

THE MILITANT

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Youth in Alabama prepare to defend abortion clinics

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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Washington unable to push Russia to capitalism

BY GREG ROSENBERG

The economic and social crisis in Russia is growing worse, increasing the fragility of president Boris Yeltsin's government. As recent developments highlight the instability in the country, the Clinton administration is coming under sharp criticism from within the U.S. ruling class for its inability to push Russia down the road to capitalism.

According to a front-page article in the March 6 *New York Times*, the death rate in Russia now outstrips the birth rate and is rising faster than in any other country in the world. Last year it increased a full 20 percent over the 1992 figure — to 14.6 for every 1,000 people.

Life expectancy for men has dropped so sharply — males now live an average of 60 years — that men in Indonesia, the Philippines, and parts of Africa have a longer life span. In some rural areas, it is not unusual for life expectancy to be lower than 50 for men — a level not seen since the czars ruled the country. As a result, the *Times* noted, Russia's population decreased by 800,000 last year, making it "the first industrial country to experience such a sharp decrease in its population for reasons other than war, famine, or disease."

These shifts are a result of the growing social differentiation in the population. More and more working people are being driven below the income level needed to simply survive. About 40 million out of 152 million people living in Russia report income below subsistence level.

The International Labor Organization puts the unemployment rate at 10 percent and rising. But the real figures are higher when enforced — and unpaid — "vacations" and protracted leaves are included.

The ruble has fallen to a new low of more than 1,700 to the dollar. Growing numbers of workers are not being paid. Thousands of

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S. Africa working people topple Bantustan regime

BY GREG ROSENBERG

On March 10, tens of thousands of working people and youth overthrew the government of Bophuthatswana, a homeland created by the South African apartheid regime.

In the course of less than a week, the uprising forced homeland ruler Lucas Mangope to flee and won over sections of the army and police. The African National Congress led a political campaign that forced the South African government of F.W. de Klerk to deploy its army to protect people from an armed ultrarightist incursion. The armies of Bophuthatswana and South Africa chased an estimated 5,000 rightists, who had come to Mangope's defense, out of the Bantustan. South Africa's multiparty Transitional Executive Council then took over the administration of Bophuthatswana.

These events shattered the right-wing Freedom Alliance and advanced the momentum toward the April 26-28 elections. The alliance had been composed of Mangope, Inkatha Freedom Party leader Mangosuthu Buthelezi, who is also chief minister of the KwaZulu Bantustan, and the white separatist Afrikaner People's Front.

Tens of thousands greeted ANC president Nelson Mandela with a tumultuous welcome when he arrived to speak in Bophuthatswana's capital, Mmabatho, on March 15. Mangope had forcefully repressed ANC supporters, banning the organization as a "foreign party," breaking up meetings, and beating up people for political campaigning.

"My mere presence here is proof that in Bophuthatswana there is now free political



Protesters who helped overthrow hated regime of Lucas Mangope in South African apartheid homeland of Bophuthatswana leap on top of military vehicle March 10 to celebrate victory.

activity," Mandela told a jubilant audience of 40,000 at Independence Stadium. "The people have risen and tyrants have fallen. This message will not be lost on people living under other tyrants in this country."

'People dancing in the streets'

Strikes and protests swept Mmabatho in the five days leading up to Mangope's ouster. Civil service and other workers stayed away from work, paralyzing the Bantustan administration. Police fired rubber bullets and tear gas to break up demonstrations, to little avail. Striking workers at Bophuthatswana Broadcasting Corporation took over the building March 8, locking the chairman — Eddie Mangope, the dictator's son — inside. Riot police stormed the building.

Unions led a business boycott. Residents barricaded roads leading into the homeland. Protesters, demanding the reincorporation of Bophuthatswana into South Africa, carried banners declaring, "Join the people or starve with Mangope!" Students at the University of Bophuthatswana held large protests. Confident that they would triumph, one student turned to his comrades in the midst of a volley of bullets and tear gas and shouted, "This is the kick of a dying horse."

By March 10, working people had won

sections of the army and police over to their side. Thousands poured into the streets to celebrate. "The police are dancing in the streets with the people," said David Van Wyk, a spokesperson for striking teachers.

As Mangope fled, some people helped themselves to food, blankets, and other goods while some shops were burned. Meanwhile, thousands of ultraright commandos prepared to storm Mmabatho and its sister city, Mafikeng.

The ANC demanded, and won, the deployment of the South African army to Bophuthatswana. By that point, a caravan of trucks and cars of rightists, bristling with weapons, was entering the homeland.

Meanwhile, Mangope announced March 11 that he would agree to participate in the elections and would register "to lead the Northwest Christian Democratic Party in the election to demonstrate where the sympathies of the people of the northwest province lie." This was too little, too late.

Rightist commandos occupied the homeland's main air base. Pro-apartheid thugs drove through the streets, beating up reporters and shooting residents indiscriminately. But their killing spree was cut short when

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Haiti activist murdered in Miami

BY JANET POST

MIAMI — Daniel Buron, a leader of Veye Yo, the most prominent Haitian rights organization here, was murdered March 9. Thirty-six-year old Buron was a member of the Veye Yo executive board and head of security for the organization. He helped to organize and lead many demonstrations for the rights of Haitian refugees.

Buron was executed while talking with two other Veye Yo leaders, Aree Anelus and Max Delva, at the front gate of Anelus's home in the "Little Haiti" area of Miami. They had just left a Veye Yo board meeting at the Haitian Refugee Center, ten blocks away.

As they spoke, two gunmen approached

the three and without saying a word sprayed them with semiautomatic weapons fire. Anelus and Delva dove to the ground to protect themselves but Buron was killed. The gunmen, who were Black, ran from the scene on foot.

Marie Clenese Louis, Buron's widow, believes that her husband was killed for his political activities. "I am not surprised it happened. If you're involved in Haitian politics, we know you are going to die," she told the *Miami Herald*.

Eleven-year-old Claudia Buron, the oldest of Buron's three children said, "He had a lot of enemies. I am very mad because of what happened."

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Cuba's Revolution Confronts a Crossroads in the Fight for Socialism

Report back from a recent visit

by **MARY-ALICE WATERS**

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This program is part of a weekend socialist educational conference that will include classes on the labor movement, the fight for women's rights, and South Africa. For more information see ad on page 12 or call (312) 829-6815.

Memo reveals U.S. hypocrisy on Cuba human rights— page 10



Israeli army protects rightists

At a March 10 hearing before an Israeli inquiry commission investigating the February 25 slaughter of Palestinians by a rightist Israeli settler, a police commander said the army and police were under orders never to fire at the settlers, even if they are shooting people. The army later "clarified" its orders, saying that "clearly those directives did not apply to cases of murder."

The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) says it will not resume talks with Tel Aviv until there is protection for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and West Bank.

Meanwhile, Tel Aviv banned two ultra-rightist groups — Kahane Chai and Kach — that function throughout the settlements dotting Gaza and the West Bank. Baruch Goldstein, the gunman who assaulted the Hebron mosque February 25, was associated with these groups.

26 million in U.S. seek food relief

Second Harvest, the largest private hunger relief agency in the United States, said more than 10 percent of the U.S. population — nearly 26 million people — sought emergency food relief last year. Almost half of the recipients surveyed said that three months before seeking aid they had not expected to need assistance.

U.S. workers worried about jobs

Increases in productivity and corporate profits have not led to higher wages for workers, the Labor Department reported March 8. For non-farm businesses, output per worker increased 1.7 percent last year, while wages and benefits increased 0.6 percent. Meanwhile, for large corporations, profits were up 11.4 percent in 1993.

In a nationwide *New York Times* poll two-fifths of workers interviewed said they were concerned they would be laid off, have work hours reduced, or would be forced to take pay cuts over the next two years.

Trials of youth open in Indonesia

Trials began in Indonesia for 21 students who face six-year jail terms if convicted of insulting the president. The youths are charged with insulting President Suharto at a demonstration last December by putting up posters calling for him to be held ac-



Women in Dhaka, Bangladesh, march for equal rights March 4, to celebrate International Women's Day.

countable for human-rights violations and reading a poem accusing the president of oppression. One activist was sentenced to four years in prison on similar charges last month.

Tokyo, Washington sign accord

Washington and Tokyo reached an agreement March 12 over access of U.S. corporations to Japan's cellular phone market. The agreement calls on the Japanese government to monitor progress by Japanese companies in increasing investment in a phone system promoted by Motorola, a U.S. company. The Clinton administration had threatened trade sanctions against Japan.

Meanwhile, Kishiro Nakamura, a Liberal Democratic Party (LDP) legislator and Japan's former construction minister, was jailed for selling his influence to an industry executive. Nakamura is the first national

lawmaker charged in the corruption scandal since the LDP was forced to end its 38-year rule. Previously, local politicians and about 30 construction company executives had been arrested.

Mine deaths in China still high

More than 5,000 coal miners were killed on the job in China last year. The government reported almost 9,700 deaths in 1992 and more than 9,800 in 1991. Most fatalities occurred in small accidents that kill one or two workers daily. They often took place in private or township-run mines that are primitive in design and have little or no safety equipment. The deaths are frequently not reported. China has the world's highest fatality rate for miners. Six accidents at large state-run mines killed more than 175 workers in the first month of this year.

Workers strike in Poland

The Solidarity trade union in Poland began warning strikes March 7 as workers in northern factories halted production for several hours. The action was called to protest the country's deteriorating standard of living. Workers in the steel, mining, energy, rail, and communications industries are also expected to hold strikes. The union is protesting planned hikes in energy and heating costs, as well as demanding tax protection. Parliament rejected proposals for social spending proposals in the recent budget.

Paris: youth demand equal pay

Fifteen thousand young people protested in Paris March 10 against the government's plans to allow subminimum wages for youth

entering the workforce. Thousands of unionists and youth also rallied March 12 to demand jobs and against the wage scheme. Demonstrations have occurred in more than a dozen other cities across France. The actions are in response to a decree by Premier Edouard Balladur instituting a special wage for high school and college graduates. They could be paid up to 20 percent less than the standard minimum wage for a year. Unions have opposed the measure as discriminatory. More protests are set for March 17.

Anti-cop protests in France

Scores of young people in the Paris suburb of Garges-les-Gonesse protested the police's handling of a case involving the March 7 death of Philippe Huynh, a 16-year-old Vietnamese immigrant. The youth accuse the police of racism and of not treating Huynh's death seriously.

More troops leave Somalia

Four more governments have joined the list of those pulling troops out of Somalia. Soldiers from Morocco, Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates, and Kuwait are the latest to announce plans to exit the country. U.S. troop withdrawal is scheduled to be completed by March 25. The governments of Canada, Italy, Germany, France, Norway, Belgium, Greece, Korea, and Tunisia have all announced plans to end their military presence in Somalia. The latest withdrawals will leave a little more than 19,000 soldiers there. At its height in November, the United Nations force numbered more than 34,000.

— PAT SMITH

THE MILITANT

Eyewitness coverage from Cuba

In the next several issues the 'Militant' will carry extensive coverage on political developments in Cuba. How are Havana's new economic measures affecting working people? What are the workers' parliaments? How do different social layers view the reorganization of state farms into cooperatives? And more. Don't miss a single issue!



Workers parliament meeting at dairy plant near Havana.

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

BMW buys British Rover, deals blow to competitors in Japan

BY BOB BUCHAN
AND MARTIN HILL

LONDON — On January 31 German car manufacturer BMW announced that it had bought an 80 percent share in Rover — the last British-owned high volume car manufacturer — from British Aerospace for £800 million (U.S.\$1.2 billion). This was a move by German capital against rivals from Japan and the United States. BMW picked Rover because employers in Britain have been successful in lowering wages and pushing up labor productivity.

Rover, which employs 33,000 workers at plants across Britain, sold 440,000 cars in 1993 and made a profit of £56 million (U.S.\$84 million). BMW stated they would invest £250 million (U.S.\$375 million) a year in Rover and promised the takeover would not lead to job losses. The value of BMW shares soared after the takeover, which gives the company a 6.4 percent share of the European market.

The takeover was a blow to the Japanese car manufacturer Honda, which considered its 20 percent stake in Rover as a springboard into the European car market. Honda officials expressed disappointment and subsequently announced that they would sell their shares.

Faced with fierce competition from U.S. automakers, the car industry in Europe finds itself in the middle of an overproduction glut. If all Europe's plants were running at full capacity, they could produce 3.5 million cars more per year than they can sell. Last year, sales of automobiles made in Europe declined by a record 15.9 percent. Rover and BMW were among the few firms in the industry to show a profit.

As competition sharpens, the market could soon be dominated by as few as four major manufacturers, compared to seven today. All car manufacturers on the continent now aim to drive wages down, push productivity up, and shed personnel.

"British workers' low wages make them much cheaper to employ," commented the *Economist*. Labor costs here are now the lowest among the 10 major car-producing nations. Britain consequently attracts 40 percent of all foreign investment to Europe. Britain's rulers have been the most successful in Europe in eroding social services and working conditions and increasing labor productivity. Nissan is now Britain's top car exporter, and produces 80 cars per worker a year, compared to a European average of 45. Japanese manufacturers, such as Nissan and Toyota, increasingly see Britain as a route into the European markets. To counter this, new protectionist measures are being taken. The European Union has announced £3 billion (U.S.\$4.5 billion) in new subsidies for the car industry.

Much media discussion focused on the fact that Britain no longer boasts a British-owned high-volume car maker. According to the *Independent*, "Cabinet ministers had been braced for a backlash over the deal, but protests by Opposition MPs [Members of Parliament] in the Commons were muted." Labour Party leader John Smith regretted the demise of "our only independent car producer." But Industry Minister Tim Sainsbury said the deal showed that "Britain offered the best business environment."

The takeover indicates the relative weakness of the British bourgeoisie. It sets London apart from its major partners in the European Union. German, Italian, and French capitalists own major car manufacturers. Apart from Rover, the major car makers in Britain are owned by General Motors, Ford, Peugeot, Toyota, and Nissan.

Most Rover workers were not very concerned with the takeover. "Most people will say if this takeover keeps them in work, then it's a good thing," said one worker at the Cowley, Oxford, plant. "Nobody is going to turn around and say, 'I won't work for a German firm.'"

Since 1991, there has been a net loss of 11,500 jobs in auto plants here. Union officials have sought collaboration with management, in the name of saving jobs by helping the companies take on competitors. Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union leader Bill Jordan praised "the cooperation the companies have been receiving

from the unions and workforces to match European and Japanese competitiveness."

Increasingly, however, bosses have little to offer in return. Volkswagen workers, for example, were forced to take a hefty wage cut in exchange for "saving" jobs for a short period of time.

At IBC Vehicles, Luton, (owned by General Motors and Isuzu) management claimed the decline in sales means a single-shift work-week will soon be introduced, resulting in 400 layoffs and loss of shift premiums equivalent to a 15 percent pay cut. Luton also plans to introduce "lean production" methods. "Lean production means we work harder and they get more profits," one worker commented. "Some workers blame Japanese managers and methods for increased workloads, rather than seeing that these attacks are taking place in car factories across Europe, irrespective of who owns them. The point is to start to look for ways to resist."

Bob Buchan and Martin Hill are members of the Transport and General Workers' Union in Luton, England.

Ottawa's military cuts spark debate in Quebec

BY MICHEL DUGRÉ

MONTREAL — The Canadian government's decision to close down the Royal Military College (RMC) in Saint-Jean, Quebec, for training officers in the Canadian army has opened a sharp controversy among capitalist politicians here. Opposition to the decision is led by the Bloc Québécois, a bourgeois nationalist party, which is currently the official opposition in the Canadian Parliament. The closing down of the Saint-Jean RMC is part of a series of military and social spending cuts introduced in the February 22 federal budget.

Ottawa wants to shut 21 military installations including four large military bases. The Saint-Jean college, 40 miles east of Montreal, is the only one of these installations

NEWS ANALYSIS

located in Quebec. In the future, all officer training operations will be concentrated in Kingston, Ontario.

All in all, Ottawa plans within four years to reduce the total number of people in military uniform to 66,700, a drop of 8,100 from the current level.

Defense Minister David Collette said these cuts "will not affect... the fighting forces" in the Canadian army. In fact the Canadian army has played an increasingly active role over the past several years in imperialist military operations in the Gulf War, Somalia, Yugoslavia, and elsewhere.

The Saint-Jean college is the only place in Canada that francophone cadets could feel at home, said Bloc Québécois leader Lucien Bouchard. Its creation in 1952 "redressed old injustices" against Quebecois, he said.

Saint-Jean city officials, organizations of business people, trade union officials, and the bourgeois nationalist Parti Québécois, which is the official opposition party in Quebec, also argue that 2,000 jobs would be lost directly or indirectly in the Saint-Jean area. On March 13 more than 3,000 people marched in the streets of the city against Ottawa's decision.

The debate mirrors differences among capitalist rulers that have been at the center of Canadian politics for most of the last few decades. But none of the participants question the role of the Canadian army itself. The opposition to Ottawa's decision is entirely in the framework of maintaining and reinforcing this tool of the Canadian capitalist class.

The Bloc Québécois's call for keeping the Saint-Jean officer training academy is in line with a series of positions it has taken since the opening of the current session of Parliament. The Bloc has been campaigning aggressively in favor of sending troops and police against the Mohawk reserves, under



Auto factory assembly line in Britain. Employers there have driven down wages and increased labor productivity more than capitalists elsewhere in Europe.

the pretext of fighting cigarette smuggling.

It also took a stand in favor of testing the U.S. nuclear-tipped cruise missile in Alberta. Anti-nuclear activists in Canada have waged a fight against this for the past decade. The Bloc applauded Ottawa's efforts to maintain and strengthen the Canadian contingent in Yugoslavia. It remained totally silent on Ottawa's role in Somalia, where Canadian soldiers have been involved in torturing and killing Somali youth.

Army is instrument of oppression

These positions contrast with the experience of Quebecois who, historically, have tended to see the Canadian army as an instrument of oppression.

Fifty thousand people marched in the streets of Montreal in 1885 to denounce the hanging of Louis Riel, whose revolutionary provisional government in western Canada had been crushed by the Canadian army. In March 1918 Canadian troops shot on a crowd opposing conscription, killing five and wounding dozens in Quebec City. In a 1942 national referendum 80 percent of the Quebec population voted against conscription. The Canadian army was sent into Quebec in 1970 after the imposition of the War Measures Act for the first time ever in peace time. This act was used again in Quebec against the Mohawks in 1990.

The current defense and promotion of the Canadian army by bourgeois nationalist leaders in Quebec is a reflection of the development of an important layer of capitalists who are Quebecois since the 1950s. These capitalists, whose markets reach increasingly beyond Quebec borders, are playing a more and more aggressive role in defending Canadian imperialism.

Discrimination in the army

Opponents of the closing down of the Saint-Jean academy argue that French-

speaking cadets would feel more at home in Saint-Jean than Kingston. They point to the condition of the small French-speaking community in Kingston whose only high school has been maintained for many years in temporary installations without running water. French-speaking parents have not been able to gain any level of control on the French primary school inside the military base. There are limited government services in French in the Kingston area.

They argue that since the Saint-Jean RMC's foundation in 1952, the percentage of Francophones among the officers in the Canadian army has gone from 7 percent to 26 percent.

The reality however is that having more French-speaking officers in the Canadian army is not a step forward in the fight for the rights of francophones in Canada.

Rank and file soldiers in the Canadian army who speak French, like those who are women, Natives, Blacks, and immigrants from oppressed countries, suffer discrimination. But the fight against such discrimination — like the fight for jobs for all — can only be waged in the framework of advancing the interests of all working people. It cannot be waged by defending capitalist institutions such as the Canadian army.

Military officers, whether they speak French or English, have been and will be used against workers, Quebecois, Natives, and Blacks who stand up for their rights. They are currently involved in the U.S. government-led effort to push back Haitian refugees fleeing the military dictatorship in that country. How can training more French-speaking officers for such an army represent in any way a step forward in the fight against discrimination?

Michel Dugré is a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 6932 in Montreal.

For further reading . . .



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New Zealand supporters lead drive

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

Supporters in New Zealand are leading the international circulation campaign. After the first week of the effort to sell 3,000 subscriptions to the *Militant*, 650 to *Perspectiva Mundial*, and 1,000 copies of the magazine *New International*, they are on the top of the chart.

"The most successful effort to date," wrote Brigid Rotherham from Auckland, New Zealand, "was a visit by a sales team to Wai-kato University, a campus just over an hour's drive from here. A day-long literature table netted nine new subscribers. We sold another six subscriptions in the evening when we visited the hostels where many of the students live."

"All were drawn to the articles on what is happening in South Africa today. One, attracted to the table by a display around the Pathfinder book *Nelson Mandela Speaks*, explained that she supported the ANC and wanted to find out about their election campaign and read what Mandela had to say," said Rotherham. Supporters in Auckland also sold six subscriptions to industrial workers during the first week of the 10-week circulation drive.

"The *Militant*? Now, where have I heard that?" said a student at a campus in southeastern Alabama. The individual stared at a copy of the paper Devon Parry, a supporter from Birmingham, Alabama, was hawking on school grounds. "Oh, yes, now I remember," he answered after studying a copy for a minute. "Malcolm X talked about it! He said it was very good, that he saw it everywhere he went and that it told the truth." The student promised he would subscribe as soon as he gets a paycheck, Parry said.

"Even though campuses were going through the brain-drain of finals week, Pathfinder literature tables were focal points for discussions with students eager for politics," reported Ken Riley from Los Angeles. Riley and Diane Newberry, another young supporter, took a week's vacation from work to lead sales teams on campuses.



Literature table at N.Y. socialist educational conference March 12-13

The effort paid off, with 17 students subscribing to the *Militant*.

At a meeting at the University of California at Long Beach on the rebellion in Chiapas, Mexico, more than 100 students came to hear Juan Villagómez and Jorge Mancilla, both of whom recently returned from reporting trips there. After a lively discussion four students bought subscriptions, wrote Craig Honts from Los Angeles.

Distributors there also sold 13 subscriptions to the *Militant* and six to *Perspectiva Mundial* on door-to-door teams in working-class communities. Since the business office has not received all these subscriptions from southern California yet, they're not reflected on the chart.

This week a group of young socialists from Edinboro, Pennsylvania, joined the circulation campaign by taking a target of 10 *Militant* subscriptions. Other readers interested in emulating supporters in Edinboro can contact the business office at the address and phone number listed on page two.

Readers will also note that the local targets adopted for *Militant* subscriptions do not add up to the international goal of 3,000. We encour-

age those who are ahead of schedule to raise their goals right away.

Supporters in New York had a slow start in sales of *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* subscriptions. But they were successful in selling nearly double their weekly goal of the magazine *New International*. Of the 18 copies of the Marxist magazine sold there last week, seven were purchased by Haitians and other activists during a demonstration to demand the return to Haiti of deposed president Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

Most readers probably noticed in last week's *Militant* that the next issue of *New International*, entitled "The Rise and Fall of the Nicaraguan Revolution," will be off the press on March 30. The publication of this new issue will be a big boost in sales of the Marxist magazine.

To take into account this exciting development, the *Militant* is proposing that supporters in every city raise their goals of *New International* sales by 80 percent. Distributors should send in their new targets to the business office by Monday, March 28. Next week's *Militant* will announce a new worldwide goal for the magazine.

WHERE WE STAND end of week one

10% SOLD 301

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NEW ZEALAND							
Auckland	33	70	47%	0	6	2	12
Christchurch	8	40	20%	1	2	1	8
N.Z. Total	41	110	37%	1	8	3	20
SWEDEN	5	40	13%	4	18	1	20
BRITAIN							
Manchester	9	50	18%	0	2	0	18
London	6	60	10%	0	5	0	25
Sheffield	3	35	9%	0	2	0	10
Britain Total	18	145	12%	0	9	0	53
CANADA							
Vancouver	9	75	12%	0	10	0	25
Toronto	8	80	10%	2	15	0	40
Montreal	6	70	9%	0	15	0	40
Canada Total	23	225	10%	2	40	0	105
GREECE	1	10	10%	0	1	0	5
UNITED STATES							
Greensboro, NC	9	50	18%	0	5	2	12
San Francisco	22	135	16%	8	32	11	55
Miami	19	120	16%	1	50	7	60
Detroit	12	90	13%	0	10	0	28
Cleveland	11	85	13%	0	10	0	17
Atlanta	10	80	13%	3	13	5	20
Birmingham, AL	9	75	12%	0	5	0	17
Salt Lake City, UT	10	90	11%	0	15	0	30
Los Angeles	20	200	10%	9	95	12	90
Twin Cities, MN	11	110	10%	2	17	4	25
Seattle	7	75	9%	1	12	1	20
Pittsburgh	9	100	9%	0	10	0	20
Brooklyn	10	130	8%	4	35	9	45
Chicago	10	130	8%	4	30	0	30
Houston	5	65	8%	0	12	0	15
Philadelphia	8	115	7%	2	30	2	35
Cincinnati, OH	1	15	7%	0	2	0	3
New Haven, CT	1	15	7%	0	3	0	5
St. Louis	4	70	6%	1	8	0	20
Newark, NJ	7	130	5%	1	35	0	45
Boston	6	120	5%	3	30	1	45
Des Moines, IA	4	80	5%	3	35	2	30
New York	6	135	4%	2	35	18	85
Morgantown, WV	2	50	4%	0	2	0	12
Albany, NY	0	5	0%	0	1	0	1
Albuquerque, NM	0	3	0%	0	1	0	1
Denver	0	10	0%	0	2	0	3
Edinboro, PA	0	10	0%	0	—	0	3
Portland, OR	0	6	0%	0	—	0	2
Washington, D.C.	0	75	0%	6	25	0	17
U.S. Total	213	2,374	8%	50	560	74	791
AUSTRALIA	0	25	0%	0	8	0	15
BELGIUM	0	2	0%	0	2	0	1
FRANCE	0	10	0%	0	2	0	12
GERMANY	0	10	0%	0	4	0	10
ICELAND	0	12	0%	0	—	0	6
PUERTO RICO	0	2	0%	0	8	3	8
TOTAL	301	2,965	10%	57	660	81	1,046
SHOULD BE	300			65		100	

Another Haitian activist murdered in Miami

Continued from front page

Many Haitian activists and supporters said they remembered Buron as the one who marched out in front at refugee demonstrations, leading political chants and songs, and on many occasions wearing a Malcolm X t-shirt because of his admiration for the revolutionary leader.

Recently Buron, his coworkers, and fellow fighters at Veye Yo had been petitioning and picketing at Budget-Rent-A-Car to protest the discriminatory firing of Buron from his job there.

Following the killing, Miami police called the murder "just another street shooting" in an attempted robbery. "Maybe they just changed their minds and left," said detective George Gil. "They don't have to say, 'this is a hold-up.'" Miami police spokesperson Armando Villorin said of the murder, "It's a simple shooting. It could have been a robbery or a personal problem."

But Anelus and Delva deny it was a robbery. "As I lay there after the shooting stopped I thought that those guys were going to take a look in my pockets to get my wallet or look for money, but they didn't do that," said Anelus. "A robber will come and say 'give me something.' But they didn't say that. They didn't say anything. They just shot at Daniel."

The day after the shooting a Haitian worker living in Miami commented, "They have the same system here as in Haiti. Over there they come in your home and kill you. The government here won't stop them because they are responsible."

Buron's murder was the fourth assassina-

tion since 1991 of Haitians living in Miami who are active in the fight for democracy in Haiti.

Haitian radio announcers Jean-Claude Olivier and Fritz Dor were shot one month apart in 1991 with the same gun.

In October 1993 radio announcer Dona St. Plite was murdered in Little Haiti while attending a benefit commemorating the life of Fritz Dor. No one has been convicted for any of these killings.

The *Palm Beach Post* quoted an FBI source saying that these were "criminal murders, without any political motivations." And that the Buron killing "looks like a drive-by shooting."

A statement by the Haitian Refugee Center read, in part, "Is Haitian blood so cheap that the U.S. can't protect Haitian refugee political activists, can't stop political assassinations in Miami?"

A statement released by the Socialist Workers Party said, "The blame for Buron's death must be laid at the doors of the U.S. government. Haitians who try to flee Haiti are stopped by the U.S. Coast Guard and forcibly returned to the island, in spite of the fact that the military dictatorship continues to harass and kill supporters of ousted president Jean-Bertrand Aristide."

"It is the U.S. government that propped up the Duvalier dictatorship in Haiti for 29 years, and armed and trained the military and police murderers who rule today," the statement continued. "It is the U.S. government that deports Haitian refugees back to Haiti. It is the local Miami



Daniel Buron leads chants at October 13 demonstration in Miami to oppose Haitian military and call for the return of Haitian president Jean-Bertrand Aristide.

police authorities who have done nothing to prosecute the assassins of Dona St. Plite.

"The fact that the murders of Haitian activists Dona St. Plite, Fritz Dor, and Jean Claude Olivier, have still gone unsolved also gives a green light to the murderous backers of the military regime in Haiti and their supporters here," the SWP said.

The statement called on trade unionists,

students and other young people, supporters of women's rights, and antiracist activists to "join with the Haitian community to demand that the killers of Daniel Buron be found and brought to justice."

A march protesting Buron's murder was organized March 15 in Little Haiti.

A protest vigil will be held March 18 at 7:30 p.m., at Veye Yo headquarters at N.E. 54th Street and North Miami Avenue.

Participants at Toronto meeting discuss fights to defend frame-up victims

BY NELL WHEELER

TORONTO — Supporters of the Mark Curtis Defense Committee attended the first conference of the Association in Defence of the Wrongly Convicted (AIDWYC) held here February 18-20. The meeting discussed the cases of many people who, like Curtis, have done time for crimes they did not commit. Curtis is a political activist who is serving a 25-year sentence on false charges of sexual assault and burglary.

The program began with a talk by Rubin "Hurricane" Carter, the number one middle-weight boxing contender in 1966. Carter was wrongly convicted of a triple murder and served 19 years in a New Jersey prison. The conference discussed several other cases from Britain, Canada, and the United States.

Some 500 people attended the meeting. Many had stories of their own and were looking for others fighting for justice. AIDWYC was formed last fall to bring attention to cases of wrongful conviction and to provide legal assistance to persons serving life terms for such cases.

Carter gave the keynote address, outlining his experience of arrest, trial, and imprisonment. Legal careers are built on conviction rates, regardless of innocence or guilt, he said. Political activity adds to one's chances of being wrongly convicted, Carter explained. "For example, Leonard Peltier would not have been accused and convicted if he hadn't been a member of the American Indian Movement."

Carter identified patterns found in convictions of the innocent, as in his case. "None of the evidence can stand up to inspection, and there is an appalling lack of physical evidence," he stated. Like many others, he was found guilty on the testimony of prison informers, coerced witnesses, and police. Carter called for an independent review commission for those who claim wrongful conviction and better training of cops.

Featured at the conference were several Canadians, including David Milgaard, who served 22 years for a rape and murder he did not commit. Donald Marshall, a Mi'kmaq Native from Nova Scotia, was wrongly convicted of murder and served 11 years. His fight for compensation has received attention in the media in Canada. Richard Norris was arrested while sleeping and later convicted of child molestation despite a solid alibi. Norris alone of several panelists has received financial compensation for his undeserved stay in prison.

Representatives of the victims of two British frame-ups, the Birmingham Six and the Maguire Seven, were also at the conference. Anne Maguire spoke on behalf of the Maguire Seven, an entire family falsely convicted of making bombs to blow up pubs in Guildford, England, in 1974. They, together with four other youths known as the Guildford Four, were framed for these explosions. Alastair Logan, the attorney for the Maguire Seven and Guildford Four, and Sandra Hunter, whose husband Gerry Hunter was convicted of the Birmingham pub bombings in 1976 and was released in 1991 after the government's case was discredited, addressed the gathering.

All the speakers agreed that once a person is arrested, the presumption of innocence is

often virtually ignored. Kirk Makin described the case of Guy Paul Morin in his book *Redrum the Innocent*. Speaking at the conference, he explained that Morin was initially acquitted of the murder of his nine-year-old next door neighbor but was later retried and found guilty.

One session was devoted to the case of Leonard Peltier, who was convicted in 1977 for the deaths of two FBI agents, despite the lack of evidence linking him with the shooting. Although the trial was grossly unfair and Peltier was not allowed to present a defense based on all the evidence available, he has been denied appeal three times.

Stephen Bright, director of the Southern Center for Human Rights in Atlanta, represents persons facing the death penalty throughout the southern United States. He described several cases where people were executed despite new evidence casting great doubt on convictions. Bright spoke against U.S. president Bill Clinton's crime bill, noting the injustice of "spending more and more money to prosecute and not a penny more to defend" the accused.

The conference was sponsored by the Canadian Bar Association in Ontario, the Criminal Lawyers Association, the Law Union of Ontario, the John Howard Society in Manitoba, and several religious organizations.

Since the Toronto gathering, the Mark Curtis Defense Committee in Des Moines, Iowa, has received a good response from people who learned about Curtis's case at the conference. One participant, Linda Burdon, sent a letter to the parole board in Iowa requesting that Curtis be released. She wrote, "keep up the good fight," and sent a contribution.

Claire Culhane, a long-time activist for prisoners' rights and prison abolition, sent her endorsement to the Mark Curtis Defense Committee. Culhane is the coordinator of the Prisoners' Rights Group (PRG) in Vancouver, British Columbia.



David Milgaard, pictured above while still in jail in Canada. Milgaard, who was framed up on rape and murder charges, spent 22 years in prison. He was featured at Toronto conference, where participants discussed several defense cases, including that of U.S. unionist Mark Curtis.

Clinton unable to push Russia to capitalism

Continued from front page

coal miners, for example, struck at the beginning of March for wages overdue from December and January.

As tens of millions are pauperized, a handful of entrepreneurs are getting rich. The *Wall Street Journal* interviewed one of them for an article on "deft" businessmen. "I like a volatile market," Roman Miagkikh, a self-styled Russian financier who favors expensive Italian fashions, told the *Journal*. "It creates an environment for superprofits."

Direct foreign investment in Russia, however, remains low. The *Economist* lists it as the number two risk for investments in the world, second only to Iraq.

An increasing number of people in Russia are starting to question the merits of reestablishing capitalism. According to a recent opinion poll, the results of which were published in the *Economist*, 60 percent of the Russian people think the so-called market economy is "wrong for Russia," while less than 30 percent think it is a good idea.

The *Economist* also states that about two-fifths of Russia's manufacturing workforce is employed by private companies. However, this is accomplished by handing out pieces of paper announcing that the bearer has a "share" of a factory.

Workers and managers often end up "owning" more than 70 percent of the shares, but without state subsidies to continue manufacturing, factories stop working. Grigory Yavlinsky, a parliamentarian who styles himself as part of the "reform" wing, complains that this "is not privatization, it's collectivization, which puts the workers and managers in charge of enterprises. Their interest is in increasing wages, not investment."

Yeltsin flounders

"This has not been [Yeltsin's] best winter," the *Washington Post* said in a March 11 editorial. "He seems to have lost much of his grip on reform. He has allowed foreign policy to become something of a wedge between Russia and the countries it counts on for economic renewal. His political control remains under challenge. . . . People — although not yet the Clinton team — are beginning to look beyond him and his time."

The Russian president faces opposition from a large parliamentary bloc led by Vla-

dimir Zhirinovsky, the fascist-minded politician whose party won the biggest percentage of the vote last December. In addition, deputies aligned with the Communist Party, one of the remnants of the former Stalinist ruling party, control a number of votes.

Parliament voted to free two of Yeltsin's chief rivals from prison in February. Over the Russian president's protests, Ruslan Khasbulatov and Aleksandr Rutskoi, the leaders of last October's faction fight within the government, walked free February 26. Zhirinovsky met them at the gate along with other supporters who demanded that their vacant cells be filled by Yeltsin and his chief advisers.

"Well done, guys," said Zhirinovsky. "This is our day today." He predicted that in the next presidential elections "the choice is between me and Rutskoi."

Following their release, Yeltsin said he saw "no danger to civic peace and I am fully in control of the sociopolitical situation." He warned that "at the slightest attempt by them to try to destabilize the situation in the country, they will immediately be arrested."

In an effort to stem criticism directed against his administration, Yeltsin delivered a conciliatory speech to Parliament February 24.

Asserting military weight abroad

The Russian president told Parliament that he would pay "constant attention" to ethnic Russians living in other former Soviet republics and would consider it a "national cause" to stop alleged discrimination against them. He reiterated the stance that Moscow opposes NATO membership for governments in Eastern Europe without the acceptance of Russia too.

Moscow sent troops to Bosnia in February, brokering a deal with Serb forces there who are loyal to the regime in Belgrade. It continues to cast its weight about in the former Soviet republics in Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The Russian government recently blocked access to oil-export pipelines from Kazakhstan and Azerbaijan, demanding a greater share of their oil fields. These moves have caused concern in Washington.

The latest flap between the two governments came as a result of former U.S. president Richard Nixon's recent trip to Moscow. Nixon met with Yeltsin's opponents, including Rutskoi, on March 7. Yeltsin an-

nounced he was "deeply, personally offended," by the meetings and canceled a scheduled engagement with Nixon. He then stripped the U.S. politician of his security detail.

"The former American president met with Rutskoi and [Communist Party chief Genadi] Zyuganov, and he was coming here to meet with me," the Russian president complained. "How can one come to a country and look for the dark spots? Let him know that Russia is a great country."

Russian foreign minister Andrei Kozyrev remarked that Nixon's actions were like "if a person comes to a party and wants to go straight to the toilet . . . without greeting the hosts."

In 1992, Nixon had prepared a memorandum titled "How to Lose the Cold War," which was widely distributed to influential figures in U.S. ruling circles. In it he pointed to the enormous economic and social instability in the former Soviet Union. He assailed then-president George Bush for what he called "pathetically inadequate" aid to Moscow.

"The West has failed so far to seize the moment to shape the history of the next half century," he warned. "If Yeltsin fails, the prospects for the next fifty years will turn grim."

Trouble for Clinton's foreign policy

Now, prominent opinion columnists and politicians of both the Democratic and Republican parties are admonishing the Clinton administration for its stance toward Russia. Ever since Zhirinovsky's showing in the polls last year, it has not been lost on big-business spokespeople that moves by Washington and its allies to speed market methods have created deep resentment among working people.

"Clinton is still zigging while Russia has zagged," wrote William Safire in the March 10 *New York Times*. "We cannot talk of aid toward a market economy while Russians reject the rudiments of private property and contracts, nor sign accords about 'strategic partnership' while Moscow issues stern warnings to nations reaching for NATO protection."

Safire asks "what to do about an American policy toward Russia that has been overtaken by events?"

London's *Financial Times* calls for "a nuanced holding operation. Russia is not yet a reliable friend," it says, "nor is it a convinced enemy."

THE REVOLUTION BETRAYED

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LEON TROTSKY



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'A revolution implies break with the past'

Bishop's speeches hold many lessons on anniversary of Grenada revolution

Fifteen years ago, on March 13, 1979, working people in Grenada overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Eric Gairy. The new People's Revolutionary Government, led by the New Jewel Movement, began mobilizing Grenada's working people to reorganize society in their own interests. This included expanding trade union rights, advancing women's equality, and establishing free schools and adult literacy programs. Asserting that Grenada was in "nobody's backyard," the revolutionary government stood up to British and U.S. imperialism. It established economic and political relations with Cuba, Nicaragua, and the Soviet Union, and joined the Movement of Non-Aligned Nations.

In October 1983, the Grenada revolution was overthrown by a bureaucratic Stalinist clique within the New Jewel Movement, headed by Bernard Coard, which disarmed and demobilized the workers and farmers, murdered Grenadian president Maurice Bishop and other leaders of the revolution, and paved the way for an invasion by U.S. marines.

Printed below are excerpts from a speech presented by Bishop to an overflow audience of more than 2,500 at Hunter College in New York City on June 5, 1983. The full text of the talk is contained in *Maurice Bishop Speaks*.

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It is becoming more and more difficult for developing Third World countries to go forward. Because, unfortunately, our economies remain by and large dependent on and tied to the capitalist world economies. And therefore, when the capitalist world goes through their cyclical crises one after the other, it has an immediate effect on us. As we say at home, when the capitalist world catches a cold, we catch pneumonia.

There are so many people in the world who are unemployed, so many people in the world who are going to bed hungry every single night, so many millions in the Third World who are illiterate and whose governments either do not care or feel they cannot do anything to solve that problem. Unemployment, hunger, malnutrition, disease, illiteracy — these are the crimes and the sins that are committed upon the poor developing countries of the Third World while the industrialized countries continue to exploit our resources and keep the profits. [Applause]

Consider what happens to the sweat of a banana farmer or a banana worker in Grenada. In Grenada, the particular transnational corporation we deal with is one called Geest Industries. Mr. Van Geest was a man who came from Holland originally, went to En-

gland, and opened a flower shop. And then he discovered there was more money in ships than in flowers. He eventually developed a monopoly of transporting bananas from many, many Caribbean countries to the English market. It works out that for every dollar that is obtained from the sale of bananas, the banana workers and banana farmers share ten cents, and the other ninety cents goes in one form or another to Mr. Van Geest and his type. Ten cents for all of that labor and sweat. That will give as good an indication as possible of the inequities and injustice in the system.

But yet, sisters and brothers, in the face of all this the Grenada revolution has nonetheless continued to go forward and to make progress. At a time when even the big powerful industrialized nations were growing backwards last year, we grew forward by 5.5 percent. And coming out of the old history of negative development and retrogression under Gairy, when year after year it was backward growth, over the last four years of the revolution cumulatively we have grown by over 15 percent.

The revolution in Grenada started from a base under Gairy of 49 percent unemployment — one in every two people who wanted to work couldn't get a job. And among women, 70 percent unemployment, seven out of every ten could not get a job. Therefore at the dawn of the revolution over 22,000 people who wanted to work could not find work. When we did a census last year, April 1982, the unemployment rate had dropped from 49 percent to 14.2 percent. [Applause]

'Education to us is liberation'

Our people are more and more getting to understand what we mean when we say that education to us is liberation, that education is a strategic concern of this government. That is why this year is the year we have named the "Year of Political and Academic Education." We understand the



Militant/Kara Obradovic
Activists celebrating second year of Grenada revolution in 1981. T-shirts say, "Grow more food, build the revolution."

importance of bringing education to our people, of raising their consciousness, of promoting worker education classes in the workplace, at the same time giving them an academic education, providing them with skills training, ensuring that those who are not able to read and to write are now able to do so.

Following the establishment of the Centre for Popular Education [CPE] program in early 1980, within one year the illiteracy figure in Grenada was reduced to 2 percent of the entire population.

The point I'm making, sisters and brothers, is the nature of the struggle that we have undergone, not only to raise production and productivity, but to instill new values in our

people. As we struggle on the road towards creating a new man and a new woman, living a new life, in what we know will become a new civilization, the old culture, the old habits, the old prejudices are always there struggling against the shoots of the new. That is a struggle that we have to resolutely wage every single day of our lives.

A revolution means a new situation. A revolution implies a fracture. It implies a break with the past. It implies disruption of a temporary character. Revolution means that the abuses and excesses of the violent, reactionary, and disruptive minority have to be crushed so that the majority's interests can prevail. [Applause]

S. Africa toilers topple Bantustan regime

Continued from front page

homeland troops returned fire and chased them out of town. A few Afrikaner Resistance Movement commandos driving a blue Mercedes were deserted by their cohorts and executed by a policeman. Meanwhile, the South African army was escorting thousands of others to the border.

While the press focused its attention on the five rightist commandos who were killed, virtually no television or newspaper covered the dozens of Blacks shot in cold blood and killed in fighting. An estimated 60 people, all but five of them Bophuthatswana residents, were killed during the

week's events.

"Anyone who watched as truckloads of the racist whites fled Bophuthatswana with black soldiers in furious pursuit, cannot doubt that the right was dealt a salutary shock when its lunatic foray into Bophuthatswana ended in humiliation," wrote Patti Waldmeir in the March 14 *Financial Times*.

Homeland an obstacle to a new nation

The apartheid rulers set up the 10 fragmented homelands to rob the African peoples of their land and block the formation of a nation. Some 18 million of South Africa's 28 million Blacks were forced to live on the barren reservations, which represented only 15 percent of the country's territory. By making Black South Africans "citizens" of fake states and denying them any rights in South Africa, the capitalist rulers made sure that Blacks had to sell their labor power to the mine and factory bosses, or starve to death.

Bophuthatswana, granted phony independence in 1977, contains mines that yield nearly one-third of the world's platinum. It is split up into six pieces and was designated as the "home" for the Tswana people. Cheap labor has attracted multinationals like Germany's Bayerische Motoren Werke AG. The giant Sun City entertainment complex draws tourists for gambling and topless shows. A minority of working people hold jobs, and many live in barren rural stretches in extreme poverty.

Mangope, who enjoyed the wealth and privilege of his position, had insisted he would block the reincorporation of the homeland into South Africa that is scheduled to occur following the elections.

The ANC is leading the fight for a non-racial, democratic, nonsexist republic. Its revolutionary democratic program, the Freedom Charter, declares that "South Africa belongs to all who live in it, Black and white, and that no government can justly claim authority unless it is based on the will of the people." It goes on to declare that in a new South Africa, "the land shall be shared among those who work it!"

Freedom Alliance ruptures

The right-wing Freedom Alliance shattered on the Bophuthatswana events. Gen. Constand Viljoen, who had urged commandos to defend Mangope, resigned as head of the Afrikaner People's Front in favor of participation in the elections under the banner of the Freedom Front. A large number of supporters of the racist Conservative Party are expected to support him. This left only neo-fascist Eugene TerreBlanche of the Afrikaner Resistance Movement and Inkatha's Buthelezi standing outside the elections.

The uprising also alarmed Inkatha, whose spokespersons said it might yet join in the elections. Buthelezi demanded March 14 that the date of the polls be moved back to give him "the opportunity to campaign for the majority of votes we rightfully deserve." Buthelezi called the moves against Mangope "the biggest betrayal I've heard of in my lifetime." The ANC has continually explained that under no circumstances will it tolerate postponement of the elections. Mandela, however, has said that the deadline for registering for the elections could be extended. Inkatha spokesperson Ed Tillet said, "We anticipate that we are in for a rough ride in this [Natal] province."

Inkatha has organized a campaign of terror in an effort to undermine the elections and maintain homeland rule in KwaZulu. At least 13 people died in Natal on March 15. Hundreds of people had gathered for an ANC march to protest Inkatha's disruption of an ANC rally two days earlier demanding free political activity. Prior to the march, homeland police killed a woman in the sprawling Umlazi township on the outskirts of Durban.

The ANC protested Pretoria's declaration of 52 districts in the country as "unrest areas," giving police expanded powers to ban gatherings, make arrests, and declare curfews. "This is a move that is calculated to undermine the whole process of free and fair elections. These are the actions of a government which is now panicking — a government which sees the writing is on the wall for them," said Mandela on March 13.

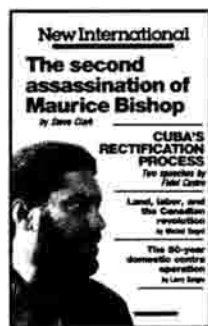
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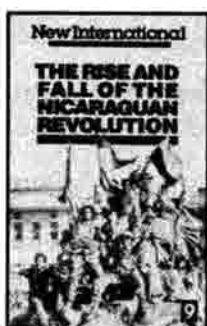
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Youth in Alabama prepare to defend abortion clinics

BY JEANNE FITZMAURICE

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama — Seventy-five people turned out for a clinic defense training session March 14 at the University of Alabama-Birmingham (UAB). The mainly high school- and college-aged youth were preparing to defend clinics in Birmingham that provide abortion services. Operation Rescue, an antiabortion outfit, has threatened to close down the medical facilities during its March 25-April 2 "Passion for Life Week." Two TV stations and the *Birmingham News* covered the event.

"Our goal is to mobilize supporters at the clinics to guarantee that women will have access," stated Beckie Dobrinski, co-coordinator of the Emergency Coalition for Choice.

The coalition, which provided veteran clinic defenders for the UAB training session, is organizing in response to the rightists' campaign.

Coalition members are now busy recruiting and training volunteers. College and high school students, young working women and men, and veterans of earlier women's rights battles are all joining in the effort.

The coalition's office is busy every day as volunteers come in and make phone calls to win new volunteers to ensure the clinics stay open. The activists staff a phone bank, make fund-raising calls, prepare leaflets, send out mailings, and contact the press.

The clinics in Birmingham serve the surrounding counties in Alabama. Patients also come from as far away as Chattanooga, Tennessee, where clinics no longer provide abortion services, and from Mississippi, because of the restrictive state laws there.

The Emergency Coalition for Choice has received calls from throughout the Southeast, from people who want to participate in the mobilization to defend a woman's right to choose abortion. In addition to the UAB, students at the University of Alabama at Tuscaloosa, Auburn University, and Birmingham Southern College, as well as activists from Huntsville, Alabama, will be

helping to keep the clinics open. Coalition activists have been invited to speak at Georgia Technical College and at Emory University, both in Atlanta.

Some college and high school students have volunteered to spend their spring breaks participating in the mobilizations.

Other abortion rights activists are expected to come into Birmingham from Jackson, Mississippi; New Orleans, Louisiana; and Nashville, Tennessee.

The emergency coalition is reaching out to the whole community in Birmingham, and many other parts of Alabama. Activists have traveled as far as Pensacola, Florida, to participate in a benefit rock concert where Pearl Jam, L7, and other bands drew a crowd of about 10,000.

"We leafleted the Rock for Choice concert and attended a clinic defense training session in Pensacola organized by the Feminist Majority," Dobrinski said. "We got an enthusiastic response from the young people at both events."

At the concert, David Gunn Jr., the son of the doctor who was shot to death at an



Militant/Denise McInerney
Pro-choice picket in Birmingham, April 1993. Students and others in Alabama are mobilizing to defend abortion clinics during Operation Rescue's "Passion for Life Week."

abortion clinic in Pensacola one year ago, invited everyone in attendance to come to Birmingham to defend the clinics.

Michael Griffin, an antiabortion thug, was found guilty earlier this month of the murder of Dr. Gunn. Griffin was sentenced March 5 to life in prison with no chance of parole for 25 years.

Abortion rights activists organized vigils

in early March in Tuscaloosa and Pensacola to commemorate Dr. Gunn's death.

The coalition is continuing to set up training for clinic defense. Members are determined to stop Operation Rescue from closing any of the Birmingham clinics. Anyone who wants to help in this effort should contact the Emergency Coalition for Choice at (205) 322-3232.

Students in Ireland demand right to distribute information on abortion

BY CELIA PUGH

DUBLIN, Ireland — Seven hundred students from Trinity College and University College Dublin marched to the Irish parliament building here March 4 to defend the right of student unions to provide information on abortion. Spirited chants and colorful posters declared, "Women's rights are here to stay. Can't pay, won't pay," and "SPUC off. Defend our unions."

A week earlier, the Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child (SPUC) won a ruling from the High Court appointing a receiver to recover interim court costs from the student unions. These were awarded in 1989 against the student unions of University College and Trinity College Dublin and the Union of Students of Ireland (USI) after

SPUC secured an injunction forbidding the groups from providing information on abortion. The student unions had voted to provide such information even though this was illegal in Ireland.

SPUC's claim for interim costs is £29,000 (U.S.\$43,500); the full costs could be as much as £200,000 (U.S.\$300,000). The recent High Court ruling means that receivers can take this from college funds allocated to student unions, thus bankrupting them. SPUC legal action has already forced the closure of the telephone advice service Open Line Counseling and the abortion information service provided by the Well Women Centre.

The Dublin demonstration came exactly two years after 15,000 people, mostly

young, marched through the same streets protesting a High Court decision banning a 14-year-old school girl — known in legal proceedings and the media as "X" — from traveling to Britain for an abortion. At that time abortion was illegal in Ireland. The protests, however, led the Supreme Court to overturn the High Court travel ban. The Court also decided that abortion was permissible in the event of substantial threat to a woman's life. This opened the door for the first time to limited legal abortion for Irish women.

In November 1992 the majority of those participating in a referendum in Ireland voted to end the ban on abortion information and travel. In the light of these changes, the student unions are demanding that the government either set aside the legal costs awarded to SPUC or pay them itself.

Gerry Disdale from the Trinity student union told the demonstration, "We were the people who put the issue on the agenda and we can get these costs put aside. They were forced to do it in the X case and they can do it now." Helen O'Sullivan, the USI women's rights officer, said, "You took a brave and necessary step to ensure that women had a right to information. These rights have been recognized in the 1992 referendum. Now the government has to legislate on this. They should cancel the debt on our behalf."

Ivana Bacik, the 1989 student union president at Trinity College Dublin, pointed to the referendum and recent surveys indicating that two-thirds of the people of Ireland favor limited abortion rights. "SPUC is in a losing position," she said. "They are on the defensive and this action is a death rattle."

Other speakers explained that SPUC's goals go beyond just opposing abortion rights. Describing government attacks on student's rights, O'Sullivan said, "They've frozen our grants, increased our fees, taken our dole [unemployment benefit] and now they are trying to close our unions. We're here today to say we're not going to let them."

Referring to SPUC as "a right-wing campaigning group," USI president Tom Duke told the *Irish Times* March 1 that "nobody wants to give these people any money." USI has joined the other student unions to launch the Student Support Trust to fight the SPUC attacks. Its trustees include Irish Parliament members, senators, and playwrights. A full-page appeal appeared in a national Irish newspaper, the *Irish Tribune*, February 27.

Celia Pugh is a member of the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers in London.

Does RICO law advance abortion rights fight?

BY BETSY FARLEY

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama — Will the RICO Act stop right-wing violence against abortion clinics? Can it be used by abortion rights supporters to prevent clinic blockades and harassment of women seeking abortions? These questions were discussed at a March 5 Militant Labor Forum here entitled "How to Stop Clinic Violence."

On Jan. 24, 1994, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO) could be used against opponents of abortion rights who attempt to block access to clinics. The lawsuit was filed by the National Organization for Women (NOW) against Joseph Scheidler, leader of the Pro-Life Action League; Randall Terry from Operation Rescue; and other antiabortion activists.

The RICO Act — ostensibly aimed at organized crime — makes it possible for the government to gain convictions against the leaders of an organization for acts they didn't commit. It also calls for payment of triple damages. RICO allows convictions of individuals and organizations found guilty of a "pattern of racketeering," even if the defendants are not accused of committing a specific crime; a link to two or more of a long list of federal and state crimes within a ten-year period is all that's necessary.

RICO also permits individuals to sue groups or individuals that "conspire" to break the law. Conviction carries stiff penalties including forfeiture of assets and long prison terms.

Justice Department lawyers stressed that a narrow interpretation of RICO — limiting it to cases where defendants stood to make

a profit — could hurt the government's ability to prosecute terrorism or other violent acts it claims are motivated by political or religious purposes.

Leaders of NOW and the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (NARRAL) hailed the court's decision as a victory for supporters of women's rights. NARRAL's president, Kate Michelman, said that the decision provides a powerful weapon to oppose the campaign of violence and terror against abortion clinics.

But many activists on the front lines of the battle to keep the clinics open don't agree. Speaking at the Militant Labor Forum here, Becky Dobrinski, co-coordinator of the Emergency Coalition for Choice, said, "I don't feel RICO should be used against antiabortion protesters because it could also be used against other parties, like unions and even pro-choice organizers."

The sweeping conspiracy provisions of the RICO law make it an attractive weapon to employers against striking unions. The United Mine Workers of America were threatened with racketeering charges during their 1989 strike against the Pittston coal company, as well as their most recent strike against the Bituminous Coal Operators Association.

The Emergency Coalition for Choice has been set up to organize a countermobilization against Operation Rescue, which plans to attempt a nine-day blockade of Birmingham abortion clinics, March 25-April 2. Calling the blockade the "Holy Week of Passion for Life," local and national antiabortion leaders plan to test the RICO decision.

"The RICO ruling makes it easier for

extreme right antiabortion organizers to pose as victims of undemocratic laws and compare themselves to civil rights protesters of the 1960s," Honey Gilmore of the Socialist Workers Party explained to the forum audience. Joy Pinto, the wife of local anti-abortion leader Jim Pinto, told the *Birmingham Post-Herald* that the city had been selected "because of its civil rights history and nonviolent protests espoused by Martin Luther King."

Gilmore called this civil rights posturing "nothing but hypocrisy. In fact there is a concerted effort on the part of some of their leaders to build a fascist movement. Leaders like John Burt of Rescue America, and Keith Tucci from Operation Rescue are not only antiabortion, they are anti-woman, anti-Black, and anti-immigrant," Gilmore said.

The socialist activist said the idea that you can stop clinic blockades through laws like RICO, the Freedom of Access to Clinic Entrances bill, or court injunctions against protesters "just serves to demobilize the pro-choice movement. Some people say we need new laws, but the last time I checked, murder, assault, and bombings were already illegal."

All the speakers pointed to the importance of turning out in large numbers to stop Operation Rescue in Birmingham. "This is how we won the repeal of abortion laws in the 1970s," Gilmore explained.

Lauren Seto, a Birmingham high school student and member of the Clinic Defense Team, said that you can't rely on the courts or the justice system to stop violence against abortion clinics or women exercising their rights. "We must rely on ourselves," she concluded.

'A handbook for the present generation'

'Letters From Prison,' just reprinted, takes up problems of building workers party

We are reprinting below the introduction to *Letters From Prison*, a book by James P. Cannon just reissued by Pathfinder, with a new cover. Cannon was one of the founders and central leaders of the Socialist Workers Party.

Jack Barnes, national secretary of the SWP, wrote this introduction when the book was first published in 1968.

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BY JACK BARNES

This collection of letters is in reality a prison journal recording the daily thoughts and impulses of a rebel behind bars. In these letters James P. Cannon addresses himself specifically to the problems of organization and politics faced by the Socialist Workers Party in the United States of 1944. But the book's central interest and importance is not as a history of that period of the revolutionary movement. The most striking thing about these letters, written a quarter of a century ago, is that they deal with the most important problems of party-building that confront young revolutionaries today.

In the last few years, growing numbers of young people have begun to reject the evils of capitalist America — war, racism, poverty, its sick culture. More and more of them want to replace capitalism with a better system. But how is this to be done? What kind of organization must be built to lead this struggle? What kind of men and women will the job require? These are the very questions discussed in *Letters From Prison*. Thus it is a basic handbook for the organizers, propagandists, and educators of the present generation who are beginning to face up to these questions.

On January 1, 1944, James P. Cannon began serving a sixteen-month sentence in the federal prison at Sandstone, Minnesota, for opposing Roosevelt's imperialist war policies. He and seventeen of his comrades, leaders of the Socialist Workers Party and of Minneapolis truck-drivers Local 544-CIO, were the first victims of the Smith Act.

As national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, Cannon was the chief defense witness; his entire testimony has been published in book form under the title *Socialism on Trial*. In it he outlined his party's view that the goal of America's rulers in World War II was to dominate and exploit the postwar world and that, far from fighting for democracy, the American ruling class was the enemy of democracy here and abroad. He predicted that this would be clearly demonstrated during and after the war.

To Roosevelt's expansionist war, Cannon counterposed revolutionary socialist opposition to capitalism and fascism. He also forecast the economic, social, and political



Militant/Jon Hillson

"Growing numbers of young people have begun to reject the evils of capitalist America — war, racism, poverty, its sick culture," wrote Barnes in 1968. This rings true today. Above, students protest U.S. bombing of Iraq in January 1993.

squeeze on the working people that would inevitably take place as American imperialism waged war — and the resistance from the workers this would eventually evoke. The sentencing of the eighteen took place December 8, 1941, at the same hour that Congress was formally declaring war.

At that time the American Trotskyists were almost alone in their antiwar stand in the radical and labor movement. Unlike the first world war, when thousands of American radicals headed by Eugene V. Debs were jailed for their antiwar views, World War II saw the Communist Party and Socialist Party, along with the AFL and CIO officialdoms, quickly line up behind Roosevelt's imperialist war policy. The Communist Party and a section of the labor bureaucracy even praised his crackdown on domestic dissent and the jailing of the eighteen.

The Civil Rights Defense Committee, with James T. Farrell as chairman and George Novack as secretary-treasurer, was formed to mobilize support for the Trotskyists indicted under the Smith Act. By the time legal appeals were exhausted and the eighteen were put behind bars, the CRDC

had gathered thousands of supporters in the labor movement who saw the imprisonment of the Trotskyists as a blow against their own right to dissent or struggle for better conditions during the war. This list of supporters was to grow during the period of imprisonment. The miners' strikes and the 1943 explosion in Harlem were the first expressions of mass opposition to the sacrifices demanded by the war-makers and foreshadowed the postwar strike wave and the bring-the-troops-home movement that began less than a year after the eighteen had served their sentences.

Founder of communist movement in U.S.

When he entered the federal penitentiary at Sandstone, Cannon had already spent thirty-seven of his fifty-three years as a revolutionary socialist. He had been an organizer and strike leader in the Industrial Workers of the World and a member of the left wing of the Socialist Party. In 1919, under the inspiration of the Russian Revolution, he became one of the founders and leaders of the American Communist movement. Expelled from the Communist Party in 1928, he was the initiator and principal leader of American Trotskyism and a founder, in 1938, of the Socialist Workers Party.

Federal prison regulations strictly limited the length and frequency of letters between prisoners and the outside world. Rose Karsner, Cannon's wife and companion, was "approved" as a correspondent by the authorities. Like Cannon, she was a veteran of the Socialist and Communist parties and a founding member of the Socialist Workers Party. All of the letters in this volume, save two, were written to her. Thus Cannon's handwritten letters — restricted under the rules to one sheet of paper — to Rose Karsner in New York City, at first two, then three, and finally four a week, and her letters to him — also restricted in length and frequency — were his channel of political communication with the Socialist Workers Party.

Cannon's letters often expressed ideas and proposals that had been crystallized in discussions with his fellow leaders of the Socialist Workers Party at Sandstone. Rose's letters contained not only information, suggestions, and ideas of her own, but the replies and opinions of the functioning national leadership of the party. Both incoming and outgoing mail was completely censored, so people's names were often disguised in order to protect them from possible victimization.

Because of the prison censorship, Cannon could not express some of his innermost

feelings. Nevertheless, in the glimpses of Cannon as a human being that come through, the reader gets a fuller understanding of his character and personality. One of the pleasures and values of the book, especially for young revolutionaries personally unacquainted with Cannon, is that this element of the letters was not edited out.

It is important to place Cannon's communications in the context of the concrete conditions that faced the Trotskyist movement internationally as well as nationally at the time they were written.

Leon Trotsky had been assassinated by an agent of [Joseph] Stalin only four years earlier, and the responsibility for forging a genuine international leadership of the Trotskyist movement weighed heavily on the prisoners at Sandstone. This task was made all the more difficult because of the conditions that Trotskyists faced during World War II. They were hounded and persecuted not only by the fascist governments and the Kremlin but also by the "democratic" powers. Trotskyist leaders found themselves in detention camps in England and in prison in the United States. Throughout the world they had to work in underground conditions.

Trotsky's death had come soon after a deep-going factional struggle within the Socialist Workers Party. A section of the membership,

headed by James Burnham and Max Shachtman, under the pressures generated by the outbreak of World War II, had led an assault on the basic theories of Marxism and the political program and organizational principles of the Socialist Workers Party. The Shachtmanites, who composed 40 per cent of the party membership, challenged the Trotskyist concept that the Soviet Union was a workers' state, bureaucratically degenerated though it was, which had to be defended against imperialist attack, just as a bureaucratized trade union had to be defended against attack by the bosses and their government. The grouping likewise challenged the whole concept of the party as a disciplined, centralized organization rooted in the political life of the working class.

The education received by the party ranks in the intensive discussion that defeated the Burnham-Shachtman tendency, an education in those very concepts against which the Burnham-Shachtman faction centered its attacks, steered the Socialist Workers Party for the future. Consequently it was capable both of withstanding the wartime repression and responding to the opportunities that the effects of the war were to create in the labor movement. This last political struggle in which Trotsky participated is documented in his book *In Defense of Marxism* and in Cannon's *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party*.

Shachtman's concepts, followed to the end, logically led to the liquidation of the revolutionary workers' party. This was confirmed by the subsequent evolution of his split-off group which eventually disintegrated, dissolving into the Socialist Party.

While the struggle against such concepts centered in the Socialist Workers Party, it had its repercussions and echoes in almost all the sections of the Fourth International, the World Party of the Socialist Revolution founded under Trotsky's leadership in 1938.¹ The difficulties of

1. At the end of the 1980s the SWP and the Communist Leagues in Australia, Britain, Canada, Iceland, New Zealand, and Sweden each decided to terminate their affiliation, whether fraternal or statutory, to the Fourth International. Through their political work, internationalist collaboration, and place within communist continuity and tradition, these parties had in reality for some time already become communist organizations that no longer considered themselves Trotskyist and were separate from the world Trotskyist movement and its various competing parties and international groupings.

Following World War II, the SWP and its proletarian traditions soon became a minority current

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worldwide communication during the war years, however, left uncertain the extent to which the international movement as a whole had absorbed the lessons of the Shachtman fight. These lessons were important, as Cannon repeatedly pointed out, because the end of the war would see massive upsurges of the workers and peasants, in revulsion against the horrors they had endured. A revolutionary leadership on a world scale was essential if these upsurges were to result in victory for the workers. A defeat of the workers and the restabilization of capitalism, especially in Europe, would place World War III on the agenda.

As more and more of the crimes of the Stalinist bureaucracy came to light, and as American and British imperialism clearly seemed headed for victory over their German and Japanese competitors, the pressures increased to abandon revolutionary politics in deference to bourgeois democratic public opinion. In response to these pressures a small group of party members, under the leadership of two of the eighteen prisoners, Albert Goldman and Felix Morrow, began to echo some of the petty-bourgeois concepts embraced by Shachtman. Much of the dispute with the Goldman-Morrow faction revolved around its disagreement with the Socialist Workers Party that uprisings of the European workers and revolutionary upsurges of the colonial workers and peasants were sure to occur. This made Cannon even more determined that the Socialist Workers Party should do everything it could to help educate and prepare the Trotskyist nuclei in Europe and the colonial lands for the opportunities and responsibilities that the postwar crisis would soon present.

International collaboration essential

Cannon's persistent inquiries about the English Trotskyists, his questions concerning Natalia Trotsky in Mexico, his eagerness for reports from the American Trotskyist merchant seamen who at that time were the only real communication links with the foreign sections of the world Trotskyist movement, his eagerness for every piece of information about the emerging European workers' movement, and even his urging that American Trotskyists learn foreign languages, all reflect the importance he attached to doing what he could, even in prison, to be part of a leadership team of international collaborators. In one of his letters to Rose Karsner, he wrote: "Without international collaboration — that is what the world 'internationalism' means — it is not possible for a political group to survive and develop as a revolutionary party in this epoch."

Nationally, the seeming hypnosis that the outbreak of the war had imposed on the American working class was already wearing off as the eighteen Trotskyists entered prison. Afro-American dissatisfaction, which had shown itself at the beginning of the war in the response to the projected March on Washington, burst out in the explosion in Harlem in 1943. Discontent was becoming more and more evident in the organized labor movement. This was to explode in 1945-1946 in the biggest strike wave in American history. Even American workers in uniform would display a new kind of combativity in the bring-the-troops-home movement in both Europe and the Pacific after Japan's surrender.

It was to this growing militancy of the American working class that Cannon wanted the Socialist Workers Party to orient all of its activities. The results of the early

within the Fourth International. For more than three decades, public differences were numerous and profound, many documented in the pages of the *Militant*. From 1979 on, however, accelerating divergences marked the course and character, on the one hand, of the SWP and other parties, and, on the other hand, the leadership bodies of the Fourth International. These differences centered above all on a political assessment of the revolutionary victories in Nicaragua and Grenada in 1979; the historical importance and weight of the communist leadership in Cuba and its political trajectory; and the necessity for communist forces the world over to decisively turn toward building communist parties that are proletarian in composition and leadership as well as program and perspectives.



Miners take 1945 strike vote. Cannon fought to orient party to growing labor militancy.

1944 subscription drive to the party's weekly paper, *The Militant*, showed that a growing number of increasingly dissatisfied American workers were open to the ideas of revolutionary Marxism. The necessity of settling accounts with the Goldman-Morrow faction assumed its real importance in relation to this new wave of working-class militancy in the United States.

Was the party to prepare itself on all fronts — from the character and size of its newspaper to its projected educational and publishing programs — for the rapid expansion that would be possible as the American workers threw off their extreme subservience to the Roosevelt administration? Or was it to dabble in prolonged and futile literary discussions with circles like Shachtman's Workers Party, destined to be bypassed in the postwar upsurge of the American workers?

In other words, was the party to be a workers' combat party, seriously preparing for coming events in the arena of the class struggle? Or was it at that very juncture to dilute its disciplined and proletarian character?

It was to answer these questions that Cannon's proposals for developing and expanding the various departments of the party were written. At the same time they rebutted the shortsighted and dilettantish perspective put forward by the Goldman-Morrow grouping.

More than anything else these letters reflect the importance Cannon attached to all the problems of the organization, education, and development of the revolutionary party. Today, just as in 1944, the building of a revolutionary party is the central requirement of our epoch. And its urgency is nowhere greater than in the United States, where the richest, most powerful, and most highly organized ruling class in history must be defeated.

The rulers of American capitalism are today fighting a bloody war to dominate Southeast Asia. They will fight even more fiercely against any challenge to their rule at home. Only a revolutionary party of the workers that is totally conscious of everything involved in disarming and defeating American imperialism on its home ground can hope to succeed. Without an adequate leadership the resistance and upsurges of exploited Americans will come to nothing — with consequences that can doom the human race. This is why it is so important to understand how best to organize, educate, and inspire those critical-minded and dedicated men and women who compose and will compose the American revolutionary party.

The concepts touched on in these letters extend from the scope of the revolutionary party's education to its field organizing, from the necessity for it to have a professional leadership and staff to the purpose of its democracy, from the character of its newspaper to the inspiration of its youth. It is the elaboration of these concepts, outlining the organization of a Leninist party in the United States, that constitutes Cannon's major contribution to Marxism.

The accomplishments of Cannon and the Socialist Workers Party in this field received their major test to date in 1944. With much of the central leadership in prison, a second-line leadership stepped in and, in the midst

of World War II, led the party through the year of its greatest growth. The performance of the unjailed leaders, the capacity of relatively young and inexperienced organizers to meet the challenge of new opportunities, and the response of the women in the party, who shouldered a greater part of the duties at the party center, were measures of the accomplishments of the previous period. Cannon watched this process unfold with keenest interest.

Revolutionary continuity

A great weakness of many young radicals today is their tendency to dismiss the importance of continuity in the development of revolutionary leadership. This in large part is a reaction against the systematic betrayals by the Communist Party, which dominated American radical politics for so many years, the reactionary policies of the AFL-CIO bureaucracy, and the quiescence of the American labor movement. But radicals who have no accurate appreciation of past experiences can have no serious perspective for the future. They are ill armed compared with the rulers who learn from both past successes and failures and thus stand upon the shoulders of their predecessors. Those revolutionists who fail to do the same condemn themselves to failure.

Giants and geniuses in the short history of the modern revolutionary movement are rare, but the march of history does not require each of us to be one, nor to wait for one to come along. *Letters From Prison* does not challenge each of us to be a [Karl] Marx, a [V.I.] Lenin, or a Trotsky. We are simply challenged to be ourselves, to study what went on before, and to apply the discoveries of our predecessors to the problems of our time. By standing on the shoulders of the earlier working-class fighters, American Marxists, as a team of revolutionists, can accomplish the tasks before them.

New insights into revolutionary theory and better understanding of revolutionary practice will doubtless come from the new generation of American radicals. But they

will come from those who are consciously part of the continuity of the international movement to change the world that began in 1848 with the *Communist Manifesto*. Those who, in the name of the quest for the "new," reject the use of the tested insights, understandings, and accomplishments of the last century or more, will merely repeat "old" mistakes.

The current struggles in Latin America, Vietnam, and America's black communities testify to the contradictions and continuing decline of imperialism. These struggles bear witness anew to the combativity and courage of the working masses. The central question remains the same as it was when Cannon was viewing the United States and the world from prison in 1944: How are revolutionists to build a party equal to the task of leading the working masses to the conquest of power?

Building such a political instrument can no more be an avocation than maintaining capitalist exploitation is an avocation of the leadership of the ruling class. One thread that runs through *Letters From Prison* is that a revolutionist does not play at politics. Revolutionary socialist politics is his chosen vocation, the center of his life, not a pastime or incidental interest. Everything, from the nature of one's education to the mode and conduct of one's life, is determined by the conscious decision to be a revolutionist.

In one letter Cannon says approvingly, "The young relate the word to the deed. They are moved and inspired by example. That is why they demand heroes; nobody can talk them out of it."

The two principal heroes of many young radicals in the world today — Malcolm X and Che Guevara — embodied the qualities of a revolutionist about which Cannon wrote in *Sandstone Penitentiary* a quarter century ago. They appealed to the best in men by challenging them to commit themselves to the great goal of liberating the oppressed that transcends the petty interests and concerns of everyday life. They sought to acquire and impart to others a knowledge of history and a confidence in the inevitability of their eventual triumph. They imbued their comrades with a faith in mankind's future that would follow the eradication of capitalism and racism. Their studies, their personal modes of life, and their integrity reflected the goals they had set for themselves. And each, after long experience and struggle, became preoccupied with the search and struggle to construct the type of organization that could lead the oppressed to victory over the American imperialist rulers and their international allies.

A prime obligation of a revolutionary leader is to explain the reasons for what he proposes and does, thus enabling the entire movement to participate in his thinking. In doing this he offers the younger generation what he knows. *Letters From Prison* is an important contribution from James P. Cannon toward fulfilling this obligation.

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LETTERS FROM PRISON

JAMES P. CANNON

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Memo reveals U.S. gov't hypocrisy on Cuba human rights

In early March, the Cuban government circulated to member states of the United Nations a memorandum sent by Joseph Sullivan, head of the U.S. Interests Section in Havana, to the secretary of state in Washington, D.C. In the document, titled "Update on the Cuban Refugee Program" and dated January 1994, Sullivan details the difficulties that U.S. officials in Cuba are having in finding Cuban refugees who are victims of human rights violations. Sullivan indicates that copies of the memo were also sent to the CIA and the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

"The overview, assessment, and considerations of this message show, with full evidence, the subversive and hypocritical nature of the migratory policy of the United States with regards to Cuba," a statement issued by the Cuban Mission to the United Nations and distributed along with the U.S. Interests Section memo says. "The official immigration procedures are used as an instrument of political coercion by the Government authorities of the United States and are manipulated for their own objectives."

The Cuban mission reports the document was "made available by friendly hands."

Reached by phone, a spokesperson at the U.S. State Department, Josie Schumake, said the document "looks like a fabrication. The Cuban government has done similar things before to try to distract the UN Human Rights Commission from alleged human rights violations." But Schumake would not categorically deny that U.S. officials authored the document. The Human Rights Commission met in Geneva earlier this month. We reprint below the entire text of the U.S. Interests Section memorandum. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.



I. Overview

The processing of refugee applicants continues to show weak cases. Most people apply more because of the deteriorating economic situation than a real fear of persecution. Cases presented by human rights activists proved particularly difficult for USINT [U.S. Interests Section] officers and INS members. Although we have tried hard to work with those human rights organizations on which we exert greater control to identify activists truly persecuted by the government, human rights cases represent the weakest category of the refugee program.

Applications by human rights groups members are marked by general and imprecise descriptions of alleged human rights activity, lack demonstrable evidence of persecution, and do not meet the basic criteria for processing in the program. Common allegations of fraudulent applications by activists and of the sale of testimonials by human rights leaders have continued in recent months. Due to the lack of verifiable documentary evidence, as a rule USINT officers and INS members have regarded human rights cases as the most susceptible to fraud.

II. Assessment

The decrease in the number of political

prisoners led the state department and the INS three years ago to work together in expanding the categories for processing in the Cuban refugee program. Professionals dismissed from their jobs, human rights activists, and members of religious faiths suffering persecution were introduced as new categories, with processing guidelines developed for each to ensure a fair consideration of cases.

During later INS visits, USINT made a deliberate effort to include cases from all of the categories. As an average, it included ex-political prisoners, religious members, human rights activists, and other cases.

We continue to select for prescreening only cases of probable INS approval. The approvals reflect the careful analysis of cases and the good understanding between USINT officers and INS visiting members.

Although USINT has tried to cover cases in line with the processing criteria it has nonetheless preserved its flexibility to present cases that may fall short in some areas but represent an interest to us.

Deteriorating economy

A deteriorating Cuban economy has provided incentive for new economic migrants to seek the refugee program. Additionally, the expansion of the categories has contributed to an increase in the number of applicants.

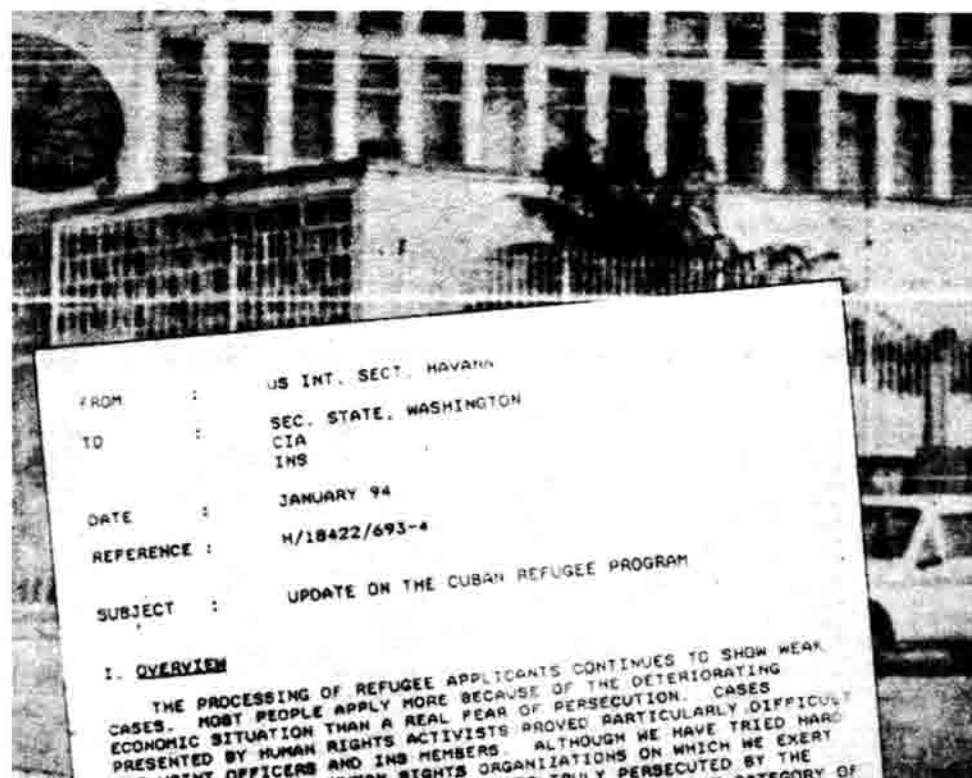
It is brazenly acknowledged now by some of the reintegrated ex-political prisoners that they apply for refugee status as a means to escape the deteriorating economic situation, and not because of a current fear of persecution or harassment. Others seem to have been pressed to request refugee status by their adult children hoping to leave with their parents. Most of these adult children of elderly, often retired, ex-political prisoners do not meet the criteria for refugee status in their own capacity.

Regrettably, the general quality of many of the applications is poor. Few of the ex-political prisoners accepted now as refugees would have been accorded such a status in previous years. As a rule, they have served much shorter sentences compared to the early entrants in the program. Most played lesser roles in counterrevolutionary groups, accepted political reeducation in order to have their sentences reduced, and later abandoned political activity to reintegrate into Cuban society.

A significant number of applications have also been received from individuals charged with attempting to illegally exit the country. With the depoliticization of "illegal exits" by the Cuban government, sentences for such charges were reduced. INS has generally regarded "illegal exits" as lacking political content.

The generally low quality of the cases, including those in the 1991 new categories, has not kept USINT from continuing to rely on documentary evidence (i.e., legal documents, dismissal notices, prison release letters) to determine the inclusion in the refugee program. Yet, this is not the case with most human rights applicants.

We have recorded an increase in the number of human rights cases since 1992. How-



This picture ran in *Juventud Rebelde*, newspaper of the Union of Young Communists in Cuba, along with text of document. U.S. Interests Section in Havana is in background.

ever, this increase did not stem from a higher level of human rights activity, or government repression. The majority of cases rarely contain any demonstrable evidence of persecution and frequently give only minimal, hardly credible, evidence of participation in human rights activities.

The testimonials of human rights leaders generally carry vague descriptions of human rights activity, such as the moral support of family members of political prisoners. These descriptions accurately show the low-level activity and non-confrontational attitudes of most human rights groups.

On the other hand, almost none of the cases show proof of house searches, interrogations, detention, or arrest. The activists usually claim persecution by state security, but they rarely can provide properly documented evidence of it. In some instances the applicant claims to have been subject to harassment without arrest. Interviewing officers end up having to rely virtually on what activists tell them.

Lack of evidence

The general trend has been one of lack of evidence to prove that the person is actually an activist, which leaves the category open for virtually everyone. Young men caught in illegal exit attempts since the economic downturn in 1989 have tended to submit applications as human rights activists. Human rights leaders have told USINT officers that they know that most of their members joined only to take advantage of the refugee program.

Since the inclusion of human rights activists as another category, we have kept a flexible and responsive approach to them. Human rights leaders such as Paula Valiente, the Aspillaga brothers, and others have received proper and quick consideration. A similar treatment has also been given to simple activists. In cases where the activist's supporting evidence is weak, but commitment to us is otherwise clear, prescreening officers have given the applicant the benefit of the doubt.

The leader of one group said that several people left his organization when they knew that it does not give testimonials to members. He complained of pressures from members to obtain strong testimonials of their human rights activity.

The latest INS visits have witnessed repeated incidences of fraud and allegations of fraud by human rights activists. USINT has attempted to address the problem through a revision of internal procedures to identify strong human rights cases. In addition, it met with heads of human rights organizations to determine the objectives, size and other aspects of the major human rights groups. USINT restricted as well the testimonials accepted from the groups to those from leaders we trust, aware that past divisions within human rights groups have produced allegations of unauthorized and fraudulent issuances of testimonials.

To our regret, not even these steps have prevented allegations of fraud and bitter recriminations among top human rights leaders. Shortly before the INS December visit, Gustavo Arcos and Jesus Yanez of the Comité Cubano Pro-Derechos Humanos [Cuban Committee for Human Rights], accused Aida Valdes of selling fraudulent avals [vouchers]. She, in turn, accuses Arcos and Yanez of sim-

ilar practices for economic profits.

This situation increases the general concern regarding the danger of relying on the testimonials. The deep rivalries and infighting among the human rights groups make it simply inevitable for the recurrence of charges of fraud not to prevail.

Prominent activists have confessed their worries that the refugee program is robbing them of the few dedicated members while at the same time it has become a magnet for opportunists. During a meeting with USINT and the INS, Felix Bonne, the head of the group "Corriente Civica," called the refugee program "the primary focus of many human rights leaders and organizations."

The involvement by some of the best-known human rights leaders in Cuba in these serious allegations clearly illustrates that our refugee program has become a divisive and increasingly controversial focus of attention for many human rights groups, whose leaders appear almost obsessed with the program. USINT has even received appeals to give human rights organization a formal role in the refugee program.

Out of the 225 cases presented by USINT to INS during its December visit, 47 claimed involvement in human rights activity although many fell into other categories, like professionals dismissed from their jobs and persons attempting to commit illegal exits. Although this was our best effort to work with human rights groups to present the strongest cases, interviews clearly showed the weakness of most cases.

Of all 47 human rights cases, only one claimed a total of more than 30 days detention over the last five years for human rights activity, and even he could not provide evidence of the detentions. The rest in general, only claimed house searches or a few undocumented summons to police stations. Most activists gave only vague descriptions of their involvement in human rights groups. And only 19 were finally approved.

Despite being only 20 percent of the total, human rights cases represented more than half of the denials. The overall refusal rate for the December visit as a result was 22 percent. This rate, although significantly higher than in past INS visits, has on the sideline the advantage of hopefully resulting in a higher level of activity by the groups.

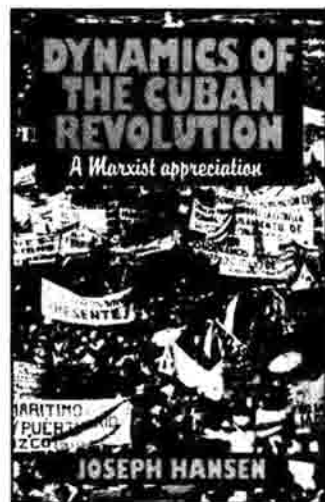
Considerations

In the face of a general decline in the quality of the cases, including those involving ex-political prisoners, USINT will need to work harder in identifying the best cases. With a view to help in this effort, it will introduce additional changes in the processing of cases.

The problems encountered in the processing of the bulk of the human rights cases point to the need for USINT to continue its close work with the INS to select strong cases.

However, the USINT will maintain the flexibility to present cases that may not meet all of the criteria but that given their nature may prove useful for U.S. interests.

Given CIA's expressed interests in the subject of human rights, and its greater involvement with and better knowledge of the different groups, we suggest a closer cooperation with USINT in line with our common goals.



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Cuba youth leader tours Iowa, Washington

BY HARVEY McARTHUR

SEATTLE — What is the biggest problem facing Cuba today? What are young people in Cuba thinking and doing? What do young Cubans think about gangs and crime?

These were questions Rainier Beach High School students raised when they met Cuban youth leader Pável Díaz Hernández March 14. Díaz spoke to assembly of 80 students while in Seattle as part of a nationwide campus speaking tour.

"The biggest problem we face today is the economy," Díaz told the high school students. He detailed shortages of fuel, food, public transportation, and other basic necessities facing Cuba and explained the role of the U.S. economic embargo as a major obstacle to the country's economic development.

Many Cuban youth are actively seeking ways to solve these problems, he said. "Last year some 140,000 students your age mobilized during July and August to help with the sugar harvest, the key to our nation's economy."

"Today we are organizing 80,000 'workers and students parliaments,' across the country. These assemblies take place in each workplace and school so workers and students like you can discuss our problems and propose concrete solutions to them. Their proposals will be presented to the National Assembly in July for a final decision on what measures to take."

Cuban youth don't discuss violence in schools, he continued, "because we don't experience it, it seems like something out of a fictional novel to us. Many Cuban youth have rifles," he added, "and we participate in special Defense Days when we go out to target practice. But these weapons have only one purpose: to defend our country and revolution."

Díaz is a 30-year-old member of the Union of Young Communists (UJC) and associate-researcher at the Center of Studies for Youth in Havana. During his four-day visit here he led lively discussions at the University of Washington, Seattle Central Community College, and The Evergreen State College. He spoke at El Centro de la Raza, a prominent community center in Seattle, and gave greetings to a meeting of 150 people where Philip Agee, a former CIA agent, spoke about the "CIA's War Against Cuba."

Díaz also met with aides to U.S. Rep. Jim McDermott, who had sent a message to the U.S. State Department requesting it grant a visa for his tour.

Activists in the Seattle-Cuba Friendshipment and chapters of MEChA and the Latin American Student Organization set up meetings on the different campuses.

Lively discussions often continued after the formal meetings ended. At Evergreen State, Díaz joined students for a party after his talk. He played the guitar and led them in songs, while dancing and political discussion continued well into the night.

Discussion on prostitution

Díaz was often asked if recent measures taken to increase Cuba's foreign exchange income, particularly the promotion of tourism and the legalization of use of dollars, weren't creating inequality and exacerbating social problems such as prostitution.

"We are very concerned about this," Díaz said, acknowledging that such problems are growing. "But, we have no other way to rapidly bring in the large amount of foreign exchange needed to purchase petroleum and other vital imports. We are trying to address the social problems tourism is bringing



Cuban youth leader Pável Díaz Hernández, left, conversing with Seattle activists.

through all the mass organizations we have, including the youth federations and the Federation of Cuban Women.

"Personally, I think problems such as prostitution can only be eliminated when we eliminate the scarcity of material goods that encourages it. You can't deal with prostitution by sending the police to arrest people," he said.

Díaz brought humor as well as political confidence to the discussions. A frequent example came when he was asked why the Cuban government had not collapsed as the regime in the Soviet Union did.

"You could fill a book with the many pre-

dictions of the imminent collapse of the Cuban revolution," Díaz said. "We even have a joke about this: A certain president, for whom Cuba had caused many headaches, dies. His aides decide to freeze his body so he could be brought back to life many years later. Thanks to scientific advances, he is eventually revived 2,000 years later. He immediately inquires about his family and friends, and then asks, 'Oh! Whatever happened to that tiny island that caused me so much trouble?'"

"The attendant replies: 'Mr. President, I assure you that this is the year Cuba will fall!'" said Díaz as the audience laughed.

The real reason Cuba is still standing, Díaz

explained, is that the Cuban revolution "is a genuine people's revolution. It is due to the continued support and participation of our people that the revolution stands firm."

He pointed to the broad support for the revolution and the Cuban government demonstrated in national elections in 1993, and to the fact that most Cubans are armed and have military training. "I'd like to see governments in other parts of the world arm their people as we do and see if they could stay in power," he commented.

"The revolution means national sovereignty and independence, and many social conquests that we value highly, including education and health care, a guaranteed right to a job, and social security," Díaz said. "We don't want to lose these rights. We know what Cuba was like before 1959, under capitalism: a land of unemployment and poverty. And a young Black man such as me had no opportunities then. I would have wound up out of work or shining shoes."

Differences between Cuba, Russia

Díaz spent seven years in the Soviet Union in the 1980s and 1990s, and said he found many differences between that society and the Cuban revolution. In one example, he noted young people in Russia did not have the same revolutionary values as Cuban youth. Membership in the Soviet youth group Komsomol, which was obligatory, amounted only to paying monthly dues and did not mean any political commitment or activism.

Membership in the Cuban Union of Young Communists is open only to those who have the commitment and dedication to shoulder responsibilities. "We are only 300,000 out of

Continued on Page 12

Friendshipment activists arrive in Cuba

BY SCOTT BREEN

HAVANA, Cuba — As 250 participants in the Third U.S.-Cuba Friendshipment caravan disembarked at José Martí international airport here March 12, nearly 400 Cubans enthusiastically cheered and chanted slogans of welcome.

The caravanistas had successfully crossed the U.S.-Mexico border a few days earlier, carrying 140 tons of humanitarian aid in open defiance of the 32-year-old U.S. trade embargo against the Caribbean country. Participants in the convoy, which was sponsored by Pastors for Peace, came from 40 states in the United States, as well as from Canada, Mexico, Britain, and 16 other countries.

The day before their arrival here, they had unloaded some 70 trucks, busses, and vans carrying medicines, paper supplies, and bicycles, among other things, at the Mexican port of Tampico. The aid, which includes an ambulance and seven busses, was loaded onto a Cuban freighter that immediately sailed for Havana. It will be donated to Cuban churches for distribution throughout the island.

"This shows that we are not alone," said Francisco Pérez, the ship's chief engineer, as the pallets of goods were being hoisted into the vessel's cargo hold. "The people of the Americas and other countries are with us."

After the last truck was unloaded, all the caravanistas walked over to a park in Tampico for a public rally and celebration. Victor Zenon of ¡Va por Cuba!, a group

in Mexico promoting solidarity with Cuba, welcomed the convoy. "We were inspired as the caravan went by," he said.

The featured speaker was Sergio López, president of the Cuban Institute for Friendship of the Peoples (ICAP) in Mexico. "The only sin of our people," he said, "was to make a revolution in 1959 to terminate the most oppressive regime in Latin America... The people of Cuba will resist [the embargo] and triumph."

Turning to the difficult economic situation the country is going through today, López said the leadership of the revolution is taking a number of proposed measures to working people for discussion. "Workers parliaments in the factories, schools, and other workplaces have discussed measures to be carried out in the future. Then the country's parliament, the National Assembly, will meet and act on them."

In Havana, as caravanistas were bussed from the airport to the Martin Luther King Jr. Center, many people on the streets waved and smiled. Nearly 800 residents of the neighborhood around the center turned out to give the convoy a rousing reception.

Rev. Raul Suárez, president of the center; ICAP president Sergio Corrieri; and José Ramón Balaguer, representing the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, were among those who welcomed the activists.

"Despite these difficult times," said Rev. Orestes Glez, president of the Ecumenical Council in Cuba, "we will hold staunchly our slogans and banners, our determination to resist the embargo... [The caravan] backs us up against all the unjust, sinful, and criminal things we are fighting."

Rev. Lucius Walker, executive director of

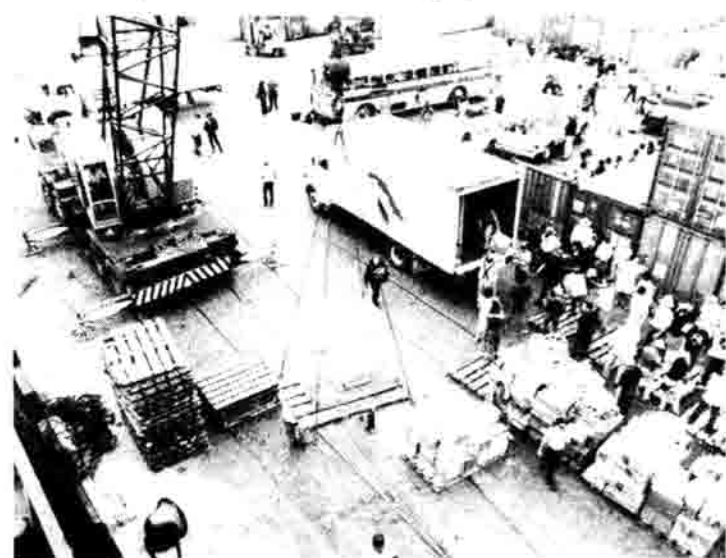
Pastors for Peace, addressed the gathering. "The majority of the U.S. people are opposed to the blockade of Cuba," he said. Walker said a satellite dish that U.S. customs officials refused to allow across the border "will be delivered to Cuba one day."

"We pledge our continuing commitment to end the U.S. blockade and normalize relations," he said to the crowd's cheers.

The rally was widely covered by the media in Havana and was broadcast on national television throughout the country.

The caravanistas then divided up to travel throughout Cuba to learn more about the conditions people face today and offer their solidarity. Teams plan to visit the provinces of Havana, Pinar del Río, Matanzas, Holguín, and Santiago de Cuba. On March 17, caravanistas will return to Havana to greet the arrival of the freighter carrying the humanitarian aid from Tampico and help unload it before returning to the United States.

Scott Breen is a member of the International Association of Machinists in Seattle and a participant in the Friendshipment. Caravan drivers Joe Young from Toronto and Sherrie Love from Los Angeles also contributed to this article.



Caravan participants unload aid for Cuba in Tampico, Mexico.

Militant/Monica Jones

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Cuba youth leader tours Iowa, Washington

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3 million young Cubans, but we are a real vanguard of our generation," he said.

In one meeting a young woman from Mexico criticized the Cuban government for "walking hand in hand with the PRI-led government of Mexico that rules by fraud and is repressing the Mexican people."

Díaz replied that Cuba always had — and seeks — good diplomatic relations with the Mexican government. "In fact," he added, "we seek good relations with all governments, regardless of their social system. Even with the United States, which has caused us so much harm."

"But good relations are one thing and walking hand-in-hand is another altogether. And Cuba will always walk hand-in-hand with the people of Mexico," he explained.

A number of students said they planned to visit Cuba in coming months and asked for ideas and help on making their visit as rewarding as possible. Díaz strongly encouraged these trips, telling students at Seattle Central Community College, "It's good that we can have a discussion like this, but you really should see Cuba for yourself. Visit a factory, a school, a farm, talk to different people, see what they have to say."

He said that the UJC hopes to collaborate with young socialists and other student activists here in organizing two volunteer work brigades from North America that would go to Cuba this summer.

A teacher at Rainier Beach High School asked Díaz what he liked most and least of what he had seen in the United States so far.

"What I like most is the type of open discussion we are having right now," Díaz replied immediately. "What I like least is the embargo. Let's work together to end it!"

Harvey McArthur is a member of International Association of Machinists Local 289 and active in the Seattle-Cuba Friendship. Marc Kinzel and David Warshawsky also contributed to this article.

BY NELL WHEELER

DES MOINES, Iowa — Pável Díaz Hernández, a youth leader from Cuba currently touring the United States, met March 8 with youth, farm activists, and others in Iowa.

The one-day visit of the state began with a meeting at Iowa State University in Ames of more than 70 students and faculty. Hosted by the campus Society for International Development, the meeting was also sponsored by a number of campus groups.

During the 90-minute meeting Díaz addressed the current situation in Cuba and the challenges facing the revolution. In response to questions about the U.S. government's attempt to crush the Cuban revolution through its trade embargo, Díaz stressed that the Cuban people will not surrender their right to decide for themselves the direction their country will take. "Cuban socialism represents everything Cuba is," Díaz said. "Our aim is to show that socialism is possible. So we cannot renounce it, in spite of the difficulties Cuba faces today."

The Cuban youth learned about the crisis facing working farmers in the United States through a visit to the hog farm of longtime activist Larry Ginter.

Díaz explained that Cuban farmers had been using feed imported from Eastern Europe, which was very rich in nutrients. "When that trade bloc disappeared," Díaz said, "we were left with an agricultural infrastructure that was underdeveloped. We are faced with a problem of what to feed our hogs that we can grow ourselves, especially

with limited access to pesticides, fertilizer, and oil." Díaz said he was impressed with the size of the hogs and the crop yields on the farm, explaining that the U.S. trade embargo has severely limited Cuba's access to modern breeds of livestock and seed hybrids.

Dan Schmitt, former Iowa president of the American Agriculture Movement (AAM), described the conditions facing working farmers today as looking more and more like the Third World.

Schmitt is also a member of the National Organization of Raw Materials (NORM), which organized a trip of farmers to Cuba last year, trying to trade their grain directly with the Cubans. "There's no reason we shouldn't be able to trade with Cuba, no matter how 'dangerous' our government says it is," said Schmitt.

Nell Wheeler is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 431 in Des Moines. Shirley Peña contributed to this article.



Pável Díaz (left) with Iowa farmer Larry Ginter, visiting the latter's hog farm. Militant/Nell Wheeler

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Irish Self-determination: A Discussion on the "Peace Plan" Signed by the Irish and British Governments. Speaker: Cathleen Gutekanst, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., March 26, 7 p.m. 3284 23rd St. (near Mission). Donation: \$4. Tel: (415) 282-6255.

IOWA

Des Moines

How to Fight Racism and Anti-Semitism. Speakers: Johnathan Narcisse, editor, *The Communicator*; Linda Powers, Diversity Committee; and John Studer, Socialist Workers Party, member of United Auto Workers Local 270. Sat., March 26, 7:30 p.m. 2105 Forest Ave. Donation: \$3. Translation into Spanish. Tel: (515) 246-8249.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

Eyewitness Report from South Africa: The African National Congress Leads the Fight for a Democratic, Nonracial, Nonsexist Republic. Speaker: Greg Rosenberg, *Militant* staff writer just returned from reporting trip to South Africa. Fri., March 25, 7:30 p.m. 780 Tremont St. (corner Mass Ave.). Donation: \$4. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

MINNESOTA

St. Paul

Clinton's Offensive Against Working People — How Can We Defend Ourselves? Speaker: Norton Sandler, member of Socialist Workers Party National Committee and International Association of Machinists Local 264. Sun., March 27, 4:00 p.m. 508 N. Snelling Ave. (One block north of University Avenue near 21A, 16A, and 4 buslines). Donation: \$3. Tel: (612) 644-6325.

MISSOURI

St. Louis

Challenges Facing United Mine Workers After Strike. Speakers: David Yard, chairperson

of UMWA Local 1969 grievance committee; Ken Cochran, laid off member, UMWA Local 2950; Richard Sorentino, Socialist Workers Party and member of Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union. Sat., March 26, 7:30 p.m. 1622 S. Broadway. Donation: \$3. Tel: (314) 421-3808.

NEW YORK

Brooklyn

Tinderbox in Latin America — Capitalist crisis meets resistance from working people in Argentina and Mexico. Speaker: Andrés Pérez, translator for *Perspectiva Mundial* magazine. Sat., March 26, 7:30 p.m. 59 Fourth Ave. (corner of Bergen, near Atlantic and Pacific subway stations). Donation: \$4. Translation into Spanish and French. Tel: (718) 399-7257.

TEXAS

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Cuba Friendship III — An Eyewitness Report Back. Sat., March 26, 7:30 p.m. 6969 Gulf Freeway, Suite 250. Donation: \$4. Tel: (713) 644-9066.

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Capitalist Politics in the '90s. Speaker: Helen Warnock, leader of Communist League. Sat., March 26, 6 p.m. 1st floor, 60 Shudehill. Donation: £2. Tel: 061-839 1766.

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Cuba's Revolution Confronts a Crossroads in the Fight for Socialism. Speaker: Jonathan Silberman, Havana International Book Fair participant and contributing editor of *New Internationalist* magazine. Sat., March 26, 6 p.m. 1 Gower St., Spital Hill. Donation: £1. Tel: 0742-765070.

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ward in the Struggle for National Rights of the Palestinians. Panel Discussion. Sat., March 26, 7:30 p.m. 4581 St. Denis. Donation: \$4. Tel: (514) 284-7364.

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SATURDAY, APRIL 2

9:30 a.m. • **Eyewitness Report from South Africa: the African National Congress Leads the Fight for a Democratic, Nonracial, Nonsexist Republic by Brock Satter, Socialist Youth Organizing Committee.**

1:30 p.m. • **A Working-class Perspective on the Fight for Women's Liberation by Naomi Craine, Socialist Youth Organizing Committee and *Militant* staff writer.**

4:30 p.m. • **World Capitalist Politics in the '90s: 'Downsizing,' 'Cultural War,' and Global Instability by Jack Barnes, National Secretary, Socialist Workers Party.**

SUNDAY, APRIL 3

9:00 a.m. • **Trade Unions and the Fight Against Imperialist War: Young Merchant Seamen during World War II and the Korean War by Tom Leonard, longtime union activist and socialist.**

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On Our Borders. A Forum on Mexico and the Chiapas Uprising. Speakers: Alex Ewen, director, Solidarity Foundation; Gonzalo Aburto, WBAI's *Alternativa Latina*; Sara Rios, Center for Constitutional Rights; Nick Unger, political director, Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union; representative, Mexican opposition Party of the Democratic Revolution. Moderator: Mario Murillo, WBAI-FM. Fri. March 25, 6:30 p.m. Hunter College West Building Room 511, Lexington Ave. and E. 68th St. (68th St. station on IRT #6). Sponsored by the Nicaragua Solidarity Network, the *Weekly News Update on the Americas* and WBAI-FM's *Alternativa Latina*. For more information, call Nicaragua Solidarity Network at (212) 674-9499.

Crime doesn't pay? — John Dasburg, top dog at Northwest Airlines, was paid \$1.6 million in salary and bonuses last year. Included in his bonus, according to Associated Press, "was \$750,000 for helping to arrange wage concessions from employees..."



Harry Ring

"Wanted" cards? — Three New York cops were suspended after a

man charged they had beaten him and stolen \$100 from him. Meanwhile, in several precincts, cops began distributing baseball-type trading cards with their mugs on them to area children in the hope that they'll be seen as role models, not occupiers.

They left trading cards? — Philadelphia cops burst into a home, terrorizing the family. They overturned beds and tore out a bookcase. They shot the family's two dogs, clubbed the head of the household to the floor with a shotgun butt and handcuffed him. They were looking for a suspect, but had the wrong address.

Trampling on Bill of Rights only

— "Lying, cheating or stealing is wholly inconsistent with everything the FBI stands for and cannot be tolerated." — New FBI guidelines.

"Oh, and by the way..." — The feds asked scientists to estimate future quake shocks in the L.A. area to help determine how much should be spent on strengthening public buildings. A scientist said the cost vs. risk equation will be calculated for the various buildings, as well as the political factors involved. He added, "We also ask how many lives will be saved... That is one method of determining what is most worth spending money on."

Sports — We're late, but these

are key facts on the Kerrigan/Harding competition. For Harding, a designer fashioned and contributed a \$6,600 outfit bedecked with silver and gold sparkles. One Kerrigan costume, featuring rhinestones, was \$9,600. Her second number, a stretchy type fabric covered with 11,500 crystals, was \$13,000.

Trusted servants — In West Virginia, Eastern Associated Coal Company's Federal No. 2 mine donated five visored helmets and five bulletproof vests to the sheriff's department to show their support.

Take care of who? — Colorado's major HMO, TakeCare, is get-

ting rid of up to 35 Denver-area surgeons and turning their patients over to the remaining 70. TakeCare hopes the 50 percent caseload jump will make the survivors more committed to cost-cutting and, simultaneously, "improved care."

No gratitude — The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) got an assist with the \$24 billion debt on its nuclear power program, a debt likely to be passed on to consumers. A University of Tennessee campus environmental group netted \$10.42 on a bake sale featuring "nuclear-meltdown cakes." The TVA board accepted the contribution without comment.

Women, leadership, and the communist movement

As part of our coverage for Women's History Month, we are reprinting below excerpts from "Forging the Leadership of a Proletarian Party," a report by Mary-Alice Waters adopted by the Socialist Workers Party National Committee in May 1979. The report appears in the second part of the three-volume Education for Socialists series "Communist Continuity and the Fight for Women's Liberation."

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I think that if you look back cold-bloodedly on the history of the Marxist movement, you would have to say that there is really only one woman who stands out as a central political leader — Rosa Luxemburg. Perhaps it would be correct to include Elea-

FROM PATHFINDER

nor Marx, too.

But if Luxemburg was unique in the history of the Marxist movement, that is not something we need to be defensive or apologetic about. It is no fault of Marxism or Leninism or the leaderships of genuine Marxist and Leninist parties.

Rather, it is a result of two historical factors: first, the stage of development of capitalism itself and the sex composition of the workforce; and second, the depth of women's oppression, institutionalized through the family, and the profound affect this has on the character structure of every female raised in class society.

If we who live in the economically strongest capitalist countries, in the last part of the twentieth century, can be relatively optimistic about our ability to build a party and leadership that is different in leadership composition from anything that has existed so far, it is because of changes produced by

the development of capitalism itself.

These changes are decisive for the development of women who are leaders of the working class, and the creation of a proletarian party of the kind our tasks require.

When you go from working as a personal secretary and servant for some man in an office, to an auto assembly line, the change affects your own consciousness. It affects your attitudes towards yourself and what you're capable of doing.

Women have a deep fear of leadership. We are conditioned from the day we're born to fear the consequences of attempting to lead — to lead men, especially.

This is the biggest obstacle to the development of women leaders. It is rooted in the character structure, the psychology, of the oppressed sex. It is something that every woman faces and has to deal with.

All party leaders — men and women — have to become thorough Marxists. Have to be politically grounded with an understanding of our broad strategic perspectives and learn how to apply them to the diverse situations and challenges we face today.

Is this a personal challenge? Yes.

Is it harder for women to do this? Yes, it's harder. That is a historical fact, a fact of life in class society.

Are many problems that we used to think were personal shortcomings, really not our own fault? Yes.

But then, we have to add, so what?

Because it is harder for us, do we think it is less necessary? Do we think the standards of leadership for us should be lower than for men? Do we think there can be some definition of leadership for women that is different than for men? Of course not. We know that nothing would be more patronizing, degrading, or insulting to women in the party.

Of course this doesn't mean women must meet this challenge only as individuals. The party as a whole has responsi-



Militant/Sara Lobman
Defending abortion clinic in Houston in 1992. It takes a combination of experience and systematic study for women — and men — to develop as politically self-confident leaders.

bilities, too. We think that one of the most important things we can and must do in the near future is establish the full-time cadre school, the leadership school that we have talked about before.

Second, the party as a whole has the responsibility to continue a policy of affirmative action to encourage women and com-

rades of the oppressed nationalities to overcome the additional obstacles they face. As with every member, our aim is to stretch comrades' capacities to the fullest, to encourage them to take assignments that challenge them to grow, and then to work collectively to maximize what we accomplish and learn in the process.

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —

THE MILITANT

Published in the Interest of the Working People
March 28, 1969 Price 10¢

LONDON, March 16 — Continued opposition to the war in Vietnam was expressed here today when 2,500 young people took to the streets in a spirited and militant demonstration in solidarity with the Vietnamese Revolution and against British complicity with U.S. aggression in Vietnam.

After a colorful march from Hyde Park with red flags and banners identifying participating groups, the demonstrators held a rally in Trafalgar Square. The speakers emphasized the need to continue and develop the antiwar movement in the face of continued U.S. aggression in Vietnam. The crowd expressed approval of an appeal by the chairman to help build a mass demonstration for April 7, at which Madame Nguyen Thi Binh of the South Vietnamese National Liberation Front [NLF] delegation in Paris will speak.

The demonstration was part of a campaign to force the Labour government to lift its ban on representatives from the NLF and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam [DRV] coming into the country. The government has all along allowed the representatives of [South Vietnam's] Ky-Thieu regime into Britain.

The government refused to grant visas so that NLF and DRV representatives could address today's rally, but under the pressure of the March Vietnam Mobilization Committee, which at one point had threatened to occupy London Airport, the government de-

cided to grant a visa to Madame Binh for the April 7 Easter demonstration.

THE MILITANT

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

March 25, 1944

Roosevelt's War Department not only maintains a strict policy of Jim Crow segregation and anti-Negro discrimination in the armed forces, but it deliberately tries to foster race prejudice and to prevent the soldier ranks from receiving scientific information exposing the fallacies of all theories of racial superiority, particularly the theory of "White Supremacy."

At the behest of Southern Democratic Representative Andrew J. May of Kentucky, chairman of the powerful House Military Affairs Committee, the War Dept. recently announced that it was shelving the distribution of 55,000 copies of a pamphlet, *The Races of Mankind*, which by some apparent accident had been purchased for use in the Army's orientation courses. The pamphlet was written by two leading authorities, Dr. Ruth F. Benedict and Dr. Gene Weltfish of the Columbia University Dept. of Anthropology, and scientifically debunks the notions of racial, national or class superiority.

What particularly aroused the lily-white ire of Rep. May and the War Dept. brass hats was that section of the pamphlet which cites irrefutable scientific evidence proving that there are no "superior" races or nationalities, and particularly that the Negro people when given equal environmental advantages have just as much mental capacity and intelligence as whites. And the data on which this indisputable fact is based comes from the records of the War Department itself.

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Celebrate a victory in South Africa

Working people around the world should stand with their brothers and sisters in South Africa and celebrate the victory scored by the toilers of Bophuthatswana, who rose up and toppled Lucas Mangope, the ruler of the apartheid-created homeland.

The Bophuthatswana uprising was a big victory for South Africa's unfolding democratic revolution, which is led by the African National Congress. It painted a vivid picture of the character, energies, and rapidity with which the revolution is advancing. This is the politics of millions in action.

Homeland ruler Mangope, who ANC president Nelson Mandela called a "toy tyrant," opposed the Bantustan's reincorporation into a democratic republic. He banned the ANC, brutally repressed his opponents, and declared he would allow no election campaign activity in Bophuthatswana.

Tens of thousands of working people and youth were not about to wait and see what took place after the April ballot. Through their strikes and protests they split the army and police. The white-minority regime was forced to send in troops at the behest of the ANC. The thousands of invading rightist commandos of the so-called master race were unceremoniously booted from Bophuthatswana by South African troops and the soldiers of the very homeland they had come to reinforce.

The homeland system was a linchpin in Pretoria's reactionary fantasies. The system was set up to rob the African peoples of their land; to give meaningless "citizenship" in fake states recognized by no one but Pretoria; and to block the formation of a South African nation. The Bantustans reinforced tribal and language divisions among Africans.

These reserves anchored the superexploitation of Black labor by capital, including the migratory labor system, forcing Africans to sell their labor in far away places or die of hunger.

Working people in South Africa today are tearing this system apart. They are fighting to forge a nation, to eradicate the caste-like position of Black labor, to open the land to all those wishing to work it, and to advance the rights of workers.

It's in the interests of workers and peasants the world over to fight for the complete success of this revolution, whose goal is to establish a democratic, nonracial, nonsexist republic.

The breakdown of the Bophuthatswana homeland is a vindication of the strategy of the leadership of the African National Congress. At each stage of negotiations with the government and the right wing, the ANC has fought to bind these forces into talks while attempting to minimize the carnage apartheid's defenders can impose on working people. While the officer corps, police, and right wing are still a dangerous force posing new complexities to the revolution, the ANC holds the political initiative.

The ANC's campaign slogan is "Now is the time!" This is an appropriate lead for working people and youth around the world. By organizing to educate about the South African revolution, raising financial and material aid for the African National Congress, and taking other initiatives to support the ANC campaign for a decisive victory in the April elections, we can help put the final nail in apartheid's coffin.

Now is the time!

Defend abortion rights!

Another battle in the fight to defend a woman's right to choose abortion is unfolding in Birmingham, Alabama. Hundreds of pro-choice activists are getting ready to confront Operation Rescue and prevent the group from closing the clinics in Birmingham during their March 25-April 2 "Passion for Life Week."

Young people, workers, and others in the region — and beyond — who support abortion rights should head for Alabama to join them in training for clinic defense, staffing phone banks, and speaking on campuses to recruit others to this battle.

Victories against the opponents of abortion rights in Buffalo, New York; Houston; Robbinsdale, Minnesota; and other cities confirm the need to outmobilize the rightist forces and link arms in front of clinics. Successful mobilizations last July pushed back Operation Rescue, defeating their "Cities of Refuge" campaign in all seven areas targeted.

Protests in Ireland over the past two years have helped lift the ban on travel and some other restrictions on abortions in that country. Thousands took to the streets, forcing the Supreme Court to overturn the prohibitions and open the door for the first time to limited legal abortions in Ireland. Young people continue this fight today in protests to demand the cancellation of fees imposed by the courts

for distributing abortion information.

These mobilizations — not reliance on laws such as the RICO Act that restrict democratic rights — point the way forward to push back the Operation Rescue-organized thugs. They are also the only way to beat back other attacks on abortion rights. Laws restricting access to abortions took effect in early March in Ohio and North Dakota. Similar legislation is scheduled to become law soon in Michigan and Pennsylvania. Mobilizations are needed to repeal these measures.

Groups like Operation Rescue are not attacking abortion rights on their own. As the capitalist economic crisis worsens, the employers and their government seek to increase the exploitation of the working class. Restricting or denying abortion rights is part of their effort to heighten the burden on working women and undermine their self-confidence. The aim is to keep the second-class status of women intact by taking away a woman's most fundamental right — control over her own body.

Affirmative action, abortion rights, and increased access to birth control are not just important for women. They help unify and strengthen the entire working class.

The labor movement should join with young activists in Alabama and elsewhere in defending abortion clinics wherever they come under attack.

Build socialist youth movement

Young people from New York, Minneapolis, and elsewhere are taking important steps toward initiating a nationwide socialist youth group. Meetings of young participants in recent socialist educational conferences in New York and Miami give a glimpse of the opportunities opening up to build such an organization.

A growing layer of youth are rejecting the horrors the crisis-ridden world capitalist system has to offer — wars, fascist movements, unemployment, and racism. This is the only world young people coming into politics today know. They radicalize because of what they are against, and begin looking for ways to change the world.

These students and young workers have a better chance of finding their way to communism today than in decades. The disintegration of the Stalinist apparatuses in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe means these murder machines masquerading under red banners no longer have a chokehold on the international working-class movement. Today, Stalinist organizations can't as easily draw in the big bulk of revolutionary-minded young workers and students and turn them away from building a communist movement.

At the same time, significant numbers of young workers are beginning to be hired into basic industries in the United States — the coal mines, steel mills, auto assembly lines, and railroads — as the employers reach for fresh blood and muscle in their drive to increase productivity. These youth aren't as burdened by the weight of the setbacks and retreats the labor movement has faced in the last 15 years. They don't know what they can't do. They will be an

essential component of new labor battles, just as young workers hired during upturns in the business cycle during the depression of the 1920s and 1930s spurred struggles to form industrial unions in the United States. Youth drawn into factories, mills, and transport, particularly the maritime industry, during World War II were the backbone of the labor upsurge after the war.

These shifts make it possible, and necessary, to draw a layer of young people toward socialism today. The social breakdowns that are inevitable under capitalism create a radicalization, and if the workers movement doesn't step in to take leadership, rightist forces will.

The perspective put forward by the Socialist Youth Organizing Committee of building an organization of these young people deserves the support of revolutionary-minded workers and farmers of all ages. Over the next several weeks, young supporters of the effort will be participating in a range of political activity, from the March 18-19 antiapartheid conference in Philadelphia to defense of abortion clinics from Operation Rescue attacks in Birmingham, Alabama, later this month.

They will be traveling to cities and campuses in the Midwest and beyond to link up with other young fighters, join in their struggles, and build an April 1-3 socialist educational conference in Chicago, which will be an opportunity for moving closer to establishing a nationwide socialist youth organization. All revolutionary-minded youth, and working-class fighters of any age, should join in these activities and support such an effort.

Hundreds attend N.Y. socialist conference

Continued from Page 16

raised through a raffle to help cover travel expenses of young socialists going to the Chicago conference.

The reaction of most young people attending the conference was very favorable to the perspectives laid out in the presentations and classes.

Ryan Kelly, a student at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis who is studying literature and history, has been active in SPOC there. "In Minneapolis," he said, "it's reaching the point where the group is starting to move on its own. . . . We've been doing Cuba work — organizing the Pastors for Peace Friendship and the tour of Cuban youth leader Pável Díaz," he explained. There is great interest in the South African revolution, he said, adding that he was particularly inspired by the victory of working people in Bophuthatswana who won the right to participate in upcoming non-racial elections by forcing out the homeland's dictator Lucas Mangope and defeating the fascist, white-supremacist thugs who came to his aid.

"Now we're looking at the possibility of forming a nationwide organization," Kelly said, recounting the formation of SYOC.

Ray Cook, a 20-year-old unemployed worker from Morgantown, West Virginia, said he liked the emphasis by Barnes on the revulsion young people feel toward fascism and war, by-products of the capitalist system. "In Morgantown the only jobs offered to young people are fast food jobs at minimum wage," he said. "As for the time being right for a youth movement to form. . . I guess it is. When you see young people organizing themselves into discussion groups and becoming interested in politics, it's a good sign that you can build one big national organization."

The reports and discussion were translated simultaneously into Spanish and French by conference volunteers.

A number of working-class activists were attending their first socialist educational conference. Marc and Pierre, two Haitian-born workers from Pittsburgh who fled Haiti after suffering repression at the hands of the military regime there, were enthusiastic about the conference, as they boarded a van Sunday with others returning to Pittsburgh. Marc, who is reading in French "The Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's Assault on Iraq," an article by Barnes in *Nouvelle Internationale*, said that the conference showed him "the example of workers in struggle. . . at a time when the crisis of capitalism is becoming more aggravated."

'Need to study, exchange ideas'

Pierre said he appreciated the opportunity to speak freely about politics and share experiences of struggle, which is impossible to do openly today in Haiti. "Because of the repression and the high degree of illiteracy among workers," Marc added, "it is difficult to organize education there. But it is necessary to figure out how to overcome these obstacles because working people need this kind of study and exchange of ideas." At the lunch break Marc and Pierre got a chance to talk with Leonard, who recounted a discussion on Marxist ideas with two Haitian-born activists at the Miami Socialist Educational Conference he had spoken at two weeks earlier.

A member of the International Association of Machinists who is on strike against Alitalia Airlines was present, as was a Philadelphia garment worker who was part of a strike against Greif Co. last year organized by the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union.

A worker born in the Dominican Republic who has been attending Militant Labor Forums in Manhattan, said the conference helped him understand "the reality of what capitalism does to humanity." He said he found the presence of so many young activists inspiring. "Young people," he stated, "are the seed that will grow into the revolution. The capitalists think that youth are just interested in drugs, but they can become fighters instead."

A garment worker from Montreal who had flown to the conference with 14 others from Quebec, said, "I've been reading *Malcolm X: The Final Speeches*. I'm learning about imperialism. This won't be the last conference I attend."

Solidarity message sent to Mark Curtis

Conference participants voted by acclamation to send a message of solidarity to Mark Curtis, an Iowa packing-house worker who has been in prison since 1988 on frame-up charges of rape and burglary.

More than \$1,250 was collected for the Pathfinder Books for Cuba Fund in an appeal following Barnes's presentation. The fund, sponsored by the *Militant*, makes donations of Pathfinder literature possible to libraries and schools in Cuba.

A Pathfinder literature table in the lobby was a center of activity at every break. Martin Dunne, who organized the table, reported that more than \$600 in literature — over 60 books and pamphlets — were sold throughout the weekend. Best sellers were *Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution* by Joseph Hansen and *Letters from Prison* by James P. Cannon, two books just reissued by Pathfinder with new covers. *Peru's Shining Path — Evolution of a Stalinist Sect* a pamphlet by *Perspectiva Mundial* editor Martín Koppel, was also a hot seller.

At several points during the breaks, young people stood at the table reading books.

Workers at USAir to vote in election on union representation

BY EDWIN FRUIT

PITTSBURGH — For the third time in four years 8,000 nonunion fleet service workers at USAir, including baggage handlers and food service employees, will decide if they want union representation.

Three unions — the International Association of Machinists (IAM), International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT), and United Steelworkers of America (USWA) — have filed for ballot status in the upcoming election with the National Mediation Board. The IAM currently represents 8,000 workers at USAir. IBT negotiated contracts at USAir for fleet service workers until 1990 when, following USAir's merger with Piedmont Airlines, they were decertified in a system-wide election.

In Pittsburgh, partisans of the three unions are campaigning for votes. Full-time organizers for the IBT, IAM, and USWA have been sent here and to other areas to influence the course of the election. In addition, the IAM local at USAir in Pittsburgh has activated an organizing committee in order to get its members involved in winning votes for the IAM.

Fleet workers disagree over which union will best represent them, although there is general agreement among many workers that the priority is to get a union on the property. Because of continuing attacks by management, most workers are hopeful that the pronoun vote will be larger than in past elections. In 1990 35 percent of those who cast ballots voted for a union; in 1992 this figure increased to 47 percent of the eligible workforce — just 254 votes short of the number required for certification. Voting is done by a mail-in ballot. To get union recognition 50 percent plus one of all eligible voters must vote for one of the unions. The union with the majority of the votes then becomes the bargaining agent.

The union organizing drive comes in the midst of a several-year assault by USAir on the wages and working conditions of fleet workers. One of the company's primary goals is to reduce the number of full-time employees and force workers to compete for

part-time positions.

In the first months of 1994 many full-time employees have been forced into part-time work in order to retain their jobs. This move coincided with the elimination of some 2,500 jobs in the fleet service and ticket agent categories. Full medical coverage was done away with for the families of part-timers and newly hired part-timers get no company-provided coverage — even for themselves. Full-time positions were eliminated for anyone hired after 1986. Workers in Pittsburgh estimate that the part-time workforce has increased from around 18 percent in 1989 to 40 percent today.

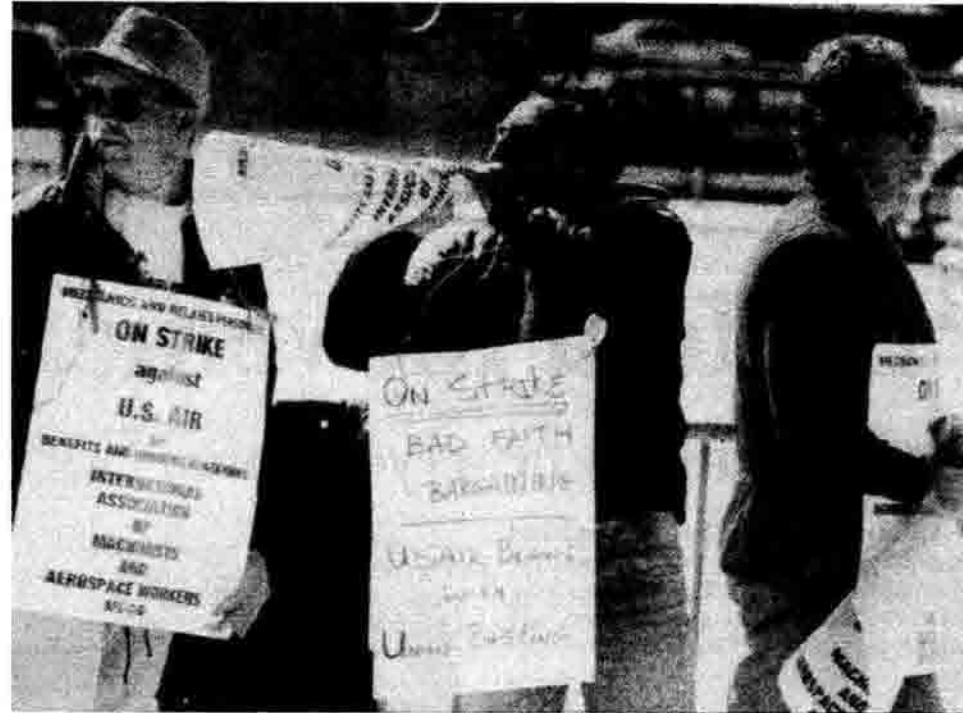
USAir has also imposed a new sick leave and vacation policy on all noncontract workers. Fleet service workers no longer get paid holidays. They are also being forced to work a nine-hour day, including an hour of unpaid lunch. And all this is on top of a one-year wage reduction imposed by the company in 1992.

Union workers also accept concessions

The 8,000 mechanics, cleaners, and store clerks at USAir who are organized by the IAM have not escaped the company's attacks either. After a one-week strike in October 1992, the IAM accepted its first concession contract at USAir. This included a one-year wage reduction and allowing cleaners to do jobs traditionally done by mechanics. In addition, the starting rate for new union hires was reduced by \$3.40.

In mid-March, company officials met with representatives of the Air Line Pilots Association, the Association of Flight Attendants, and the IAM. USAir says it wants additional permanent givebacks of up to \$1.5 billion from all its employees, union and nonunion alike.

Management claims that all these cost-cutting measures are necessary to bring the airline "back to profitability." The company recently announced expected losses of more than \$200 million in the first quarter of 1994. The airline is also facing increased competition from its rivals. USAir recently



Members of the IAM during a one-week strike against USAir in 1992. Airline is demanding concessions from both union and nonunion workers.

announced lower fares and limited service for passengers on a number of East Coast routes in order to compete with Continental and Southwest Airlines. In a related development, British Air, which has a 24 percent stake in USAir, announced that it was putting on hold a further \$450 million investment in the airline until effective cost-cutting measures were implemented.

Wayne Barnett, USAir vice president for ground services, is taking a hardline stance toward the union organizing drive. "We need to inject a dose of reality into the discussions," he says in a company telephone line recording. "If the fleet service workers vote for a union, the first contract will be negotiated under the toughest economic conditions faced by the company. If they think that the company can agree to a contract like the ones previously negotiated, they are sadly mistaken."

'Respect and dignity'

John Aulicino, who has worked for USAir for 24 years, stated, "We need a union so that we can be treated like human beings with respect and dignity. I support the IAM because I think there is strength in numbers and we'd be in a better bargaining position in one organization."

Mike Yanko, a baggage handler with eight years at USAir, explains that he is a supporter of the USWA. "They've been out here for two

years when we weren't sure if the IAM wanted us in their union," he said. "Plus, my whole family has been in the USWA for many years working in the mills so I feel like I should support them. However, I'll support whatever union wins. The main thing is that we need protection because we never know what the company is going to do next."

Eddie Croft, a cleaner and a member of the IAM, as well as a former rank-and-file leader of the Eastern airline strike in Los Angeles, thinks that everyone should be in the IAM. "It's a matter of common sense. One union, one airline puts the employees in the best situation to deal with the company," he said.

Lou Knoll, a ramp worker with 14 years at USAir, was a member of the Teamsters and thinks they should be supported. "We had a good contract. The Teamsters are the largest union in the country and that gives us clout," he stated. "We're the weakest link in the USAir chain and it's important to vote in a union to strengthen everyone on the property."

Eric Lundberg, an IAM shop steward and a coordinator of the local's organizing committee, said, "I think we all should be in the IAM because it puts us in the strongest position to deal with this company."

Edwin Fruit is a member of IAM Local 1976 and works for USAir at the Pittsburgh airport.

—LETTERS—

Struggle in Chiapas

"Chiapas: A Call to Arms? American Indian Reaction," a panel discussion of 150 people, which I attended, was held at the University of Arizona in Tucson on Feb. 22, 1994. It was sponsored by the U of A Office of Indian Programs and American Indian Graduate Center.

One of the organizers, Alonso, who is from Chiapas, showed slides of the area and photos of the original Declaration of War posted on the walls of the municipal building in Ocosingo by the EZLN (Zapatista army). This declaration gives a history of indigenous peoples in Chiapas, of the miserable conditions forced on them for 500 years by colonialism, first Spanish, then European imperialists, then the U.S. and Mexican governments. Genocide has been and is a result of these brutal policies. The Zapatistas are demanding for the Mexican people: work, land, shelter, food, health, education, independence, liberty, democracy, justice, and peace.

Several of the speakers addressed these demands and gave a history of the oppressive conditions in Chiapas. Among those conditions are 80 percent unemployment, \$4-a-day wages, and the landowners/government destroying the native people's land to build roads and dams for the convenience and profits of the landowners and corporations. As a result, only 40 percent of the Mayan peoples now own garden plots or a little land. The majority of the land in Chiapas is used for exploitation by the rich:

export crops, timber, oil, cattle, etc. The Lacandon rainforest is also being destroyed along with its inhabitants.

One of the speakers proposed to create an International Indigenous Commission on Human Rights to monitor the Mexican government in Chiapas and stop its brutality. Solidarity with the Chiapas struggle was also discussed.

Marta DeLeon
Tucson, Arizona

Investment in China

I have a question about the editorial, "Capitalism in Russia? Not Soon," which appeared in the December 27 *Militant*. The editorial asserts that "there will be no big infusions of capital coming into Russia, unlike the mushrooming capitalist investment in parts of China," and ascribes this to the fact that the "imperialist powers find themselves suffering through the effects of a world economic depression."

This doesn't seem to make logical sense. If it is the capitalist world depression which precludes big capital infusions into Russia, why would it permit investment to "mushroom" in China? The world economic depression certainly determines the context in which the capitalists make their investment decisions today. But you appear to cite it as the cause for the dearth of capital in Russia, while in the same breath admitting the opposite trend in China.

Obviously, it is the big differences between the conditions of Russia and China which attract the imperialist investors, despite the world de-

pression, to the latter and repel them from the former. In a previous article on China, the *Militant* described the flood of millions of desperately poor peasants into the cities, where they provide a cheap and vulnerable labor pool for profitable exploitation, and you pointed out that this situation does not exist in Russia. Without some reference in the editorial to this and other differences between the two countries to explain the opposite investment trends, ascribing the aversion of capitalists to invest in Russia simply to the "world economic depression" sounds doctrinaire, illogical, and unconvincing.

Peter Buch
Berkeley, California

Northern Ireland

Concerning the issue of the struggle going on in the north of Ireland, I must agree with Kathleen Shields letter to the *Militant* of January 17 and her assessment of the northern Ireland situation. I lived in the north-eastern occupied counties of Ireland for 15 years and have witnessed firsthand the brutality of British "Democracy" fostered on the nationalist people of the north of Ireland. Attacking the IRA for treating British workers as part of the problem is incorrect. If the British workers are not actively working to get their ruling class's military and political machinery out of Ireland then they are part of the problem.

But there is one disagreement that I have with Kathleen, and in fact with Sinn Fein, and that is their almost complete dismissal of the fears of the Loyalist population. They are

a reality that must be dealt with and we must ask how better would things be for the Loyalist worker if there was unification into the Irish Free State. After all, the only difference between an Irish and British capitalist is the shape of their pound note.

So this leads to an obvious conclusion. That the "troubles" in the north of Ireland can begin to be solved if looked at from a unified class perspective. After all, the slums and housing projects of Belfast all look alike if you take the wall murals off. And hunger, misery and degradation all feel alike whether you are orange or green. Or black, latino, asian, native or white for that matter.

Michael Cavlan
Palo Alto, California

Navajo land dispute

A few weeks ago I visited the Navajo Reservation with a food caravan from Boulder, Colorado. I feel compelled to share this information because of what I witnessed was happening to the people there. I hope you will feel compelled to take some form of action as was I.

In 1974, the U.S. Congress passed Public Law 93-531 in order to settle a so-called land dispute between the Navajo and Hopi peoples. Public Law 93-531 is actually a means by which Peabody Coal Co. will be allowed to strip-mine one of the largest coal reserves in the United States. The area in Arizona in dispute, known as Big Mountain, is home to thousands of Navajo shepherders, weavers, and silversmiths. For many generations, traditional Navajos

have existed in peace, separate from the money economy and modern, technological culture.

Many families continue to oppose the "relocation act" from Washington, D.C., and go on living in the traditional ways. As a result, the resisters have been subjected to harassment from the government. This harassment includes forced livestock impoundments, reduced water supplies) resulting from Peabody's intense use of local water for a slurry line), restrictions in gathering wood (the only source of heat and cooking fuel), constant presence of government officials, as well as F-16 fighter jets flying 100 feet above the ground during religious ceremonies.

Many years of mediation has recently been deteriorating due to the insistence that traditional people be allowed to remain on the land of their ancestors. It is of the utmost importance that the traditional Navajo continue living on their ancestral homeland. Because of the low-intensity warfare being waged by the U.S. government, this is extremely difficult. Outside support has been requested by the tribal elders of the Big Mountain area.

Hally DeCarion
Boulder, Colorado

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.

'Build a movement of socialist youth'

Statement by newly formed Socialist Youth Organizing Committee

We are reproducing below a statement issued by the Socialist Youth Organizing Committee (SYOC), which is being circulated among activists on campuses and elsewhere in the United States. You can reach SYOC at Box 113, 561 Hudson St., New York, NY 10014; or P.O. Box 50495, Minneapolis, MN 55404.

Young socialists in Minnesota and New York have decided to begin working together to form a national alliance of young socialists. The Student Political Organizing Committee (SPOC) of Minnesota and the Young Socialists (YS) of New York have also decided to support and organize young people to attend a Socialist Educational Conference in Chicago, Illinois, April 1-3, 1994, where we will be organizing a youth gathering that could prove to be a valuable forum to discuss further joint political action. This will also be an opportunity to discuss and explore possibilities for forming a nationwide socialist youth organization.

The common assessment of SPOC and YS is that the world capitalist system has proven itself incapable of ending wars, unemployment, racism, police brutality, environmental destruction, and attacks on women's rights. Socialism points the way out of the ravages of capitalist society by constructing a society based on human needs rather than profit, run by workers and farmers.

The growing disorder and instability of the world market system is driving layers of young people to reject the horrors of capitalism and to look for an alternative. All over the United States groups of youth have been getting together to discuss and study socialist politics and figure out how to fight back. From Carleton College in Minnesota to Swarthmore College in Pennsylvania, socialist study groups have been popping up. SPOC and YS seek to think and act together to begin drawing these different groups together into an alliance of socialist youth.



Young people from Minnesota, New York, and elsewhere hold meeting during N.Y. socialist educational conference March 13 to discuss building nationwide socialist youth group. At center is Brock Satter, leader of SPOC from Minneapolis.

We encourage all young people, socialist or not, who are interested in fighting the destruction faced by the oppressed masses of the world to join at the conference in Chicago. We think this discussion concerning the future of our revolutionary role in the coming battles in the United States and internationally will be extremely useful to

all young fighters.

We are making efforts to send people from both organizations to participate in several key political events happening in the month of March. Members of SPOC and YS helped build send-off rallies and support for the U.S.-Cuba Friendship caravan. We are part of helping to build the national speaking tour of

Cuban youth leader Pável Díaz Hernández, to get out the truth about the Cuban revolution to as many young people as possible. Youth from both groups will be helping to build and participate in a regional student antiapartheid conference at Temple University in Philadelphia March 18-19. SPOC and YS will also be linking up with other young people to defend abortion clinics from Operation Rescue attacks in Birmingham, Alabama, March 25-April 2. Throughout this month, we will be organizing teams of young people to travel to campuses around the Midwest, setting up literature tables, organizing meetings, and building the conference in Chicago to recruit more young people to the perspective of a socialist youth movement.

To coordinate this work among young people, leaders from both groups have temporarily formed the Socialist Youth Organizing Committee. SYOC is organizing youth to participate in these aforementioned activities and to bring in the input from youth in both groups and in other places to shape the character of the youth meeting scheduled to occur at the Chicago conference, which we see as the next step in the building of a socialist youth movement here in the United States and internationally.

It is with this perspective in mind that we would like to encourage you to become a part of our efforts to begin organizing students, young workers, and other youth to stand up against the crimes of the capitalist system and fight for socialism. Join us!

*In solidarity,
Socialist Youth Organizing Committee*

Hundreds at N.Y. socialist educational event

BY MAGGIE TROWE
AND STEFANIE TRICE

NEW YORK — Nearly 350 people attended the March 12-13 Socialist Educational Conference in New York City. The

event, sponsored by the New York Young Socialists and the Socialist Workers Party, drew 200 workers and youth from the New York/northern New Jersey area. Others came from up and down the eastern seaboard and as far away as Minnesota and Illinois.

The conference opened Saturday afternoon with a talk by Mary-Alice Waters entitled "Cuba's Revolution Confronts a Crossroads in the Fight for Socialism." Waters, the editor of *New Internationalist*, a magazine of Marxist politics and theory, recently returned from a month-long stay in Cuba, where she attended a Latin American solidarity conference and the Sixth Havana Book Fair, and visited farms and factories. Waters spoke about the struggle being waged by Cuban revolutionary leaders and the working class in that country to continue standing up to Washington's aggression while confronting a deep economic crisis.

In an interview after the talk, Jon German-Bey, who organizes computer systems for a Cleveland oil company, said he "liked the class on Cuba because the media doesn't cover Cuba in a fair light and this was a chance to hear a firsthand report from a person who had been there and who is pretty darn knowledgeable." Several other youth present had a similar reaction to the presentation by Waters. German-Bey said he became interested in socialist ideas because he "could see the dynamic of the whole capitalist thing at work at my job, where people get laid off as the technology gets utilized better." He later said the conference helped him see "how the capitalist system functions for a certain class of people as compared with another class."

On Saturday evening, Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes spoke on "World Capitalist Politics in the '90s: 'Downsizing,' 'Cultural War,' and Global Instability."

Two classes followed next day. The first was a presentation by Tom Leonard, longtime union activist and socialist, on "Trade Unions and the Fight Against Imperialist

War." Leonard, who became a merchant seaman and a socialist as a young man in the 1940s, explained the impact of thousands of young people hired as merchant seamen during World War II and the Korean War.

The last class was "An Eyewitness Report from South Africa" by Greg Rosenberg, *Militant* staff writer, and Brock Satter of the Socialist Youth Organizing Committee (SYOC). Rosenberg and Satter recently returned from South Africa, where they attended the ANC Youth League Congress.

Meeting of youth at conference

At the break between the two classes on Sunday, SYOC invited young people attending the conference to participate in a discussion of the activities of youth groups around the country.

SYOC is a committee coordinating efforts by the New York Young Socialists and the Minneapolis-based Student Political Organizing Committee (SPOC) to reach out to young people who are repelled by capitalism and invite them to help build a nationwide socialist youth organization. SYOC members Brock Satter, Naomi Craine, and Mark Gilsdorf were present at the meeting of some two dozen people.

SYOC members invited conference participants to attend and help publicize a socialist educational conference to be held in Chicago April 1-3. SYOC is co-sponsoring that meeting along with the Chicago Socialist Workers Party. Teams of young people will be traveling through the Midwest in the next two weeks to find out what political activities are going on at campuses throughout the region and to meet young people interested in coming to the conference.

Sessions of the New York conference were held at auditoriums in two elementary schools in lower Manhattan. Each presentation was followed by a discussion period, and informal discussion continued in the lobby and at nearby cafes and restaurants during meal breaks and at a fund-raising party Saturday night. Nearly \$250 was

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BUILD A MOVEMENT OF SOCIALIST YOUTH!

Socialist youth from New York and Twin Cities, MN encourage all young people to attend a

Socialist Educational Conference Chicago April 1-3

to discuss how to fight against the wars, unemployment, racism, police brutality, attacks on women's rights, environmental destruction and other ravages of the world capitalist system.

The conference will have eyewitness reports on the socialist revolution in Cuba, the unfolding democratic revolution in South Africa, and discussions on the world capitalist crisis and prospects for revolutionary change.

As part of the conference there will be a gathering of youth to discuss the opportunities for building a nationwide socialist youth organization.

For more information contact:

Socialist Youth Organizing Committee

P.O. Box 50495
Mpls., MN 55404

Or

Box 113, 561 Hudson St.
NY, NY 10014

Local Contact:

- ☐ I would like more information about the Socialist Educational Conference.
☐ I would like more information about the Organizing Committee of Socialist Youth.
☐ I would like to invite a speaker to my campus or get involved in activities of the Organizing Committee with others in my area.
☐ I would like to make a contribution of \$_____.

Name: _____
Address: _____ Phone: _____
City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____