

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

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no way to defend abortion

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## Tell the truth about Clinton's holocaust in Waco, Texas!

### 86 die after FBI attacks compound

BY NAOMI CRAINE

In an assault that left 86 people dead, FBI agents brought the government's 51-day siege of the Branch Davidians in Waco, Texas, to a close. The decision to launch the attack was made by U.S. attorney general Janet Reno and approved by President Bill Clinton.

At a press conference the next day, Clinton expressed wholehearted approval for the action, and blamed the besieged cult members for the devastating fire that resulted. "We did everything we could to avoid the loss of life. They made the decision to immolate themselves," he said, "and I feel awful about the children."

"There is, unfortunately, a rise in this sort of fanaticism all across the world," the president continued. "It is important to recognize that the wrongdoers in this case were the people who killed others and then killed themselves."

Clinton said the number one reason for ordering FBI agents to launch the assault after 51 days was that the government couldn't rotate the cops. "There was a limit to how long the federal authorities could maintain with their limited resources the quality and intensity of coverage by experts there," he said. "They might be needed in other parts of the country."

At 6:00 a.m. on April 19, armored vehicles equipped with battering rams began plowing into the wooden walls of the Branch Davidians' complex and pumping tear gas into the buildings. People inside shot at the tank-like M-60 combat engineering vehicles, apparently with little effect. The attack continued all morning. Whole sections of the exterior walls of the group's living quarters were demolished, and portions of the roof began to collapse.

Six hours into this assault, a fire broke out and spread rapidly. Fire engines were not brought to fight the blaze for almost half an hour. All but nine of the people who were in the compound at the time are believed dead, including 17 children under the age of 10. Survivors of the April 19 conflagration who did not require hospitalization were immediately jailed.

"Where's our civil rights?" asked Bonnie Haldeman, the mother of Branch Davidian



Branch Davidian complex burns to ground. "We did everything we could to avoid the loss of life," said Clinton, who approved FBI assault that started deadly blaze.

leader David Koresh, blaming the authorities for the fire. Her son is one of those presumed dead. "It's just terrible. The way they've handled this whole thing has been wrong," she said.

#### 'We did not start fire'

The police contend that the fire was started by those inside in an act of mass suicide. Some of the survivors of the raid contradicted this allegation, stating that the federal agents' action caused the blaze.

"The fire was not started by us," said Remos Avram, one of the survivors. "There was no plans for a mass suicide."

Avram told reporters the fire began after "the tanks knocked over the gas lanterns." The government had cut off electrical service to the buildings earlier in the siege, forcing those inside the compound to use gas lanterns.

Many of the families of the victims also blamed the FBI for the deaths. "The families tried to talk but the FBI said 'no,'" said Lyle Moser of Anaheim, California, whose stepdaughter died in the compound in Waco. "They [the FBI] said they were running the show. They sure were and look how it turned out."

The confrontation in Waco began February 28, when more than 100 agents of the

Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF) surrounded the compound in what was planned as a surprise attack.

The ATF had search and arrest warrants charging the Branch Davidians with the possession and manufacture of illegal weapons. They claimed they had evidence that the group was converting legally purchased semi-automatic weapons into automatics. Koresh and his supporters did not deny that they had stockpiled weapons, but insisted they were all legally acquired.

When the federal agents stormed the farm, backed up by three National Guard helicopters, they were met with gunfire. Four of the cops and as many as six people inside the complex were killed in the shooting. Branch Davidian members have said that the ATF agents fired the first shots; the government denies it.

*Newsweek* quoted an unnamed government official as saying, "there is evidence that supports the theory of friendly fire," suggesting that some of the cops were shot by their cohorts.

"These people had thumbed their noses at law enforcement," commented Larry Potts, assistant director of the FBI's criminal division, explaining the reason for the events that followed.

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The following statement by the Socialist Workers Party National Committee was issued April 21 by Jack Barnes, the party's national secretary.

President Bill Clinton and Attorney General Janet Reno are responsible for the cold-blooded murder of 86 people, including 17 children, outside Waco, Texas.

Tens of millions of people the world over watched in horror on TV the inferno that culminated the FBI's April 19 assault on the large wooden complex housing the Branch Davidian religious sect. Six hours earlier armored vehicles had begun smashing through the walls of the buildings, pumping tear gas inside.

This heinous crime exposes the true face of the bipartisan imperialist government in the United States — its imperial presidency, Congress, armed forces, cop agencies, and courts. The entire operation had been carried out over weeks with coarse disregard for democratic rights and with callous indifference to the human life of anyone outside of — or viewed as an obstacle to — ruling-class circles and their multitude of professional and middle-class retainers.

To cite just one example, federal officials had cut off electricity in the first weeks after their initial February 28 assault on the buildings and knew full well that kerosene lamps had to be used for lighting inside. Yet, despite plans for armored vehicles to ram the

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## Mandela at Hani funeral: 'End minority rule now!'

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In one of the largest political funerals to occur in South Africa, African National Congress (ANC) leader Chris Hani was buried April 19 near his home in Boksburg, a suburb of Johannesburg.

Heeding a call by the ANC, millions of workers throughout South Africa stayed away from work that day to honor Hani. This was the second major one-day strike in less than a week. Hani, who was also the general secretary of the South African Communist Party (SACP), was assassinated April 10. Janusz Walus, a member of the neo-Nazi white nationalist group, the Afrikaner Resistance Movement (AWB), has been arrested for this act.

The ANC, together with its allies in the democratic movement, the SACP and Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU), has also called for a campaign of mass actions at least through the end of May to pressure the government to agree to set the date for the first-ever democratic, non-racial elections and to accede to multiparty control of the armed forces.

In a speech to an overflowing crowd of 80,000 people who packed the Soweto soccer stadium for the funeral ceremony April 19, ANC president Nelson Mandela paid tribute to Hani's political contributions to the struggle and lashed out at the white minority regime.

"They say we cannot control our forces.

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## Conviction of two in King beating is victory in fight against cop brutality

BY SANDRA PUCCI  
AND HARRY RING

LOS ANGELES—The conviction of two of the cops who beat Rodney King was a victory in the ongoing fight against police brutality.

The decision by the U.S. Justice Department to press civil rights charges against the cops last year was a product of the recognition, by decisive sections of the capitalist rulers, of the outrage that greeted the April 29, 1992, acquittal of those responsible for the beating of King.

Given what hundreds of millions around the world had seen with their own eyes on the televised videotape of the assault, it

would have been politically unsustainable for the government not to press for at least some convictions.

Stacey Koon and Laurence Powell, the two police officers convicted April 17, will be sentenced August 4. They could face between 3 and 10 years in federal prison. It is possible that they will remain free for at least another year pending appeals.

Policemen Theodore Briseno and Timothy Wind were acquitted.

Many workers here were jubilant at the verdict, but thought all four cops should have been convicted. One airline worker commented, "I was expecting the verdict. This way they can please everybody. But

people know they are all guilty."

With the verdict came a concentrated campaign to persuade the public that all cops should not be "tarred with the same brush," as Mayor Tom Bradley put it.

The *Los Angeles Times* echoed this sentiment, calling for a "yes" vote on a referendum to add 1,000 more cops to the department. Most mayoral candidates for the April 20 city elections joined the call for more cops.

#### 'Cop violence is routine'

In contrast, Socialist Workers mayoral candidate Kim Allen commented, "The

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## IN BRIEF

### Haiti regime rejects accord

On April 16, Haiti's military regime rejected an offer for amnesty by the country's deposed president Jean-Bertrand Aristide, which was to have been the cornerstone of a diplomatic settlement. United Nations diplomats had announced an accord that would have allowed Aristide to return to office.

The plan would have resulted in the resignation of Lieut. Gen. Raoul Cedras, leader of the military coup, and other senior military officials. From exile, Aristide would have begun to form a government, which would return to Haiti within 60 days of final agreement on the pact.

The amnesty offer would have guaranteed military commanders protection from future prosecution for their role in the coup as well as for widespread repression against civilians since the coup. The agreement called for \$1 billion in aid to Haiti quickly after Aristide's return to the country.

### Caterpillar workers arrested

At an April 17 rally at a Caterpillar plant in Mossville, Illinois, cops arrested 167 United Auto Workers (UAW) members. The union called the rally to protest the company's ban on workers wearing T-shirts in the plant that call for the dismissal of company chairman Donald Fites.

The union suffered a setback in April 1992 when UAW officials called off a 163-day strike against Caterpillar. Workers returned to work without a contract. Union members, however, continue to organize resistance to the company's drive for concessions, as in the fight around the T-shirts.

### Army spied against M. L. King

The U.S. government considered pulling troops out of Vietnam in 1968 to confront the civil rights movement led by Martin Luther King Jr., and others. This information is part of a report released by the *Commercial Appeal*, a Memphis, Tennessee, newspaper, after a 16-month investigation.

The paper revealed a massive spying operation by the U.S. army against King and other civil rights leaders. The spy network included informants in 304 intelligence offices; 798 Army officers; 1,573 enlisted men; and 1,532 civilians, including 67 Black undercover agents. The domestic

spying included at least 27 flights by U2 spy planes. Two flights by the high-technology SR-71 spy jet were flown by the U.S. Air Force at the request of army commanders.

In February 1968, as King was organizing the "Poor People's March on Washington," the army began discussions on the possibility of drawing on troops then in Vietnam or forces from the Seventh Army in Europe to deal with what they believed was a possible nationwide outbreak of protest or revolt.

### G-7 meeting offers aid to Russia

Meeting in Tokyo April 14-15, the foreign and finance ministers from the Group of Seven, the seven major imperialist powers, unveiled an aid package of \$28.4 billion in possible credits and loans to the governments of Russia and other former Soviet republics. More than half the package, however, is conditional on Moscow's ability to introduce more austerity measures and control inflation, now at 30 percent a month.

West European governments, apart from London, which offered another \$600 million, refused to expand their previous financial commitments. European Community members, chiefly Germany, are owed the vast bulk of the former Soviet Union's \$80 billion foreign debt, which bankers have all but written off.

### Romanians protest austerity

Tens of thousands of Romanian workers held rallies and warning strikes nationwide to protest economic attacks planned by the government to try to advance a market economy in the country. The protesters demanded higher pay, restraints on prices, better social security guarantees, and the rescue of failing state industries.

The unionists also demanded the resignation of the government, which planned to end most price subsidies on May 1. The regimes' policies have fueled inflation and unemployment. The demonstrations were considered the largest since the fall of the Stalinist Ceausescu government in December 1989.

### Czech republic restricts abortion

The government of the Czech Republic announced April 12 that visitors from other

countries were banned from obtaining abortions there. The Health Ministry said the ban was to prevent an influx of Polish women from crossing the border to get the procedure. Since the Polish government severely restricted legal abortions in mid-March, many Poles have inquired about abortion services in the Czech Republic.

Until last October, women were provided abortions at no charge. But under a law passed by the now-defunct Czechoslovak parliament they now pay \$115 for abortion except when their life is threatened.

### Budapest bars German cattle

The governments of Poland and Hungary placed a ban on imports of livestock and dairy products from the European Community (EC) in April after Brussels imposed a similar ban on imports from the Eastern European countries. On April 11, 20 truckloads of cattle from Germany and Holland were stuck on the border between Hungary and Slovakia when Budapest denied them entry. The government of Slovakia refused to let the trucks turn back.

EC officials said their ban was imposed to prevent the spread of hoof and mouth disease. Budapest and Warsaw insist that their cattle are disease-free. The trade conflict developed days before a meeting on improving trade relations between EC and Eastern European countries was to have taken place in Denmark.

### Somalis protest UN troops

Some 400 people marched April 7 against the dispatch of troops to Somaliland. The demonstrators marched through the capital city of Hargeysa with banners reading: "No U.N. troops," and "We'll fight for our sovereignty."

Somaliland declared itself independent from the rest of Somalia in May 1991 after the fall of dictator Mohammed Siad Barre. Somaliland was formerly under British rule, unlike the remainder of the country, which was an Italian colony. Until now, all UN and U.S. forces in the country had been deployed in the southern 40 percent of what was Somalia.

### China, Taiwan officials to meet

The Chinese government said that Beijing would meet with Taiwan government officials in Singapore April 27-28. It would be the first meeting of top representatives of the countries since the Chinese revolution in 1949. The meeting is not intended to take up major questions. Instead, technical and legal cooperation matters will be discussed, as well as trade between the two countries, which rose by nearly 28 percent to \$7.4 billion in 1992.



The Link/Marco La Licata  
Students from seven pre-university colleges (Cegeps) in Montreal at a demonstration at the end of March. They were protesting government plans to introduce tuition fees for those who do not complete their studies in five semesters or fail more than five courses.

The Chiang Kai-shek Nationalist government in China fled to Taiwan during the 1949 revolution. Since then, the regime in Taiwan has maintained its claim that it is the legitimate representative of all China.

The Khmer Rouge quit Phnom Penh

The head of the UN military force in Cambodia has expressed disquiet at the abrupt departure of top Khmer Rouge officials from the capital city of Phnom Penh in mid-April. The commander, Lieut. Gen. John Sanderson said he was stepping up security for the more than 3,000 civilian officials organizing for an election to take place between May 23 and 27. He claimed most Cambodians would still be able to participate.

Khmer Rouge officials left the compound where they had been staying since the 1991 Paris peace accords. They said in a letter that security was deteriorating in the capital and proclaimed their adherence to the accord. The Khmer Rouge are boycotting the elections and have been blamed in the deaths of seven UN workers in recent weeks.

—DEREK BRACEY

## THE MILITANT

**News on the fight  
to defend abortion rights, clinic by clinic**

Follow the fight to defend abortion rights in the pages of the 'Militant.' As rightist groups like Operation Rescue advance their social agenda — including through street actions at abortion clinics — workers and young people are speaking out and organizing to defend the fundamental right of women to control their own bodies. The 'Militant' follows this fight clinic by clinic. Don't miss a single issue.



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# Gays not cause of sexual abuse in military

## Top brass organizes exploitation of women around U.S. bases worldwide

BY GEORGE FYSON

Members of the military brass who oppose lifting the ban on gays in the military claim they fear that heterosexual soldiers will become targets of sexual assault or unwanted sexual advances by gay troops. It is, however, the U.S. military brass — not individual soldiers, gay or straight — that is guilty of organizing large-scale sexual exploitation, assault, and abuse around the world.

From post-World War II Japan to Korea, Thailand, and the Philippines, the U.S. military has acted to ensure that the sexual services of large numbers of women are made available — at “bargain rates” — to U.S. servicemen.

## NEWS ANALYSIS

The recent glare of publicity has exposed the Japanese army's procurement of tens of thousands of so-called comfort women during and prior to World War II. As a number of these women have now testified, they were drafted from Korea and other Japanese colonies, as well as from Japan itself. They were forced to accompany the large military units and to submit to what amounted to

repeated mass rape.

Many of these women were later organized as prostitutes for the U.S. military forces that occupied Japan after World War II.

The Japanese government initiated the organization of brothels for the occupying U.S. military forces. They sponsored a “Recreation and Amusement Association,” whose activities were described in a 1977 article by Matsui Yoyori, “Sexual Slavery in Korea.” Yoyori writes:

“On August 30, about 100 women, some of them former prostitutes and others deceived by advertisements reading ‘Recruiting the new Japanese woman: lodging, clothing and food provided,’ had to surrender their bodies to American soldiers. R.A.A. army brothels literally sprouted up before the smoke could clear from the bombed-out rubble of Tokyo, and within three months there were twenty-five such brothels . . . At its height, R.A.A. is said to have employed 70,000 ‘comfort girls.’”

Similar “services” were provided for the U.S. armed forces during the Korean War in the early 1950s, when Japan was the major center for the U.S. military's “Rest and Recreation.”

The tradition continued during the Vietnam War in the 1960s and 70s, where mil-

itary bases became surrounded by shantytowns of brothels and massage parlors. Susan Brownmiller, in her book *Against Our Will*, described the operation:

“By 1966 the 1st Cavalry Division at An Khe, in the Central Highlands, the 1st Infantry Division at Lai Khe . . . and the 4th Infantry Division of Pleiku had established official military brothels within the perimeter of their base camps. . . .

“The American military, which kept its hands partially clean by leaving the procurement and price arrangements to Vietnamese civilians, controlled and regulated the health and security features of the trade.”

By the time the U.S. military was forced out of Vietnam, the number of prostitutes there was estimated at more than 300,000. In Thailand, a major area for “R and R” during the Vietnam War, some 100,000 prostitutes had been recruited to meet military needs. In the Philippines too, entire towns sprang up based on prostitution for members of the U.S. armed forces.

“For generations of American sailors,” a *New York Times* article pointed out, Subic Bay Naval Station in the Philippines “made possible a way of life that could never be duplicated on a navy salary back home.” The amenities according to the *Times* included “a seemingly endless supply of available

women and cheap beer.” Scores of sex bars with names like Love Disco and Hot Lips surrounded the Subic base, which has since been closed. Thousands of Philippine women worked as prostitutes there.

During the Persian Gulf war against the people of Iraq, opposition from the Saudi government made it impossible to set up similar facilities for troops in the Middle East. But the military brass arranged for large numbers of soldiers to be taken home via Thailand and the Philippines, to make available the prostitution facilities in those countries.

The Pentagon's recent attempt to delay its report on the 1991 convention of the Tailhook Association of U.S. Navy aviators, at which some 50 women — some of them officers — were sexually assaulted, is another indication of the cavalier attitude of the military brass to rape and other abuses.

### Myth of gay-straight rape

The above instances are fact, but the myth of gay-straight rape in the military is exactly that — a myth. Placing men or women, some of whom might be gay, in a predominantly heterosexual unit is not the same as having coed units of men and women.

Heterosexual men share bathrooms, showers, and locker rooms with homosexual schoolmates and coworkers from high school on. So do women. In contrast, if men and women slept in the same rooms in dormitories — whether in army barracks or on campus — or took showers together, it is likely that incidents involving sexual activity would occur.

The same is not true for gay and straight men in similar situations. In fact, there are thousands of gays currently in the military. Discrimination against them, including expulsions from the army, should be ended.

On one level, of course, the fears of the military brass are real. Two Marine Corps officers, writing in a March 29 *New York Times* column entitled “Keep Gays Out,” state: “With openly gay and heterosexual personnel together, sexual tension would fester 24 hours a day in deployed military units and ships. Romantic interests, even if unconsummated, would shatter the bonds that add up to unit cohesion. If the bonds that prompt men to risk all and die willingly for each other are lacking, combat performance will decline, with tragic consequences for people and missions.”

In other words, the military fears lifting the ban on gays for the same reason it forbids sexual relationships between officers and enlisted troops and avoids placing close relatives in the same unit. Combat situations require the strictest discipline and loyalty to the unit as a whole. Any personal relationship that might skew that loyalty is a threat to the army's hierarchy.

In March, Clinton, attempting to accommodate some of the objections from the military brass and others, blurted out at his first major press conference that he would not rule out segregating homosexual troops within the armed forces. This would mean the military would have to know the sexual preference of all soldiers, an outrageous invasion of privacy. Clinton rapidly backed away from this proposal.

The interests of working people are not those of the rulers. Washington wants to make its armed forces the most effective possible military machine, whose job is to intervene with all necessary brutality to defend the interests of U.S. capitalism, wherever those interests are challenged, from Iraq to Korea.

Working people should fight to dismantle the U.S. military. The cost of the Pentagon's wars can be measured in the lives of hundreds of millions of workers and farmers in this century. Its very existence is a threat to the struggles of working people the world over.

Whether ending the ban on gays will weaken or strengthen the military is of no concern to working people. Our starting point must be to defend the civil rights and liberties of all, including soldiers. Discrimination on the basis of sexual orientation — in and out of the military — must be outlawed.

## UN orders harsh sanctions on Serbia



NATO planes used for surveillance of “no-fly zone” imposed on Bosnia. U.S. government is weighing use of air power to bomb Serbian targets, following drastic tightening of UN sanctions against Belgrade.

BY GEORGE FYSON

With the defeat of Bosnian government troops defending Srebrenica, voices are being raised more loudly within ruling circles in the United States and Britain for direct military intervention into the former Yugoslavia. The options being discussed include the use of air power against Serbian artillery and the bombardment of other selected targets both in Bosnia and Serbia.

Washington, London, Paris, and Bonn have in the recent period ruled out a more active military intervention than the air-dropping of food and medical supplies and the enforcement of a no-fly zone over Bosnia.

On April 17 Washington, London, and Paris pushed through the United Nations Security Council a draconian tightening of the embargo against Serbia and Montenegro. The measure, which compares with the near-total embargo against Iraq, will take effect April 26 unless the Serbian rightist forces in Bosnia sign the UN plan to divide up Bosnia and Herzegovina by then. Representatives of Russia and China abstained on the Security Council vote.

Under the tightened provisions, ships will be banned from Yugoslavia's territorial waters, other countries will be barred from shipping goods through Yugoslav territory to other nations, and every Yugoslav plane, ship, truck, or container outside the country will be seized. Foreign bank accounts and other Yugoslav assets abroad will be frozen.

Following the vote, U.S. president Bill Clinton welcomed the decision. After talk-

ing with Clinton, British prime minister John Major said the sanctions should remain until territory seized by right-wing Serbian forces has been “disgorged and returned.”

Srebrenica is one of several towns in eastern Bosnia with a predominantly Muslim population that have in the past weeks been attacked by Serbian Democratic Party forces.

Senator Joseph Biden, chairman of the Foreign Relations subcommittee on European Affairs, returned from a five-day visit to the Balkans and called for the United States to use its air power to “destroy every bridge” along the Drina river. Bridges across this river, which runs between Serbia and eastern Bosnia, have been used by the Belgrade military to carry supplies and reinforcements for the Serb-based forces attacking Srebrenica and other cities.

Washington claimed that units of the regular army from Serbia have crossed the river to join the fighting and that artillery from the federal Yugoslav army has been used to fire across the border at Srebrenica.

### Bipartisan calls for military action

Senate Republican leader Robert Dole denounced the administration's policy as simply “standing by,” while Senate majority leader George Mitchell called for immediate air attacks against Serbian forces.

White House spokesman George Stephanopoulos said “military options” were among those being considered.

Following a 50-minute phone conversa-

tion between Clinton and Major, the British government was still stressing its opposition to military intervention. In contrast, the *London Independent* called strongly for military action, warning that failure to act would “destroy what little remains of the credibility of the Western alliance.” The *Independent* also favored bombing supply lines from Serbia into Bosnia.

Dozens of civilians were killed in the final days of the shelling of Srebrenica. Eastern Bosnia was one of the regions that had been assigned to the forces of the current Bosnian government in the UN-sponsored plan to partition Bosnia among the warring factions. This plan was the signal for the Serbian rightist forces to begin a drive to eject most Muslims from this region.

The plan also triggered fighting between Croatian rightist and Bosnian government forces in the central part of the republic over territories and towns assigned to Croats and Muslims under the UN plan. Forces from both sides attacked urban centers, killing civilians.

In Srebrenica, United Nations representatives negotiated a deal with the surrounding Serbian Democratic Party forces. This includes disarming the Muslim defenders and organizing for Muslims to leave the city, whose population had swelled 10-fold to 70,000 as a result of refugees fleeing nearby towns captured by the Serbian Democratic Party. But military leaders of the Bosnian government forces in Srebrenica continue to resist allowing people under their control to leave the city.



# Cops knew Curtis was political activist at time of his arrest

BY NAOMI CRAINE

(Second in a series)

When the Des Moines, Iowa, police arrested Mark Curtis on March 4, 1988, one of their first actions was to take his car keys. Among the things they would have noticed in his car, which was parked at the scene, was a leaflet advertising an upcoming meeting titled "Stop Government Attacks on Political Rights!"

The flier listed a variety of examples of democratic rights abuses, including FBI spying against political organizations, the case of 17 Latino workers who had just been arrested in an Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) raid on the Swift meat-packing plant in Des Moines, and a recent incident of racism by police in nearby Clive, Iowa.

At a glance the cops could tell that the man they had arrested was a "Mexican-lover" and a "lover of coloreds" — which is what they called Curtis as they beat him later that night in the Des Moines city jail.

The struggles for justice detailed on that leaflet sum up the kind of political activities Curtis was deeply involved with. They make clear the reasons the Des Moines police and prosecutors framed the young unionist on rape and burglary charges and railroaded him to prison.

## Fight against government spying

The leaflet announced a March 27 meeting to "take up many cases of government attacks on political and democratic rights. The meeting is sponsored by the Political Rights Defense Fund (PRDF).

"PRDF," the leaflet continued, "is organizing the 15 year long fight of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance suit against government spying and harassment. That suit won a historic decision by Federal Judge Thomas Griesa in August 1986 upholding the right of privacy to advocate political ideas. But Attorney General [Edwin] Meese is appealing the decision."

Just two weeks after Curtis was framed up, the U.S. government withdrew its appeal, and the March 27 meeting was turned into a victory celebration. Curtis, a member of the SWP and former national secretary of

the YSA, spoke at that event. He explained that the ruling in the lawsuit was an important weapon in the fight against the cops' attempt to frame him.

The case represented a major victory for the right to carry out political activity in the United States. The SWP and YSA filed their lawsuit against the FBI and other government police agencies in 1973, charging that the government had illegally spied on and disrupted the organizations. The plaintiffs asked for a court injunction to end these activities, which had been going on at least since 1941.

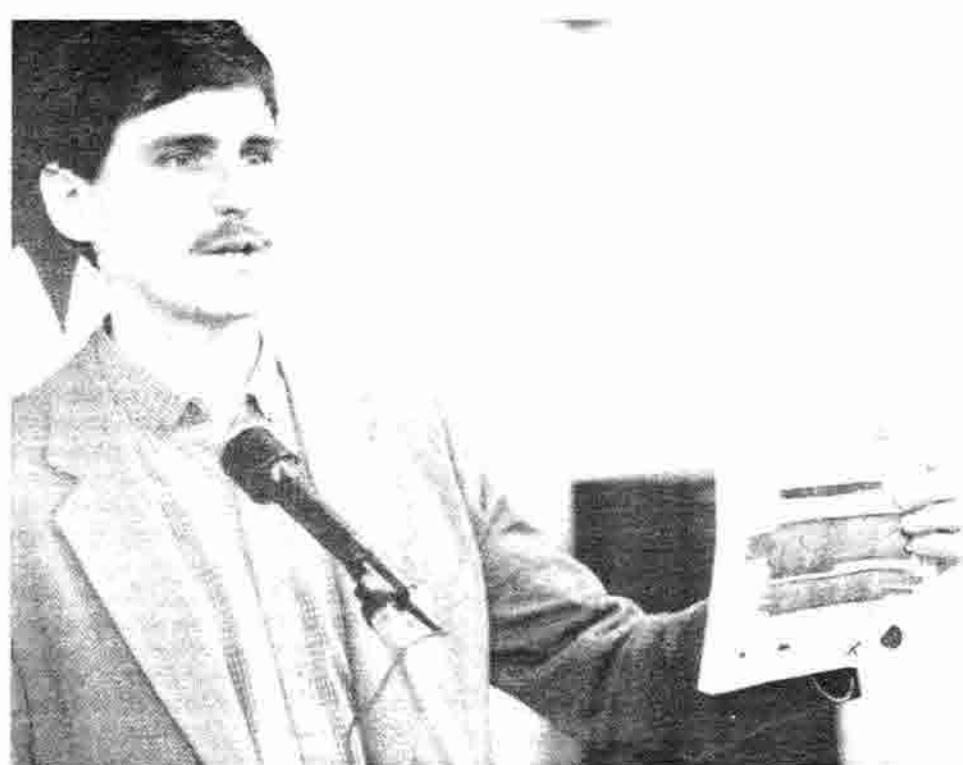
## Documents reveal disruption attempts

In 1986 Judge Griesa, who had been appointed by Republican president Richard Nixon, ruled that decades of spying had not revealed any evidence of illegal activity on the part of the SWP and YSA. Instead, he wrote, FBI informers collected "thousands of reports recording peaceful, lawful activity by the SWP and YSA." They also carried out FBI orders to "suppress recruiting activities," to "frustrate the growth of the organizations," and "to attempt to disrupt them."

In his decision, Griesa detailed some of the 57 disruption operations conducted by the FBI, including poison-pen letters, covert attempts to get SWP members fired from their jobs, and efforts to disrupt collaboration between the SWP and Black rights and anti-Vietnam War groups. The decision also documented 20,000 days of wiretaps between 1943 and 1963, as well as 208 FBI burglaries of both SWP offices and homes of its members.

In 1987 the two socialist groups won a further injunction barring the government from using the information contained in the 10 million pages of illegal files uncovered through the lawsuit. In addition, the court awarded the SWP and YSA \$264,000 in damages.

The FBI, CIA, INS, and several other government spy agencies had filed affidavits arguing against an injunction. They claimed that any restrictions on use of the illegally obtained files would cripple their functioning and endanger "national security."



Militant/Stu Singer

Mark Curtis at April 1988 meeting to seek support for his fight against police frame-up. He holds copy of FBI files on his active involvement in opposing U.S.-backed war in El Salvador. FBI informer wrote that Curtis was part of group advocating "peace, not just absence of war, but nurturing of human life."

With the Iran-contra scandal unfolding in 1988, Washington decided not to pursue an appeal of the injunction, which would have put a further spotlight on the government's illegal activities at home.

## Antiwar activists targeted

Shortly after the SWP and YSA won the 1987 injunction in their case, another FBI spy operation was exposed. This one targeted the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) and other opponents of U.S. policy in Central America.

The Center for Constitutional Rights and CISPES forced the government to admit it had collected 3,700 pages of files on hundreds of antiwar activists and other individuals between 1981 and at least 1985, simply on the basis of their political beliefs and activities.

At a news conference in Des Moines following his arrest, Curtis made public the files that the FBI had kept on him as part of the spying operation against CISPES. Curtis had participated in antiwar activities in Birmingham, Alabama, from 1981 to 1985. In one document, he was listed as one of three individuals "acting in the leadership roles in the Birmingham area" chapter of CISPES.

Another FBI document described the group's activities. The CISPES chapter, it noted, "had several peaceful protests in Birmingham area. Group protests U.S. involvement in Central America and Caribbean. . . . Captioned group advocates 'peace — not just absence of war, but nurturing of human life.'"

Also in the FBI's files was a clipping from the Nov. 10, 1983, *Tuscaloosa News* reporting on an antiwar protest in Tuscaloosa, Alabama. The news item mentions that Curtis spoke at the rally, condemning the recent U.S. invasion of Grenada.

The existence of FBI files on him and on the SWP, YSA, and CISPES was one of the important pieces of evidence that Curtis was not permitted to present at his trial.

## Struggles in meat-packing industry

The fight against Washington's war moves in Central America was just one of the struggles Curtis took part in. He moved to Des Moines in 1986, inspired by another important battle: the resistance of packing-house workers in the Midwest to attacks by the bosses.

The assault against meat-packers began in 1982 when Iowa Beef Processors demanded big concessions in wages and work rules at its Dakota City, Nebraska, plant and defeated a strike by the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) union there.

Other large packing companies demanded similar cuts and threatened workers with plant closings if they did not give in. The officialdom of the UFCW recommended workers take the concessions, arguing that givebacks would lead to improvements in the future. By 1985, average wages had been slashed from \$10.69 an hour to \$8.24 an hour, and 24,000 packinghouse jobs had been eliminated. Injury rates in the industry skyrocketed due to speedup of production.

The pattern of concession contracts, promoted by the union officials and voted for

by workers, held sway for several years. But in the mid-1980s a layer of workers began to resist further attacks on their livelihoods.

This shift was illustrated by the 1985-86 strike of UFCW Local P-9 members at the Hormel plant in Austin, Minnesota. The membership of Local P-9 decided to put up a fight, even with the risk that they would lose, rather than vote for more concessions on the promise that things might get better in the long run. The strikers began to take control of their local union and reach out for solidarity to unionists and other working people around the country.

The resolute stand of the Hormel workers helped inspire a wave of strikes in the meat-packing industry throughout the Midwest. Many faced difficult odds and a number, like the Hormel strike, were eventually defeated. Many workers decided, however, that it was better to fight than just give in to the bosses' demands. These struggles were an important break in the pattern of concessions.

This fightback is what prompted Curtis and many other members of the Socialist Workers Party to move to the Midwest and set up new branches in Des Moines; Omaha, Nebraska; and Austin. There they joined struggles in the meatpacking industry and fights by farmers to defend their land against foreclosures by the banks.

The packinghouse bosses often responded to fights by workers with intimidation and harassment. Hormel, for instance, fired Bob Langemeier, a union activist at the company's Fremont, Nebraska, plant, for refusing to cross a picket line set up by the P-9 strikers from Austin.

Through the fight to regain Langemeier's job, it was revealed that the company had hired a private investigator to spy on his political and union activities. Among other things, the private cop spied on a Militant Labor Forum in Des Moines where Langemeier spoke on the Hormel strike. The cop had taped the meeting by perching on a trash dumpster outside and holding a tape recorder to an air vent.

## Conditions in packinghouses

Soon after moving to Des Moines, Curtis was hired at the Swift packing plant. Conditions in the plant were typical of what had been forced on workers in the industry. Wages started as low as \$5.40 an hour and topped out at less than \$8. In 1987, nearly 80 percent of the workers there suffered injuries on the job. Cuts from knives, amputations, and repetitive motion injuries, such as carpal tunnel syndrome, were common because of the excessive line speed. During the year before Curtis was arrested, Swift had brought 3,000 workers into the plant; there were only 600 jobs there at any one time.

Many workers at Swift are fired or forced to quit when they get hurt. This happened to Curtis in December 1987. His job was pulling cattle paunches — a very heavy task. One day he injured his back and told the foreman he had to see a doctor. The boss refused to let him go. After a couple of hours, the pain became unbearable and Curtis walked off the line. The company fired him for this, but with the support of his

Continued on Page 5

## Stop Government Attacks on Political Rights!



Sunday, March 27 3pm

Des Moines Valley Friends Meeting House  
4211 Grand Avenue  
Des Moines, Ia.

speakers will include:

JOE SWANSON — Midwest spokesperson for Political Rights Defense Fund

ED SPARKS — Secretary-Treasurer Local 387, Teamsters union, Des Moines

PAT HEARNS — member New Wave, Univ. of Iowa; participated in CIA Off Campus demonstration last October

The March 27 meeting will take up many cases of government attacks on political and democratic rights. The meeting is sponsored by the Political Rights Defense Fund (PRDF).

PRDF is organizing the 15 year long fight of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance suit against government spying and harassment. That suit won a historic decision by Federal Judge Thomas Griesa in August 1986 upholding the right of privacy to advocate political ideas. But Attorney General Meese is appealing the decision.

There have been recent exposures of government spying and disruption against the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES). The FBI targeted church, community, political and labor groups such as the United Auto Workers union that have spoken out against the U.S. war on the people of Central America.

Government efforts to carry out unpopular foreign policy require restricting our rights and access to information. They prohibit travel to Cuba, restrict the travel of representatives of the African National Congress, and are trying to close down the information offices of the Palestine Liberation Organization.

Other cases include:

- Students at the University of Iowa who face criminal charges for protesting CIA recruiting
- Five Kentucky coal miners framed up for murder for the "crime" of going on strike.
- Farm activists who face injunctions and police action for protesting foreclosures.
- The 17 immigrant workers at the Swift meatpacking plant in Des Moines arrested and jailed for the "crime" of immigrating and working.
- The Supreme Court ruled against free speech for high school newspapers.
- Racist attacks like the Clive, Iowa police notice to report "Black sales".
- Treating the homeless and victims of the AIDS disease as criminals, not victims.
- Attacking workers rights through increased drug testing.

for more information contact PRDF, c/o Pathfinder Books, 2105 Forest, Des Moines, IA 5031 (515) 274-3683.

Cops found quantities of this leaflet in Curtis's car when he was arrested



# 'Mark Curtis's imprisonment is unjust'

## Supporters of jailed Iowa union activist speak out against police frame-up

We reproduce below excerpts of some of the recent letters sent by supporters of Mark Curtis to his defense committee.

These letters answer attempts, made by those who claim Curtis is guilty, to pressure endorsers of his case to end their backing of the defense effort. A political activist and union fighter, Curtis was framed up on false charges of sexual assault and burglary in March 1988. He was convicted of those charges later that year and is now serving a 25-year prison sentence.

### Tom Laney

Recording Secretary, United Auto Workers Local 879, St. Paul, Minnesota

Given the quality of evidence used against Mark Curtis it is very difficult for me to believe that he remains in jail. I cannot see any evidence that Mark Curtis committed the crime for which he has been imprisoned. His behavior during his jail term reinforces my belief that he is innocent and I fully support the efforts of the Defense Committee to free him and clear his name.

### Ray Rogers

Director, Corporate Campaign, Inc., New York City

I, like so many others, remain convinced that Mark Curtis is not guilty of raping Demetria Morris and that his imprisonment is unjust. For the past several years, I have followed the Curtis case and my conviction that his trial and sentencing were unfair and politically motivated grows stronger and stronger.

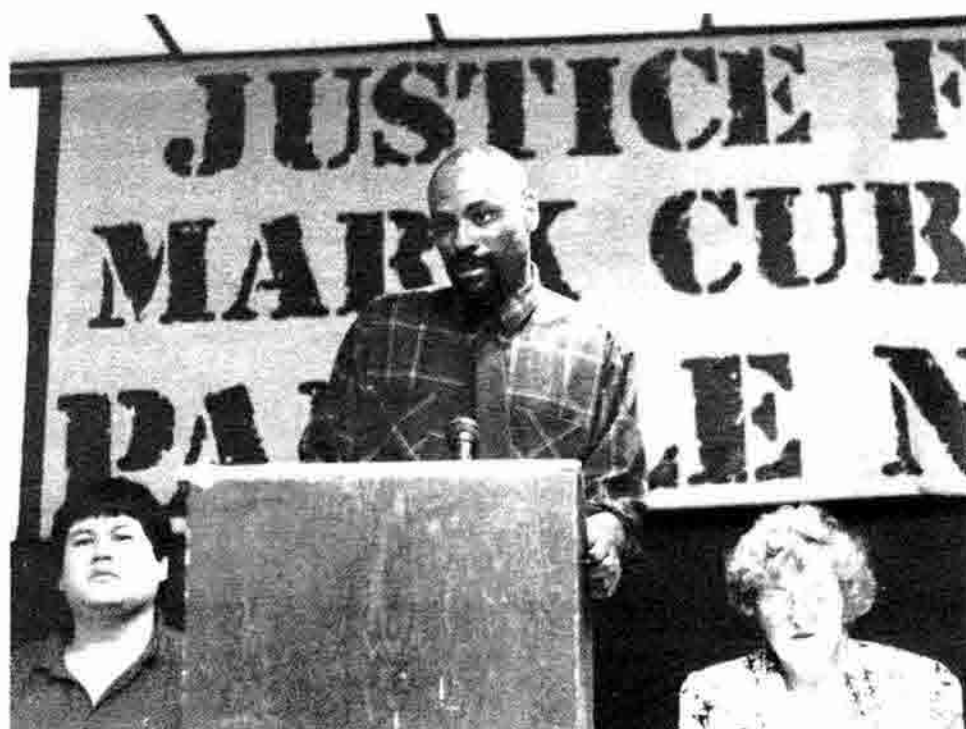
The U.S. legal system is supposed to be built on the premise that citizens in this country are innocent until proven guilty and that guilt must be proven beyond a reasonable doubt. My colleagues and I have reviewed legal motions, transcripts of the trial, and investigative reports that convince me that there is a great deal of room for doubting Mark Curtis's guilt.

It is absolutely clear to me that his trial was unfair and that his imprisonment should be investigated and his parole should be immediate.

### Benjamin Dupuy

'Haïti Progrès' newspaper, Brooklyn, New York

Following the infamy of Haymarket, Sacco & Vanzetti, and the Rosenbergs, the ongoing frame-up and persecution of Mark Curtis is a painful reminder that justice in



Militant/Chris Remple  
UFCW member Andre Sledge speaking at April 9 Curtis defense rally in Des Moines.

the United States remains only a political weapon used by authorities, both local and national, to intimidate popular organizers and confuse the people as to their friends and enemies.

Most distasteful in the whole affair is the demagogic campaign being waged against Mark Curtis and the Defense Committee by individuals whose motivations are, at best, emotional and naive. The innocence of Mark Curtis and the absurdity of the charges against him are apparent to anyone who has followed the case.

The campaign against Mark Curtis is not without parallels to the vilification campaign waged today against Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, the victim of a coup d'état. His overthrowers would like to portray him as the aggressor! The same can be said for Mark Curtis.

The famous Nazi Joseph Goebbels said: "Lie, lie, lie. It may be disproved but something always remains." We must work hard to disprove this axiom and foil the nefarious plots against popular organizers like Mark Curtis. He has our total support.

### Stone Johnson

Chairperson, Birmingham Alliance against Racist and Political Repression, Birmingham, Alabama

We became interested in the Mark Curtis case when it first started. I personally know Mark as a fine gentleman of good character and a good union man plus a freedom and justice loving person. The union-busting Presidents Bush and Reagan have been put out of the White House. Now is the time to picket the courthouse and even the jail where they are holding Mark. Now is the time to step up every protest possible because it is time to undo this miscarriage of justice and free Mark now.

We are with you. Freedom is a constant struggle.

### Spiver Gordon

Councilman, Eutaw, Alabama

This comes to reaffirm my strong commitment to the defense of Mark Curtis. I believe Mark is innocent and will support him until he's released and with his family again.

I urge others who believe in Freedom, Justice and Equality, to stand with Mark and "don't let anyone turn them around."

Letters in support of Mark Curtis's fight for justice should be sent to the Mark Curtis Defense Committee, Box 1048, Des Moines, Iowa 50311. Fax (515) 243-9869.

## Protest in Britain blasts deportations

BY CELIA PUGH

BOLTON, England — One thousand people marched in this northern town April 3 to protest new government restrictions on asylum and immigration. Contingents from around Britain participated in the march, which was led by local Black and Asian youth.

As protesters entered the town square they mounted the steps of the town hall waving colorful banners and loudly chanting "Here to stay, here to fight. No deportations. No Asylum bill."

Many local shoppers stopped to listen to the rally speakers. March organizers had received threats from the British National Party (BNP), an ultrarightist organization. But while BNP members mingled with the crowd, the confidence and discipline of the protesters made it impossible for the right-

ists to disrupt the march.

Local branches of the National Association of Local Government Officers, the National Union of Teachers, and the Lancashire Association of Trades Councils took part in the action and carried their banners.

Demonstrators protested the government's plans to deport the Rahman family. Aziz Rahman and his two daughters came to this city from Djibouti, a country in East Africa, to join his wife, who is receiving cancer treatment. One daughter is now settled in a special school catering for her multiple handicaps. Medical and welfare reports have appealed for the family to stay for treatment unavailable in Djibouti.

Speaking to the crowded town square, Aziz Rahman said the British government "wants to continue its centuries-old tradition of racism." Referring to strikes of miners and rail workers against job cuts and of Asian women for union rights in Birmingham, Rahman said, "This is another attack on working people. In the same way that Burnall strikers, the miners and rail workers face attacks, this is another way to divide us. This is one fight, one struggle. United we can win."

### New asylum and immigration laws

The new asylum and immigration laws proposed by London will severely restrict visiting rights to Britain. The previous right to appeal entry refusal will cease. Immigration officials at British embassies abroad will have absolute power to refuse visas. Appeal rights for visitors who manage to get to Britain and want to stay more than six months will be removed, leading to speedier deportations.

In 1990, authorities refused 42,000 visas to applicants from Bangladesh, India, Pakistan, Ghana, and Nigeria. The new laws will rule out any appeal. In 1990, 4,390 people were deported from Britain.

The new laws will include severe restrictions on refugees seeking asylum as well. Asylum seekers will be given only two days on entry to obtain legal representation, an interpreter, and complete complicated appeal forms. A claim may be refused if the applicant has destroyed or falsified a passport or other identity document. If a refugee has traveled through a country deemed "safe" by the British Home Office, he or she

can be returned immediately to that country and refugee status denied.

This procedure has been used to deny asylum to hundreds of refugees from the former Yugoslavia who could not get direct flights from Bosnia or other war-torn republics to Britain but had to travel through other countries in Europe.

In the first nine months of 1992, less than 600 people were granted asylum. This was barely 3 percent of the 20,000 cases processed by the Home Office. A further 8,000 people were granted "exceptional leave to remain" on a renewable basis. About 60 percent of the applicants were denied entry. In 1991 only 9 percent of the applicants were granted asylum, compared to 32 percent in 1989.

One victim of these asylum policies was Omasase Lumumba, nephew of Patrice Lumumba, the first president of independent Congo (now Zaire) who was murdered in 1961 by rightist forces with the complicity of the United Nations. Omasase Lumumba was killed by prison officers in October 1991 while detained in a London prison awaiting an appeal for asylum status. An inquest by a jury has still to produce a verdict.

Opponents of the new laws fear that these additional restrictions on immigration will fuel racial divisions in the working class and attacks on democratic rights as rightist forces and capitalist politicians seek to scapegoat immigrants for deteriorating economic and social conditions. Home Office figures show that racial attacks have grown from 4,000 in 1988 to almost 8,000 in 1991. Representatives of the national Anti-Racist Alliance say Home Office figures only register cases reported to the police and that a more accurate estimate would be 70,000 attacks in 1991. In 1992, eight people were murdered in racist attacks.

Aziz Rahman said the Bolton demonstration has boosted his confidence.

Similar campaigns in the northwest have defeated other deportation attempts. Recent demonstrations and meetings contributed to a victory in the case of William Weekes, from Manchester, England, who won an appeal against deportation.

Celia Pugh is a member of the Amalgamated Electrical and Engineering Union at GEC Alsthom in Manchester.

## Cops knew Curtis was activist

Continued from Page 4

coworkers and his union, he won the job back.

This was an unusual victory at Swift. When Curtis initially talked to other workers about fighting the firing, most were skeptical. But he explained the importance of the union standing up for its membership in these situations, and was able to get the support he needed from the local.

When the INS arrested 17 of his coworkers, Curtis argued that the union should defend their rights as well.

### Fight against police racism

The leaflet found in Curtis's car raised the need to respond to "racist attacks like the Clive, Iowa police notice to report 'Black males.'" This referred to another fight Curtis had participated in during the preceding weeks.

In early February 1988, the Clive police department distributed a flier referring to a recent burglary and describing the suspect as a large Black man. The flier said, "If you see a black male in your neighborhood at night, please call the Clive police immediately so that we can try to find out who the individual is." Clive, a small

town near Des Moines, has very few residents who are Black.

The police flier outraged many in the area. The NAACP, Iowa Civil Liberties Union, Des Moines Human Rights Commission, many Clive residents, and others sharply condemned this racism. Some of these forces organized a protest march February 20 to Clive City Hall.

The Clive City Council, feeling the heat, issued a retraction and a letter of apology for the leaflet. The council refused to take disciplinary action against the police chief, however, and the protest went ahead as scheduled.

Curtis was one of about 400 people who joined the march. At the end of the demonstration near the police headquarters, he set up a table on the police lawn to sell the *Militant* newspaper and books from the Pathfinder bookstore.

Through these actions, most of which were highlighted by literature clearly visible in his car when he was arrested, Mark Curtis was easy to identify as a staunch fighter for democratic rights and for the interests of Blacks, immigrants, and working people.

(to be continued)



# Ohio prisoners revolt against conditions

BY VALERIE LIBBY

LUCASVILLE, Ohio — The revolt by hundreds of prisoners in the Southern Ohio Correctional Facility (SOCF) here in this small Appalachian town is slowly exposing some of the conditions prisoners face throughout the country.

Some 450 prisoners, among an inmate population of 1,800, took control of Cellblock L April 11 and took eight guards as hostages. They have since said they will release the hostages if their demands for better prison conditions are met. As the *Militant* went to press inmates reportedly reached an agreement with prison authorities and began the process of surrender.

Six prisoners died when the rebellion began. A seventh was found dead April 13 in an adjacent cellblock controlled by prison guards.

Prison authorities responded by putting the entire Ohio state prison system on alert and calling in the Highway Patrol and local SWAT teams. Ohio governor George Voinovich called in 500 National Guard troops on the fourth day of the rebellion. The road to the prison has been closed by police roadblocks. The news media has been moved to an area with no view of Cellblock L. Military vehicles and troops are visible throughout the town. The very front of the prison is jammed with ambulances, police cars, and other emergency vehicles.

Prison officials have refused to release the prisoners' list of 19 demands, but many of the issues have come to light through public statements by two inmates. Major demands include:

- Removal of Warden Arthur Tate and rescindment of several policies he instituted. (These include forced integration of cells; regimented marching in hallways within specially drawn lines; and an arbitrary point system to determine prisoners' security status and supervision level.)
- Religious freedom with the same rights extended to Muslim prisoners as those allowed for prisoners of other faiths.
- Adequate medical care for all. Removal to another facility or adequate treatment for hundreds of mentally ill prisoners.
- Amnesty and no reprisals for those involved in the revolt.

Prisoner representative Abdul Samad Mulin said in a statement that this demand is important "because in the past Lucasville has had the reputation for killing innocent people. [They] hang them in J Block and say that they committed suicide, while we know that different administrators... have blatantly killed innocent people here in these jails."

Additional demands call for improvements in food; implementation of a promised new phone policy (currently only one five minute call per year at Christmas is allowed); pay increases to keep pace with rising commissary prices; an end to nepotism in the hiring of guards; and the review and revision of other regulations.

Tensions have been simmering at Lucasville for years. The entire Ohio system of prisons is overcrowded. At Lucasville, cells constructed for one person frequently have



Militant

Ohio National Guard stationed at county fairgrounds near prison in Lucasville

two prisoners assigned. SOCF has the highest rate of complaints of any Ohio facility.

A probe of Lucasville three years ago, sponsored by the Ohio state government, revealed that corrections officers were responsible for bringing drugs into the prison and that guards and some inmates were involved in white supremacist groups.

## 'Not a racial issue'

Both Black and white prisoners are involved in the current uprising. Prisoner representative George Skatzes, who is white, made it clear prisoners of different nationalities were united in the rebellion: "We are not going to take this anymore," he said. "It is not a racial issue. Blacks and whites alike have joined hands at SOCF. We are standing strong and will remain strong."

Lorry Thomas of Justice Watch, a Cincinnati-based prisoner rights group, said in an interview that tensions have been growing at SOCF. "The so-called inmate grievance procedure does not work," he said. "Whether your toilet is leaking or a guard has beaten you, your only recourse is to file a complaint with an inspector hired by the Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections. They never rule in the prisoner's favor. So there's no outlet, no phone calls; prisoners are cut off and frustrated."

"A Confidential Information Policy instituted at Lucasville in 1988 has intensified

victimization of many prisoners," Thomas added, "including those who speak out against poor conditions. They are brought before the Rules Infraction Board and have no access to documentation of accusations against them. They suffer severe penalties while informants are granted many privileges."

In Lucasville yellow ribbons have been tied along the roads expressing sympathy with the guards being held hostage. The local Red Cross and guards' organization are accepting donations to provide food to cops and National Guard troops and aid to guards' families.

The decision to construct the only Ohio maximum security prison in Lucasville 20 years ago was controversial. The town of about 1,500 people is 95 percent white and off in the southernmost tip of the state away from all the major urban population centers, making access for most families and lawyers of prisoners difficult.

## Prisoners' families meet in Cleveland

The majority of prisoners are Black and from the northeast part of the state. The Cleveland NAACP held meetings April 16 and 18 for families of the prisoners to discuss the situation in Lucasville. Nearly 100 people attended.

Louise Ambers, who has a son at Lucasville, expressed the anger of many at the

overcrowding, phone call policy, and brutal treatment. "It's a shame it takes a riot to open people's eyes to what's going on there," she said. "This has been going on for years and years, and I don't see anything being done to rehabilitate anyone."

Others disagreed with the prisoners' actions and wanted assurances of good treatment for those who did not participate in the uprising. The NAACP chartered two buses for family members to go to Lucasville the next day to show concern over the fate of the prisoners.

When 75 people showed up at 7:00 a.m. at the Antioch Baptist Church for the buses, they were brought into a meeting with George Forbes, president of the Cleveland NAACP. He announced that Governor Voinovich had called him the night before to urge him to call off the bus trip. Forbes related the governor's concern over the "volatility of the situation" and opinion that nothing more could be learned about individual prisoners.

In response to Forbes, many at the meeting spoke up in anger. "Why is it every time a group of Black people get together they say it's to cause trouble?" said one member of the audience. "If they let people show their solidarity with the hostages, why can't we show our solidarity with the prisoners?" asked another.

Reginald Wilkinson, director of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, arrived half an hour later to hold a closed meeting with those planning on taking the buses to Lucasville. The hour-long meeting ended with the decision not to send the buses. Not everyone was convinced, however. "This is wrong," Helen Vincent said. "I have no family in Lucasville but I took the day off work to go there and show support." David Williams, a roofing worker with a cousin in Lucasville, walked out of the meeting. "I remember when they stormed the Ohio Penitentiary in 1968. We have to go down and show some unity. This is a world problem," he said.

Wilkinson said officials "are going to be very patient, but," he warned, "if they feel at any time the lives of the hostages are at risk, they reserve the right to use force."

Valerie Libby is a member of United Auto Workers Local 647 in Cincinnati, Ohio. Michael Italie, a member of Local 14919 of the United Steelworkers of America in Cleveland, Ohio, contributed to this article.

## \$75,000 fund will cover new publications, reporting trips to Cuba and South Africa

BY MAGGIE TROW

The Socialist Workers Party launched a \$75,000 party-building fund drive at public meetings that were part of SWP regional education conferences held April 10-11 in Des Moines, Iowa, and Greensboro, North Carolina. Participants at the meetings pledged nearly \$19,000, getting the drive off to a strong start.

The campaign runs through June 15. The fund will cover the tens of thousands of dollars needed to produce two new issues of the Marxist magazine *New International* and to send *Militant* reporting teams to Cuba and South Africa.

### New issues of 'New International'

Work is in progress on *New International* no. 9, titled "The Rise and Fall of the Nicaraguan Revolution." *New International* no. 10 will feature an article on political developments since the Persian Gulf War, a follow-up to the main article in *New International* no. 7, titled "The Opening Guns of World War III."

In addition, *New International* no. 10 will publish the 1988 Socialist Workers Party political resolution on the significance of the 1987 stock market crash.

The two new issues of *New International* will be available in August. After their publication in English, both of these issues will be published in Spanish and, if possible, French.

The fund will also help cover the costs of coming reporting trips to Cuba and South Africa. *Militant* reporters Mary-Alice Waters, Sara Lobman, Francisco Picado, and

Judy White traveled to Cuba in March. They participated in an international conference called "Cuban Women in the 1990s: Realities and Challenges," as well as a social sciences conference at the University of Matanzas. Their eyewitness reports provided *Militant* readers with unique coverage of political developments in Cuba.

### Reporting trips to Cuba and S. Africa

Between now and August, *Militant* reporters will attend several important activities in Cuba:

- covering May Day events and taking part in a May 2-4 leadership meeting of activists from the United States involved in solidarity work with Cuba;
  - returning to the University of Matanzas in June for an international conference on the work of revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara;
  - covering and participating in the fourth annual conference of the São Paulo Forum, a broad leadership meeting of Latin American and Caribbean political parties, scheduled for July in Havana;
  - taking part in a youth brigade in early July, composed of students and youth reporting for their campus papers and other media on political developments in Cuba, including on the agricultural work brigades.
- The dates for the next South Africa reporting team are not yet set. *Militant* readers were able to benefit from the on-the-scene coverage by Steve Clark, John Steele, Pete Clifford, and other reporters who recently returned from a several-week long trip to South Africa. In light of upcoming African

National Congress conferences and elections for a constituent assembly, which will most likely take place within the next year, the *Militant* will organize more reporting trips.

These trips are very expensive. They are funded in large part from contributions by *Militant* readers.

### Public meetings and outreach

To raise the \$75,000 goal in full and on time, fund drive supporters in cities around the country will be helping organize *Militant* Labor Forums to publicize the fund. Key-note speakers at these meetings will be some of the participants in the recent reporting teams to Cuba and South Africa. Attention to advance publicity and, where possible, the organization of preforum dinners can make the meetings special events.

Fund drive committees in 25 cities will spearhead efforts to reach out as broadly as possible to those who may want to contribute to the fund — coal miners fighting for a contract and other industrial workers, *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* subscribers, high school and college students defending abortion clinics, supporters of the revolutions in Cuba and South Africa, *Militant* Labor Forum attendees, and others. Next week the *Militant* will print goals for the fund supporters have adopted in each area.

*Militant* readers are encouraged to send contributions to the fund. Checks or money orders can be sent to: Socialist Workers Party, 406 West Street, New York, NY, 10014.



NEW INTERNATIONAL NO. 7

### Opening Guns of World War III:

WASHINGTON'S ASSAULT ON IRAQ  
Jack Barnes

Washington's devastation of Iraq did not mark the opening of a new world order. It held a mirror to the declining world order of capitalism and to its accelerating conflicts and contradictions. 333 pp. \$12.00

New issues of *New International* covering political developments since the Gulf War and the rise and fall of the Nicaraguan revolution will be available in August.

Available at Pathfinder bookstores listed on page 12, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Please include \$3 shipping for first title, \$.50 for each additional book.



# Miners glad to see 'Militant'

BY NAOMI CRAINE

As the *Militant* goes to press, a special sales target week is in progress that will help supporters of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and *New International* gain momentum in the international drive to win new readers to the socialist publications. At the end of the third week of this campaign, sales in most areas continued to lag behind schedule.

By building on and learning from successful efforts, *Militant* supporters can now take steps in the second half of the sales drive to get back on track, meet, and surpass their goals.

One of the biggest success stories in getting the *Militant* into the hands of working-class fighters and youth continues to be the special sales trips organized to coalfields around the country.

*Militant* supporters who recently spent five days in western Virginia say the response to the paper from miners, youth, and other workers was tremendous. The four team members sold 16 *Militant* subscriptions, 94 single issues, and 2 copies of the Pathfinder title *The Eastern Airlines Strike* during their trip.

## Good to see 'Militant'

The sales team traveled through the area where miners set up their Camp Solidarity during the 1989-90 strike at Pittston Coal. "It's good to see the *Militant* again. I read it at Camp Solidarity," said one miner to team members Ellen Haywood from Atlanta and George Williams from Birmingham, Alabama.

"We set up a table at Clinch Valley College in Wise, Virginia, which was swamped by students curious about all the political books and eager for discussion," they wrote. "A student and a professor bought *Militant* subscriptions and several others bought single copies, as well as a copy of the *Communist Manifesto*."

The sales team was also invited to a meeting of the Virginia Black Lung Association, where the *Militant* was well received. The group fights for the rights of miners suffering from black lung disease.

## Western coalfields

After attending a socialist educational conference in Des Moines, Iowa, three *Militant* supporters traveled to the western coalfields. "The *Militant* continues to receive an enthusiastic response from coal miners on the Navajo Indian reservation in Kayenta, Arizona," writes team member Toni Jackson from Detroit. "During two shift changes at the Kayenta mine, we sold 58 issues of the *Militant* and 1 subscription. Miners who had bought subscriptions from a previous sales team stopped to chat with us and discuss the pa-

per," she added.

There will be many more opportunities for *Militant* readers to demonstrate support for the miners and sell subscriptions. The United Mine Workers of America is planning solidarity rallies in St. Louis, Los Angeles, Pittsburgh, and Kan-

in Pathfinder literature were also sold by two representatives of the Young Socialist Alliance attending the meeting.

There are plenty of other opportunities to reach out to youth and workers involved in struggles. In Florida and Alabama, for instance,



*Militant*/Jim Kendrick  
Abortion rights activist checks out the *Militant* while defending clinic in Melbourne, Florida.

sas City, Missouri, in the days leading up to May 3, when the miners' contract extension with the Bituminous Coal Operators Association is set to expire.

Auto workers at Caterpillar in Illinois are also resisting company attacks. More than 160 of them were arrested at a rally for wearing T-shirts calling for the removal of company chairman Don Fites. These workers will also want to read the *Militant* in the coming weeks.

The *Militant* is attractive to fighting workers around the world. Timex strikers and their supporters bought 15 copies of the paper and 2 copies of *The Eastern Airlines Strike* at an April 12 mass picket and rally in Dundee, Scotland.

## Sales to youth in Spain

In Madrid, delegates and guests at a congress of the Union of Young Communists of Spain were eager to read *Perspectiva Mundial*. Twelve bought subscriptions to the Spanish-language magazine. Two *Militant* subscriptions, 12 copies of *New International* and the Spanish-language *Nueva Internacional*, and hundreds of dollars

supporters of the *Militant* have joined actions to defend abortion clinics from right-wing attacks, selling the paper to other pro-choice activists in the process.

Brigitte Groulx reports that the drive is going well in Toronto, where *Militant* sales are ahead of schedule. "Last week three members of the Canadian Auto Workers at Chrysler subscribed," she said. "They were especially interested in the coverage on South Africa. What's in the big-business media is so confusing — the *Militant* is the only place they can find more information. We sold subscriptions during the recent tour of South African youth here too."

## New deadline!

The *Militant*'s business office has decided to extend the deadline for receiving subscriptions. All subscriptions and reports of *New International* sales that come in by noon on Tuesday, Eastern Daylight Time, will now be counted for the scoreboard printed that week. This will make it easier to credit in a timely way the subscriptions sold over the weekend toward local goals.

# WHERE WE STAND

SOLD: 28% 793

SHOULD BE: 38% 1,050

END OF WEEK THREE

	The MILITANT		PERSPECTIVA MUNDIAL		NEW INTERNATIONAL		
	SOLD / GOAL		SOLD / GOAL		SOLD / GOAL		
UNITED STATES							
Cleveland	31	65	48%	0	4	8	25
Washington, D.C.	35	75	47%	5	25	10	40
Salt Lake City, UT	34	75	45%	3	15	11	35
Denver	2	5	40%	1	2	0	5
Atlanta	26	75	35%	2	10	0	20
Greensboro, NC	22	65	34%	4	7	5	30
Portland, OR	5	15	33%	0	2	0	10
Miami	33	100	33%	17	35	15	50
Birmingham, AL	24	75	32%	3	10	2	20
Chicago	35	110	32%	5	25	5	35
New York	69	225	31%	27	75	20	95
Houston	21	75	28%	6	20	8	25
Philadelphia	23	85	27%	3	20	13	25
Baltimore	20	75	27%	0	10	0	25
San Francisco	29	110	26%	4	30	20	70
Morgantown, WV	17	65	26%	2	5	5	20
Newark, NJ	33	135	24%	7	45	10	70
Detroit	19	80	24%	0	10	0	30
Los Angeles	40	170	24%	32	85	11	95
Boston	25	110	23%	7	30	5	45
New Haven, CT	2	10	20%	0	2	0	5
Seattle	15	80	19%	4	30	7	35
Pittsburgh	13	80	16%	5	8	6	25
St. Louis	13	90	14%	0	7	0	40
Twin Cities, MN	17	120	14%	8	15	6	30
Des Moines, IA	11	85	13%	3	30	5	40
Santa Cruz, CA	1	8	13%	0	5	0	5
Cincinnati	1	10	10%	0	2	0	3
U.S. Total	616	2,273	27%	148	564	172	953
AUSTRALIA							
	7	30	23%	1	10	1	20
BELGIUM							
	0	8	0%	0	4	0	10
BRITAIN							
Sheffield	7	35	20%	0	3	1	15
Manchester	6	35	17%	0	1	0	20
London	5	60	8%	2	5	5	25
Britain Total	18	130	14%	2	9	6	60
CANADA							
Toronto	32	75	43%	2	15	12	45
Vancouver	24	70	34%	3	10	9	30
Montreal	22	65	34%	6	12	6	60
Quebec City	0	5	0%	0	0	0	2
Canada Total	78	215	36%	11	37	27	137
FRANCE							
	2	10	20%	1	3	1	10
GREECE							
	0	2	0%	0	0	0	2
ICELAND							
	5	10	50%	0	1	1	3
NEW ZEALAND							
Wellington	21	40	53%	0	1	4	10
Christchurch	12	25	48%	0	1	4	8
Auckland	15	45	33%	0	1	2	10
New Zealand Total	48	110	44%	0	3	10	28
PUERTO RICO							
	2	1	200%	1	10	0	10
SWEDEN							
	17	65	26%	5	20	8	20
TOTAL	793	2,854	28%	169	661	226	1,253
SHOULD BE	1,050		38%	225		450	

# IN THE UNIONS

	The MILITANT		PERSPECTIVA MUNDIAL		NEW INTERNATIONAL	
	SOLD / GOAL		SOLD / GOAL		SOLD / GOAL	
UNITED STATES						
UMWA	17	15	113%	0	—	0
ACTWU	11	28	39%	6	12	0
UTU	30	80	38%	0	12	0
UAW	27	85	32%	1	—	4
USWA	27	85	32%	2	—	1
OCAW	15	50	30%	1	4	3
IAM	22	90	24%	0	25	6
UFCW	6	56	11%	3	35	1
ILGWU	2	20	10%	6	20	0
U.S. Total	157	489	32%	19	80	15
AUSTRALIA						
NUW	2	3	67%	0	—	0
AMEU	0	3	0%	0	—	0
FPU	0	3	0%	0	—	0
Australia Total	2	9	22%	0	—	0
BRITAIN						
TGWU	2	6	33%	0	—	0
AEEU	1	6	17%	0	—	0
RMT	2	12	17%	0	—	0
NUM	0	2	0%	0	—	0
Britain Total	5	26	19%	0	—	0
CANADA						
CAW	4	9	44%	1	—	2
USWA	7	17	41%	0	2	0
ACTWU	0	2	0%	0	—	0
IAM	0	6	0%	0	—	0
Canada Total	11	34	32%	1	2	2
NEW ZEALAND						
EU	2	5	40%	0	—	1
UFBGWU	1	8	13%	0	—	1
MWU	0	2	0%	0	—	1
New Zealand Total	3	15	20%	0	—	3
SWEDEN						
Metalworkers	1	5	20%	0	—	0
Food workers	0	6	0%	0	—	0
Transport workers	0	2	0%	0	—	0
Sweden Total	1	13	8%	0	—	0

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

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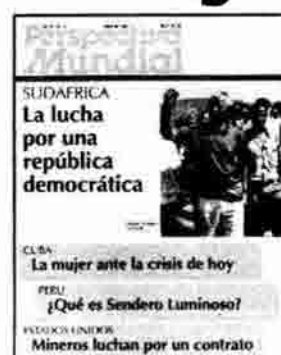
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- Coal miners struggle for a decent contract
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- The reactionary course of Shining Path in Peru

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# 'South African people are today walking the last mile toward democratic elections'

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

NEW YORK — "Today the South African people are walking the last mile toward the first democratic elections in that country," said Steve Clark to an audience of 200 people attending a Militant Labor Forum here in early April. "The ANC-led democratic movement deserves more than ever the active support and solidarity of working people, youth, and the labor movement the world over."

Clark, a member of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee, recently returned from a five-week *Militant* reporting trip to South Africa. He attended the February 19-21 International Solidarity Conference in Johannesburg and the March 5-6 Multiparty Planning Conference. Clark covered African National Congress (ANC) president Nelson Mandela's visit to the Natal Midlands region of the country. He has also spoken at forums in Boston, London, and Manchester, Britain.

"The ANC's perspective of fighting for a nonracial, nonsexist, democratic republic is important to the working class in South Africa and throughout the world," said Clark. "Advancing nonracialism is a precondition for class consciousness, which is also growing among layers of workers in South Africa."

What is unfolding in South Africa today is a national, democratic revolution to drive the last nail into the coffin of the racist, caste-like system of apartheid. Through this struggle, the door will be opened for working people to advance their class interests, said Clark.

"The apartheid regime began to come apart in the 1970s under the impact of its own contradictions in organizing and disciplining labor for capitalist exploitation," he said. "This process was further exacerbated by the economic crisis and stagnation affecting the entire world capitalist system."

The development of capitalist industries in and around major cities made it harder to keep Blacks out of the cities, as they were driven into factory jobs, including jobs previously reserved for whites.

Clark elaborated on some of the highlights of the anti-apartheid struggle during the past two decades. In 1973, for the first time in many years, large strikes by Black workers occurred, he explained. In 1976 students in Soweto rebelled against the apartheid education system. The 1984-85 period was marked by a big upsurge in struggles by youth and working people leading to the formation of the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU).

One of the big turning points in the struggle came in 1988 with the defeat of the South African army by Cuban and Angolan fighters in Cuito Cuanavale, Angola. "This was a devastating blow to the confidence of the white ruling class in the dependability of its army," said Clark. This event, combined with a new surge of struggles by the democratic movement in South Africa, paved the way in 1990 for Mandela's release from prison and the unbanning of the ANC, South African Communist Party, Pan Africanist Congress, and other organizations.

## Crisis of bourgeois leadership

Clark pointed to the crisis of bourgeois leadership in the country, which stems from the realization that the old South Africa is gone. This crisis is reflected in massive corruption, which is endemic to all capitalist governments but has greatly accelerated as the white regime faces its final hour. State-owned land is being sold off for private gain. The regime is attempting to privatize state industries and other enterprises as well.

There has also been a splintering of far-right organizations, which have a base in the police and army officer corps and which are determined to reverse the progress toward a nonracial democratic republic.

The ANC faces a unique situation in history as it presses the struggle to eliminate the white minority regime. "We've seen a massive growth of the revolutionary democratic movement, led effectively by the ANC," said Clark. "Democratic organizations have been unbanned. Political prisoners have been released and exiles have returned to their country. Free political activity has been restored to much of the country. All the basic legislation that formed the foundation of apartheid has been repealed.

Initial agreement has been reached on a course toward the first democratic elections in South African history.

"These gains have coincided with the collapse and crumbling of the apartheid rulers' confidence and capacity to rule in the old way," said Clark. "At the same time, however, the old armed forces of the regime are still in place and there's no immediate alternative counterforce to them."

This points to the importance of the ANC's insistence on holding the National Party government, its cops, and armed forces responsible for the ongoing reign of violence against the democratic movement. It underlines why the ANC is demanding, through the negotiations process, the creation of a Transitional Executive Council to organize democratic elections for a constituent assembly, and for placing the military and police under multiparty control.

There is no doubt that in these elections the ANC will emerge as a majority. The only question is how much of a majority. Clark said. He pointed to a talk Mandela gave in March at the University of Natal that clearly poses the challenges before the democratic movement.

"It is comparatively easy to win an election," said Mandela. "But when you do so,



Steve Clark addressing New York Militant Labor Forum on South Africa.

you merely hold political office; you don't have political power. Because to gain political power means you have to control the civil service, the army, the police." A new government, the ANC president said, "will start to reorganize the civil service and the security services, but to do so is going to take some years."

"The ANC has produced a revolutionary leadership of world-class character," said Clark. "That's what has been shown during the course of events of the past decade and especially over the past three years since the ANC was unbanned."

The organization continues to appeal to the confidence and dignity of South Africans of all skin colors, explained Clark. The ANC has advanced as much as it has today by building a disciplined movement that relies on the power of the masses of South African workers and rural toilers.

"The challenge today is to carry the struggle through to the end, to win the biggest majority for the ANC and mobilize against the counterrevolutionary forces," said Clark. "Through this process it will be possible to fight to strengthen the ANC and its structures, so the new government that emerges can be an effective tool for advancing the fight of working people for land, unioniza-

tion, and economic and social justice."

Over many decades of struggle, Clark said, the democratic movement in South Africa — like struggles by working people and the oppressed all over the world — has confronted the obstacle of Stalinism. "That political obstacle has been weakened in recent years, both by the collapse of the hated, anti-working class regimes in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union and by the advances of the ANC-led democratic movement and its leadership in South Africa."

## New prospects for revolutionary struggle

A democratic government in South Africa will open new prospects for the revolutionary struggle by the working class and its allies to advance their class interests. "It is among the most self-sacrificing fighters for the national, democratic revolution led by the ANC," Clark said, "that the cadres and leaders of a communist movement in South Africa will be forged."

Because of what the democratic movement has already achieved, said Clark, "there's no way that the march toward elections can be reversed by anything short of a bloody counterrevolution."

There are armed rightist forces inside and outside the state apparatus in South Africa that are working toward this goal, he said. These forces will continue their violent efforts to undermine a democratic government resulting from such elections.

The ANC-led movement, however, has kept the initiative and is pushing back the reactionary, bourgeois forces. It needs the full support of democratic-minded fighters and class-conscious workers everywhere.

"The workers' movement around the world has a responsibility," Clark concluded, "to get out the truth about the ANC and the historic significance of a victorious democratic revolution in South Africa."

## ANC youth leaders tour New Jersey, Utah

BY NANCY BOYASKO AND DAN FURMAN

NEW BRUNSWICK, New Jersey — "Please join us for a moment of silence in memory of comrade Chris Hani," said Clayton Lillienfeldt, a South African youth from Cape Town, opening a presentation before 75 students and activists at Rutgers University here. Hani, a central leader of the African National Congress (ANC) and the South African Communist Party, had been gunned down just three days before this meeting.

Lillienfeldt was here as part of the Student-to-Student Anti-Apartheid Empowerment Tour, a nationwide tour of youth who are members of the ANC Youth League. Wantu Zenzile, the U.S. representative of the ANC Youth League, joined him on the platform, as did Valerie Caffee from the New Jersey Anti-Apartheid Mobilization Coalition.

The coalition of groups that sponsored the event here also included the Women's Support and Resource Center, Livingston College Student Government Association, Haitian Association of Rutgers University, Socialist Workers Party, and others. Kagendo Murungi from the Wimmin of Color Collective chaired the program. The speakers were officially welcomed by Dean Walton Johnson of Livingston College at Rutgers.

In their presentations, the youth leaders took up the history of the oppression of Blacks in South Africa and the challenges now facing the ANC and all those who are fighting apartheid.

In addition to the political struggle the ANC must lead, Lillienfeldt explained, "there are growing social needs that have to be addressed and cannot wait for a new government to be formed." He pointed to the housing crisis as well as unemployment, which in the last year has risen above 40 percent.

In response to a question concerning relations between the ANC and the Cuban government, Zenzile emphasized that Cuba has long been in the forefront of the struggle in southern Africa.

"The role Cuban soldiers played in Angola in defeating the South African army changed the course of history in Africa," he said.

The next day Bill Harrison, an auto worker and member of United Auto Workers



ANC youth leaders Clayton Lillienfeldt (left) and Wantu Zenzile (right) with Newark mayor Sharpe James at City Hall April 15.

Local 980, organized a tour for Lillienfeldt of the Ford auto plant in Edison, New Jersey. As word spread down the line about the visitor, the youth leader received many handshakes and thumbs-up signs from workers throughout the plant.

A discussion in the lunchroom focused on how the assassination of Chris Hani was a provocation intended to disrupt the movement against apartheid.

The South African youths asked many questions about conditions of workers in the plant. Workers are planning to take up a collection for the ANC.

Later that afternoon, Lillienfeldt and Zenzile spoke at a meeting at Princeton University organized by the campus NAACP chapter. A press conference the following day with Newark mayor Sharpe James wound up the tour here. The Newark *Star Ledger* ran a quarter-page article on the visit with the mayor.

BY ELLIE GARCÍA

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah — A press conference was quickly organized here April 10 for two South African youths visiting this

city. Eldred de Klerk and Thabo Mzilikazi, who are on a national Student-to-Student Anti-Apartheid Empowerment Tour, denounced the murder of South African Communist Party leader Chris Hani. They called on South African president F.W. de Klerk to set a date for free elections and to step down from office.

"The assassination of Chris Hani, a respected leader of the democratic liberation movement, is simply the attempt of the South African regime to undermine the democratic process and plunge the country into civil war and turmoil," Brian Pugh said on behalf of the local anti-apartheid coalition.

"We have a very strong role to influence the masses in South Africa to focus on how to win the elections and not to retaliate," Mzilikazi said. "At the same time it is clear that the evil forces are not going to stop the brutal killings of our people and we will have to say, therefore, that our people should protect themselves by all means and strengthen the struggle from all levels."

Three television stations covered the press conference. The two major dailies interviewed the youths later in the day.



# Mandela: 'End white minority rule now!'

Continued from front page

We are not cattle to be controlled," said Mandela. "And we say to de Klerk: it is your forces that lost control and, completely unprovoked, shot innocent marchers."

"We, the victims of violence, have been blamed for the very acts that take our lives. Yet you treat the far right with kid gloves, allowing them to publish hit lists when it is a crime to do so. Your police do not protect marchers from gunmen who mow them down."

"Black lives are cheap," continued Mandela, "and will remain so as long as apartheid continues to exist. And let there be no mistake: there have been many changes, and negotiations have started, but for the ordinary Black person of this country, apartheid is alive and well."

"The ANC," he said, "is a liberation movement fighting for freedom for all our people. It is our unceasing struggles — in the prisons, in mass campaigns, through the armed struggle — that has brought the regime to the negotiating table. And those negotiations are themselves a site of struggle. It is not a question of armed struggle or negotiations. Armed struggle brought about negotiations. It is precisely because negotiations will force them to relinquish power that certain elements are resorting to the cowardly tactics of assassinations. This government is illegitimate, unrepresentative, corrupt and unfit to govern."

Mandela then proceeded to summarize the demands that the democratic movement is making upon the government. They include: the immediate installation of a Transitional Executive Council (TEC) to ensure that free elections are held; the announcement of an agreed upon election date; the placing under multiparty control of the armed forces, the budget, foreign relations, and local government; and the creation of an Independent Electoral Commission and an Independent Media Commission.

## 'End white minority rule now!'

"Speed is of the essence. We want an end to white minority rule now," said Mandela. "We warn all who seek to impose endless negotiations that any further delay will discredit the negotiation process itself and place on the national agenda the need for change by other means."

Mandela's address and the entire funeral ceremony were broadcast nationwide on government-controlled television and radio.

"We are unstoppable! Nobody can stop us on our march to victory," stated Anglican Archbishop Desmond Tutu in his talk to the rally. Cheers erupted from the crowd with the reading of a tribute from Cuban president Fidel Castro.

Meanwhile, South African president F.W. de Klerk was 900 miles away in Capetown addressing a session of parliament where he claimed Hani's assassination had "plunged our country into crisis." The entire delegation of the liberal Democratic Party walked out of the chamber in a gesture of solidarity for Hani.

Following the rally at the Soweto soccer stadium, tens of thousands drove in the funeral procession to the Boksburg cemetery where Hani was buried. This cemetery was reserved for whites only until the June 1991 repeal of the Group Areas Act.

In an attempt to provoke an incident, armed members of the neo-fascist AWB took up positions in Boksburg, allegedly to protect the homes of some white residents. However, the discipline of the ANC-led protesters prevented any major incidents from occurring at the funeral site. Tensions were high after a massacre in the township of Sebokeng the night before left 19 people dead.

## Mass actions continue

Two days earlier, on April 17, about 40,000 people demonstrated in downtown Johannesburg to protest the Hani assassination. Thousands of protesters also took to the streets in Pretoria and other South African cities.

In an ominous move prior to the Johannesburg demonstration, the National Party government announced that it was deploying 3,000 additional police and soldiers to reinforce its 23,000-member security force. It also threatened to declare the Johannes-

burg-Pretoria region an "unrest area," a step which would significantly expand police powers to declare curfews, disperse crowds, and detain people.

"The crisis calls for political solutions," said Cyril Ramaphosa, the ANC's secretary general, "not a return to a reign of the securocrats." Under mounting pressure from the ANC, the government backed down from the plan to increase police powers.

Meanwhile, the South African police arrested Clive Derby-Lewis, a leading member of the Conservative Party, as a second suspect in the assassination of Hani. Derby-Lewis has been the Conservative Party's representative to a parliamentary body known as the President's Council. He reportedly knew the other suspect, Janusz Walus, from when they worked together on a political campaign in the mid-1980s.

## Campaign is launched in Miami to defend anti-embargo protesters victimized by cops

BY ERNIE MAILHOT

MIAMI — Supporters of democratic rights here have launched a campaign to defend three Cuban-Americans who were arrested and charged by police during a peaceful protest on March 17 against the U.S. embargo of Cuba.

Meanwhile, important steps forward in defense of free speech have been registered here in recent weeks.

A district court decided April 7 to take no action on felony charges filed by the Miami police against Otto Fiffe.

Fiffe was one of three people arrested while taking part in the picket protesting the U.S. economic embargo of Cuba. He had been charged with carrying a weapon even though he is a licensed security guard with all the proper permits.

Fiffe was arrested together with Andrés Gómez and another participant in the protest outside of Radio Mambi despite the fact that it was they and other demonstrators who were the victims of an attack.

Radio Mambi, which defends Washington's embargo against Cuba and caters to the ultraright in the Cuban-American community, had urged people to come to the station to confront the peaceful protesters. Members of the terrorist group Alpha 66 and the paramilitary Comandos L, as well as other ultrarightists, attacked the protesters with rocks, eggs, and physical blows. The police revoked the permits of both the anti-embargo protesters and the rightists and ordered everyone to leave.

The police permit for the anti-embargo picket had been obtained by the Alliance of Workers in the Cuban Community (ATC), a Cuban-American group that supports normalization of relations between the United States and Cuba.

The Antonio Maceo Brigade, an activist group in the Cuban-American community that supports the Cuban revolution, played a prominent role in the March 17 demonstration as well. Andrés Gómez, the leading spokesperson for the group, faces trumped-up charges of disorderly conduct despite the fact that he was the main target of the rightist attack.

The hearing on the charges against Gómez as well as a third participant will be coming up soon. While no action has been taken on the charges against Fiffe, these could still be brought up again later. Charges have also been filed against a dozen or so of the rightists who attacked the peaceful protesters and even some of the police who attempted to restrain them.

The Miami Committee to Defend Free Speech has been set up to defend those illegally charged while participating in the peaceful picket. The committee has urged supporters to send messages demanding that all charges be dropped against those who were exercising their right to free speech outside Radio Mambi.

Protest messages can be sent to Katherine Fernandez Rundle, State Attorney, 1351 N.W. 12th St., Miami, FL 33125, Fax: (305) 547-5191. Copies of protest messages can be sent to the Miami Committee to Defend Free



Militant/Margrethe Siem

Mandela called for creation of Transitional Executive Council to replace regime

Speech, P.O. Box 1092, Miami, FL 33137.

The defense committee has already spent several thousand dollars for legal expenses and is asking that donations be sent to help defray these costs.

Another advance for free speech was registered in an April 1 letter sent to Tony Thomas by the Florida state attorney's office. Thomas was informed that battery charges had been filed against Marcel Felipe. Felipe, a Cuban-American student at Florida International University (FIU), punched fellow student Thomas at the end of a public meeting at FIU last October that was addressed by two youths visiting from Cuba. Thomas had been an usher at the meeting.

After initially indicating that there was no basis for charges against Felipe, the prosecutor's office felt pressured to move ahead

with them. Part of the reason for this was the recent decision at an FIU administrative hearing to suspend Felipe for one year for his attack on Thomas.

Tony Thomas and his supporters have urged that messages supporting the prosecution of Felipe also be sent to the state attorney's office at the above address. Copies should be sent to Tony Thomas, P.O. Box 1363, Miami, FL 33137.

"The vast majority here, including Cuban-Americans, do not support the denial of free speech for anyone, including those opposed to Washington's attacks on Cuba," Thomas said in an interview. "In the past these attacks, including terrorist bombings, always went unanswered. The difference on this question now goes along with the fact that most people here are for dialogue with Cuba."

## Cuban speaks in New England

BY GEOFF MIRELOWITZ

BOSTON — "Every crisis is both a danger and an opportunity," explained Juan Antonio Blanco at an April 11 meeting of 75 people sponsored by the Community Church here. Blanco is cofounder in Cuba of the Félix Varela Center for the Study of Ethics. His visit in New England was part of a U.S. speaking tour organized by Global Exchange.

Cuba is going through "two parallel transitions," Blanco said. One is a change in "the structure of Cuban society, moving away from the Soviet-bloc model of constructing socialism."

The other is the challenge of an immediate conjunctural crisis that was caused by the collapse of the country's trade with the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe together with the U.S. embargo.

This severe economic crisis was exacerbated by a devastating storm that swept through the island in March, wiping out \$1 billion in economic resources and worsening the already severe food shortages.

"People who would like to help Cuba should be engaged in two activities," Blanco stressed. One is encouraging emergency aid and relief efforts.

For the first time in the history of the Cuban revolution, Blanco said, Cuba has appealed to international institutions and governments around the world for help. A United Nations resolution has led to opening a bank account in Geneva, Switzerland, so that "institutions, countries, or people can contribute through the UN" to help Cuba recover from the effects of the storm.

The second activity Blanco urged is to press the U.S. government to lift its embargo, especially on food and medicine.

Blanco was also asked about the place of Ernesto Che Guevara's ideas in Cuba today. Guevara, born in Argentina, was one of the main leaders of the revolution in the 1960s. He was centrally involved in organizing aspects of the Cuban economy.

"The essence of Che Guevara's thinking

and his criticism of the Soviet Union and the Eastern bloc," replied Blanco, was that these countries were "going the wrong way in terms of what the project originally was about — socialism."

Guevara, said Blanco, believed that the fight for socialism was not just aimed at economic, industrial, and technical development coupled with more consumer goods. Rather, he explained, socialism aims at development through "a new culture."

"You cannot build a society of solidarity ... based on the principles of selfishness and everyone for himself."

Blanco posed the question, "What is the essence of the socialism we want to see?" It includes the concept of economic planning, he said, but, "that's not the definition."

"It's not the market either," he added. "If you enter a situation in which the laws of the market, of demand and supply, are going to determine the right to shelter, medical care, education, and employment, then, 'you are capitalist.'"

"You have to make sure that the basic human needs of every single citizen will be dealt with outside the blind forces of the market," Blanco said. Working people will have to be directly involved in changing society.

Blanco said there is growing political space and openness in Cuba today. "I am very encouraged," he said, "that in this difficult moment, it's not the trend of repression [but] the trend of democracy that is prevailing."

"Before," Blanco explained, "the line of the [Communist] Party was the line, period. If you went against the line you would have been perceived as a counterrevolutionary. That's not the case anymore. There is room for dissenting views on how to deal with the construction of socialism, the betterment of Cuban society."

Geoff Mirelowitz is a member of Local 187 of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union in Lawrence, Massachusetts.



# Southern textile workers fight for contract

BY BRUCE KIMBALL  
AND SUSAN LaMONT

GREENSBORO, North Carolina — Members of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union (ACTWU) who work for the Fieldcrest Cannon Co. voted overwhelmingly April 6 to reject the company's final contract offer. The contract had been extended since March 1.

Workers cited many issues with which they were dissatisfied: lower pay rates, subcontracting of work, and a proposed smoking ban on company premises. The company is also proposing no hourly pay raise for three years, the right to institute 12-hour shifts, and further restrictions in the right to strike.

Fieldcrest's intransigence on these issues is a serious matter for all textile workers. Fieldcrest's contract with ACTWU is the largest single textile contract, and one of the few that covers more than one plant. It includes about 4,500 workers at plants in Fieldale, Virginia; Eden, North Carolina; Columbus, Georgia; and Phenix City, Alabama. These workers represent nearly 20 percent of some 25,000 textile workers who are covered by ACTWU contracts in the United States. According to a report to the 1990 ACTWU national convention, there are about 500,000 textile workers in the southern states.

Fieldcrest Cannon is one of the five largest textile manufacturers in the United States. It dominates the towel market and has significant production in bedding and carpeting. Aside from Cone Mills, it is the only large textile manufacturer that has union representation by ACTWU.

## One-day walkout

Workers have demonstrated their determination to fight for a decent contract. Last year they organized a walkout, shutting down production for a day. A weaver at the Fieldale plant explained that this job action was successful. Many workers not in the union joined the walkout. Thanks to the unity of the workers no one was victimized. The contract language is loose enough to allow such an action. Now the company wants to be able to force workers back to their jobs within one hour of a job action, holding the union responsible. Workers in Fieldale have also traveled to Greensboro to demonstrate outside of negotiations sessions.

ACTWU signed its last contract with Fieldcrest in 1990. Since then the company

has undertaken a \$500 million program of modernization. The introduction of new machinery has changed how many workers do their jobs. The company has arbitrarily imposed new pay rates for workers who are paid according to a piecework-like system known as the "production" system.

A weaver in Fieldale explained that his wages recently went down between \$1 to \$2 per hour. A sewer said her income is only about half of what it used to be. The company also changes styles frequently, resulting in a large number of different rates and lower pay.

Another issue is subcontracting. Fieldcrest maintains that it has the right to subcontract work under the current contract. This allows the company to bring in a large number of workers who actually work for another company, and who have no union representation or benefits. A fixer (mechanic) at Karastan, a rug plant owned by Fieldcrest in Eden, explained that the company has already started to subcontract sweeping jobs. Due to the large amount of dust and lint that accompanies textile production, sweeping is a major job classification. Workers also report that this has started to occur in Columbus, Georgia.

Another issue workers feel strongly about is a proposed ban on smoking throughout the plant, and possibly including in the parking lots. The company wants to make this a contractual issue. The union believes workers can be victimized selectively if a smoking ban is imposed. Workers also feel smoking in designated areas is not harmful to nonsmokers and they see it as an issue of individual privacy.

The company's demand to be able to impose a 12-hour work day is also important. Workers in Columbus, Georgia, for example, report that some employees on 12-hour shifts are only working two days a week. Shifts of this length also raise questions about overtime, breaks, and the impact on workers' personal lives.

## Union's strength tested

This contract challenge comes at a time when the union's strength is being tested by textile companies throughout the south. In August 1991, ACTWU lost an important election at Fieldcrest's Kannapolis, North Carolina, mills by only 199 votes out of a work force of about 9,000. The union has challenged Fieldcrest's conduct during the organizing drive. Many workers testified that union supporters were harassed, intim-

idated, and fired prior to the election. The courts have yet to rule on this.

Cone Mills recently reduced its ACTWU-represented finishing plant at Haw River, North Carolina, to a skeleton crew. Plants that were organized as part of an earlier unionization drive at J.P. Stevens Co. have changed hands a couple of times and some of the mills were closed. In addition, Highland Yarn, a yarn production plant in High Point, North Carolina, recently declared that the union was decertified. A decision on this, too, is pending in the courts.

## Contract proposal rejected

In voting against Fieldcrest's proposed contract, many workers felt they were sending a strong message to the company: they are united in opposing the concessions and supporting their union. Union officials had recommended a "no" vote. Now, a discussion is taking place about how to advance the fight for a decent contract.

Many workers point to the problem that only about half of the Fieldcrest employees in the various unionized plants actually belong to the union. All the plants are in "right-to-work" states. The company operates nearly 20 plants and employs almost 20,000 workers.

There also have been rumors that the

biggest stock-holding family is trying to sell its share of the company. The Amoskeag Co. of Boston is the majority owner of Fieldcrest stock. Most of the top Fieldcrest management comes from Amoskeag, which has been in the textile business for a century.

Nonetheless, many workers are determined to struggle for a better contract. Some say they can continue to take advantage of the contract language that allows job actions like last year's walkout. Others say they may be able to slow down production. Some are optimistic that the "no" vote will send a forceful signal to the company.

When asked recently by a Charlotte, North Carolina, business publication how the company has been able to maintain its profitability, Fieldcrest chairman James Fitzgibbons, who receives a \$560,000 annual salary, answered, "We've had aggressive cost reductions." Many workers have resolved not to let themselves be part of these "cost reductions."

Bruce Kimball is a spinner at Cone Mills in Greensboro, North Carolina, and a member of ACTWU Local 1391. Susan LaMont works at Arrow Shirt in Atlanta and is a member of ACTWU Local 365. Bob Braxton from Atlanta also contributed to this article.

## Pennsylvania mushroom workers strike for recognition of union



Militant Nancy Cole

Striking mushroom workers in Pennsylvania sign a petition demanding recognition of their union. The 140 workers, mostly Mexican immigrants, went on strike April 1 for better pay and benefits. State police, private cops, and court orders have been used against the strikers. The company is trying to use immigrants from Cambodia and other countries as strikebreakers. Messages of support can be sent to: Kaolin Workers Union, Box 246, Kennett Square, PA 19348. Tel. (215) 444-9696.

## New Zealand day-care workers are acquitted of child abuse

BY JOAN SHIELDS

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand — Three day-care workers were acquitted April 6 by the High Court here of a charge of sexually abusing a child in their care.

The three women, who had proclaimed their innocence from the beginning, told assembled journalists that the charges had taken an enormous emotional and financial toll on themselves and their families and had wrecked their careers in child care. The government has used hysterical publicity around the case to attempt to curb democratic rights in the name of protecting children.

Gaye Davidson, the former supervisor of the Christchurch Civic Creche, said that her driving force now was to fight what had happened to her and her fellow workers. "I've no faith in the system anymore," she said. "It could happen to anybody."

The ruling followed an application by the women's lawyer that they be acquitted for lack of evidence. The judge did not offer his reasons for the decision. Another former Civic Creche worker, Peter Ellis, will face about 28 charges in a High Court trial scheduled to begin April 26.

The Civic Creche child sex-abuse case began with the March 31, 1992, arrest of Peter Ellis. On October 1, another four workers at the child-care center were arrested. The women were the four most senior workers at the center.

Deposition hearings on the case lasted 11 weeks — one of the longest such hearings ever held in New Zealand. The district court judge presiding over the hearings ruled February 11 that the government had produced

sufficient evidence to prosecute the defendants on most of the charges.

The prosecution case began to unravel March 5, however, when one of the accused, Deborah Gillespie, was acquitted of the one remaining charge against her. The parents of the child who had accused her had withdrawn the girl from the case. Similar action by other parents reduced the charges against the other three women to one each. This remaining charge alleged that the women had participated in an incident involving children standing naked in a circle and being forced to kick each other in the genitals.

## Case rested on videotaped interviews

The police case against the accused workers rested almost solely on more than 60 videotaped interviews with 20 children. These had been conducted by interviewers from the Social Welfare Department. In all, 118 children were interviewed.

The defense criticized the way these interviews were conducted. The charge against Gillespie, for example, was based on the evidence of a child who attended the child-care center for 15 months, beginning at the age of two and a half.

The child's allegations were made at an interview that took place 18 months after the child had left the center and 12 days after the arrest of Gillespie and the other women. Prior to this interview the child had been directly questioned by her mother about possible abuse at least four times and had denied it each time.

Medical experts who appeared for the prosecution testified that they had found no

physical evidence of abuse and could reach no firm conclusions about whether it had taken place. Some parents testified about changes they had noticed in their children's behavior, which, in hindsight, they attributed to the effects of sexual abuse.

Defense lawyers called a number of former Civic Creche workers and some parents who acted as character witnesses for the accused and described management practices at the center that would have made it virtually impossible for many of the alleged incidents to have occurred as described.

Hysteria in the big-business media surrounded the case from the beginning. News stories originating from the police and also drawing on the videotaped interviews contained allegations about satanic rituals, child pornography rings, mass mutilation of children, and abuse by groups of Asian men. No evidence to support such allegations was produced in court.

Both Ellis and Davidson received death threats. Ellis was beaten by four men who broke into his apartment. A number of the accused received abusive phone calls. Janice Buckingham, one of the defendants, had the words "child molester" etched in her lawn with weed killer.

A number of people with children at the center publicly expressed their disbelief of the charges and supported the child-care workers throughout the trial. They are now calling for an independent inquiry into events resulting in the closure of the Civic Creche and into the training and expertise of Social Welfare staff who interviewed children about abuse.

The Southern Local Government Officers' Union, on behalf of 13 former workers at the Civic Creche, has filed a NZ\$2.8 million (US\$1.5 million) claim against the Christchurch City Council for wrongful dismissal.

Joan Shields is a member of the New Zealand Meat Workers Union at Alliance Sockburn in Christchurch.

## Labor news in the 'Militant'

The *Militant* stays on top of the most important developments in the labor movement. It has correspondents who work in the mines, mills, and shops where the events are breaking. You won't miss any of it if you subscribe. See the ad on page 2 of this issue for subscription rates.



# Limiting free speech: no way to defend abortion

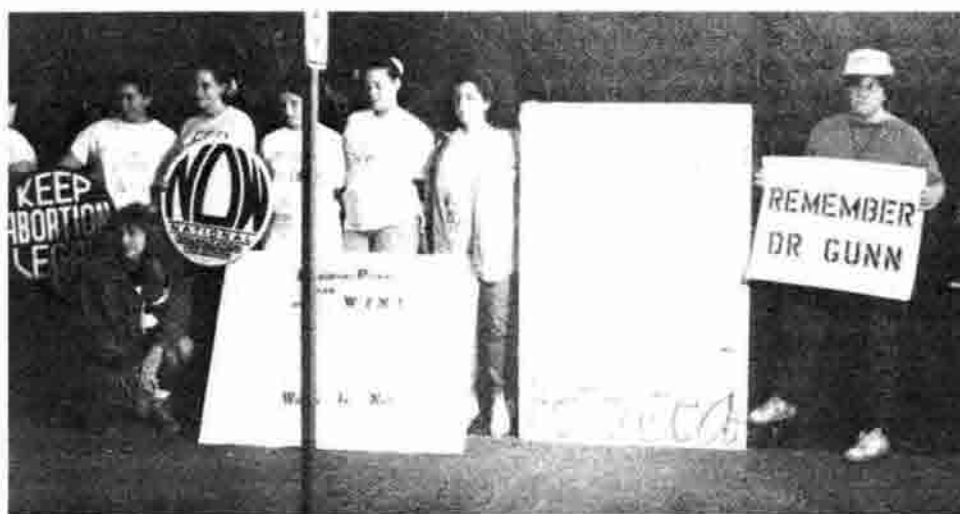
BY MAUREEN COLETTA

MIAMI — Working people in Florida recently won a victory for a woman's right to choose abortion. Hundreds of mostly young people linked arms in front of clinics throughout central Florida April 10 to keep access open for patients seeking abortions. The right-wing group Operation Rescue had targeted Florida and vowed to blockade clinics and prevent abortions. More than 50 antiabortion activists were arrested for violating an injunction that prohibits them from picketing within 36 feet of the clinic.

The highly restrictive injunction, issued by state judge Robert McGregor, also bans placards, loud noises, and the distribution of literature near the clinic.

Only weeks before, on March 17, right-wing Cuban-American groups attacked a picket line held in Miami to protest the U.S. embargo against Cuba. The thugs injured 27 pickets, seven of them seriously. While this was the third such protest held in front of the Spanish-language station Radio Mambi, it was the only one to be violently disrupted.

Throughout the day of the picket, station director Armando Pérez Roura broadcast announcements encouraging rightists to take action against the anti-embargo protesters. Despite the attack by right-wing Cuban-Americans, city commissioner Miriam Alonso called for banning



Pro-choice activists defend abortion clinic in Melbourne, Florida. Only by mobilizing large numbers of abortion rights supporters can right-wing attacks be defeated.

"I'd rather sit in jail than have the ACLU represent me," said Keith Tucci, executive director of Operation Rescue. They've got a baby-killing position, and I'm not going to let them use me to sanitize their awful reputation." Tucci called the court order "a piece of trash" and said, "We will appeal. We will win and the judge knows it."

Officials of the right-wing cadre organization made it clear they will continue to organize defiance of the court order. Bruce Cadle, Operation Rescue's national field director, called Judge McGregor "a judicial whore... who better have plenty of time on his calendar for the contempt cases on hundreds of people" who won't obey the injunction.

Yet abortion rights leaders hailed the injunction. "The whole order shows a much more serious, get-tough policy that we have needed for some time," said Eleanor Smeal, president of the Feminist Majority Foundation. She called for the Florida state legislature and U.S. Congress to pass more laws like McGregor's order.

The injunction bans shouting within earshot of the patients inside the clinic and bans displays of "images observable to... patients" such as graphic pictures of fetuses. It also bans the distribution of literature within 300 feet of the clinic except by "invited contact."

The parts of the injunction prohibiting distribution of literature, displaying of certain images or singing and chanting on a sidewalk are a violation of free speech. The same is true for moves to deny a permit for a march to a racist group.

Calls on the government and police to ban certain groups and restrict free speech are not the way to defeat rightist or racist organizations. This only serves to divert the question to one of the ultrarightists' right to free speech.

Operation Rescue and Pritchard's white supremacist outfit have used the recent events to portray themselves as proponents of free speech. "I'm being arrested for walking a public sidewalk, singing and praying," Tucci exclaimed as police arrested him April 10 for violating the injunction in Melbourne.

The banning of distribution of literature by Operation Rescue supporters near abortion clinics and the denial of

a permit for a picket to an ultrarightist group are measures that will strengthen the ability of capitalist politicians, courts, and the police to restrict democratic rights of unionists and other working people — including abortion rights supporters and opponents of the U.S. embargo against Cuba.

Despite what Tucci and Pritchard claim, these rightist groups are not trying to win public opinion through civil discussion and a free exchange of views. They are instead committing acts of violence to take away fundamental rights of working people. The problem is not the ideas they raise but that they carry out violent actions that suppress the democratic rights of others.

Operation Rescue uses physical and verbal assaults on patients, blocking clinic entry, harassing employees and their children, stalking patients and bombings. Their actions encouraged the murder of Dr. David Gunn in Pensacola, Florida, by one of their supporters.

Likewise, right-wing Cuban-American groups as well as racist and fascist-like outfits all have histories of violent attacks on others. We should call on the government to arrest, prosecute, and jail the right-wing thugs who commit acts of violent terror such as the murder of Dr. Gunn, the blockade of clinics, or the violent attack on the anti-embargo picket line.

## Inaction emboldens antiabortion thugs

Women exercising their legal right to get an abortion should be protected from assaults, intimidation or harassment. Laws already exist on the books that should be used to halt Operation Rescue's harassment techniques. Yet the years of inaction by the government and police have only emboldened the antiabortion thugs.

Contrary to what Smeal claims, the government and cops in Florida have not displayed "a much more serious, get tough policy" toward Operation Rescue. Those of us in central Florida who defended clinics on Easter weekend watched the cops drag their feet.

On April 9, police arrested 78 after allowing right-wingers to blockade a clinic in Fort Pierce. The next day in front of the Melbourne clinic, one woman linking arms with me commented on the disparity in treatment accorded by the cops to Rodney King for a traffic violation and Operation Rescue rightists for terroristic behavior.

It became clear to hundreds of us at clinics throughout the state that our actions made the difference in keeping the clinics open. By countermobilizing against the threatened blockade, we defeated Operation Rescue. We also gained confidence in our own abilities to have an impact.

It is becoming increasingly clear that rightist forces like Operation Rescue will not go away. While opposing any government attacks on free speech and assembly, we must demand swift government action to arrest and prosecute those guilty of violence or clinic blockades. Most importantly, it is only through mobilizations of large numbers of abortion rights supporters, unionists, youth, and other working people that the right of women to choose abortion can be defended — clinic by clinic.

## AS I SEE IT

the two Cuban-American groups that protested the embargo from carrying out similar actions in the future. The terrorist organization Alpha 66 and the paramilitary Commandos L, which participated in the attack on the anti-embargo protest, make no pretenses of defending free speech whatsoever.

A white supremacist group, the Society for the Advancement of White People, is planning an April 24 "white unity rally" in Miami Beach. Hank Pritchard, former member of the Ku Klux Klan, applied for a permit to hold the rally at the Holocaust Memorial site.

### Debate on democratic rights

A debate on First Amendment rights and whether the racist rally should be held, banned, or ignored, has unfolded in articles, editorials, and letters to the editors of various local newspapers. City officials decided to deny a permit at the site, which is on public property. They issued one for a block away from the memorial.

Miami Beach commissioner Abe Resnick, a Holocaust survivor, plans to file a suit against the rally permit on the basis that the First Amendment doesn't apply to neo-Nazi groups near the Holocaust Memorial.

The American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) is representing Hank Pritchard in challenging the Miami Beach decision on the rally site.

The ACLU also offered to help Operation Rescue overturn parts of the McGregor injunction. The rightist group demonstratively rejected the offer.

# Right-wing group presses drive for school prayer

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Pat Robertson, a right-wing politician known as a television evangelist, and his organization, the Christian Coalition, are spearheading a new drive to reintroduce prayer into the public schools. Seeking to exploit an opening provided by a recent court ruling on the subject, Robertson is threatening to sue school boards that ban prayer at graduation ceremonies.

Last June the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that a public school could not have a member of the clergy offer a school-approved prayer at graduation. At the same time, it sent back to a lower court for further consideration a ruling that permitted prayers as long as they were initiated and led by students.

The U.S. Court of Appeals in New Orleans then reaffirmed its earlier ruling allowing such "student-led" prayer. This is now the law in Texas, Mississippi, and Louisiana. Elsewhere, federal courts have the discretion to follow it or not.

Robertson's group has vowed to send legal "SWAT teams" to communities around the country to pressure school officials into accepting prayer in the schools. He argues that student-led prayer is a right guaranteed by the Constitution. In February and March, Robertson's legal organization, the American Center for Law and Justice, distributed more than 300,000 copies of a "special bulletin" detailing the court ruling allowing graduation prayer. Among the recipients were the nation's 15,000 school districts.

The bulletin argues that the issue is the "free speech rights of students, particularly the right to make religious comments in public speeches."

But this is not the issue at all. The truth is that Robertson and his supporters aim to impose prayer in the public schools in violation of the Constitution, which mandates the separation of church and state.

They couch this reactionary perspective behind innocent-sounding arguments about the need to defend free speech and freedom of religion. Their aim, however, is to push a far broader right-wing political and social agenda — in the schools and throughout society — that includes mandatory prayer in the schools, banning abortion, proscribing homosexuality, censorship of reading material, and the requirement that creationism be taught in the schools.

"America is at a crossroads," wrote Robertson in a Christian Coalition fund-raising letter last year. "Either she returns to her Christian roots... or she will continue to legalize sodomy, slaughter innocent babies, destroy the minds of her children, squander her resources and sink into oblivion."

### Force within Republican Party

Founded in 1989, Robertson's Christian Coalition now claims 250,000 members in 49 states. Its local affiliates have obtained majorities or near majorities on Republican Party central committees in more than half a dozen states. They placed 300 members as delegates to last year's Republican national convention.

Robertson, who ran as a presidential candidate in the 1988 Republican primaries, was again in the national spotlight at the party's 1992 convention. There he delivered a nationally televised speech promoting his rightist agenda.

In the November election the Christian Coalition campaigned aggressively in support of the Colorado initiative narrowly approved by voters to restrict gay rights, and against an equal rights amendment in Iowa, which was defeated.

In a letter urging a vote against the Iowa amendment, Robertson argued that it "encourages women to leave their husbands, kill their children, practice witchcraft, destroy capitalism, and become lesbians."

The government has granted the Christian Coalition tax-exempt status on the grounds that it is involved in "educational" endeavors. However, the group has focused much of its efforts on participating in local election campaigns.

### Winning school board seats

The liberal group People for the American Way, which last November monitored 500 local elections involving candidates backed by Christian right-wing organizations, reported that such candidates won 40 percent of them.

A number of rightist candidates describing themselves simply as evangelical Christians have won blocks of seats in local elections and in some cases like the San Diego suburb of Vista, California, majority control of the school board.

These rightist politicians, like their counterparts in Operation Rescue and other antiabortion outfits, appeal to "higher law" to justify reactionary positions.

In a discussion on abortion counseling in the schools, for example, one newly elected school board member in Oceanside, California, pulled a Bible from his pocket and declared, "There are the laws of the State of California and there are also the laws that are written in this book."

In New York City, where elections will occur May 4 for 288 seats on the city's 32 community school boards, the Roman Catholic Archdiocese has forged an alliance with the Christian Coalition to distribute more than 100,000 pieces of campaign material prepared by Robertson's group. This relationship arose after years of common work between the Christian Coalition and top figures in the Catholic church around anti-abortion actions.

The New York school board elections are at the center of a controversy that in February resulted in a 4-3 vote by the New York City Board of Education to oust Schools Chancellor Joseph Fernandez. The vote reflected the growing inroads right-wing forces have made in bourgeois public opinion against the so-called Rainbow Curriculum as well as Fernandez's November 1991 decision to allow the distribution of condoms in the public schools. The Rainbow Curriculum is a program introduced by Fernandez into the school system requiring teachers to discuss homosexuality and AIDS, among other things.



# King verdict

Continued from front page

verdict was a victory that shows what many workers know from personal experience: cop violence is routine, not just in Los Angeles but throughout the country. Working people don't need more cops. They need to fight for justice against police brutality.

Limiting the case to the four cops and the beating of King was the foundation of the entire federal trial.

Federal judge John Davies barred evidence on record of previous brutal acts by the defendants, as well as racist diatribes written by Koon and racist computer messages sent by Powell.

The judge also reminded jurors how difficult a cop's job can be. He said, "You may consider the fact that police officers are often forced to make judgments, in circumstances that are tense, uncertain and rapidly evolving, about the amount of force that is necessary in a particular situation."

This had been the axis of the cops' defense. In a post-verdict interview Koon commented, "I did as I was trained. I did as I was taught. I did as the LAPD wants to do." There is more than a grain of truth to this assertion.

The prosecution responded within the same framework, charging that only some of the blows were justified. They completely avoided the heart of the issue—that the beating of King was but one manifestation of ongoing, pervasive cop violence.

## Prosecution sought limited victory

The prosecution sought a limited victory, presenting less evidence against Briseno, who stomped King, and Wind, who kicked and clubbed him. Prosecutors seemed satisfied to see these two cops walk.

From the outset of the King case, the government employed a damage control strategy. The widely shown video of the beating had sparked a storm of protest. A key response to this protest was Mayor Tom Bradley's appointment of a commission to probe the police department. It was headed by Warren Christopher, now U.S. secretary of state.

The commission recognized that a traditional whitewash couldn't work. It presented a report that lifted a corner on the violence and racism of the police department. At the same time it insisted that this was the work of a minority of "bad" cops.

The commission also recognized that Police Chief Daryl Gates, who had come to symbolize the racism and brutality of the LAPD, had become a liability. It recommended he step aside. In his place, Bradley appointed Willie Williams, the first Los Angeles police chief who is Black.

The Christopher commission also acted as a safety valve, holding a series of community hearings. Hundreds of Blacks and Latinos jammed into these meetings to vent their outrage and long-standing grievances with the cops.

The protests mounted at first, focusing on the demand to dismiss Gates. A month after King's beating, 5,000 people marched to protest cop brutality. The action was supported by the AFL-CIO.

The potential for mobilizations to oust Gates and convict the cops—which could have boosted the fight against police brutality—was not realized, however. Trade union officials, politicians who are Black, and leaders of organizations in the Black community acted to block working people from taking political action around this case.

This situation allowed capitalist politicians and the big-business media to turn the situation around. The focus was no longer on the LAPD but on the four individual cops. This was the strategy followed in the state trial last year, where the cops walked free, and was the basic political approach of the government in the federal trial.

Since the April 17 verdict, there has been a stepped-up effort to promote the myth that the cops are "public servants." An April 19 editorial in the *Los Angeles Times* praised Police Chief Williams for the mobilization of 6,500 cops during the weekend of the verdict. "A round of applause to all those who helped to preserve the peace," the *Times* editors said, calling the police deployment "an impressive contribution to the maintenance of public order."

The editorial went on to assert "that the guilty verdict on Saturday was not a verdict on all police officers but only on two of them."

## MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

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

### San Francisco

**South Africa: White Regime's Final Hour.** Speaker: Sam Manuel, Socialist Workers Party, just returned from South Africa. Fri., April 30, 7 p.m. 3284 23rd St. (near Mission). Donation: \$5. Tel: (415) 282-6255.

## FLORIDA

### Miami

**Crisis in Peru: What's Behind the Anti-Worker Actions of Shining Path.** Speaker: Seth Galinsky, Socialist Workers Party, Sat., May 1, 7:30 p.m. 137 NE 54th St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (305) 756-1020. Translation to Spanish and French.

## GEORGIA

### Atlanta

**Eyewitness Account: UN Plan to Partition Bosnia—No Solution for War in Yugoslavia.** Speakers: Dubravko Kakarigi, and a representative of the Socialist Workers Party. Sat., May 1, 7:30 p.m. 172 Trinity Ave. SW. Donation: \$3. Tel: (404) 577-4065.

## IOWA

### Des Moines

**The Clinton Administration vs. Health Care for Working People.** Speaker: Priscilla Schenk, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., May 1, 7:30 p.m. 2105 Forest Ave. Donation: \$3. Tel: (515) 246-8249.

## NEW YORK

### Manhattan

**The Cultural War and the Battle over Education in New York City.** Speaker: Derek Bracey, Militant staff writer. Sat., May 1, 7:30 p.m. 191 7th Ave. Donation: \$4. Tel: (212) 727-8421. Translation to Spanish.

## WASHINGTON

### Seattle

**Coal Miners Face Down Bosses.** Speakers: Beverly Bernardo, Communist League of Canada;

Pat McGuinnis, Socialist Workers Party. Both just returned from West Virginia coal region. Sat., May 1, 7:30 p.m. 1405 E. Madison. Donation: \$3. Tel: (206) 323-1755. Translation to Spanish.

## CANADA

### Toronto

**The Fight for Gay Rights Today: Reportback from April 25 March on Washington.** Speaker: Darla White, Communist League. Sat., May 1, 7:30 p.m. 827 Bloor St. West. Donation: \$4. Tel: (416) 533-4324.

### Vancouver

**Mandela: Murder Won't Stop March to Freedom in South Africa.** Speaker: representative, African National Congress. Sat., May 1, 7:30 p.m. 3967 Main St. (between 23rd and 24 Ave). Donation: \$4. Tel: (604) 872-8343.

## ICELAND

### Reykjavik

**The Capitalist World Disorder and the Workers. May Day Forum.** Sat., May 1, 3 p.m. Klappartíg 26, 2nd floor. Tel: (91) 17513.

# Strikes in Britain shut railroads, coal mines

BY MARTIN MARRIOTT

LONDON — The entire British railroad system and most coal mines were closed down for 24 hours April 16 in the second protest strike against job losses this month. The two main unions involved were the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (RMT) and the National Union of Mineworkers (NUM). Both unions organized a similar one-day protest strike April 2.

This time, the RMT, which is the largest rail union, was joined by the Amalgamated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen (ASLEF), which organizes the train drivers.

The strikes were called to protest job losses through forced retirement, contracting out work, and massive pit closures. Both the railroads and the coal mines are government-owned industries which the government wants to sell off.

In the last 20 years there have been 106,000 jobs eliminated on the railroads, 7,000 of them this year alone. While the latest reductions come from voluntary retirements, the rail unions expect the employer, British Rail, to begin compulsory retirements. There has also been increased use of low paid, and often nonunion, contractors to replace the jobs of union rail workers.

Last October the Conservative Party government announced the closing of 31 of the 50 coal mines in Britain, eliminating the jobs of 30,000 miners. This announcement was answered by massive demonstrations, forcing the government to back down temporarily. The latest government plan is to



Militant Durham miners at march for workers on strike at Timex in Dundee, Scotland.

close 19 mines. Some have already been shut down.

The government and big business have tried to diminish the importance of the two strikes. Prime Minister John Major described the April 16 action as "a throwback to the 1960s," and "utterly pointless."

British Rail chairman Sir Bob Reid, accused the RMT of "living in a different world." To punish the workers, the company will stop deducting union dues from paychecks.

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**Robust recovery** — "Stacks of unsold goods piled up for a fifth straight month during February, the



Harry Ring

Commerce Dept. said, mainly because of weaker demand at retail stores." — News item

**Racist brew** — A federal judge in South Dakota overturned a congressional statute intended to bar the marketing of "Crazy Horse"

malt liquor. The Oglala Sioux tribe had objected to the use of the name. A lawyer for Crazy Horse's estate declared: "People wouldn't stand for Martin Luther King police batons or Rodney King police batons. It's that level or worse."

**'Even the devils can quote Scripture ...'** — To justify the "right" of Greek capitalism to Macedonia, a Greek historian reported that the Talmud consistently refers to Alexander the Great as "Alexander the Macedonian, King of the Greeks." Israel also cites the Talmud to justify its "right" to Palestine.

**Too aggressive for cops?** — In Iowa, three cops and the owner of

a guard dog — part German shepherd and part wolf — were acquitted of cruelty to animal charges after castrating the dog without benefit of anesthesia. They did it because he was too aggressive, but the surgery failed to calm him down, so he was shot.

**Helps balance the budget** — We didn't want to irritate you during the scramble to beat the tax deadline, but the Treasury Department dining room offers a lunch of lobster, asparagus, and poached peaches. \$4.75.

**Give them time** — Officials in Greensboro, North Carolina, are considering an added homeowners

tax on roofs, driveways, and parking areas, assertedly to reduce runoff water pollution. A local columnist suggested a tax on the air people breathe. This may sound stupid, he said, "but it fits right along with the way many politicians in both parties think."

**Class and spousal treachery?** — After not smoking for six years, Greek actor Dimitris Horn fell off the wagon. He was sharply and publicly rebuked for this by the spouse of Greece's top tobacco magnate. She is, apparently, a principled opponent of the stuff.

**Moet for the masses** — According to the Annual survey by Moët &

Chandon, the champagne folks, the cost of luxury goods again trailed the inflation rate. Enthused the chap who prepared the survey: "This means that luxury items, like imported chocolate or fine champagne, are becoming increasingly affordable to the American consumer."

**Now here's a role model** — "Cheers" star Kirstie Alley is into improving the environment. She ripped out the air conditioning system in her 32-room mansion, replacing it with a solar-operated cooling and heating system. She shops at an organic supermarket and takes along 15 canvas bags, so she won't need paper ones. She's checking out a special-order electric-powered Volvo.

## Russia nuclear explosion: worst since Chernobyl

BY JON HILLSON

MINNEAPOLIS — The ticking time bomb of the former Soviet Union's nuclear industry exploded April 6 near Tomsk, a Siberian city of 500,000.

Georgy Kaurov, a spokesman for the Russian government's Atomic Energy Ministry, termed the detonation of a tank of uranium waste the "single worst accident since the Chernobyl catastrophe."

Like their Soviet predecessors in the wake of the 1986 meltdown at Chernobyl, however, Russian officials sought immediately to play down the extent of the danger from the Tomsk blast.

"It is an accident without danger," Kaurov stated. Not a single curie of radioactivity was released in the explosion, he claimed, in comparison to the release of 80 million curies at Chernobyl.

Gennady Khandorin, director of the Tomsk-7 plant, told the Moscow newspaper *Izvestia* that some radiation had been detected on a road in the nearby village of Samus. Kaurov later admitted April 12 that traces of plutonium had been found in the atmosphere.

The road is near a contaminated strip of land that is 550 yards wide and two miles long. A cloud of radioactive gas from the explosion also drifted away from the plant.

Up to 500 civil defense workers were digging up contaminated snow and dirt for burial elsewhere. The Russian government announced allocation of \$3 million for the cleanup operation.

### Steel tank exploded

According to the Russian Atomic Energy Ministry, the blast was produced when nitric acid, a cleansing agent, was poured into a tank with nuclear waste.

The resulting explosion blew off a reinforced concrete tank cover, short-circuited the facility's electrical system, and ignited a fire.

At least one of 25 firefighters who arrived to combat the blaze received a heavy dose of radiation.



Russian civil defense worker measures radiation near Tomsk accident site

According to Russian officials, the Tomsk-7 plant's production of weapons-grade plutonium has been phased out. The facility now processes used nuclear fuel from reactors, they said.

The environmental group Greenpeace says plutonium production continues at the plant.

Two similar plutonium producing plants, near Krasnoyarsk in Siberia and Chelyabinsk in the Urals, remain operational. The latter region was the site of nuclear accidents in the 1950s and 1960s.

The effect of these accidents, along with decades of massive industrial and nuclear pollution, have been termed by Chelyabinsk residents a "slow-motion Chernobyl."

Tomsk-style explosions at these locations could not be ruled out in the near future, said Aleksei Yablokov, Russian president Boris Yeltsin's adviser on the environment.

The Tomsk site has been a focus of protest

by local residents. They have publicly opposed helicopter dumping of unidentified drums into nearby marshes.

Tomsk officials received word of the April 6 explosion from Moscow, some 1,800 miles to the east. But, they said, they received no information on how to deal with radiation from the blast.

### Nuclear accidents routine in Russia

While the Tomsk explosion has made world headlines, nuclear accidents in Russia have become routine.

More than 200 such "incidents," including those where radiation were released, were reported in 1992.

Fifteen Chernobyl-style reactors remain in operation, with more scheduled for construction. Twenty-five of Russia's 57 nuclear power plants are considered "very dangerous" by international experts.

In recent conversations with Yeltsin at their meeting in Vancouver, U.S. president Bill Clinton pledged \$15 million for short-term safety improvement at these plants and \$10 million for use in storage of nuclear fuel.

Some \$700 million was promised by the Group of Seven major industrialized nations last year to "upgrade" the most dangerous nuclear power plants in the former Soviet Union.

Disputes between these capitalist powers on who should disburse funds and manage the cleanup have blocked virtually any payments from these funds, however.

Estimates for cleaning up the environment of the former Soviet Union, ravaged by rampant nuclear contamination and industrial pollution, go as high as \$1.5 trillion.

Jon Hillson is a switchman on the Burlington Northern railroad and a member of United Transportation Union Local 1000 in Minneapolis.

## 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO



Al-Fatah is only one of many armed guerrilla organizations of the Palestine refugees, but in the last year it has come to the fore as the most resolute and daring of the underground fighters. Teófilo Acosta, a Cuban journalist, visited one of the al-Fatah training camps. Bashiri, the *nom de guerre* of a political leader of the organization in Damascus explained its origins and objectives. Acosta asked him the purpose of al-Fatah's struggle. He answered:

"To bring down the economic, political and social system in Israel, to destroy her institutions through a war that will be long and bloody but sure to succeed."

When asked what would be done when the guerrillas took power, he said, "Our movement is not of a racist character. We are not motivated by racial hatred. We are not fighting the Jews as such. We are fighting against Israel as a Zionist state — at the service of U.S. imperialism — that forcibly displaced our people from their lands and homes in 1948 and, more recently, in June 1967."



May 1, 1943

"Your Standard of Living — What's Happening to It," the popular new pamphlet by C. Charles, has had such a warm response

from the readers in all parts of the country that the first edition is completely sold out and a second, revised, up-to-date edition is now being prepared. Pioneer Publishers announced this week.

Following are reports from some of the branches of the Socialist Workers Party which had taken bundle orders of the pamphlet:

CHICAGO held a Red Sunday on April 18 combining sale of the pamphlet with distribution of *The Militant* and leaflets for its May Day meeting. "There were exactly 25 who went out and in an average time of one hour sold 250 pamphlets at a nickel apiece. . . . Everything was completely organized in advance. We had five teams in five different sections of town." Of the 1,000 copies Chicago had at that time, only 100 remained for sale at an important CIO meeting that week.

NEW HAVEN: "Last Wednesday another comrade and I canvassed the Negro district. Within approximately 40 minutes we sold 16 pamphlets and collected 90 cents. The reception and sale of the pamphlet has encouraged us to order another 50 pamphlets. Please send them to us at once."

"Its timeliness, as well as the urgency of its topic matter, sold the pamphlet with little encouragement. Workers realize that they are being mulcted, but they want to know why, and what can be done to stop it."

FLINT: "Please send 50 more copies. One worker said he was having his children read it and wished all high school boys and girls could get copies. He was also passing it around among his friends. Others generally agree the pamphlet is certainly the true story of living conditions today."

SAN DIEGO: "Well. That's just the type of thing we need. The type of literature you can give everybody you know and it hits the spot."

## N. Carolina college students fight for Black cultural center

BY SUSAN SKINNER

CHAPEL HILL, North Carolina — Students at the University of North Carolina (UNC) here packed the campus Memorial Auditorium April 16 in a rally to demand that university officials allow a Black Cultural Center (BCC) to be built.

A group of students has also been staging a sit-in outside Chancellor Paul Hardin's office since April 1. They are demanding that Hardin approve an advisory board's proposed site for the BCC and that the Board of Trustees meeting be moved up to early April before summer break. Sixteen protesting students and one supporter were arrested April 17; the university later dropped the charges.

Students have been fighting for a Black Cultural Center for the past decade. Currently the university only provides a small temporary office inside the student center. Over the years the BCC movement has faced countless delays and excuses from university officials.

In recent months, a coalition of more than 25 campus groups has organized several

marches, rallies, and other activities to press their demand for a freestanding BCC.

Exposing the political character of the university stonewalling on the BCC, the argument has been raised that the center would be "separatist" and would worsen relations between Black and white students.

BCC supporters answer by pointing to the breadth of the struggle for the center, which includes students of all nationalities. The Student Congress has passed a resolution backing the BCC. Last September, thousands of local high school and college students filled the UNC stadium to hear student leaders and filmmaker Spike Lee call for the Black Cultural Center. Leaders of the African National Congress Youth League, visiting the campus March 25 to speak on the South African freedom struggle, added their support for the BCC at an enthusiastic rally of 200 students.

Susan Skinner is a member of the United Transportation Union in Salisbury, North Carolina.



# —SWP NATIONAL COMMITTEE STATEMENT— Tell the truth about Clinton's holocaust in Waco, Texas

Continued from front page

wooden structures for hours on end, and to inject massive quantities of tear gas into the premises, the FBI had no fire trucks on hand. None arrived for 30 minutes after the first curls of smoke were seen rising, and well after Clinton's holocaust had consumed all human life inside.

To Clinton administration officials, the April 19 assault was a matter of bureaucratic convenience. The FBI agents who had laid siege to the cult's buildings 51 days earlier were growing tired. Clinton and Reno explained, and replacements would need to be trained.

The president and attorney general also claimed to have been worried about reports that children inside the complex were being battered and abused. According to Clinton at his April 20 press conference, when he asked Reno why that particular day was being picked for the move, she replied, "It's because of the children."

The same day as Clinton's remarks, however, FBI director William Sessions and Reno's press spokesperson at the Justice Department both said publicly that the agency had no evidence of child abuse or baby beating.

## 'Children's administration'

What hypocrisy! Clinton's new crew in the White House claims to be the "children's administration." Hillary Clinton, the president's wife and head of the administration's health-care task force, is a former chairperson of the Children's Defense Fund, a liberal lobbying group. The fund's current head is Donna Shalala, Clinton's secretary of health and human services. Where are the voices of these "children's advocates" now, in the aftermath of Washington's massacre in Waco?

During the initial hours following the fire, Clinton sought to pin responsibility on his attorney general. After Reno went on nationwide television that night saying the operation "was obviously wrong" and then offered to resign, however, Clinton called a quick news conference the next day to hold the fort.

As readers of the news article in this issue can judge for themselves, Clinton's tone was strident and unapologetic. He expressed the same aggressive arrogance in the face of 17 dead children as in his warnings to Japan about trade balances, or his talk of cost controls on health care.

Clinton labeled David Koresh, leader of the Branch Davidians, "dangerous, irrational, and probably insane." Clinton said he was surprised anyone "would suggest that the Attorney General should resign because some religious fanatics murdered themselves."

Using the Waco events to bolster Washington's murderous policies elsewhere, the president ominously added, "There is, unfortunately, a rise in this sort of fanaticism all across the world. And we may have to confront it again."

By what perverse logic does the instigator of the Waco holocaust accuse anyone else of being "dangerous"? Countless peoples around the world would gladly have taken their chances with "religious fanatics" to have been spared the tender mercies of the U.S. capitalist rulers.

In Waco there were close to 90 victims. In the Gulf War two years ago, the roster of Iraqis incinerated trying to surrender, or murdered in one of the U.S.-organized "turkey shoots," totaled in the tens and possibly hundreds of thousands. In Vietnam, the toll rose into the millions.

## Abuse of democratic rights

In fact, the bloody outcome of the Waco events was built into the flagrant abuse of democratic rights by the initial raid on the Branch Davidian building last February 28 by the U.S. Treasury Department's notorious Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms (ATF). The botched secret assault by 100 federal agents was launched on the flimsiest of excuses: alleged rumors that registered firearms on the premises were being illegally refashioned into automatic weapons. After the fact, the equally unsubstantiated charge of child abuse—the newest "last refuge of scoundrels" by cops, prosecutors, and government officials—was raised for the first time as well.

In the February raid itself, the ATF killed at least two and perhaps as many as six members of the Branch Davidians, managing to set up the shooting deaths of four of its own agents to boot.

From this deadly start to its murderous finish, Washington's operation in Waco has been a direct assault on the constitutional rights so vital to the interests of the working class.

What happened to due process? Protection from illegal search and seizure? Freedom of religion?

Did the right to association and equal protection under the law not apply to the Branch Davidians? If so, who else might someday find themselves labeled fanatics or fundamentalists or radicals? A Black rights organization? An immigrants' rights group? Defenders of an abortion clinic? A striking union local?

## Workers recoil in horror

The first reaction of millions of workers watching the conflagration in Waco was to recoil in horror against this government-organized homicide. They responded as millions did more than a year ago after seeing the video of the Los Angeles cop beating of Rodney King.

Now the Clinton administration is trying to break that bond of human solidarity with those whose most basic

democratic rights and whose very lives are trampled underfoot by the cops and capitalist politicians.

The government is weaving elaborate tales to portray its victims as less than human. As detailed in the accompanying news article, outright lies, half-truths, and self-serving rumors are being patched together to portray the Branch Davidian buildings as a gigantic munitions factory and the site of unbridled child abuse. But not a shred of hard evidence has yet been presented.

This is far from the first time in the history of big-business rule that the U.S. employers and government have cooked up hysterical tales to justify bloody assaults.

## The Molly Maguires

More than a century ago, the coal bosses in Pennsylvania and West Virginia whipped up a hue and cry against an alleged conspiracy of terrorist miners they dubbed "the Molly Maguires." Ten miners were framed up in sensational 1875-77 trials and sent to the gallows on the testimony of a private cop bought and paid for by the mine owners.

In 1964 the New York cops and daily papers concocted a scare campaign about a "hate gang" of Black youths in Harlem allegedly called the "Blood Brothers." Over the next few years, the FBI and state and local cop agencies used similar pretexts to unleash raids on the homes and apartments of members of the Black Panther Party and other organizations, resulting in numerous assassinations and frame-ups.

And today, in the aftermath of the World Trade Center bombing last February, the campaign against alleged "Palestinian terrorist groups," "Islamic fundamentalists," and "radical Muslim fanatics"—already in high gear—is being cranked up even further.

Clinton talks about those indicted for the New York bombing as though they were already tried and convicted. At his April 20 news briefing he boasted that the Waco operation was carried out by "the same FBI that found the people that bombed the World Trade Center in lickety-split, record time." So much for the presumption of innocence.

Clinton and the bourgeois figures and bought-and-paid-for middle-class professionals and "experts" who make up his administration as well as his social milieu, have no experience on the receiving end of such calculated lies and violence. They are blind and indifferent to the depth of workers' reactions to ruling-class brutality.

## Happens to workers daily

But assaults like this, on a greater or lesser scale, happen to workers and their families every day. Police, sometimes including FBI or ATF agents, routinely raid workers' homes on one or another pretext—drugs, firearms, or arrest warrants. Family members and friends are framed up or gunned down. Workers' cars are stopped and searched. Their lockers are rifled by private or government cops. They are subjected to random police intimidation and brutality.

Sometimes, as in Waco, the assaults by the government and their cops take on larger proportions. Eight years ago, for example, the mayor's office and police in Philadelphia dropped bombs on a home in a largely Black neighborhood in which members of a group called MOVE were resisting eviction. Eleven of the 13 occupants, including 5 children, were murdered in cold blood, and 60 other homes in the working-class community were consumed in flames.

The capitalist rulers and big-business media would like to coarsen our human response to such outrages. They want working people to watch the flames in Waco, or the nightstick blows to a Rodney King, and say, "They're lowlifes. They got what was coming to them." Or at least, "It's none of my affair. It can't happen to me."

## Workers must tell truth

But working people and the labor movement, above all in the United States but also around the world, must not let this happen. We must demand that the full truth come out about the February 28 cop assault on the Branch Davidians, the 51-day siege, and the murderous April 19 finale organized directly by the president and chief prosecutor of the United States.

For workers around the world, watching the carnage in Waco was an almost unbearable reminder of the kind of violence the capitalist government, capitalist political parties, and their armed gangs—whether cops or rightist goons—will not hesitate to use. Today the target may be a marginal religious group. Tomorrow it can be workers who step out of line or their unions and other class organizations.

Fewer than 100 days into the new Democratic administration, workers in the United States and the world over have been given the chance to take a cold, hard look at the truth about the Clinton White House and bipartisan Congress. That reality should redouble our determination to unite and organize as a class—across national borders and beyond skin color, language, or sex—to defend the economic, social, and political rights of working people, which are under attack both at home and abroad by the employers and their government.

This should encourage us, as working people, to take the moral high ground and keep telling the truth about the murders in Waco and the murderers in Washington. No other class can or will.

# 86 die in Waco

Continued from front page

After the police failed to overrun the compound in the initial assault, they laid siege to the place. Within days more than 400 federal agents, buttressed by state and local police, armored personnel carriers, and other heavy weaponry, had encircled the compound. Clinton soon sent in the FBI, which took over control of the operation from the ATF.

Over the next several weeks, electricity and phone service to the compound were cut off. According to the *New York Times*, the police "bombarded the cult members through the night with the sounds of dentists' drills and rabbits being slaughtered." The week before the final onslaught, the FBI closed off the area with razor-sharp concertina wire.

At one point the cops, angry over negative media coverage, used an armored fighting vehicle to flatten a reporter's car parked nearby.

In March about 30 adults and children left the grounds, leaving nearly 100 inside. Those adults who left the compound during the siege were taken to jail.

Attorney General Reno responded to the fatal outcome of the raid by saying it had been a mistake. At the same time, she argued that it had been "just a step forward in trying to bring about peaceful resolution by constantly exerting further pressure to shrink the perimeter."

"Our experts," Reno told reporters, "said that they were totally frustrated, that they had not been able to negotiate anything with Koresh, that they did not think that he would ever come out."

Further attempting to justify the raid, the attorney general said there had been reports that children had been sexually abused and beaten inside the compound. The day after the attack, however, FBI chief William Sessions said he had no evidence of child abuse there.

Texas authorities had also been unable to find proof of child abuse by the Branch Davidians prior to the February 28 raid.

Asked if he would have done anything differently Sessions replied, "No. I think it was a good plan. . . . It was well thought out, well executed."

Reno immediately declared her willingness to take full responsibility for the assault, and offered to resign "if that's what the president wants."

Clinton responded that he was surprised "that anyone would suggest that the attorney general should resign because some religious fanatics murdered themselves. . . . [Reno] has conducted her duties in an appropriate fashion and she has dealt with this situation I think as well as she could have."

The president noted that military people were brought in to help analyze the situation, and that the FBI had consulted with them in planning the assault.

## Tear gas 'covered entire premises'

Reno also said the tear gas was intended "to induce serious negotiations for the evacuation of the compound," and claimed it was only used in limited areas of the buildings.

This was contradicted by an FBI agent on the scene, however. Bob Ricks said the tear gas was meant to "make their environment as uncomfortable as possible until they do exit the compound." He noted that the police had "covered almost the entire premises with gas."

Government officials say they believed the adults inside the buildings had gas masks that could protect them from the tear gas for up to eight hours. At his press conference, Clinton said, "The gas was supposed to stay active in the compound longer than the gas masks themselves were to work. So that it was thought that even if they all had gas masks, that eventually the gas would force them out."

Most of the people died inside a concrete bunker where they had taken refuge from the tear gas.

Senator Bob Packwood was one of those who voiced support for Reno. "I think she acted correctly," the Republican legislator stated.

Other congressmen took some distance and suggested an investigation of the assault. "There are questions of competence, questions of effectiveness," commented Representative Henry Hyde, also a Republican.

Most media coverage on the situation in Waco has focused on the ideas and statements of the Branch Davidians, including Koresh's claim that he is the messiah.

An April 20 editorial in the *Wall Street Journal*, bearing the title "Weird in Waco," justified the FBI's deadly assault by arguing that Koresh was simply crazy. "Perhaps it could have been handled better," but the main problem is that people are "afraid to uphold traditional standards" and stand up to "nuttiness," the *Journal's* editors declared.

The *New York Times* said in an April 21 editorial that Clinton was correct to argue "that the primary evil was done by David Koresh, the cult leader." While placing the blame for the deaths squarely on Koresh, the *Times* also called for "a searching inquiry into where things went wrong," saying, "The Government's mistake was triggering his mad act."

One article in the *Washington Post*, however, drew a comparison between the events in Waco and the bombing of a house by police in Philadelphia eight years ago. In that case, members of the organization MOVE were resisting an eviction order when police dropped a bomb onto their row house from a helicopter, starting a fire that killed 11 occupants and destroyed 60 other homes.

"Despite a grand jury that found the bombing 'totally unacceptable,' no state or federal charges were brought against city officials responsible for the decision," the *Post* noted. The only adult survivor of that bombing, Ramona Africa, was imprisoned for seven years.



# Striking Canadian miners win solidarity

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

We invite you to contribute short items to this column as a way for other fighting workers around the world to read about and learn from these important struggles. Jot down a few lines 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 240 striking miners at the Royal Oak mine in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, have made recent progress in reaching out to other unions for support. They have been on strike since May 23, 1992. The strikers, members

has been set up called CASAW Ladies Support System (CLASS), which has helped organize a program where unions across Canada can "adopt" a striker's family. Twenty-seven families of strikers were sponsored in March.

Strikebreakers working in the mine are trying to decertify the union. The Federal Labor Board has postponed a decision on this.

Cops are still holding over the heads of the strikers the threat of charging one or more of them for a September explosion in the mine that killed nine replacement workers. □

## Hoover workers strike in Australia

Workers at the Hoover Australia plant in Sydney walked off the job March 30 to protest the

agreement.

The Metal Trades Federation of Unions launched a wage claim campaign in February including a one-day national strike March 1 and a campaign to achieve 10 percent wage increases at individual enterprises. As part of this campaign a national strike of steelworkers took place March 22 at Broken Hill Proprietary, the biggest steel producer in Australia. This was the first national strike against the company in 10 years.

Two days later workers at Hoover rejected a company proposal, voted to ban overtime, and began a series of stoppages. It started with a plantwide half-day strike and then each department went out for four hours.

At the beginning of the month, Hoover proposed to tie wage increases to productivity over a two-year period and to make major changes in job classifications. The company also attempted to introduce part-time work and a lower start rate for new workers for the first four and a half months. This proposal was put forward a week before the March 13 Australian elections. The company hoped to see a Liberal Party government elected that would help accelerate the attacks on unions. Following the return of the Labor government, however, the company backed off from some of the sharpest attacks in the original proposal.

The company proposal was again rejected by workers. Following the meeting that voted to take strike action, management called line meetings to put forward

the company position and try to make workers afraid Hoover would close down, as they did in France, and move to another country where labor costs are cheaper.

While some workers were afraid of losing their jobs and thought they should take what the company offered, the majority supported the strike action, many saying that workers never get anything out of Hoover without a fight. □

## Health-care strike in Connecticut

Four hundred people rallied April 7 at the gate of Winthrop Health Care Center in New Haven, Connecticut, to support the 200 striking workers at this nursing home. The strike began April 2. Members of the New England Health Care Employees Union District 1199 are fighting to obtain from Winthrop the same contract terms won at 30 other Connecticut nursing homes, including a 12 percent wage increase over three years and no cuts in medical benefits.

The owner of the nursing home, Nelson Tuchman, is recruiting scabs from nonunion nursing homes and even from local homeless shelters, according to District 1199 organizer Leslie Frane.

Aida, a nurse's aide, was enthusiastic about the rally. She said, "The only thing Tuchman has going for him is money—everything else is against him." Darlene, another nurse's aide added, "I was hoping for support from the local community and it looks like we

got even more than we anticipated. I just hope it makes a positive difference."

The union points out that Tuchman was arrested in January and charged with defrauding Medicaid of \$391,000. Rally leaflets pointed out that Tuchman took home almost \$500,000 in salary and profits from Winthrop last year. This explains a favorite chant at the picket line: "Hey hey, ho ho, where did all that money go?"

Toree, a nurse's aide, spelled it out: "We're fighting to hold onto health-care benefits and a small wage raise. Tuchman wants the contract to say any raise we get comes only if he is reimbursed by the state."

Frane said union officials hope to convince the state to put Winthrop under receivership as a way to end the strike.

The strikers picket at the gate 24 hours a day, usually with 15-40 people. They are regularly joined by members of other unions and people living in the neighborhood. Strikers are confident they can win, and report that union members are solid. None have crossed the picket line. □

The following people contributed to this week's column: Ned Dmytryshyn, a member of Teamsters Local 213 in Vancouver, British Columbia; Linda Harris, a member of the Automotive, Metals and Engineering Union in Sydney, Australia; and Will Wilkin, a member of International Association of Machinists Local 609 in New Haven, Connecticut.

## ON THE PICKET LINE

of the Canadian Association of Smelter and Allied Workers (CASAW) Local 4, are facing scabs and cop violence.

Fred Couch, CASAW vice-president and a striking miner, was part of a solidarity tour to Alberta in March and April, where a group of strikers spoke to hundreds of unionists and raised \$15,000. "Wherever we went, we met with tremendous support," Couch said in an interview. Other solidarity tours are planned to Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

A family strike support group

layoff of 50 workers. As they finished work the previous afternoon, management told workers on one of the washing machine lines not to come in the next day. Hoover workers, members of the Metal Trades Federation of Unions, had been carrying out a campaign of rolling stoppages during the week before the layoffs, in a fight over a wage claim.

The following morning at a plantwide meeting, workers voted in favor of a union proposal that the strike be called off and that negotiations resume over the wage

## LETTERS

### Abused for travel to Cuba

As a Dutch citizen living in the U.S.A. I am outraged at U.S. governmental abuse of power and flagrant violations of my constitutional rights.

Semiretired and cruising aboard my sailboat *Hatuey*, my vessel was seized by U.S. Customs on arrival from Cuba on March 15, 1993.

The yacht was seized without probable cause, without a search warrant, and my rights were never explained. In essence I was told that I did not have any. My crew was offered "substantial money" to provide U.S. Customs with incriminating information about my person and I was denied a copy of the Constructive Seizure Notification.

When the search by U.S. Coast Guard, and U.S. Customs officials

in a retirement fund.

My alleged "crimes"? "Trading with the enemy" (Cuba). In reality I am guilty of humanitarian aid in the form of delivering engine parts for fishing boats so people could fish and eat. I am also guilty of delivering CARE packages to individuals and donating powdered milk to ICAP [Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples] for distribution to needy children and the elderly.

I want my boat returned to me immediately before additional damage renders her worthless as has been the case in similar seizures.

Already several thousands of dollars worth of damage has been done due to rude treatment and wind.

I am outraged and solicit your

### Colorado's antigay law

Colorado Amendment 2, the anti-gay-rights amendment approved by voters last November, is cloning. It prohibits the state or any local government from passing or enforcing laws to protect homosexuals from discrimination. Four cities and some government agencies already have such laws. It's currently in legal limbo because Denver District Court has blocked the amendment from taking effect until its constitutionality is decided. In the meantime, groups in 10 to 12 states are pushing for similar laws.

There are several lessons to be learned from Colorado. (1) This is a civil rights and justice issue, not a class issue. (2) Amendment 2 proponents confused voters by claiming the amendment was against "special rights" for homosexuals. That was not true. (3) Because of the emphasis on "special rights," people opposed to homosexuality but who supported an individual's right to privacy in personal matters voted for the bill. (4) Opponents of Amendment 2 were so certain it would fail that they did not organize adequately against it.

Mary Walter  
Denver, Colorado

### Leonard Peltier

In a recent insurrection at the United States Penitentiary here in Leavenworth, Kansas, the keepers tried to pull a very opportunistic move in the middle of the turmoil. Longtime political activist Leonard Peltier came under attack in a move to transfer him to the highest-security prison in the country, Marion, Illinois.

The Bureau of Prisons was able to see firsthand the power of the people. Leonard Peltier had been loaded on the prison bus ready to move out, when Native Americans started coming from all directions,



Photo from Leavenworth federal penitentiary. Clockwise from top left: Fowaz Younis, Balagoon Moyenda, Sundiata Acol, Robert McKnight, John Young, Leonard Peltier, and Jaan Laaman.

effectively blocking the bus. Two hundred plus came to the aid of their Native American brother and demanded that Leonard Peltier be put back in Leavenworth. Leavenworth is where he is.

There are important lessons to be learned here. First, the power of the people when they are united. The other is that, unfortunately, the disturbance that went on in the prison was inmates against inmates. Every time that the oppressed go against the oppressed, the prison system will use this to hurt political prisoners as well as the general population.

Leonard Peltier is a political prisoner accused of killing FBI agents in 1975. In spite of numerous amounts of information that have come into view, the government refuses to give him a new trial. Statement after statement has come forth that Leonard Peltier did not kill anyone at the Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota, and after close examination we think the real issue lies in the fear of Leonard Peltier's ability to organize Native

American people.

We as political prisoners stand in solidarity with our brother. United, the people can change anything.

Balagoon Moyenda  
Leavenworth, Kansas

Editor's note: A representative of the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee said in a telephone interview that the incident reported above occurred in June 1992. Peltier was charged by prison authorities with participating in a riot. The charges were later dropped. A motion for a new trial in Peltier's fight against the FBI frame-up is currently pending decision by the Eighth U.S. Circuit Court in St. Paul, Minnesota. For more information call the committee at (913) 842-5774.

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.



Militant/George Chalmers  
William Eickhold at his Seattle home: 'I am guilty of humanitarian aid.'

produced no results, it was repeated by a dog. Again: no results. Together with my vessel, my briefcase with personal correspondence and ship's papers was seized by U.S. Customs "as evidence."

The yacht represents my life's work and life's savings. She was scheduled to be sold in the near future, the proceeds to be invested

support in exposing this gross injustice, the hypocrisy of the U.S. Cuban policy and the absurdity of its counterproductive embargo. By exposing the police state practices of the U.S. government you may indirectly affect the return of my boat.

William H. Eickhold  
Seattle, Washington



## Miners prepare to resume strike

BY STU SINGER

When the International Executive Board of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) met April 17 in Evansville, Indiana, union president Richard Trumka said the union should prepare for a major strike May 3. That is the expiration date for the contract extension to which the union agreed after a 30-day strike against Peabody Coal Co. in February.

Peabody Coal's parent corporation, Peabody Holdings Co., is the largest company in the Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA), the main industry bargaining group. The February strike ended in a victory for the miners, who forced Peabody to agree to open some of their business records to the union for use in negotiating a new contract. But this was just one round in the battle for a contract.

No details of the ongoing negotiations have been released to the news media.

Howard Green, a member of the International Executive Board from UMWA District 17 in southern West Virginia, told the Charleston, West Virginia, *Gazette*, "We're telling our folks to dig in because things are not going well."

"The operators are not taking our position on job opportunities and job security seriously, and we're very serious about it."

Roger Myers, an International Executive Board member from District 11 in Indiana, told the *Militant*, "There's going to be a hell of a strike come May 3."



Buck Creek strikers share dinner at Sullivan, Indiana, picket line. Militant/Melanie Zimmer

An April 20 article in the *Gazette* reported that when the strike against Peabody ended, Peter Lilly, president of Eastern Association Coal Co., a Peabody subsidiary, said Trumka's "failed attempt to use coercion for automatic union representation at nonunion mines was nothing more than a ploy to save the union at the expense of the miners."

But the union's effort to use the contract negotiations for some leverage to help organize nonunion mines has tremendous support among both union members and miners

in nonunion mines. Examples of this support include the 1991 union-organizing victory at the Buck Creek mine in Indiana where miners are now on strike to win a decent contract; the overwhelming support for the UMWA from the miners at Zeigler Coal Co.'s Marrowbone complex in West Virginia and Wolf Creek in Kentucky; and the support from the union for the families of victims of last December's explosion at the nonunion Southmountain mine in southwest Virginia.

"We have the support of the entire AFL-CIO and the international labor movement," said Trumka in an interview in the March-April issue of the *United Mine Workers Journal*. "Further job actions may well be necessary if we haven't reached agreement by the end of the extension period."

The UMWA is reaching out for support. A front-page article in the April 19 *AFL-CIO News* was headlined, "United labor presses coal job security; Deadline looms in UMWA talks." The article urged backing for UMWA support rallies in Kansas City, Missouri, on April 22, Los Angeles and St. Louis on April 24, and Pittsburgh on May 1. "The AFL-CIO Strategic Approaches Committee is helping to rally the entire labor movement in support

of the UMWA," the paper said.

If the coal operators do force a strike May 3, it will be a battle that will undoubtedly capture the attention and support of working people around the world.

### UMWA miners strike Buck Creek in Indiana

BY RICHARD SORRENTINO

SULLIVAN, Indiana — Seventy members of United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) Local 4538 went on strike April 1 against Buck Creek Coal. The company has failed to negotiate a contract with them since the miners voted to join the union in October 1991.

The company has offered jobs to miners from Illinois, Kentucky, and Indiana. Management and 16 strikebreakers are now working. But the 70 strikers are holding firm on the picket line and receiving solidarity from UMWA miners and other working people.

The first Monday after the strike began, 300 miners and others gathered to support the strike. They came from eight other UMWA locals. Members of the carpenters, laborers, boilermakers, and ironworkers unions also participated.

A truck driver was fired by Gibco Motor Express, which is hauling coal from the mine, because he honked in support of the pickets and refused to cross the picket line. On the other hand, on April 8 another Gibco driver stopped his truck at the gate, got out, and started a fight with union pickets. The fight was captured on videotape and scenes were shown on television. The driver and three pickets were charged with disorderly conduct. Buck Creek fired the three strikers. Their reinstatement has now become an issue in the contract talks.

Negotiations with the company broke down over safety, shift rotation, job bidding, seniority, and a pension plan.

The stakes in this fight go beyond Buck Creek. As striker Mark Pittman put it, "Lots of eyes are on us. If we lose this, there's no chance of organizing the other mines in Indiana."

## Gov't covers for company in 1992 Virginia mine explosion

BY JASON COUGHLIN

NORTON, Virginia — Family members of eight miners killed in a Dec. 7, 1992, explosion at Southmountain No. 3, a non-union mine here, continue to fight to expose the truth about the disaster in the face of a company-led campaign to blame the miners for the explosion.

Federal and state agencies, the news media, and the Virginia General Assembly have participated in the effort to blame the deadly explosion on miners smoking in the mine.

The families of those killed, as well as many other miners, say cigarette smoking alone could not have caused the explosion. They believe the it was caused by company

negligence in not ventilating methane gas out of the mine. Methane occurs naturally in coal mines and requires ventilation to avoid explosive concentrations.

Don Stanley, a miner for 20 years and a neighbor of one of the men killed, said, "If there was no gas, there'd be no way that explosion would have happened." Stanley said mining equipment routinely causes sparks and arcing.

The Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) interviewed other miners in private following the blast with company officials present. No family members of the victims or UMWA union officials were permitted in the hearings.

This sparked protests. Family members of the victims set up picket lines at the hearings and were joined by United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) members from nearby Pittston coal mines.

The protests forced Virginia governor Douglas Wilder to set up a task force to review the investigation. A series of public hearings were held, including April 8-9.

These hearings revealed several facts. A rag had been placed in the methane monitor on the continuous mining machine. Of the 252 rock dust samples taken following the explosion, 228 were not in compliance with safety standards. A year ago methane levels of nearly 10 percent were found in the mine, but the information was never passed on to state officials.

The methane detector shuts down mine equipment when methane levels exceed 2 percent. Methane levels of between 5 and 15 percent are explosive. Rock dusting is used to minimize the danger of coal dust in the air.

Miner Bobby McCowan explained, "When I worked in the union mine, we had a crew of 8-10 to rock-dust and clean up and they'd pay overtime if it was needed to get that work done."

Liz Mullins, widow of Southmountain victim Mike Mullins, explained, "I'm not fighting this just for Mike. There's not a miner that was in there that's to blame. We need to find out why the methane monitor on the continuous miner had been tampered with."

## Kentucky, W. Virginia miners fight for union recognition

BY ESTELLE DeBATES AND ELIZABETH LARISCY

NAUGATUCK, West Virginia — "We as a union have made a commitment to this particular organizing drive," said Bob Phalen, president of District 17 of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) to the applause of 150 miners. The workers are fighting for union recognition at Zeigler Coal Co.'s Marrowbone mine complex, one of West Virginia's largest coal operations.

Soon after Zeigler purchased Marrowbone last year, the company announced severe cuts in benefits. On March 24 miners at the strip mine set up a picket line that stopped production. Early in the day, words were exchanged after a boss drove his car at the pickets. The boss returned hours later and fired the four miners who led the walkout.

The strike then spread to Marrowbone's three deep mines and preparation plant, and to Kermit Coal's strip mine, also owned by Zeigler. Some 450 miners remained off the job for 10 days, demanding that the four be rehired.

A victory was scored April 2 when Zeigler agreed to rehire the four miners.

Meanwhile, 400 miners signed UMWA cards for a union representation election. There are 435 hourly workers at Marrowbone. Subsequently, miners at Zeigler-owned Wolf Creek Collieries, nearby in Kentucky, joined the union drive.

"The UMWA is shooting for a quick elec-

tion," Bernard Evans of the UMWA Logan subdistrict office told the meeting.

Joe Stanley is a Marrowbone miner and a leader of the organizing committee. The day after the strike, Stanley requested written information on the pension and profit-sharing plans. He was told that "none was available on the premises." He has now filed a request under the Freedom of Information Act.

Miners want the facts on the company's three health-care options. Elmer Spence, another Marrowbone miner, drew cheers when he revealed his T-shirt reading: "Option IV for Health Care: Vote UMWA."

Spence used to be a member of the UMWA and was on strike at A.T. Massey Coal Co. several years ago. "This company is saying that if we go with the union it will cause layoffs," he said to the meeting. "I'm one of the youngest guys on the job. If anyone gets hit it'll be me, but I'm with the union."

Vernondia Adams, like most of the miners here, has worked at other nonunion mines. "I've been a coal miner for 13 years," she said. "I spent 10 years at a company where we had it all — until people started getting close to their pensions. Then came one cut after another. We were told that if we did anything UMWA the place would shut down. No one did anything UMWA and it shut down anyway. Now the mine is open and guys are working for \$10 an hour with no benefits."

The meeting closed with a miner singing "Lord Have Mercy on the Working Man."

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