8421.

**NORTH CAROLINA:** Greensboro: 2000-C S. Elm-Eugene St. Zip: 27406. Tel: (919) 272-5996.

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

**PENNSYLVANIA:** Philadelphia: 1906 South St. Zip: 19146. Tel: (215) 546-8196. **Pittsburgh:** 4905 Penn Ave. Zip: 15224. Tel: (412) 362-6767.

**TEXAS:** Houston: 4806 Almeda. Zip: 77004. Tel: (713) 522-8054.

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

**WASHINGTON, D.C.:** 523 8th St. SE. Zip: 20003. Tel: (202) 547-7557.

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

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

## AUSTRALIA

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

## BRITAIN

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

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

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

## CANADA

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

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

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

## ICELAND

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

## MEXICO

**Mexico City:** Nevin Siders, Apdo. Postal 27-575, Col. Roma Sur. Mexico DF.

## NEW ZEALAND

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

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

**Wellington:** 23 Majoribanks St., Courtenay Pl. Postal address: P.O. Box 9092. Tel: (4) 384-4205.

## SWEDEN

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



**Equal Justice** — In New Jersey, a cop convicted of robbing motorists on the highway he patrolled was sentenced to 364 days in jail. Because he has a family, and medical



Harry Ring

problems, he will be permitted to do his time on weekends.

**Presidential timber** — Lawrence Summers, chief economist at the World Bank, says that the pressure on the former Soviet Union and

other poor countries to slash energy subsidies will mean price hikes and reduced consumption and this will do more than any big capitalist nation can to curb global warming. He's the same chap who recently opined that Third World countries are underpolluted and more toxic waste should be shipped to them.

**They thought it was too stiff?** — One news report said Pentagon auditors were "astonished" to learn that the U.S. Army had quietly settled \$50.3 million in contract overcharges by McDonnell Douglas for \$2.4 million.

**Health care** — Los Angeles county hospitals are notoriously overcrowded and understaffed.

Meanwhile, a consulting firm hired to supervise a yet-to-be-funded expansion program pocketed \$1 million last year. Their expense tabs included a leather furniture set for \$13,359 and a granite conference table for \$6,332. A spokesperson said they bought the granite table instead of a wooden one that would have cost double.

**You dig?** — "Jerry speaks the language we thought America had forgotten. . . . The language that rejects politics as linear consciousness." — A 1960s activist at a New York Brown-for-prez rally.

**Benefit gala** — A groups of Los Angeles sheriff's deputies are

being investigated for shooting into the air at a party marked by drinking and altercations. The bash was a benefit for several deputies fired in shooting incidents, including one where a man died with eight bullet wounds in his back. One of the fired cops had earlier been fired and reinstated in a cross-burning incident.

**Growth Industry** — Check out Political Risk Services for up-to-the-minute odds on global investments. Covers "Labor costs;" "Regime stability;" "Turmoil, sources of unrest and violence." A subscription will "help you make key business decisions even in the midst of PANIC!"

**Free-market stationhouse** — In Ludwigshafen, Germany, the police operated out of a house provided by BASF, the giant chemical trust. It was rent-free, with utilities and office furnishings thrown in. In return, the cops checked the files of several thousand employees. But, BASF insists, they only spied on workers supplied by subcontractors, not regular employees.

**It is an expensive town** — The scandal-ridden New York stock-brokerage, Salomon Bros., brought in a new top exec last July but apparently he hasn't had time for apartment hunting, so the firm has been putting him and the family up at a nice hotel — at \$30,000 a month, plus \$7,000 a month to store their belongings.

## Peru's Shining Path imposes policies on workers

Continued from Page 7

as a threat. Its actions aim to push workers and farmers out of political activity and debate.

### Sendero's chauvinist outlook

Sendero's anti-working-class perspective is also reflected in its reactionary international outlook and xenophobia. In the early 1980s, it bombed the Soviet, Chinese, Cuban, and Nicaraguan embassies for representing "social-imperialism" and "revisionism."

Shining Path guerrillas have assassinated European-born priests and nuns, attacked agricultural technicians from other countries, and burned down foreign-owned factories.

Playing on the deep resentment by Peru's Indian and mestizo majority against the systematic racial discrimination promoted by the largely white ruling class, Sendero targets "Europeans" and "foreigners" as the enemy. In an October 1991 interview in London by the Lima magazine *Expreso*, Shining Path representative Adolfo Olaechea explained that the problem is that Peru is "a country that is managed by persons of foreign descent — in other words, Spaniards and people of other nationalities including, at this time, Japanese." This refers to Fujimori, who is of Japanese ancestry. A small but significant number of Peruvians are of Japanese descent.

As part of this chauvinist campaign, members of Sendero Luminoso murdered a Japanese-Peruvian poultry farmer and bombed several Japanese-owned businesses last July. They killed three Japanese technicians at a farm, spray-painting anti-Japanese slogans on the walls of the compound. In response, the government of Japan pulled out most of

its aid technicians from the country.

In the face of the country's social and economic collapse and the political bankruptcy of the major parties, however, Shining Path has won support among impoverished peasants and residents of shantytowns, particularly youth. "It's been 160 years of government by the rich. Now it's our turn," said one shantytown resident who supports the guerrillas.

Sendero now has some 3,500 combatants and operates freely in 19 of the 24 provinces, especially in the poorest and most backward parts of the countryside such as the Andean region of Ayacucho.

It has won support among peasants by promising "land to those who till it." In areas under their control the guerrillas execute landlords, judges, and other corrupt authorities.

In coca-producing areas Sendero offers coca farmers protection from the government and abusive drug traffickers in exchange for support and payment of "taxes."

### Appeals to 'order'

Above all what Shining Path offers is "order." The group sets up its so-called people's committees in rural villages that establish strict rules for conducting local affairs and organizing agricultural work. The committee of five is run by a Sendero cadre, who "represents the proletariat," as one of its documents states.

A *New York Times* reporter recently described his visit to Raucana, a shantytown outside of Lima that is run by Shining Path. "Protected by high walls, watchtowers and trenches, squatters collectively dug wells, raised light poles and laid out streets," he

observed. "A square was designated for people's trials and public whippings of prostitutes, thieves, homosexuals, drug users and wife beaters."

The appeals to order, stability, a strict moral code, and quasi-religious worship of a "wise" supreme authority, President Gonzalo, are particularly directed to women. The burden of the social breakdown falls especially hard on women in the countryside, who are responsible not only for child-rearing but often for feeding the family as men migrate to the cities in search of work.

### Same course as Pol Pot

In spite of its demagoguery Shining Path is no friend of peasants. "At first the Senderos seemed good because they imposed order against the authorities who had committed abuses," explained one refugee from a rural village. "But then they showed their fangs, because they not only demanded food and lodging from us but began to take away our children and husbands to attack other communities. They also began to demand our domestic animals to feed the 'comrades.'"

She added that after Shining Path left, army troops came in and arrested and "disappeared" several villagers. This is one ex-

ample of how the guerrillas set peasants up for government victimization without any means to defend themselves.

In fact, Shining Path uses its coercion and terror to prevent any independent effort by peasants to organize to defend their interests. The group imposes forced communal labor rather than voluntary cooperation among farmers. Its insistence on provincial "self-reliance" glorifies the isolation and backwardness facing many peasants that capitalists and landlords use to keep them divided.

Above all, Sendero Luminoso instills anti-working-class prejudices about the "corrupt" cities and labor unions and promotes a reactionary national socialist outlook to block an alliance of farmers and workers, both nationally and internationally.

Shining Path represents the opposite of a communist and internationalist perspective. It has much in common with the reactionary course of the terrorist Khmer Rouge gang headed by Pol Pot, which massacred at least 2 million people in Cambodia after taking power in 1975. A major part of the fight of workers and peasants in Peru to defend their interests against the ruling capitalists and landlords, will be to take on and politically defeat Shining Path.

## — 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —

### THE MILITANT

Published in the interest of the Working People  
April 24, 1967 Price 10¢

NEW YORK — April 15 was an historic day. A relatively small group of individuals and organizations armed with a correct idea and a correct assessment of the political temper of the country organized the biggest antiwar demonstration this city or country has ever seen. Nearly half a million people participated in the demonstration.

It was a militant demonstration and a young one. Probably two-thirds of the participants were young people. Minority groups were well represented. There was a larger group of Puerto Ricans than in previous demonstrations and a far larger number of black faces than seen in any action of this type. A spirited, militant contingent of several thousand marched down from Harlem. There was an outpouring of students from the city's high schools and colleges and from colleges throughout the East.

A *New York Times* editorial the morning of the mobilization sanctimoniously advised that the action would have neither political nor moral impact. A demonstration for a halt to the bombing leading to negotiations, the paper piously suggested, might do some good. But, it sternly added, "a demonstration in favor of unilateral American withdrawal" can only lead to a dead-end.

Nearly half a million Americans demonstrated they think otherwise.

### THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE  
NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS  
April 25, 1942

Political life in France is much more intense in the occupied zone than in the zone

called "Free." There are many causes, the principal one being the direct collision with the invader.

Like the political life in general, the Trotskyists are more active in the Occupied Zone. In the Paris region is found the largest number of the Trotskyist cells. The great majority of the members are extremely young.

The whole party is organized on a conspirative basis, for the slightest imprudence may cost dearly at the hands of the Gestapo. Regular liaisons are established between the two zones as well as with other European countries.

For one and a half years, since a little after the arrival of the Nazis, the organization has been publishing a paper, *La Verité*. At first reproduced in divers ways, the paper has now been printed since September, 1941. It appears as regularly as the illegal conditions permit, about once every 15 days.

The organization held its national convention last September with the representatives of the two zones participating.

The military defeats and the occupation of the country profoundly altered the political physiognomy of France. The traditional bourgeois parties have vanished. In the camp of the bourgeoisie, nothing remains except the fascist cliques and, illegally, some new organizations, groups of resistance without direct connections with the old parties.

Of the once enormous Socialist Party, not a great deal remains. Of the unions, there is a little more left. But it is undoubtedly the Stalinist party which represents, by far, the principal organized force of resistance. The party advocates individual terror in its publications. As for its political ideology, it is absolute nationalism without a trace of socialism.

The Internationalist Workers Party (POI), on the other hand, subscribes to the Marxist criticism of the political adventurism of the Stalinists, constantly opposing to individual terrorism the organization of the masses.



Peruvian soldiers with alleged guerrilla. The army has massacred the entire male population of some towns where Shining Path operates.



# Trial flouts Panama sovereignty

The conviction of Gen. Manuel Noriega of Panama will set dangerous precedents if it is allowed to stand.

Most significant is the very fact that the trial occurred. Noriega, who was the head of state in Panama, was apprehended from his post in the course of the U.S. invasion of his country in 1989, brought to the United States, imprisoned, tried, and convicted under U.S. law. This is the first time the United States has done this. Noriega now faces up to 120 years in prison.

Noriega's attorneys argued that U.S. courts do not have jurisdiction over what government officials do in their own countries. Judge William Hoeveler simply ruled that U.S. courts do have that power.

One of the charges on which Noriega was convicted was a supposed meeting with representatives of a drug cartel from Colombia, and Cuban president Fidel Castro. Under the precedent set by this trial, presumably the Cuban head of state would be liable to the same treatment Noriega has received from Washington.

The trial showed the U.S. government was determined to have Noriega found guilty no matter by what means. "The judge insisted the bloody kidnapping of Noriega — a head of a sovereign state — was irrelevant," wrote columnist Pete Hamill, who attended the trial, in the *New York Post*. "He wouldn't admit as evidence the classified records of Noriega's meeting with Bush in 1983. Noriega's jailhouse telephone conversations were wiretapped by prosecution agents and slipped to the CNN TV news network. Noriega was not allowed to use funds from his overseas bank accounts to expand [chief defense attorney Frank] Rubino's defense team to hire investigators, take depositions, travel to find defense witnesses."

Many of the witnesses Noriega's lawyers sought to have testify were prevented by the government from doing so.

Judge Hoeveler backed this blocking action, ruling that these witnesses' testimonies were irrelevant.

The prosecuting team's whole case was based on the testimony of many former drug runners and others who claimed to have worked with Noriega. One drug trafficker, Carlos Lehder, testified about Noriega despite admitting he had never met him. Most were offered major inducements to testify. A congressional report on the trial notes that, in exchange for their testimony, 15 of the government witnesses each had charges dropped that were more serious than those Noriega faced.

This exposes U.S. president George Bush's lie that the U.S. invasion of Panama and Noriega's trial were part of a fight to stem drug trafficking. Bush's assertion that the flow of drugs through Panama has decreased since Noriega's capture is belied by reports indicating that drug trafficking through Panama has in fact increased since the invasion.

The Noriega trial represents another aspect of what the U.S. government is willing to do to impose big-business interests on the rest of the world. Through its invasion of Panama and the killing of hundreds of Panamanian working people, Washington overthrew the government of a sovereign country and put in power a servile regime that does its bidding. The U.S. invasion was not about fighting drugs but about trying to prevent the return of the Panama Canal to its rightful owner — Panama. According to the 1977 treaty it signed, the United States is supposed to do so by 1999.

The U.S. trial of General Noriega, like its invasion of Panama, is a blatant violation of sovereignty. Washington should release Noriega. Working people should also demand that all U.S. troops and military bases be removed from Panamanian territory.

# Strikers defy Caterpillar

Caterpillar is not backing down from its declaration of war on the labor movement. It is pushing ahead with its calculated plans to break the five-month strike by the United Auto Workers (UAW) union. The company's threats to replace workers, who refused to accept Caterpillar's final offer and return to work, have been met by determined defiance from UAW members.

The agricultural implements giant has taken another step toward its goal to attempt to break the UAW and set a precedent for the auto bosses and major corporations in steel, trucking, and other basic industries. For the first time in nearly five decades a major corporation has decided to go all out to inflict a crushing blow against a union such as the UAW.

Members of the UAW who work at Caterpillar are showing their determination not to back down. As one striker from Peoria, Illinois, put it, "We're out here for the next generation."

Strikers are already reaching out to convince those who have crossed the picket lines to rejoin the strike. This is important, since Caterpillar's determination to press the assault and the length of the strike are causing a discussion among some union members who are considering returning to work.

This question will be posed in a sharper way as the

company pushes ahead with plans to begin operating its plants with scabs. With the backing of the government and the police and the use of Vance goon squads, Caterpillar will attempt to prevent workers from keeping the plants shut down.

Hundreds of coal miners, oil and auto workers, students, and others have joined daily picket lines.

The initial response to the company's challenge to labor points in the right direction. A solidarity campaign involving the entire labor movement, students and other youth, and working farmers is needed to defend the union from this assault. Millions of working people know the rising stakes at Caterpillar and can be organized into the fight.

More reinforcements are needed on the picket lines. Unionists, students, and others who go to join in the battle in Peoria, Decatur, and other cities where there are Caterpillar plants can bring back reports to their unions and schools. Solidarity actions can be organized in cities across the country. Candidates for public office should join the picket lines.

Backing up the determination of Caterpillar strikers with such a course can turn the tide against the company and its war against the union.

# U.S. military out of Peru!

Under the guise of combating drug trafficking, government corruption, and terrorism, the government of Alberto Fujimori of Peru has launched a massive crackdown against the democratic rights of working people.

The purpose of the repression is not to control the drug trade, but to control the growing discontent by workers, peasants, and youth in Peru.

Peru is a victim of decades of imperialist exploitation and oppression. The country is burdened with an unpayable foreign debt of \$22 billion, yet the International Monetary Fund demands more and more austerity from Peru's 22 million people to pay interest to the banks.

One sign of the appalling conditions is the fact that at least 250,000 Peruvians have been infected with cholera, a preventable disease, since the epidemic broke out last year. In 1991 more than 2,500 people in Peru died of cholera.

As in Venezuela, Mexico, Argentina, Puerto Rico, and other countries, the real problem confronting Peruvian workers and farmers is not government corruption but capitalism, a system in which the vast majority grows poorer and poorer as the handful of wealthy families that run the country grow richer and richer. The drug trade is but one of the sources of the wealth that goes into the coffers of the ruling rich both in Peru and in the imperialist countries like the United States where the processed drugs are sold.

Using the excuse of combating the drug trade, U.S. troops operate inside Peru, giving Washington an important military foothold there. U.S. companies account for half of the \$1.2

billion of foreign investment in Peru. The Fujimori regime has been an ally of Washington, receiving massive U.S. funding since taking power in 1990. While Washington today takes its distance from the Fujimori government's latest suspension of democratic rights, the fact is that this regime has imposed severe repressive measures on Peruvian working people since the day it came to power.

Government repression, both by the army and right-wing death squads, goes hand in hand with the imposition of the harsh austerity measures demanded by the International Monetary Fund and implemented over the last two years by the Fujimori government.

Working people and youth in the United States have nothing to gain from the repression of peasants and workers in Peru and should demand that Washington get its armed forces out of Peru now. Nor should we be conned by the argument that these forces are a necessary part of the so-called war on drugs. The "war on drugs" is carried out in a highly selective fashion, in line with Washington's broader imperialist interests in Latin America and the world. The drug industry will only be eliminated when the system that profits from it is eliminated.

The billionaire families that profit from the superexploitation of workers and peasants in Peru and the rest of Latin America are the same ones that exploit our labor here. To really assist the working people of Peru, labor should demand: cancel the foreign debt that is suffocating the peoples of the Third World!

This column is devoted to a discussion with our readers — printing remarks, questions, suggestions, and other comments sent to the *Militant*. Where possible we will take up issues raised in notes and letters as a way to help clarify and expand on the coverage in the paper.

Reader I.P. raises questions about the *Militant's* editorial opinion on the "war on drugs."

Trafficking in addictive drugs has spread like a plague through working-class neighborhoods throughout the country. Black and Latino communities are especially victimized. The trade in drugs is accompanied by increased violence and killings. The main victims are the tens of thousands of young drug users whose creative capacities are deadened and self-esteem snuffed out.

It is no secret to anyone that a handful of entrepreneurs are profiting from this misery. The production, processing, transportation, and sale of addictive drugs is one of the most lucrative capitalist industries today.

## DISCUSSION WITH OUR READERS

Government officials and other capitalist politicians exploit the sentiment among working people against the scourge of drug addiction to periodically declare a "war on drugs." Their proposals target the victims of the drug trade.

The Department of Housing and Urban Development has adjusted procedures so that drug users can more easily be evicted from federally funded housing projects. Under the pretext of the "war on drugs" the rulers attempt to reinforce the police apparatus and gain greater acceptance for restricting democratic rights.

Confiscation of drugs and jailing pushers and users have never stopped drug trafficking. If there is any impact at all, it is to make drugs a little harder to get, raising their price on the market. In this highly profitable business new dealers quickly replace those arrested and jailed. The police themselves are up to their eyeballs in the whole dirty business.

The laws that make drugs illegal are not intended to stop drug trafficking. They are instead used by the government as an excuse to go after those who do not follow Washington's dictates. The "war on drugs" has been used numerous times to justify U.S. military intervention in Latin America and elsewhere.

The government's obligation should be to provide easily accessible and adequate rehabilitation at no cost for any addict who seeks it. Possession of drugs and drug paraphernalia should be decriminalized so that the users can come forward for medical help without fear of prosecution.

At the same time the use of addictive drugs is not a right, any more than inflicting self-injury is a right. Working people have a big stake in the elimination of the drug epidemic since they are the ones who suffer the most from it.

In the long run the degrading effects of drug addiction on layers of the working class will not be conquered as long as capitalist rule exists.

The rise of massive mobilizations and struggles of the working class will inspire young people who use drugs to abandon their addiction in order to devote their full creative powers and clarity of thinking to the fight for a better world.

Working people can learn much from the way in which the revolutionary government and people of Cuba dealt with the problem of drugs. Prior to the 1959 revolution, Cuba was dominated by capitalist drug lords and a string of local dictatorships in cahoots with them. However today, because the country's workers and farmers overthrew capitalism, established their own political and economic power, and embarked on a course of building socialism, there is no widespread problem of drug production or consumption among the Cuban people.

\* \* \*

### Volunteers needed

With the international circulation campaign now underway, the *Militant* business office has begun receiving hundreds of new subscriptions each week. Volunteers are needed to enter these subscriptions into the computers to ensure that all new subscribers will receive their papers as rapidly as possible.

Business office responsibilities for the paper are currently divided among different members of the *Militant's* editorial staff. This has proven to be an efficient and effective way to organize the weekly production and distribution of the paper.

However, for *Militant* staff members to be able to effectively carry out their writing and other editorial responsibilities, a team of volunteers is needed to help out on some of the important business office tasks, especially during a high-volume period such as a circulation drive. These include: entering subscriptions and address changes into the computer, correcting and answering inquiries related to subscription delivery problems, and compiling the subscription scoreboards, which are printed in the paper each week.

We are urging our readers and distributors in the New York/New Jersey area to volunteer to help out on these important tasks.

Subscription entry work is being organized for Thursday all day and into the early evening, and all day Saturday. Paperwork and other recordkeeping tasks need to be done Friday evenings and for a couple hours in the morning on Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. If you can help out please contact staff members Brian Williams or Derek Bracey at the business office. Tel: (212) 243-6392.



# Public employees union in Vancouver ends strike

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

Working people around the world are involved in skirmishes over speedup, forced overtime, layoffs, and attacks on health and

sector workers in British Columbia, have seen their real wages decline by between 25 percent and 40 percent. The provincial government had imposed a wage freeze during the 1980s on public sector workers.

The contract ratified by the workers is retroactive to April 1, 1991. It contains a general wage increase of

CUPE also organized a spirited rally, attended by 500 strikers and supporters, in front of the university president's office March 19. Greetings were received from different unions.

This was the first strike experience for many workers. "The battle is not over; the struggle goes on," explained one striker. Another woman said, "The next time I see a picket line, I'll understand what they're going through."

## 500 at rally for striking West Virginia steelworkers

Steelworkers from West Virginia, Ohio, and Kentucky joined other unionists at a rally March 29 for striking Helmick Corporation workers. Five hundred people attended the event in Fairmont, West Virginia, to back 72 members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 12475 who walked off their jobs last June.

Striking Helmick workers wore black T-shirts. Addressing the rally, USWA Local 12475 president Kevin Haymond said, "We wear black because black clouds will hang over this country until the scabs are gone." The company has hired replacement workers and the union continues to maintain pickets near the plant.

More than half the crowd were Steelworkers wearing blue sweat shirts from Local 5668 at Ravenswood Aluminium Corp. They traveled three hours to participate in the rally. Dan Stidham, president of the Ravenswood Steelworkers local, which has been locked in a labor dispute for the past 18 months, told the Helmick strikers, "We understand your situation. Stay there one day longer. That's all we can ask."

Joe Powell, president of the West

Virginia AFL-CIO, commended the Helmick and Ravenswood workers for the commitment they have shown. "The Helmick workers and Local 5668 are on the front line, in the ditches dodging those economic bullets," said Powell.

Returning the Democratic Party to the White House was a theme promoted by many labor officials. "Labor in this country's going to have to band together," said Eugene Claypole, president of United Mine Workers of America District 31. "We're going to have to elect a Democratic president and, if he doesn't do the job, then we're going to have to shut this country down for a day."

Lou Albright, a representative of the national AFL-CIO's Region III, led the audience in cheers of "Union In, Scabs Out" and "Stop Scabs." Albright asked, "Who brought about the scabs? You got it — Reagan and Bush."

## Foodworkers in Sweden confront company layoffs

Workers at the Konsum Chark meat-processing plant in Stockholm have been discussing how to unite in the face of threats of layoffs by the company.

Last spring workers were told that the factory would be closed and a new one requiring a smaller workforce would be opened elsewhere. Today many workers doubt the company's plans. Some say, "They'll close this factory for sure but we'll see if there ever will be a new one."

In December 1991 all temporary workers at the plant were laid off. In January 1992 the company attempted to fire nine workers in the cutting department.

A lively discussion took place at a well-attended union meeting at the plant. One of the workers who op-

posed the move to fire the cutters explained, "There can be no firings in one department when there is a lack of workers in others." Others said that seniority has to be followed. They argued that if the company lays off nine workers, it has to be those with the least plantwide seniority.

At a February union meeting attended by almost 100 workers, some expressed doubts about whether the union should accept any layoffs. A local union official diverted the discussion away from how to unite the workers against the company. He began attacking nonunion workers at the plant, accusing them of being egotistic and greedy for not paying union dues. He said they should be fired.

Many workers were taken in by his arguments and started to look for scapegoats among other workers instead of figuring out how to unite against the company.

In the course of this chaotic debate one worker spoke out for participation in a union-sponsored demonstration against rising unemployment and cuts in social welfare. The unionist explained that this is something we can do together with other workers in Stockholm. He proposed that the local union organize workers from the plant to attend. Seven workers from the plant participated in this action.

The union continues to refuse to accept any layoffs.

The following people contributed to this week's column: Marie-Claire David, member of Canadian Union of Public Employees Local 2950 in Vancouver, Canada; Bernie Senter from Morgantown, West Virginia; and Maria Hamberg, member of the Foodworkers Union at the Konsum Chark meat-processing plant in Stockholm, Sweden.

## ON THE PICKET LINE

safety benefits. Some unionists faced with sharp takeback demands, lockouts, and union-busting moves have gone on strike to force the bosses to back down.

We invite you to contribute short items to this column as a way for other fighting workers around the world to read about and learn from these important struggles. Jot down a few lines to let other Militant readers know about what is happening at your workplace or in your union. If there is an interesting political discussion going on at work, we would like to hear about that too.

The 3,100 members of the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) Locals 2950 and 116 in Vancouver, Canada, voted to return to work March 25 after a strike for better wages, benefits, and pay equity for women. CUPE organizes clerical, library, and maintenance workers at the University of British Columbia (UBC). The strike, which lasted more than two weeks, was the biggest such action to take place in the public sector since the New Democratic Party won control of the provincial government in elections last fall.

During the last decade, unionized workers at UBC, like other public

close to 14 percent over three years. This package also includes a 5 percent pay raise for the lowest paid jobs performed overwhelmingly by women. This measure narrows the gap between lowest and highest paid workers.

On the second day of the strike UBC obtained two injunctions against the union to prevent strikers from stopping students and teachers from entering the campus. When UBC tried to organize a campus shuttle service, Vancouver city bus drivers, who are members of the Independent Canadian Transportation Union, refused to drive on campus. In a gesture of solidarity some drivers went to reinforce CUPE picket lines at the entrance to the university. Management had to back down.

A "Students for a fair treatment" committee was set up on campus. They organized rallies and an occupation of the university president's office.

On March 20, the Hospital Employees Union, as well as the British Columbia Union, and other workers put up picket lines at Shaughnessy Hospital in Vancouver in support of CUPE. Some 1,500 workers walked out from 5:30 a.m. until 1:00 p.m. when a court injunction ordered them back to work.

## LETTERS

### Threat of Buchananism

The Militant has been doing an excellent job of explaining the rightward shift of U.S. politics and the threat of Buchananism. In Pennsylvania we are seeing the same phenomenon unfolding in the election for U.S. Senate, where Senator Arlen Specter is being challenged by Stephen Freind, currently a state legislator.

Freind is a militantly antiabortion "America first" politician. He was recently criticized by several Jewish organizations for comments he made about Israel and religion during a televised debate. Freind criticized Specter, who is Jewish, for supporting U.S. loan guarantees to Israel while opposing the sale of F-15 fighter jets to Saudi Arabia, which he claimed costs 140,000 American jobs. He also criticized a Specter vote to give jet fighter technology to Japan, saying, "Arlen Specter has to understand that he's a United States senator... not a Senator from Japan and... Israel." He said the following during his closing remarks: "I never apologize for accepting Jesus Christ as my lord and savior. And I'll never apologize for saying that my first priority [is] to spend eternity with God." This was seen by the Jewish organizations as a not-so-subtle message to voters that Freind is a Christian and Specter is not.

After that debate, an aide to Freind engaged in a fistfight with a Specter aide, claiming that Specter was abusing a time limit for an after-debate interview with the press.

It should come as no surprise that Jew-hatred would emerge at a time of deepening economic crisis. The capitalists always scapegoat to get workers' eyes off the ones who are really responsible — the capitalist class and the politicians in the Dem-

ocratic and Republican parties that do their bidding. We, as working people have to keep our eyes and ears out for this, and educate others about the dangers of anti-Semitism and all forms of scapegoating. The Militant is our best tool for advancing this discussion.

Sandi Sherman  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

### Illusions worn bare

In my six straight years of incarceration, my illusion of American grandeur has worn bare. I realize that I was brainwashed to believe that the rest of the world was either war-torn, starving, or in a continual state of static and poverty because they did not have the American Way. And this is not simplistic bitterness for my not being offered a portion of the spoils. I have come to accept the circumstances of my hero mentality. Is there a man who fought for wealth not dwarfed by a man who fought for people?

I am very interested in your newspaper. If I can live out my part in the grand propulsion for world equality by way of any avenue you can provide, I will be glad to freely do so.  
A prisoner  
Polk City, Florida

### Bernard Sanders

In the March 1992 issue of Z, a monthly magazine published in Boston, there is a lengthy interview with Bernard Sanders. Sanders, who claims to be a socialist, was mayor of Burlington, Vermont, and was elected to Congress in 1990 as an independent. Nowhere in the eight-page interview, entitled "Creating a New Political Agenda," does he discuss the rule of U.S. imperialism in the world, the presence of U.S. troops in Korea, the Philippines, Panama and elsewhere, or the \$3 billion in

aid given by the U.S. to Israel every year. But he does utter this lament, and I quote, "Why are we declining as a world power? This should be discussed on television every night. There should be a serious debate about this in all of our communities."

Sanders lumps together workers and employers with the pronoun "we," and suggests that working people should be worried about the decline of U.S. imperialism, of the U.S. as a "world power." Workers have no interest in the U.S. being a "world power." Genuine socialists look forward to a world without borders.

It's hard to imagine more bankrupt politics coming from a "socialist." Evidently, Sanders' "socialism" stops at the border.

Marc Viglielmo  
Honolulu, Hawaii

### Prison labor

I am a subscriber of the Militant newspaper. Your paper concerns the working class, and its need for unity. Your paper to me is a paradigm in my fight for another working class, inmates in the Texas prison system who are currently being deprived of "incentive remuneration" from their prison labor.

In every prison system there exist two means in which prisoners are rewarded for their labor. (1) awarding of good time, or extra time given toward your sentence, (2) or pay.

However, Texas is currently depriving inmates with sentences which are classified as "aggravated," which means any sentence in which a weapon, or excessive amounts of drugs, or other mitigating factors relating to their sentence, are being denied good time or pay.

I would appreciate your assistance, if at all possible, in exposing



the Texas Department of Criminal Justice's exploitation of inmate labor. Also, it should also be noted that inmate labor is used against the free-world labor, since some of the jobs here pertain to contracts with outside companies in the manufacturing of desks for offices, a cannery, and a host of other jobs and trades that are taken away from the free-world labor force.

A prisoner  
Huntsville, Texas

### War on drugs

How come the Militant doesn't cover the war on drugs? The very implications of a war declared on a country's own people is scary. Why does the U.S. punish drug users rather than rehabilitate them? Don't we have the right to put into our bodies what we choose?

I want the Militant's opinions on this issue. It's very important to me.

I.P.  
Carbondale, Illinois

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.

The Militant special prisoner fund makes it possible to send reduced-rate subscriptions to prisoners who can't pay for them. To help this important cause, send your contribution to Militant Prisoner Subscription Fund, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.



## Peru's president dissolves Congress

BY SELVA NEBBIA

Tanks and armored personnel carriers occupied the main streets of Lima, Peru's capital, as Peruvian president Alberto Fujimori, with the support of the military, dissolved Congress and suspended the constitution April 6, restricting all civil rights and imposing press censorship.

Saying that Congress was blocking economic reforms and that the judiciary was a "fiefdom of corruption" impeding the fight against "terrorists," Fujimori ordered the roundup of labor leaders and politicians from opposition parties. Troops were dispatched to

## 100,000 march in Belgium against racism

BY ERIC WILS

BRUSSELS, Belgium — One hundred thousand people marched here March 22 to protest against racism. Racist scapegoating and harassment of immigrants and refugees has been on the increase.

About half of the participants were young people, among them many Moroccan and Turkish immigrants. There were also numerous trade union contingents.

The demonstration was called by a newly formed coalition that includes centers for immigrant, women's organizations, peace groups, and the two main trade union federations.

Many participants saw the demonstration as a way to answer the anti-immigrant campaign of ultrarightist parties that won seats in Parliament in last November's election.

A group of young Moroccans from Brussels explained to a television crew the kind of racism they face. There are confrontations in Brussels between the police and young immigrants resisting harassment almost every week. On April 3 and 4 these conflicts spread for the first time to Antwerp, the country's second largest city.

One youth described how the cops routinely handcuff young Arabs during identity checks on the streets and treat them like criminals.

Another told how a cop forced him to wipe the street pavement with his handkerchief after seeing him spit.

"The racists say we should go back to Morocco, but when we go there on a holiday people say, 'the Belgians are arriving,'" he said. "We were born here. We're human beings after all."

A few weeks before the demonstration, the Christian Democratic and Socialist parties reestablished a coalition government. Some spokespeople for these parties commented favorably on the antiracist demonstration. But it is the policies of this government that continue to foster the rise in racist harassment.

The government has begun implementing cuts in health care and unemployment benefits, tax hikes, and increases in the price of medicines.

Workers have responded to these attacks on their standard of living. Strikes against factory closures and layoffs have been on the rise since the beginning of this year.

In a statement distributed at plant gates before the demonstration, supporters of the *Militant* pointed out the racist practices of the government and the bosses. They called on the unions to fight for a shorter workweek, positive action in hiring for immigrants and women, cancellation of the Third World debt, opening Belgium's borders for refugees, and granting residence and work permits to undocumented workers.

Ludo De Witte contributed to this article. De Witte and Eric Wils are members of the Metalworkers Union of the General Federation of Labor.

two prisons near the capital holding members of the Shining Path guerrilla organization (see article on page 7). Fujimori also dismissed 13 of the 24 Supreme Court justices.

"The country's secret service also appeared to be rounding up people suspected of either sympathizing with the Shining Path or having knowledge of its activities," the April 8 *New York Times* reported. The Communist Party of Peru—Shining Path, which has been waging a guerrilla war in Peru since 1980, has recently extended its operations to the country's major cities. It is estimated that over the past 12 years some 20,000 have been killed in the conflict, most of them peasants from the Andean plateaus caught in the clashes between the armed forces and the guerrillas.

Fujimori proclaimed an Emergency Government of National Reconstruction and said a new Congress would be named at a later date after a national plebiscite called to "approve a new organic structure for the legislative branch."

Shortly after Fujimori's assumption of dictatorial powers, the White House issued a statement urging "a rapid return to constitutional rule," adding that President George Bush was "very disappointed" by Fujimori's actions. While not condemning the coup,

Washington said it was suspending all aid to Peru except for humanitarian assistance.

Total authorized U.S. aid to Peru more than doubled from \$105 million in 1990—the year Fujimori took office—to \$233 million in 1991. Aid for 1992 was estimated at nearly \$293 million.

While Washington has suspended a two-

## Ordering the roundup of labor and opposition leaders, Fujimori assumed dictatorial powers

year total of about \$50 million in military funds, U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration agents, regardless of the coup, will continue to stage joint raids with the Peruvian police from a U.S. base in Peru's Upper Huallaga Valley. Green Beret instructors continue to give training in jungle warfare. The stated aim of these joint actions is to combat the drug trade. Peru is the source of more than half of the world's coca, from which cocaine is made.

U.S. assistant secretary of state for inter-American affairs Bernard Aronson, who ar-

rived in Lima for talks with Fujimori the day the Peruvian president suspended the constitution, canceled an interview via television from Washington that he had scheduled for Peruvian journalists, the *New York Times* reported. "In explaining the cancellation, American Embassy officials said the United States wanted more time before making a definitive public assessment of Mr. Fujimori's actions," the *Times* reported.

In an April 10 editorial, New York's Spanish-language daily *El Diario/La Prensa* commented that the fact Aronson "arrived in Lima just a few hours before the coup has raised suspicions in South American capitals, as well as in public opinion, that if the U.S. did not actually engineer the coup, the CIA at least had to have some advance knowledge of it."

On April 8 police began what was described as a "very large" roundup of "suspects" after a powerful bomb exploded outside the police headquarters in Villa El Salvador, a shantytown on the outskirts of Lima. Three officers were killed and 22 wounded as a result of the blast.

The Peruvian Congress, meeting secretly, voted April 9 to impeach President Fujimori. The Organization of American States scheduled a meeting for April 13 to discuss the situation in Peru.

## Trial of Puerto Rican activist begins

BY TIM CRAINE

HARTFORD, Connecticut — Supporters of Puerto Rican independence activist Yvonne Meléndez held a news conference here April 9 to demand that pending charges against her be dropped.

Meléndez was one of 15 independence fighters arrested in Puerto Rico in 1985 and brought to Connecticut to face charges in connection with the robbery of a Wells Fargo depot. Since that time, the case of the Hartford 15 has received international attention as an example of U.S. government repression of the Puerto Rican independence movement.

Now, more than six years after her arrest, Meléndez is scheduled to be tried in a federal district court in Bridgeport, Connecticut, starting April 13.

Of the 14 remaining members of the Hartford 15, 9 are in jail or awaiting sentencing, 1 has finished her jail term, 1 was acquitted in an earlier trial, 2 have had all charges dropped, and 1 went into hiding and will be tried in absentia.

At the press conference Meléndez explained why she chose to go ahead with the trial rather than accept a plea bargain with the federal prosecutor. First, she explained, she is taking this stand to protest violations of her rights. These include the right to a speedy trial; the right to bail, which she was denied for 16 months; and the right to a trial by her peers, the people of Puerto Rico.

In addition, she pointed out, the FBI violated the constitution of Puerto Rico by conducting electronic surveillance against her and the other defendants. And, she added, she has already been punished by separation from her four children.

"I was put under very restrictive conditions on bond," said Meléndez. "These included house arrest between midnight and 6 a.m. I had to ask for written permission from the court every time I had to travel outside the state of Connecticut. Five years later it is still the same."

Meléndez added that as the only woman remaining in the case she felt a special responsibility. "Sometimes the participation of women in the struggle is ignored. But it doesn't matter how big the enemy is, we women have the right to struggle for the independence of our country, and that is not a crime."

Edwin Vargas, chair of the Hartford Democratic Party Town Committee, addressed the press conference. "Now, after the defendants have developed a network of supporters in Hartford," he pointed out, "the government has unilaterally moved the trial to Bridgeport," some 60 miles away. "Her treatment has made a mockery of the presumption of innocence."

Other speakers at the news conference included Hartford city councilman Eugenio Caro and Teodoro Anderson of the National Committee to Free Puerto Rican

Political Prisoners and Prisoners of War. Statements of support were read or distributed from former Hartford 15 defendant Elías Castro Ramos, three members of the Connecticut state legislature, the Connecticut Committee Against Repression, and the Socialist Workers Party 1992 campaign of James Warren for U.S. president and Estelle DeBates for vice-president.

The campaign to free Meléndez is being coordinated by the Yvonne Meléndez Defense Committee, P.O. Box 341245, Hartford, CT 06134; tel: (203) 247-3454.



Militant/Arthur Hughes  
Hartford 15 defendant Yvonne Meléndez, speaking at March 21 New York Militant Labor Forum, and Elías Castro (seated). "We have the right to struggle for Puerto Rican independence and that is not a crime," says Meléndez.