

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Clinton and Congress
attack abortion rights

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 61 NO. 13 MARCH 31, 1997

Albania rebels: 'We are not about to give up'

Imperialists continue to probe for intervention

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS
AND TONY HUNT

SARANDA, Albania — "During a rebellion there is dislocation, there can even appear to be chaos for a period of time until the question of power is resolved," said Gjevat Koucia in an interview here March 18. "But at least we have avoided bloodshed so far and we are beginning to restore order in this town. We are not about to give in. We will not order people to surrender their weapons and we will not negotiate a political solution to the crisis until [President] Sali Berisha resigns. There can be no free and fair elections or transition to normalcy until he is out of office."

Koucia is the de-facto president of the defense council of Saranda, a port town of about 10,000 people near the Greek-Albanian border. The council was formed at the beginning of March to organize self-defense units as antigovernment protests turned into an armed revolt. The entire command of the army and navy here was dissolved and most officers and soldiers have joined the rebels or abandoned their uniforms and gone home.

On March 18, *Militant* reporters disembarked from the *Kalliopi* — the little boat



Rebels guard jets seized at Kucove air force base, 60 miles outside the capital, Tirana.

that still does daily trips between Igoumenitsa, on the northwestern coast of Greece's mainland, the Greek island Corfu, and Saranda. Civilians with Kalashnikov

rifles were guarding the port here. Later that day we saw old Russian tanks guarding the town's electric power station, as well as the

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Workers strike GM in Indiana

BY FRANK FORRESTAL

FORT WAYNE, Indiana — In another display of resistance to GM's profit drive, 2,700 members of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 2209 walked off their jobs after failing to reach a local agreement by the March 14 strike deadline. This is the first time in the local's 10-year history that it has gone on strike.

The Fort Wayne Assembly Plant produces full-size pickup trucks, which are among GM's best-selling vehicles. The truck plant is one of the most modern and "efficient" in the GM system.

The strike has led to the layoff of 150 auto parts workers at Johnson Controls, where the plant's seats are outsourced. The Fort Wayne strike is the fifth work stoppage against the world's largest automaker in the past year.

The main demand of the union is to hire more workers to give some relief from heavy overtime schedules. One of GM's plans is to cut 300 jobs at the truck plant. Strikers on the picket lines report that a shortage of workers has prevented UAW members from taking vacations or getting days off.

This has led to a backlog of grievances against the company. Other unresolved issues are health and safety, particularly repetitive stress injuries, as well as more than 900 unsettled grievances. Strikers report that the average age of the workforce is around 45 years old.

Since the plant was opened in 1986, GM

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Young Socialists build convention

BY JOSHUA CARROLL

ATLANTA — "Clearly there is a lot of potential to get young people interested in revolutionary ideas to this convention," said Patricia O'Beirne, a leader of the Young Socialists in Canada. O'Beirne has been on tour in the United States for the past two weeks, building the organization's second national convention taking place here in Atlanta March 28-30.

Young Socialists and communist workers of all ages are using the next two weeks to meet with young fighters interested in attending the convention and firming up plans for the trip to Atlanta.

They are setting up speaking engagements at high schools and college campuses, reaching out through the campaign to win new readers to the *Militant* newspaper and *Perspectiva Mundial*, and presenting pub-

lic forums.

Among other activities, YS members are meeting with leaders of youth and student groups involved in protest actions around the country, encouraging them to join in the efforts to build a delegation to the 14th World Festival of Youth and Students this summer. Many of these same people will want to attend a convention of revolution-

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Fund makes Albania reporting trip possible

BY VALERIE JOHNSON

NEW YORK — With this issue *Militant* readers are getting their first on-the-scene report from Albania by an international team headed up by staff writer Argiris Malapanis. The reporting team includes Tony Hunt from London and airline workers Natasha Terlexis and Bobbis Misailides from Athens.

Even before the *Militant* team set foot in southern Albania, the heart of the popular uprising against the pro-capitalist regime of Sali Berisha, the first envelope had already arrived in the mail from several readers in Houston. The accompanying note read succinctly: "\$42 to go to *Militant* to contribute to trip to Albania."

Our front-page coverage speaks for itself. What a contrast between the truthful reporting of a socialist newspaper, which gives a voice to fighting workers and peasants in Albania, and the crudely class-biased pieces served up by the hack writers of the *New York Times* or *Washington Post* — every word dripping with hatred and fear of workers, who to them are nothing but "looters and thugs" creating "chaos," "anarchy," and an all-round bad example to working people elsewhere in the world.

The *Militant* has explained from the start

Continued on Page 4

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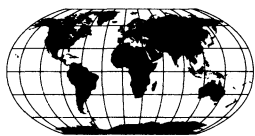
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Korean workers force Seoul to back off some antilabor laws

On March 10, the south Korean parliament adopted a revised version of the antilabor laws that sparked weeks of mass demonstrations, strikes, and rallies involving hundreds of thousands of workers in December and January. The new legislation allows for more than one umbrella union, thus legalizing the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions, and also pushed back for two years provisions that make it easier to lay off, fire, or replace workers. The antilabor laws still include provisions extending more powers to the secret police and barring teachers from organizing unions. "We oppose the compromise bill!" chanted 1,000 trade unionists at a rally in downtown Seoul March 8, when the new bill was announced.

Bangladeshi cops kill student

Police in Dhaka, Bangladesh, opened fire on high school students protesting the expulsion of classmates for allegedly cheating on English exams there March 13. One 18-year-old student was killed and 70 more injured while blocking a nearby highway. Cops claim they sprang into action when students began to pound on cars.

Comoros workers demand pay

Workers, students, and others in Moroni, Comoros Islands, shut down "all administrative and commercial activity," reports the Associated Press. In three days of protests, started March 12, protesters blockaded the main road to the center of town. Prime Minister Ahmed Abdou blamed the demonstrations on "elements opposed to the regime." These "elements" are striking teachers and other workers who were promised eight months' back pay at the beginning of this year and have yet to see it. Students are calling for the government to meet the demands of the teachers' strike. Some angry protesters burned down one of Abdou's houses. When the Comoros government sent in cops to break up the actions, they opened fire on protesters, killing one and injuring several. Comoros president Mohamed Taki Abdoul Karim sent government troops in "reinforce" the cops.



1,500 shipyard workers in Gdansk, Poland, protested March 13 against government plans to lay off 3,800 shipbuilders. "We want jobs. We want bread," they chanted marching to the downtown train station, blocking traffic for four hours and halting 30 local trains. The day before, some 2,000 workers organized a similar roadblock that stretched for miles outside the city center. Above, workers listen to speeches at a March 6 rally held at the Gdansk shipyard.

EU cool to Turkish membership

Foreign ministers of the European Union countries, meeting March 15-16, put off any decision on the Turkish government's application for membership to the organization. Earlier in the month, top government officials from Italy, Spain and Germany, along with prominent politicians from Belgium, met to declare their opposition to bringing Ankara into EU membership. Wilfred Maartens, former Belgian prime minister, said, "Turkey is not a candidate to become a member of the European Union, short term or long." Those against Turkish membership argue that the country is too large, too underdeveloped, and too Muslim.

Washington dispatched diplomat Carey Cavanaugh to Europe to urge the EU to keep the door open to Ankara, which has threat-

ened to veto any expansion of NATO if its EU application is rejected. Meanwhile, the Wall Street credit agency Moodys downgraded Turkey's foreign debt rating March 14, citing political instability and insufficient austerity measures. It was the last of major international lending agencies to do so.

Belarusians call gov't's ouster

On March 15, at least 10,000 people demonstrated in central Minsk, the capital of Belarus, chanting antigovernment slogans. The day before, the cops, on the order of President Alexander Lukashenko, arrested and clubbed over 100 demonstrators who were calling for the government's ouster.

Prior to these protests, the Stalinist government cracked down on civil liberties, closing down newspapers, limiting public protests, and restricting the activities of the Belarusian Popular Front (BNF), the main opposition group, which called the demonstrations. Police arrested BNF deputy chairman Yuri Khadyka on March 13, but provided no reason. Speaking to the British Broadcasting Company, Lukashenko compared Belarus to Albania and Yugoslavia, saying if imperialist countries want to avoid such unrest "then the West should support the policy of strong power here."

Bonn kicks out accused U.S. spy

The German government, for the first time, has accused a CIA employee — working as a U.S. diplomat — of espionage and asked him to leave the country, according to German news magazine *Der Spiegel*. The

diplomat reportedly tried to tap a high-ranking German economics ministry official for information about Bonn's high-technology projects. U.S. embassy officials had no comment except to say, "If indeed it's an intelligence issue, normally the department does not comment on intelligence matters."

2,000 march for pay hike in Venezuela

Some 2,000 Venezuelan university students, employees and professors, joined by textile workers, doctors, and others took to streets of Caracas March 13, demanding wage raises and opposing government moves towards selling off nationalized industries like steel and aluminum. Police helicopters patrolled the protest, and toward the end the cops moved in with tear gas and water cannons. They arrested 14 youth, seven of whom are being turned over to the federal police on charges of manufacturing explosives. The demonstration paralyzed downtown Caracas. Some bosses gave workers half the day off, since many were planning to join the protest. Seventeen universities that have been struck for two months remained closed.

Jury rejects coerced confessions

A Philadelphia jury, in just three hours of deliberations, acquitted two men of charges of raping and killing a young female jogger. Herbert Haak, one of the defendants, said he was beaten and tortured by the cops for six hours until he signed a confession containing blank pages, later filled out by police. Richard Wise said police also coerced a statement from him. DNA evidence did not link either of the defendants to the victim, and the prosecution had to agree that the "confessions" were the only evidence.

In the last two years alone, 12 Philadelphia cops have been charged with robbing or framing people up, and 283 criminal cases have been dismissed as the result of police corruption scandals.

Prisons abused female inmates

Prisons run by the states of Arizona and Michigan violate the Federal Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act of 1980, recent U.S. Justice Department suits charged, because they do not adequately protect female inmates from prison guards and staff. Women imprisoned in both states have been subjected to sexual misconduct and invasion of privacy, the suits allege. Additionally, two prisons in Michigan also provide inadequate medical and mental healthcare. The lawsuits will seek court orders mandating state governments to protect female inmates from rape, sexual assault, and other already illegal abuses by prison staff.

— BRIAN TAYLOR

Why I read

"To understand politics in New Zealand, you have to understand politics in the world, and to do that the *Militant* is essential. The internationalist aspect of the *Militant* is one of the most important."

Matthew Gibson, member of Young Socialists and student Christchurch, New Zealand

THE MILITANT



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New Zealand gov't slashes public health

BY RUTH GRAY

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand — A recent series of public controversies have spotlighted the continuing decline in free, publicly funded health services in New Zealand. These debates have been particularly heated in Christchurch, over calls for a public inquiry into "patient safety" and a recommendation to set up a private heart surgery unit.

These controversies highlight the conflicts that have been generated by assaults on healthcare initiated by the National government elected in 1990. The so-called reforms implemented by that government launched a process aimed at reversing the right to free public healthcare — a right that was won by the working class in the 1930's.

Since 1993, public hospitals have been divided up among 23 Crown Health Enterprises (CHE) that compete with each other and with private interests for government funding through four Regional Health Authorities.

The National/New Zealand First coalition government, elected in October last year, reaffirmed this principle in its coalition document, which states that the health system is required to run "in a business-like" manner.

The first act of the newly-formed government regarding health policy was to announce in February that it would not be holding a public inquiry into patient safety at Christchurch's public hospitals run by Canterbury Health. The Christchurch Hospitals' Medical Staff Association chairperson, Stuart Gowland, told the Christchurch Press the decision was "approaching the level of a scandal."

For more than a year now the Medical Staff Association has been in conflict with their employer, Canterbury Health, over declining standards of patient care. The Association has been campaigning for a public inquiry and joint decision-making in clinical matters.

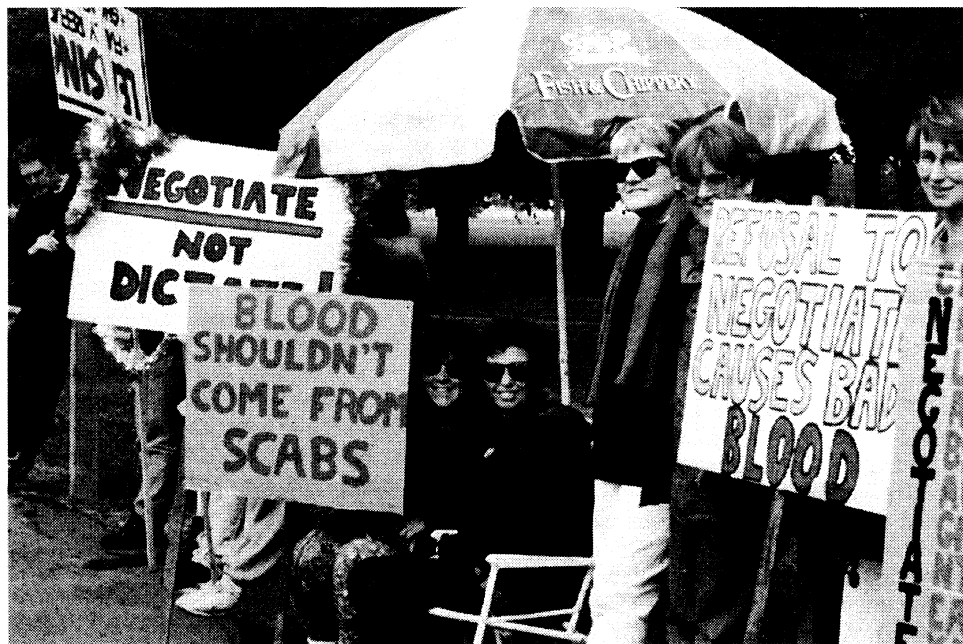
In place of such an inquiry, Minister of Health, Bill English, is backing an investigation begun by Robyn Stent, the Health and Disability Commissioner. Last December, Stent said she was "concerned about health professionals exploiting people's fears about hospital safety as a tactic in industrial negotiations or other lobbying activities."

Medical Staff Association condemned the investigation by Stent on the grounds that it is being held in private, and that prejudicial statements were made by Stent. To back up their demands for the public inquiry, the Medical Staff Association and Christchurch representatives of the New Zealand Nurses Organization released a report that lists incidents affecting patient safety. The report also identifies four potentially avoidable deaths at the hospital in 1996.

Documents released to the media January 31 by parliament member and Alliance Party leader, James Anderton, support these claims. The documents report that a man died because senior medical staff were too busy with other patients to treat his bleeding peptic ulcer. Another death occurred when a woman who was sent to hospital by her general practitioner died of heart failure after waiting over four hours for treatment.

Private surgery unit in public hospital

The Southern Regional Health authority announced on February 28 that it would grant the contract to provide heart surgery to a private bidder — a joint consortium of the Healthcare Otago Crown Health Enterprise and the Southern Cardiothoracic Institute. This decision followed many years of public demands for such a unit to be pro-



Militant/Patrick Brown

Medical workers in Christchurch, New Zealand, struck for three days last December demanding Canterbury Health negotiate the union's contract in good faith.

vided in the city, the largest in the South Island. Candidates for heart surgery now have to travel 360 kilometers (225 miles) to Dunedin. The private consortium outbid other contenders — including one by Canterbury Health — to make the service part of the hospital's budget. The private heart unit will be set up at Christchurch Public Hospital.

The decision has been greeted with a mixed response among working people in the city. An article by Press journalist David Gee in the March 4 edition of the paper reports a phone-in survey on the decision: "One caller, Maggie Lawson, echoed the sentiments of many when she said: 'I am angry about the decision that a private, money-making company will be involved in our hospital. The people are entitled to a public-funded and public-run service.'"

While the reforms have increased the market for private healthcare and insurance, the latter remains a parasitic growth on the public system. This is because for most major operations like heart surgery and kidney transplants, everyone has to rely on the public system. The private heart unit in Christchurch, if it goes ahead, will rely on public hospital facilities.

This means that having the ability to pay will not completely protect the wealthy from the crisis in public health. This fact generates the continuing scandals plaguing the health "reforms."

One of the main products of these assaults has been to ration healthcare. In Christchurch, for example, over the last two winters non-urgent surgery has been postponed while the hospital struggled to cope with increased admissions mainly caused by winter respiratory infections and influenza. While this is a yearly phenomenon, there is no funding provision for extra beds.

'Nightmare on night shift'

The problem of staff cutbacks and unfilled vacancies was vividly illustrated by an article entitled "Nightmare on the Night Shift," written by nurse Howard Brown, in the August issue of the *Nursing New Zealand* journal. Brown describes how he and a colleague struggled to care for 23 patients in the acute medical ward at Hamilton's Waikato Hospital one Saturday night.

According to the Association of Salaried Medical Specialists Executive Director Ian Powell, the government had forced Health Waikato to cut its budget by \$30 million in the last three years. The Coalition for Public Health commented that the number of nurses employed by Health Waikato fell 15 percent between 1990 and 1994. They added that during the same period there was a 12.4 percent fall in the number of nurses working nationally in public hospitals. Yet the number of patients being treated at public hospitals has risen.

In Hawkes Bay, a pilot scheme is being launched to replace nurses with "clinical associates" who will have two weeks training. They are to replace nursing jobs by providing basic care for less pay.

The lack of resources and funds for public health has led to burgeoning waiting lists across the country. At Auckland's Green Lane hospital, one patient a month is dying while waiting for urgent cardiac surgery, according to the head of cardiology John Neutze. The Australasian College of Radiology reports that in many parts of the country people are waiting almost three months for cancer treatment.

To reduce waiting lists the government is forcing CHEs to introduce a booking system that will reduce waiting times to six months. This is a precondition for qualifying for \$130 million of additional government funding. Under the booking system patients are allocated points by clinicians. If a patient scores above a certain threshold the operation will be done in six months. If the patient scores below the threshold the patient is referred back to their general practitioner.

The Central Regional Health Authority, which covers the capital city of Wellington, plans to drop 770 people from its waiting lists using this system. Criticizing this move, Wellington Medical school professor of surgery Geoffrey Horne, told the Christchurch Press, "I believe most people deserve their place — I am not aware of anyone on my waiting list who is there for some kind of recreation. This is just a rationing system. It is not to improve efficiencies."

Another target of cuts to healthcare has been the wages and conditions of health workers. Last August, Christchurch Public Hospital contracted out its catering services to P&O Services. The new contractor then offered existing staff an employment contract that cut wages for weekend work and overtime and did not recognize length of service and experience. Other cuts were also made to sickness, holidays, and bereavement leave.

A year earlier P&O Crothals won the hospital's cleaning contract and demanded that the existing workforce reapply for their jobs for inferior wages and conditions. The cleaners responded with picket lines outside two Christchurch hospitals. Their lone action, however, was insufficient to prevent P&O hiring replacement workers and implementing the contract.

Ruth Gray is a member of the Engineers Union.

Students demonstrate in S. Africa against education cuts, for funding

BY GREG ROSENBERG

WASHINGTON, D.C. — "We can come here and stand every day, and nothing will happen. We have to step on some toes," said student protester Xolani Malawana. On February 26, Malawana joined nearly 5,000 other students in the streets of Johannesburg — the largest student march since South Africa's first nonracial elections in 1994 — sponsored by the South African Students Congress (SASCO). Marchers culminated their boisterous protest outside the Johannesburg Stock Exchange.

The students were joined in a sympathy picket by professors, administrators, and other staff who held signs reading "Education is a right! Subsidy cuts are a blight." Students hoped to present their demands to Finance Minister Trevor Manuel of the ANC, but he did not show up.

SASCO leaders say that the ANC-led government's proposed budget would have sacrificed education for thousands of students, to the demands of fiscal discipline.

While the gains of the mass struggle to bring down the apartheid regime were registered over the past two years in the establishment of a unitary system of nonracial public education, there has been little change so far in the devastated conditions of many schools. Moreover, university level education remains blocked off for the vast majority of black students, who cannot afford the fees.

A wave of student protests since the be-

ginning of January forced South African Education Minister Sibusiso Bengu to announce March 6 that the funds allocated for student subsidies would be increased to just below the level of last year. The Finance Ministry's preliminary budget for the upcoming fiscal year had proposed a drop in student loans from 300 million rand to 250 million rand (\$1= approximately 4.5 rand).

SASCO deputy president Kenny Diseko announced March 10 that the student federation, which has been an important component of the revolutionary democratic movement led by the ANC, would join workers from the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in a march on Parliament in Cape Town on March 12. The trade union federation had earlier announced the demonstration to press the government to speed implementation of the Reconstruction and Development Program, a document outlining provision of basic services to millions of black South Africans disenfranchised under apartheid rule.

Diseko said student marchers would focus their demands on withdrawal of charges against students engaging in peaceful protest and for funding to settle outstanding fees.

Student protests led by SASCO and other organizations have taken place at the University of the Witwatersrand, the Wits and Pretoria technikons, the University of KwaZulu-Natal, and the University of the North. The University of Fort Hare in the

Eastern Cape was closed March 11 after student protests against payment of outstanding tuition fees. The vice-chancellor gave students less than a day's warning to vacate the campus with their belongings.

Students at the Bosele School for the Blind in the Northern Province evicted their principal on March 6, saying he had misused funds.

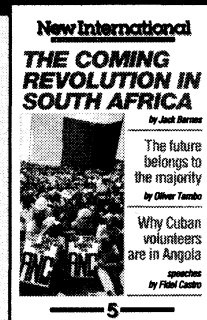
SASCO protests were successful in forcing some institutions to submit to demands that all students be registered regardless of their finances.

The University of Port Elizabeth agreed to a moratorium on excluding students who could not pay their fees, and the University of the Free State extended payment deadlines to June 30. In the third week of March, SASCO plans to organize protests at the Afrikaans-language universities — Stellenbosch, University of the Free State, Rand Afrikaans University and University of Potchefstroom.

In other news, ANC president Nelson Mandela added his voice to those calling for the names of alleged collaborators with the apartheid regime to be disclosed.

The Truth Commission, which is hearing testimony on apartheid-era crimes, had earlier ruled that the names of some apartheid-era police informers could not be revealed. Certain police applying for amnesty before the commission have asserted that some of their former informers are now ANC government officials.

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Coming soon: entire 'New International'

BY SARA LOBMAN

Participants at the upcoming Young Socialists national convention will be the first to be able to acquire the complete *Collected New International*, which includes every article published over the last 60 years in the *New International*, a Marxist magazine of politics and theory. It is available on a three-volume CD-ROM set. Draft versions of the first two volumes, covering the years 1934-1971, were completed in mid-1996. After a test period, the entire collection will be available for sale to the general public.

New International was founded in July 1934 "by pioneers of the communist movement in the United States and Canada," the introduction to the 3-volume set explains. "It has been published for more than six decades since then, presenting political, theoretical, and historical material that clarifies the most important questions of program, strategy, and organization confronting the working-class movement internationally."

"While the name and format of the magazine have changed several times over the span of sixty years, the continuity of political outlook and editorial policy has remained unbroken," the introduction says. "That political continuity begins with the *Communist Manifesto*, drafted in 1847 by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels; adopted by the December 1847 congress of the Communist League, it became the founding programmatic document of the modern workers movement."

"The initial editors of the magazine were leaders of the communist parties in North America," the introduction adds. "Those parties were forged in the crucible of the first interimperialist world slaughter, which

precipitated the collapse of the social-democratic Second International and ended in the victory of the October 1917 Russian revolution, led by the Bolshevik Party. Trained in the proletarian internationalism of the Communist International under the leadership of V.I. Lenin, the founding editors launched *New International* as part of the effort to maintain that communist continuity in face of the political counterrevolution consolidated by the rising bureaucratic caste in the Soviet Union in the latter 1920s.

"The majority of the magazine's editors and many of its contributors have been leaders of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States," the introduction says. "From its first issue, the magazine has been produced in collaboration with leaders of communist organizations around the world, all of whom shared the goal of linking up and advancing the prospects for a new revolutionary international. Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky was among the most frequent early contributors to the magazine until his assassination in 1940 at the hands of the Stalinist murder machine."

James P. Cannon, a founding leader of the Socialist Workers Party, explained the political and editorial policy of *New International* more than half a century ago when he stated that the international movement the SWP was part of had no new revelations to make.

It is "not a new movement, a new doctrine," Cannon wrote, "but the restoration, the revival, of genuine Marxism as it was expounded and practiced in the Russian revolution and in the early days of the Communist International."

This collection of three CD-ROMs contains every issue of the magazine from 1934



U.S. troops in Philippines demand to go home in January 1946, after World War II. Articles in *New International* tell this hidden history and much more.

through 1994. Beginning as *New International*, from 1934 to March 1940, the magazine later appeared as *Fourth International*, from May 1940 to spring 1956. It then changed its name to *International Socialist Review* and was published in magazine format until 1975. Since then the *ISR* has been published as a supplement to the socialist newsweekly, the *Militant*; these issues of the *ISR* are not included in the collection. In 1983 *New International* resumed publication as a magazine of Marxist politics and theory; its 10 current issues are included on Volume 3 of the CD-ROM set.

By the late 1980s, issues of the magazine

from earlier decades had become increasingly scarce. Individual copies and bound volumes from the early 1950s and before were yellowed and crumbling. Later issues were long out of print; many were available only on microfilm in a limited number of libraries.

Reproducing 'New International'

"As the magazine became less and less accessible, the valuable political legacy it contained was in growing demand by a new generation of communist youth," the editors explain in the introduction. "To meet this need, supporters of *New International* decided to take up the challenge of making the magazine broadly available once again."

Since 1989, some two dozen volunteers have worked to prepare a subject and author index of all 3,800 articles and to scan the magazines to turn them into digital files.

Chris Remple, who was part of the team that just completed work on the third volume, explained in a recent phone interview how the *Collected New International* is organized to make it as easy as possible for youth and working-class fighters to have access to the rich political legacy contained in the magazines.

"You can look up a topic, author, or title, and get a list of articles on the CD and where else these articles have been published," Remple noted.

"From the Main Menu you can click on the subject index. There you can page through the index or go directly to a subject you are interested in," Remple added.

Among the topics written about are: "Fascism and the Anti-Fascist Struggle," "Cuba: Land Reform," "Black Struggle: Nationalism and Self-Determination," and "Imperialism and Interimperialist Rivalry." Clicking on any subject will produce a list of all relevant articles published on the three-volume CD-ROM set. Then you can click on the title and the article will come up on your screen.

Or you can go to the author index and look up a particular author, James P. Cannon, for instance. The index will list all the articles published under his name from 1934 to 1994. You can also check the Pen Name index to see whether he published articles under any other name. If the article was published in book form, the Published Elsewhere index will tell you where you can find it.

The articles on CD-ROM can also be printed. They include the photographs and drawings that were used in the magazine. The covers have been reproduced in their original colors. Ads, cartoons, letters, and book reviews that were part of the theoretical magazines are all included as well.

CORRECTION

The article "100,000 protest anti-immigrant bill," which appeared on page 12 of the March 10 *Militant*, incorrectly attributed a statement to the National Front of France. The statement reading, "Everything that they have proposed, we have already done," was issued by the campaign committee of the former Socialist Party mayor of Vitrolles, France.

Fund makes Albania reports possible

Continued from front page

that this insurrection by working people is the biggest obstacle to the imperialist powers' attempts to restore capitalism in Albania. The workers state there, as in Russia, has proven stronger than the petty-bourgeois caste that has monopolized political rule, first under the Stalinist regime and now under an openly pro-capitalist government.

Since its first issue in November 1928, the *Militant* has consistently defended the Soviet Union and other workers states as a historic gain for the working class. The

Militant has opposed imperialist attempts to overthrow them, from German imperialism's invasion of the Soviet Union in 1939 to the current U.S. threats of intervention against Albania and the NATO powers' march toward war against Russia.

As the Houston readers underlined with their immediate response, funds are urgently needed to cover the expenses of the international reporting team in the Balkans. But these are a small part of the overall costs of producing a working-class newspaper every week — paper, ink, equipment, ship-

ping, and other expenses. The \$110,000 *Militant* Fund helps meet these operating costs.

And that money from supporters is needed not just in the future, but right now.

The biggest task facing supporters of the *Militant* right now is the collection and payment of pledges. As you can see from the chart, local pledges now total well above the international goal — but the fund drive has been slipping behind every week. With \$18,714 in hand, we are at 17 percent of the goal but should be at 33 percent. A mid-course correction is needed to catch up and stay on schedule.

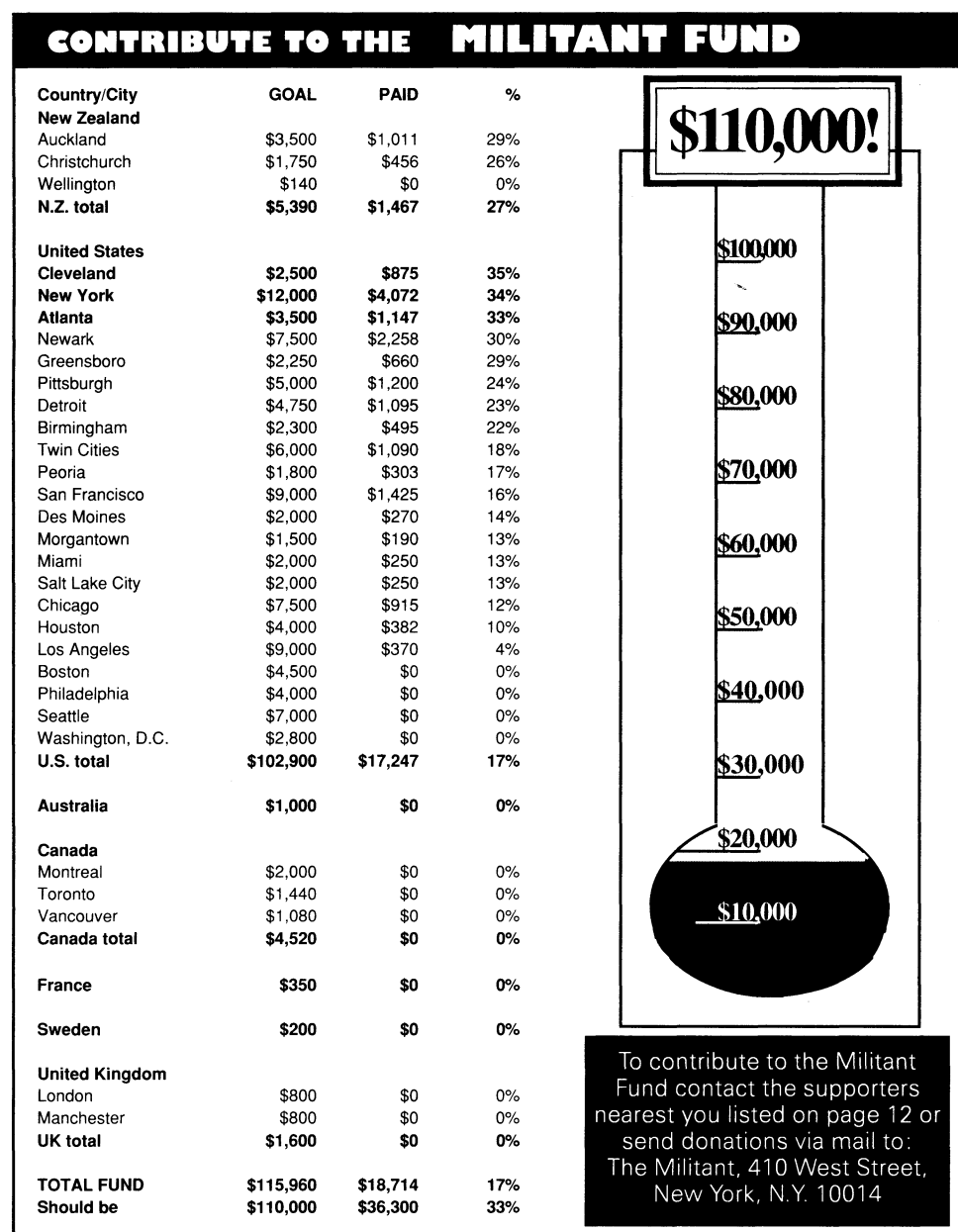
That challenge can be met both by continuing to reach out broadly for support among working people and others, and with organized, day-by-day attention to the collection of pledges already made. The cities that are on time, such as New York, are those where, regardless of whether supporters have already hosted a *Militant* Fund meeting, consistent work is being done on weekly collection of payments.

Militant readers are planning attractive fund drive meetings in a number of cities in the next couple of weeks including Des Moines, Los Angeles, New York, and Philadelphia.

Kevin Johnson from Newark wrote in to the *Militant* describing the fund celebration in that city. "Supporters collected \$1,191 at the event, bringing them to nearly \$2,000 in total collection of their goal of \$7,500," Johnson reported. "Ben Ademoyega, a factory worker from Newark, attended the event. He has been reading the *Militant* for five years. 'The *Militant* supports workers and tells the truth without the view that we are satisfied with the capitalist system,' Ademoyega said. 'It is a good paper for workers to read every week.'"

Johanna Ryan from Peoria, describing one way they broadened out their appeal for funds, reports that "\$100 of this was raised by telephoning *Militant* subscribers while staffing the Pathfinder bookstore on Saturday afternoon."

Tony Prince writes that a highlight of the recent fund meeting in Cleveland, which is in first place this week, "was the participation of about 10 students from around the country who were in Cleveland to participate in a national conference of the Campus Outreach Opportunity League. Several of the students remarked that this was the first time that they had heard a socialist speaker."



SELL THE BOOKS WORKERS OF THE WORLD NEED

Join the campaign to sell Pathfinder books and pamphlets

Selling communist press will build YS Nat'l Convention

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

Finding the revolutionary-minded youth who will want to attend the March 28-30 Second National Convention of the Young Socialists, and getting involved in political activity with other workers and rebel-minded youth is at the heart of what supporters of the Militant are doing right now. That's what the international subscription drive — to win 1,400 new readers to the socialist weekly, 450 subscribers to the Spanish-language monthly *Perspectiva Mundial*, and sell 600 copies of the Marxist magazine *New International* — is all about.

Having gotten off to a slow start, supporters in several cities have mapped out plans to catch up. Ray Parsons in Des Moines, Iowa, says partisans of the *Militant* there plan to "increase the pace of sales around Des Moines and elsewhere; target Spanish speaking areas for door-to-door; and contact readers of the *Militant*, including contacts and members of the Young Socialists, about buying and reading *New International*." They are offering a payment plan for new readers who want to stock up on any or all of the magazine's 10 issues.

Socialists in Des Moines, as well as in New York and Newark, have decided to call local target weeks — with extra sales teams planned — for the week leading up to the YS convention, to make an extra effort to build the event.

Supporters in several cities indicate they have sold more than what's listed on the chart from the first week of the drive, which was compiled based on subscriptions received at the *Militant* office by Tuesday, March 18, at noon, E.S.T. It's important for distributors to send in their subscriptions and *New International* sales reports by that time each week, so charts can be up to date.

Sales in the unions

Militant supporters in several unions have started selling subscriptions on the job. In Newark, New Jersey, rail worker Jane Harris, a member of the United Transportation Union, sold two subscriptions to co-workers. She met a newly hired assistant conductor and within 15 minutes of discussion he bought a subscription. "He looked through the paper explaining that he didn't



Militant/Pete Clifford

Selling the Militant and Pathfinder books in London

like it when people had questions about the world and he didn't have the answers," Harris said. She sold another subscription to a signal woman she rarely sees. "Always have *Militants* on the job and don't wait to introduce the paper," Harris told this reporter. "If you don't show people the paper it is a disservice to those who may really want it."

In New York, Deborah Liatos, a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees, sold a *Perspectiva Mundial* subscription to a co-worker who "wanted the get socialist working-class perspective on the world," and a Spanish-language publication "that could explain in depth what's happening in Europe." Wendy Lyons, who works in the same garment shop sold a *New International* in Spanish on the rise and fall of the Nicaraguan revolution to a worker in the Dominican Labor Party.

Pete Clifford of London reports, "A team of *Militant* supporters from Paris, London, and Antwerp visited the Renault workers' two-week plant occupation at Vilvoorde near Brussels on Sunday March 16, and then participated with two sales tables in the 70,000-strong demonstration through the center of Brussels, against unemployment and in support of the Renault workers." That day seven copies of *New International* in French were sold. Fifteen demonstrators also bought copies of the recently published French-language edition of *An Action Program to*

Confront the Coming Economic Crisis.

Socialists in Greece took advantage of the heightened political discussion and polarization around the uprising in Albania. Equipped with a literature table full of books, signs demanding "Hands off Albania" and "Equal rights for Immigrants," and a statement issue by the Committee of Communists, which was published in last week's issue of the *Militant*, a team went to a Greek farmers protest and sold well over a dozen books including *New International* no. 10 with the article, "Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War."

Black farmers fight for land

BY JOAN PALTRINERI

GREENSBORO, North Carolina — The struggle of Black family farmers was the topic of the Militant Labor Forum in Greensboro March 14. Speaking was Marcus Tillery, one of the activists in the Black Land Loss Fund and a professor at North Carolina Agricultural and Technical University here. The Black Land Loss Fund is organizing a regional conference in Enfield, North Carolina, March 20-22, at the Franklinton Center.

"African Americans are losing farm land at a rate of 9,000 acres per week. At this rate, there will be no African-American owned land by the year 2000," explained Tillery, as he talked about the long battle Black farmers in the South have waged against the racist discriminatory practices of the U.S. Department of Agriculture that resulted in a high rate of farm foreclosures over the last three decades.

The 1929 stock market crash heralded the onset of a severe economic depression. Millions lost their jobs and land. There were continuous demonstrations of unemployed demanding relief. The Tillery Resettlement was one of 113 rural resettlement experiments in the 1930s and '40s, and the largest African American project. "The land was set in the flood plains of the Roanoke River. It was very fertile land, but susceptible to flooding. And the 1939 flood wiped out many of the Black family farms, while the land given to white farmers was out of the flood waters reach," Tillery told the forum goers. "The farmers survived the floods but couldn't sur-

vive the racist practices of the U.S. government. There are less than 10 Black farms" left in the area today.

"Blacks lost 800,000 acres of land in North Carolina between 1950 and the late 1980's, and these were supposed to be the good times," explained Tillery.

The loans Black farmers applied for from the Farmer's Home Association (FmHA) were systematically put aside — in some cases for over a year — while those for white farmers were handed out within two or three months. "The local FmHA agent in Tillery was an outright racist, who drove around with a confederate flag on his car and his lapel. This is the person farmers have to go to for loans," said the activist.

Many Black farmers who borrowed from the FmHA were placed on a supervised Farm Program Account. In a supervised FmHA account, the farmer is required to go to the FmHA office each time money is needed, whereas, in an unsupervised program the money is given directly to the farmer who can decide how to delegate the funds. "In all my years I have only known two Black farmers who got unsupervised loans," said Tillery.

On Dec. 18, 1996, after decades of protest by Black farmers, U.S. secretary of agriculture Daniel Glickman announced a temporary halt to foreclosure sales on delinquent farm loans. Many Black farmers viewed this as a first step.

In a report issued February 28, Glickman admitted that the "U.S. Department of Agri-

culture has been seen as ignoring serious, pervasive problems with our civil rights systems." The report outlined a policy suspending foreclosures in cases of alleged discrimination, until review by an independent team.

"The new USDA report does not go back far enough," said the farm activist. "Most of the land that was taken goes back 10 to 30 years, and the USDA says it will only look at foreclosure complaints for the last year. This will leave out most Black farmers." The upcoming Land Loss Conference will press ahead with the farmers demands to return all the land unjustly taken through the racist policies of the U.S. government. Tillery urged everyone to attend.

Joan Paltrineri is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees.

WEEK 1

SPRING SUBSCRIPTION DRIVE March 8 – April 26

Militant • Perspectiva Mundial • New International

	Militant			PM		NI	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
GREECE	5	1	20%			3	1
NEW ZEALAND							
Christchurch	25	5	20%	1	1	10	1
Auckland	35	5	14%	2	0	14	
Wellington	3	0	0%			1	0
N.Z. total	63	10	16%	3	1	25	1
AUSTRALIA	18	2	11%	3	0	10	1
SWEDEN	15	1	7%	7	1	10	4
UNITED STATES							
Boston	30	8	27%	10	1	20	7
Atlanta	27	4	15%	14	3	16	0
Cleveland	35	5	14%	7	0	10	0
Miami	30	4	13%	15	1	15	3
Detroit	40	4	10%	7	0	15	3
San Francisco	70	7	10%	30	2	35	6
Birmingham, AL	32	3	9%	5	1	15	0
Newark, NJ	130	12	9%	45	2	60	3
Philadelphia	35	3	9%	10	0	10	0
Salt Lake City	24	2	8%	10	3	8	1
Pittsburgh	45	3	7%	4	0	15	0
Chicago	70	4	6%	25	2	30	0
New York	150	6	4%	75	12	65	12
Peoria, IL	25	1	4%	3	0	10	0
Washington, DC	42	1	2%	15	4	15	5
Houston	50	1	2%	20	3	20	4
Los Angeles	100	1	1%	50	0	50	7
Cincinnati	5	0	0%	1	0		
Des Moines	40	0	0%	25	0	20	0
Greensboro, NC	30	0	0%	15	3	10	2
Morgantown, WV	27	0	0%	2	0	10	0
Seattle	60	0	0%	25	0	25	0
Tucson	4	0	0%	2	0		
Twin Cities, MN	70	0	0%	10	0	15	0
U.S. total	1171	69	6%	425	37	489	53
UNITED KINGDOM							
Manchester	21	3	14%	2	0	10	0
London	45	0	0%	8	0	25	0
U.K. total	66	3	5%	10	0	35	0
CANADA							
Vancouver	40	3	8%	5	0	15	0
Toronto	30	1	3%	7	0	10	0
Montreal	35	0	0%	10	0	35	3
CANADA total	105	4	4%	22	0	60	3
ICELAND	10	0	0%	1	0	4	0
International totals	1453	90	6%	471	39	636	63
Should be	1400	200	14%	450	64	600	86

IN THE UNIONS

NEW ZEALAND							
EU	7	2	29%				
MWU	6	0	0%				
UFBGWU	3	0	0%				
TOTAL	16	2	13%	0	0	0	0
UNITED STATES							
IAM	72	8	11%	16	0	37	0
UTU	55	6	11%	4	0	28	0
OCAW	28	2	7%	5	0	18	0
USWA	42	3	7%	8	1	31	1
UAW	45	1	2%	10	0	20	0
UFCW	14	0	0%	10	0	6	1
UMWA	2	0	0%			2	0
UNITE	21	0	0%	15	3	15	1
TOTAL	279	20	7%	68	4	157	3
AUSTRALIA							
AMWU	4	0	0%			3	1
CANADA							
IAM	8	0	0%			7	0

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

All out to build the YS convention

Continued from front page
ary youth.

O'Beirne, who has been to Boston and Newark, New Jersey, so far, was the featured speaker at a March 14 forum organized by the Newark YS. Her talk was titled, "Youth and the Struggle for Socialism Today." Afterwards, Megan Greene, a high school student from Honesdale, Pennsylvania, who had traveled two and a half hours to come to the event, said she plans to come to the convention. The forum raised \$90 for Newark's "Countdown to Atlanta" fund, bringing the total to about \$200.

Delegates at the YS convention will be discussing some of the key questions of world politics — from opposing Washington's war drive against the workers states in Russia, Albania, and Yugoslavia, to fighting the bosses' attacks on working people in the United States and elsewhere — and how to build a youth organization that is a component of the communist workers movement. Many of the convention sessions will be open for all members of the Young Socialists, Socialist Workers Party, and other guests to observe. There will also be classes, special book sales, and socials.

A special feature during the convention will be a reportback from Albania and Yugoslavia by *Militant* staff writer Argiris Malapanis, who will have just returned from a 10-day reporting trip to the Balkans.

Jack Willey, the organizer of the National Executive Committee of the Young Socialists, explained that one of the central themes of this convention will be the question of how the YS organizes itself. "At our first national convention, almost a year ago, we adopted a set of political principals. We said that we wanted to help build an international movement that will lead working people to overthrow capitalism and establish work-

ers and farmers governments.

"As we have taken steps forward since then, we have become more conscious of the need to organize ourselves in a democratic, disciplined, and centralized way — one that is suited to carrying out our stated goals, Willey added."

Another point that the YS convention will discuss is the role of propaganda in educating and recruiting to the revolutionary movement. Over the past six weeks, chapters of the Young Socialists have been organizing discussions on these and other questions. Based on these discussions, each chapter will elect delegates to the convention.

Sarah Katz, a leader of the YS in Twin Cities, explained that her chapter organized a list of all the young people they had met who had expressed interest in the Young Socialists. "We realized that we had about 15 people around us interested in our politics. Our goal is to set up meetings with all of these contacts to discuss the Young Socialists and the importance of coming to our convention."

Katz was the main speaker at a March 13 meeting that the Young Socialists organized at Macalester College, titled "Women's Liberation and the Fight for Socialism Today." Katz explained that while this meeting was modest in size — six people attended — it attracted a politically conscious group of young people. Of the six, three are interested in attending the YS convention.

By reaching out to young women and others interested in fighting for women's rights, the YS is preparing to attend and bring other young people to the Young Feminist Summit taking place in Washington D.C. April 11-13. The conference is being organized by the National Organization for Women.

Speaking tours of YS leaders

In the final weeks before the convention, national leaders of the Young Socialists have been speaking at public meetings around the



Militant

By joining in actions shoulder-to-shoulder with young rebels like the students above demanding affirmative action at the University of Massachusetts, the YS will bring youth to the convention and recruit those looking to join a fighting organization.

country to explain the importance of building a communist youth organization right now. On Saturday, March 15, for example, Brock Satter, a member of the YS National Committee, spoke at a Militant Fund rally in Cleveland on "Black Liberation and Socialism: Prospects for Freedom in the 21st Century." A dozen student activists who had been attending a national conference in Cleveland, hosted by the Campus Outreach Opportunities League (COOL), attended the rally. They had met members of the YS and the Socialist Workers Party who had set up a table to publicize the Militant Fund rally at the COOL conference. Two members of the group had, in fact, already worked with the Newark YS previously when Satter spoke at a Black and Latino youth conference called Umoja '97, which students organized. After the fund rally, two people said they wanted to go the YS convention.

YS leader Meg Novak has also been touring around the country. She just finished a trip to Washington, D.C., where she spoke at a Militant Labor Forum. Leading up to the convention she will be in Greensboro

and Miami.

This reporter will be giving a forum in Atlanta March 21 titled "Winning Young Fighters to a Revolutionary Perspective: Building a Communist Youth Organization." Doug Nelson, a leader of the Atlanta chapter, explained how having a forum like this just before the convention will both help to win young people to attend the convention, "and will also introduce many of them to some of the discussions that will be central to it."

Nelson further explained that Young Socialists in Georgia are putting an extra effort into setting up convention-building tables at the University of Georgia in Athens. Last week they sponsored a successful meeting there with Ma'mud Shirvani, the co-author of the introduction to the Pathfinder book, *To See the Dawn: Baku, 1920 — First Congress of the Peoples of the East*. At the meeting, Shirvani explained why working people and youth around the world should defend the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination, and should support their struggle against Israeli occupation and expansion. Shirvani also talked about the recent armed rebellions against the pro-capitalist government in Albania. At this meeting, Young Socialists in Atlanta met two people who wanted to attend the convention.

YS chapters are working hard to raise money in their local areas to help pay for the costs of travel to the convention. Many chapters have held fund-raising dinners and raffles to collect money from supporters of the organization. Young Socialists in Seattle and Spokane, Washington, will be teaming up to hold a luau on Saturday, March 22.

The Young Socialists will also launch a national fund drive at their convention.

Anti-deportation protest in Miami draws hundreds

BY ELLEN BRICKLEY

MIAMI — Five hundred people demonstrated here March 6 against the new immigration law, which will go into effect on April 1. The protest was organized by the Haitian rights group Veye-yo, the Haitian Refugee Center, and a local educational advocacy group called the Haitian Connection.

Signs read "Amnesty for all immigrants!", "This country was built by the blood and sweat of immigrants", and "Who were the first people to come on a ship?" Some carried signs saying "Amnesty: yes, workfare: yes!"

The new immigration laws will make it difficult for immigrants who did not come legally to this country to become legal residents — no matter how long they may have lived here. The laws would also deny the right for immigrants to appeal deportations. The laws contain changes that will affect thousands of disabled children and senior citizens, who will lose their Supplemental Security Income.

Referring to the U.S. government, Veye-yo leader Florvil Samedi, told the crowd that the same government that forced Haitians out of their country is now passing new laws against Haitian refugees here. Fritz Luctan, a participant in the demonstration said "America is now my home — down with deportation. I'm not a criminal."

Rollande Girard of the Socialist Workers Party told the crowd that "Workfare is not the solution, what we need is to shorten the workweek without cut in pay so that jobs would be created. We need to raise minimum wage to union scale."

On February 14, more than 1,000 people, including many Nicaraguans, filled the street in front of the same INS building to protest deportations and the new immigration laws. Another rally against the laws, is planned for April 1.

Activists begin to build for world youth festival

BY JACK WILLEY

NEW YORK — Roughly 30 people from about a dozen organizations across the country came together for the second national planning meeting of the U.S. Organizing Committee for the World Youth Festival. The March 15 meeting heard a reportback from the international preparatory meeting that took place in Havana, Cuba, in late February. Participants reported on efforts to build the festival in several cities, discussed ways to reach out to more youth in the coming weeks, and took up logistics such as travel and fund-raising.

The youth festival will be held in Cuba July 28–August 5 under the slogan "Anti-imperialist solidarity, peace and friendship." Thousands of young people from over 100 countries around the world will discuss and debate a range of political questions facing the working class today, including: anti-imperialist struggles, the environment, the fight for women's liberation, national liberation struggles, employment, education, labor resistance, and how to fight against fascism.

Organizing efforts to build the U.S. delegation are under way. Susana Ochoa, from the Center for Latino Research at De Paul University in Chicago, reported that 20 students there are actively fund-raising to go. In Pittsburgh, two youth involved in the Pittsburgh Cuba Coalition are reaching out to students and others about the festival. An activist involved in protests against police brutality there plans to go.

Several campus and community groups in Houston, Texas, have expressed interest in sending delegations from their groups to the festival. This reporter had the opportunity to speak about the World Youth Festival and inform people about local organizing efforts there on a half-hour radio show by Ada Edwards on KBXX.

The total cost for the festival is \$600, which covers all expenses except airfare to from the United States to Nassau, Bahamas, or Cancun, Mexico, the two meeting points for all U.S. participants. The deadline for

applications is May 15 and full payment is due by June 30.

For more information or an application, write to the U.S. Organizing Committee for the World Youth Festival at 2565 Broadway #236, New York, NY 10025, or call (212) 866-7270.

Benjamin Chavis joins NOI

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

Benjamin Chavis announced February 23 that he joined the Nation of Islam (NOI) at the organization's annual Savior's Day meeting in Chicago.

Chavis, who changed his name to Minister Benjamin Chavis Muhammad, gained prominence as one of the "Wilmington 10." This was a group of Black activists framed up for the 1971 fire bombing of a grocery store in North Carolina, in the context of an uprising by Blacks responding to racist vigilante attacks on the Black community. He was imprisoned from 1976 to 1980.

Chavis was one of the founders of the National Black Independent Political Party, an organization forged in 1980 that rejected the Republican and Democratic parties. After that formation dissolved, he continued functioning as the executive director of the United Church of Christ's Commission for Racial Justice. He was ordained as a minister of that organization in the 1970s.

In April, 1993 Chavis was elected the executive director for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) and several months later began publicly associating with NOI leader Louis Farrakhan. Some 16 months after his appointment as NAACP executive director, Chavis was fired in 1994 for unilaterally using \$330,000 from the organization's budget to reach an out-of-court settlement for sexual harassment claims made against him.

Chavis then joined forces with Farrakhan and helped organize the 1995 Million Man

March in Washington, D.C. The following year, they organized a political convention in St. Louis where fascist politician Lyndon LaRouche was invited to speak. Chavis has given several prominent interviews to LaRouche's newspaper, the *New Federalist*. He has also participated in public meetings with LaRouche and events sponsored by LaRouche's organization, the Schiller Institute.

LaRouche was introduced to the St. Louis meeting by James Bevel, who was the vice presidential candidate in LaRouche's campaign for U.S. president in 1992. LaRouche left the stage in the face of jeers from a handful of people in the audience.

Manning Marable, professor of history and director of the Institute for Research in African-American Studies at Columbia University, denounced Chavis and Farrakhan for putting "a notorious white racist" on a "public platform." In a February 1 *Amsterdam News* article entitled "No compromise: Farrakhan, Chavis and Lyndon LaRouche," Marable challenged "Chavis and Farrakhan to have a full disclosure on their full political relationship with LaRouche."

Marable, however, failed to comment about fascist politician James Bevel, who is Black. Bevel, once an advisor and aid to civil rights activists Martin Luther King Jr. and member of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, is now a frequent columnist in the NOI organ, the *Final Call*, and a close aid of LaRouche.

The struggle for Quebec independence and the socialist revolution in Canada

BY MICHEL PRAIRIE

MONTREAL — "I really liked being called dangerous," said high school student and Young Socialist member Peter Duck, 16. Duck was commenting on a talk on building the Young Socialists given to a Vancouver Regional Socialist Educational Conference held February 15-16. A similar conference was held a week later in Montreal February 22-23.

The main theme of both conferences was "The struggle for Quebec independence and the socialist revolution in Canada — building a party of communist workers and an organization of revolutionary youth." Classes on the Russian and Cuban revolutions, the fight for women's liberation, and other topics were jointly prepared and presented by veterans of the communist movement and members of the Young Socialists.

Some 120 workers and youth — including more than 40 who were under 27 years old — participated in the two conferences jointly organized by the Communist League (CL) and the Young Socialists (YS) in Canada. Participants came from six cities in Canada, and several cities in the United States. A majority of the participants were members of unions, such as the United Steelworkers of America (USWA), International Association of Machinists (IAM), the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW), and others.

Canada is an imperialist country

The opening political talk was given by YS leader Patricia O'Beirne in Vancouver and Communist League leader Michel Dugré in Montreal.

"To understand what's happening in the world today, including here in Canada, we need to start from the economic depression of world capitalism and the drive of imperialism towards war," said Dugré.

He explained the sharpening conflict in Europe between the imperialist powers, with Washington taking the lead, and the workers states — Russia and the other countries where capitalism has been abolished. Despite half a century of brutal Stalinist domination, and the "market-oriented" policies of the governments that came to power following the crumbling of the Stalinist regimes across Eastern Europe in the 1990s, imperialism is nowhere close to reclaiming that portion of the world for capitalist exploitation.

"We fight to build a party of communist workers capable of leading a socialist revolution during our lifetime, here in Canada and internationally," explained O'Beirne in Vancouver.

Canada is an imperialist country, she explained, and its rulers have the same aim as their rivals. They exploit and oppress workers and farmers here and across Latin America, the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia. And they use whatever means are necessary for doing so, including force and violence.

This was recently illustrated by the way Ottawa put a sharp halt to its public inquiry into the scandal triggered by revelations that Canadian troops had tortured and executed unarmed civilians in Somalia during the imperialist occupation there a few years ago.

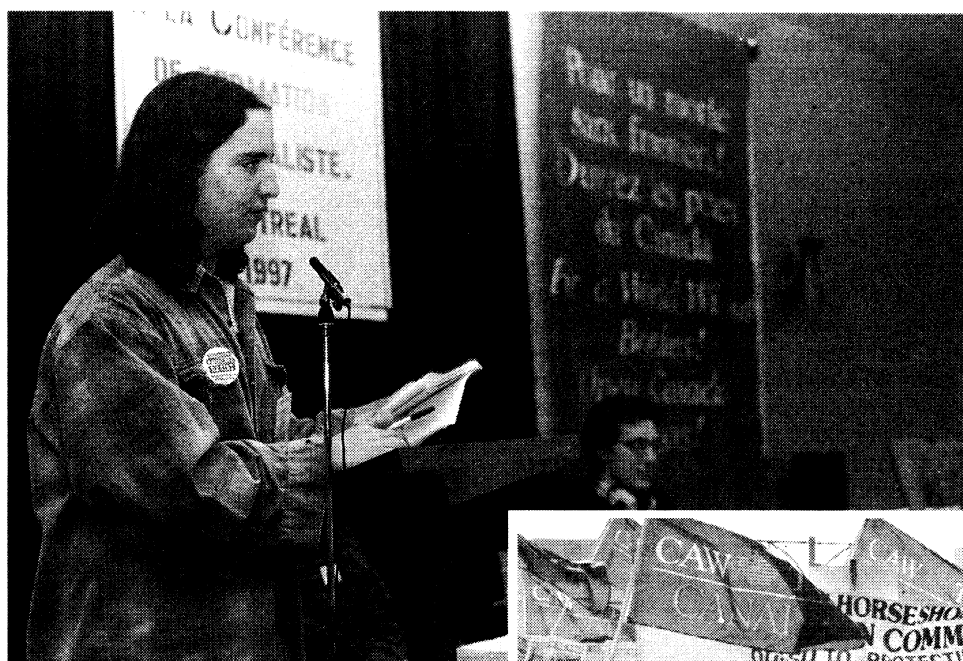
"The Somalia scandal did not and will not stop Ottawa from using its army around the world," O'Beirne stressed. "Canada was the main force campaigning for an imperialist intervention in Zaire last fall and it is the main imperialist force of occupation in Haiti today — with hundreds of soldiers, cops and 'civil' advisers."

This talk and a related class in Montreal "gave me examples of why Canada is an imperialist country," said Kevin Austin from Woodstock, Ontario. He bought copies of *New Internationalist* no. 10 containing the article "Imperialism's march toward fascism and war," and of *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* by Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin. At the end of the conference, Austin asked to join the YS in Toronto.

The fight for Quebec independence

"I'm here to learn about politics and social movements in Canada," said Autumn Knowlton from Tacoma, Washington, who decided to join the Seattle YS at the Vancouver conference.

"It's exciting to hear about Canadian politics, like the struggles of Native peoples and the Quebecois," added Samantha Kern, a YS



Militant/above, Elssa Martinez, right, George Rose. More than 40 youth participated in socialist conferences in Canada in February. YS member Gabriel Charbin, from Toronto, above, spoke about the opportunities for communist ideas. He pointed to the Toronto Days of Action, right, as one example.

member from Spokane, Washington.

Following the narrow defeat of the Quebec referendum on sovereignty in October 1995, Jean François Brousseau, 19, left the bourgeois nationalist Parti Quebecois youth organization and began to look for other answers, including reading speeches by Cuban revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara. "I came here because I felt isolated in my ideas," said the Quebecois youth, who is a Teamsters union member and maintenance worker at Mirabel airport near Montreal. After the referendum "I didn't think it was possible anymore to win independence for Quebec in this 'democratic' system."

"Quebecois are an oppressed nation," said O'Beirne in her talk. "Their fight for Quebec independence is of strategic importance for all workers in Canada."

"It's a basic struggle for justice and equality, a struggle against the systematic discrimination Quebecois face on the basis of their language, French. For example, a disproportionate number of the poorest cities in Canada are located in Quebec, despite the fact that it is the second most industrialized province in the country."

"Only by supporting unconditionally the fight for Quebec independence," she continued, "will working people in this country be able to overcome the divisions between those of us who are Quebecois and those who are not — divisions that Canada's capitalist rulers imposed on us following the defeat of the bourgeois democratic revolution of 1837-38, and have worked since then to deepen a divide and rule strategy to maintain their class rule."

In answer to a question, O'Beirne explained, "Canada's rulers won't let Quebec become independent without sending in their army as they did in 1970. The fight for Quebec independence has mobilized hundreds of thousands of youth and workers in the past and will do so in the future. It is a threat to the very survival of the state through which Canada's capitalist rulers maintain their class domination. It will not be won at the ballot box, but in the streets."

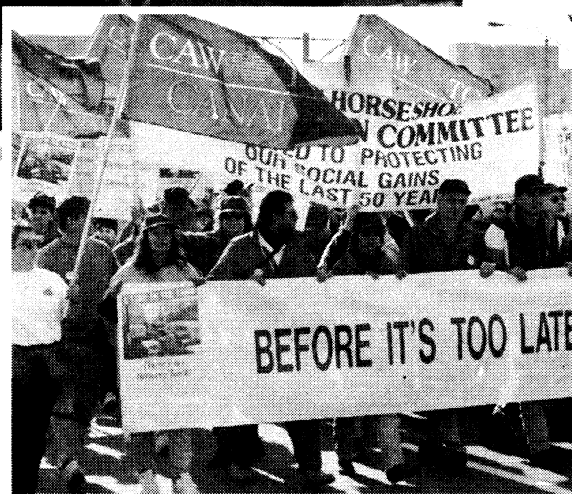
"Victory in this struggle can only be assured by a working-class leadership," she concluded. "This is what the Communist League and Young Socialists are building today."

YS is a school for communism

YS leaders Mick O'Donnell in Vancouver and Vicky Mercier in Montreal gave the talk on "Building a revolutionary working-class youth organization, building the Young Socialists." Both are members of the IAM in Montreal.

They explained that, as an international organization, the YS recognizes the need to overthrow capitalism and fight for socialism.

"Under the impact of the capitalist crisis," said Mercier, "young people radicalize in the world today. The YS in Canada is a product of this process. We participate in



picket lines to support strikes, as well as demonstrations and meetings in support of women's rights, against government cuts in education and healthcare, and in opposition to racist cop brutality. In September 1995, we were six, mainly in Montreal. Now, we have 27 members in three functioning chapters in Montreal, Toronto and Vancouver," she added.

"The YS is a school for communism," explained O'Donnell in Vancouver. "We look for political direction from the Communist League and we share the same political program. At the same time, we organize independently of the party. We decide on our own campaigns and activities on a weekly basis, and we elect our own leaders. This is part of learning to be disciplined professional revolutionists."

"Youth rebel against what they see in capitalist society. But the YS is the only organization that challenges young fighters to study the history of working class battles — the Russian revolution, the forging of the industrial unions in the 1930s, and the struggle of women and oppressed nationalities for their liberation — so that they can effectively fight for a new society."

Mercier compared the YS to the guerrilla column led in Bolivia in 1966-67 by Che Guevara who carried 300-400 books in their backpacks. The YS puts a great emphasis on organizing classes and selling Pathfinder books, as well as the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*. "Bringing our socialist ideas into the struggles that erupt today is our most important contribution," she stressed.

She also described how "the YS has made *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions* by Jack Barnes our handbook. This book explains lessons on the building of the communist movement during the last 20 years, the decisive weight of the industrial working class, and how a proletarian party can be built today." The three YS chapters have initiated weekly public classes on the book with Communist League branches.

The communist movement in Canada has responded to the development of the YS in Quebec and in France, where a chapter was formed last September, by launching the biggest effort ever of its French-language publication program. This effort is focused at the present time on the translation of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* and includes YS members in Montreal and Paris.

Despite the progress they made over the last 18 months in Canada, explained Mercier, "the YS doesn't have a national structure. In Canada, as in other countries, the capitalists maintain their domination through their state, their army and their police. We too need a centralized, cross-country organization. This will require con-

sciously fighting to overcome the national and regional divisions fostered by the capitalist rulers in this country."

A first step was taken last October when the elected leaders of the three chapters met in Toronto and mandated the executive committee of the Montreal chapter to lead the work of the YS nationally.

"The next concrete steps toward building a national organization," said O'Donnell, "will be a national seven-week fund drive for CAN\$2,000, our participation in the international *Militant* subscription campaign, and the building of the upcoming second national convention of the YS in Atlanta."

Recruiting a new generation

John Steele, a Machinists union member at Ford Electronics near Toronto and a member of the Central Committee of the CL, gave the final talk on "Working-class politics and the trade unions: forging a communist party of industrial workers today" in Montreal and Vancouver.

Today, he said, three-quarters of the CL members work in industry and are members of industrial unions. As the YS has grown, many of its members have joined the party. A quarter of the membership of the CL is now less than 27 years old; a majority of the young members joined during the last year.

In January, the Communist League Central Committee and the Young Socialists agreed to establishment joint CL-YS units — or fractions — in the unions that can work to bring communist ideas to co-workers and engage in political activities. Today, almost half of the joint fraction members are in the YS.

"This," said Steele, "is the biggest opportunity and challenge before the communist movement in Canada today. After a decade and a half of continuous retreat of the labor movement under the employers' assault, it has now become possible for veteran communists to work side by side with young fighters in the struggle to use union power to defend all working people and get rid of the capitalist system itself."

At this stage of the class struggle and of the construction of the communist movement, the Communist League leader explained, "our goal is to build branches with several joint fractions of two or three members per plant, with weekly plant gate sales of the *Militant* and Pathfinder books at these factories, to reinforce the political work of the fractions in getting Pathfinder books into the hands of co-workers." Steele and others at the conference reported on the modest increase in sales of Pathfinder titles to workers on the job over the past several months.

Participants at the two conferences discussed a class struggle perspective for the unions. Steele counterposed this to the class-collaborationist course advanced by all wings of the trade union officialdom. Steele pointed to the example during the recent mass protests against the anti-union austerity drive of the Conservative Party government in Ontario, as well as in face of the drive by the Liberal government in Ottawa, the New Democratic Party (NDP) government in British Columbia, and the Canadian Airline bosses to force airline workers to take a pay cut.

"Genuine working-class political action that is independent of the government, courts, and political parties of the employers has nothing to do with the dead-end perspective of massive concessions to the bosses and their governments, or with getting out the vote for the NDP or the Parti Quebecois," Steele explained.

In addition to the two participants who asked to join the YS, one YS member in Montreal decided to join the Communist League. Initial contributions for the *Militant* fund drive of CAN\$2,268 were pledged or raised from conference participants from Canada and US\$500 from U.S. participants. The YS national fund drive also raised CAN\$1,338 in contributions and pledges. Participants bought 30 books.

Mick O'Donnell in Montreal and John Steele in Toronto contributed to this article.

Debate over intervention in Albania

Continued from front page

city's entrance. The volunteers who man them get a stipend disbursed by the defense council. On the other end of town, the former army base on the rocky heights of the north side of the bay is abandoned and some of its buildings dismantled. We saw a couple of people taking bricks from one of the barracks' walls. Down below the cliffs overlooking the Adriatic, the naval base is also deserted. The four navy gunboats, decades old, are in the hands of the rebels, though one is sunk and only one of the rest is operational.

Except for some sporadic gunfire from people shooting in the air, the towns and villages in this region are fairly quiet. In downtown Saranda, there was evidence of the unrest at the beginning of the month. Most of the shops were closed, some with their windows broken and a couple burned. The police station in the same area was also torched and police officers have left their duties. The council Koucia organizes is now trying to deputize new police officers, including some from the previous police department, to enforce order and put a stop to looting and burning of shops and government buildings that took place the first days of the revolt. Koucia said he is opposed to foreign military intervention, which is now being debated by Paris, Rome, Washington, and other imperialist powers. "This is for the Albanian people to sort out," he said. "Most Albanians want Berisha to go," referring to Albanian president Sali Berisha.

"This is also the position of the National Front for the Salvation of the People," a coalition of defense committees formed by rebel forces controlling 12 cities in southern Albania, said Minella Bala, a truck driver who is also on Saranda's defense council. The Front issued a statement to that effect on March 16, after its second meeting in Gjirokastra, a city of 32,000 people 60 miles east of here.

A stalemate with government forces

"Only half of our demands are met," Bala said. "Berisha appointed a new government that includes opposition figures and agreed to new elections by June. But he is still the president and there are no guarantees that people are going to get compensated for their losses from the pyramids." The collapse of the pyramid schemes in January — fraudulent investment funds into which many Albanian families had deposited their money — sparked the two-month-old rebellion.

In a concession aimed at ending the revolt, Berisha named Bashkim Fino of the opposition Socialist Party as prime minister on March 11 and announced new elections within three months. Soon afterward, Berisha released and pardoned SP leader and former premier Fatos Nano, who had been serving a 12-year sentence since 1993 on charges of embezzling state funds. The parliament, controlled by Berisha's Democratic Party since what everyone interviewed here described as fraudulent elections last year, passed a law giving amnesty to all those who would turn in their weapons by March 20. The new cabinet includes other SP members and ministers from the Democratic Party. Fino has called on the rebels to turn in their weapons and "abide by the constitution."

On March 18, the publishers of eight Albanian dailies demanded that the new government end censorship, imposed with the state of emergency Berisha declared on March 2.

Over the last few days, a stalemate has developed between the government in Tirana, the country's capital, and the rebels who control the southern third of the country. According to several news reports here, government forces remain in control of the capital. CNN showed several thousand people in what was dubbed as a "peace rally" on March 16. The Albanian state news agency ATA said hundreds of civilians have begun to return weapons taken from armories — over 3,000 rifles, five missiles, dozens of hand grenades, and 3 million bullets were reportedly turned back to authorities in Tirana by March 18. Even if these reports are true, the weaponry described is a tiny fraction of what has been seized by civilians, and no return of arms has taken place in the south so far.

On March 19, Fino postponed indefinitely a meeting with representatives of the National Front for the Salvation of the People that was to take place that day in Gjirokastra, where the SP official was mayor from 1992 to 1996.

Isuf Cepani, a former army officer who is on Gjirokastra's defense council, said in an interview the same day, that National Front representatives from throughout the south will meet in Tepeleni, southern Albania, on March 21. "We've given Berisha a deadline of March 21 to resign," Cepani said. "We'll discuss what to do next if he's still in office then." If the president capitulates, Front leaders propose that the presidency be replaced by a committee that would include insurgents.

Asked by a reporter for BBC television if rebel forces would consider a march to Tirana to oust the president, Cepani said the idea is under consideration. No obvious preparations for such a move can be detected in this area, however.

Debate over imperialist intervention

On March 17, an 11-member European Union (EU) delegation led by Dutch diplomat Jean de Marchant et d'Ansembourg arrived in Tirana and met with Berisha. The Albanian president reiterated demands for imperialist financial and military aid to his regime. "I think that European police units are a necessity so that together with our units they can distribute aid and contribute to re-establishing order and reforming our police," Berisha said, according to ATA. Prime minister Fino also backed the call for EU intervention.

The EU visit followed a two-day debate at a meeting of European Union foreign ministers in the Netherlands, which was marked by deep divisions between Paris and Bonn. French foreign minister Herve de Charette argued for an initial military force of up to 3,000 soldiers and police to be dispatched to Albania swiftly to take control of the Tirana airport and government buildings. The military operation, if Paris had its wishes, would be under the auspices of the Western European Union, the EU's embryonic military arm that the French rulers have been trying to prop up as their alternative to Washington's NATO. "We are not in a civil war," De Charette stated, "it's total anarchy."



Residents arm themselves in rebel-held town of Gjirokastra, in southern Albania.

The Italian and Greek governments were among the strongest backers of the French plan, with Rome floating proposals for a force as large as 7,000 troops.

But the French plan ran into strong opposition from Bonn and London. German foreign minister Klaus Kinkel rejected what he termed that "something-must-be-done" school of foreign policy, referring to Paris's proposal. "This is no time to plunge into a new adventure," he said. "You know best what happens when you send soldiers without a clear mandate."

British Foreign Secretary Malcolm Rifkind underscored London's opposition to any military role for the EU in Europe, which could undermine Britain's special relationship with Washington. "The EU as such has no defense role, no military role," he said.

Meanwhile, Washington, which until a couple of weeks ago had backed Berisha with economic and military aid, rejected the Albanian president's call for NATO intervention and called on Berisha to resign. In that way, the U.S. rulers give the appearance taking the moral high ground and position themselves to best take advantage of the outcome of the revolt. "The main problem is that there is lack of trust in the [Albanian] government," said NATO spokesman Jamie Fhea.

On March 14, the U.S. government suspended efforts to evacuate most of the 2,000 U.S. officials and other personnel in Albania, supposedly after gunmen fired on two helicopter gunships waiting to pick up diplomats outside Tirana. The same day, German troops fired on Albanian protesters, injuring several people, as a German helicopter was evacuating officials from Bonn's embassy in Tirana, according to Reuters.

The imperialist powers, especially Rome and Athens, vying for different forms of intervention with the ultimate goal of re-establishing capitalism in the Albanian workers state, are using the exodus of thousands to win acceptance for their aim. As of March 18, over 10,000 Albanians had crossed the Asiatic to Italy, mostly from the Port of Durres, west of Tirana. Another 3,500 have arrived in Greece, according to



the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

The Italian government suspended its policy of immediately sending back Albanian immigrants with no proper papers, and is now giving "temporary humanitarian residence" for three months to those fleeing. At the same time, Rome has sent back to Tirana 250 Albanians it branded as "criminals." According to an article in the March 17 *Financial Times* of London, almost three-quarters of the Albanian navy has taken refuge in either Brindisi or Otranto in Italy, including 250 military personnel.

"Many of the military officers who fled to Italy must have their hands dirty against the people," Minella Bala told the *Militant*. "They could have stayed here like thousands of others to fight Berisha."

Several thousand Albanians have camped for days at Durres, waiting for the opportunity to board a ship to Italy. "I have been here for four days and nights," said Samir Paja. He had been expelled from Italy in 1991, after 40,000 Albanians fled across the Asiatic when the former Stalinist regime of Ramiz Alia tottered. "We want our government to calm down the situation. If Berisha resigns, we would stay." On a hill overlooking Durres, Albanians carted away bathroom fixtures and other items from the remains of what used to be the summer palace of King Zog, who fled Albania in 1939, a few years before the workers and peasant revolution of 1944-46 that successfully defeated the Nazi occupation and overturned capitalist rule. "I don't care about the

Continued on Page 14

One more reason to give to the Militant Fund

As we traveled to Saranda, three motor boats with several armed men on each approached the boat *Kalliopi*, which was transporting dozens of sacks of flour donated by the government and other institutions in northern Greece. The armed men took the flour that was allotted for their village, Xamili, which has no port.

Militant reporters translated this exchange for Canadian Broadcasting Corporation reporter Mike Hornbecker. They later overheard him transmitting a falsified account of the story in his live CBC broadcast from the safety of his hotel. Hornbecker said the flour had been "hijacked in high seas by armed robbers." He also described the few sporadic gunshots as we approached the Saranda port as "a hail of bullets," the young people carrying rifles in the cities as "young thugs," and defense council President Koucia as the "local warlord." So much for facts from the capitalist media.

— A.M.

for further reading

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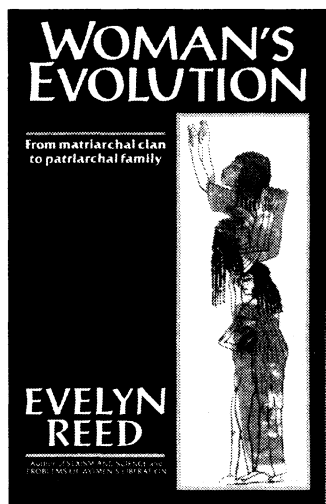
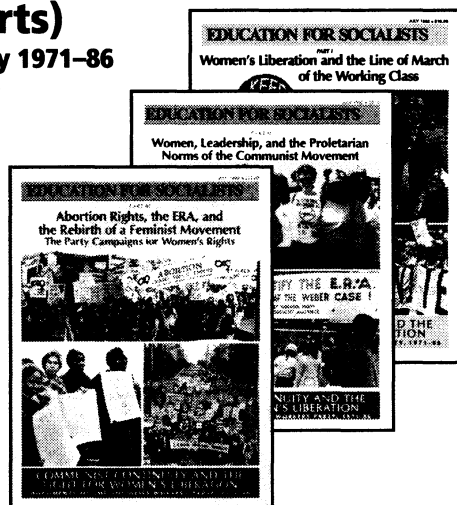
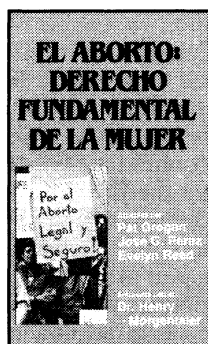
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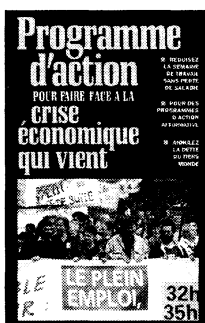
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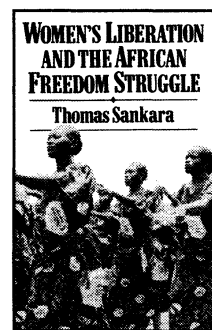
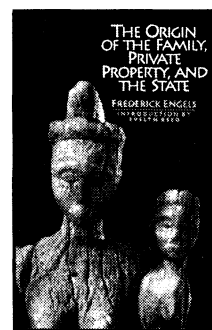
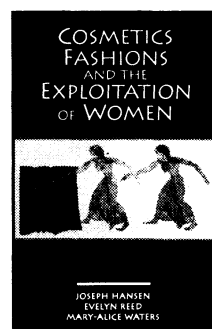
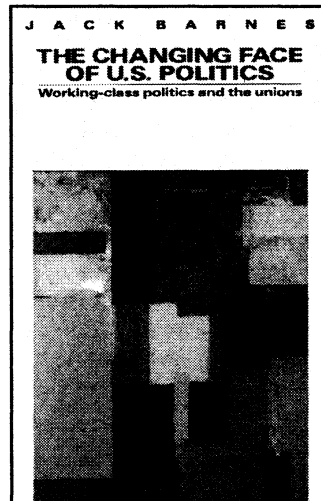
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SWP wins extension of campaign rights

BY GREG McCARTAN

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Federal Election Commission has granted campaign committees supporting Socialist Workers Party candidates a six-year extension of their exemption from reporting the names of financial contributors to the government.

The ruling came at an FEC meeting here March 6 in response to a request filed with the commission by the socialists last November. Constitutional rights attorney Michael Krinsky prepared the extensive legal and factual papers backing the petition for continued exemption from the financial disclosure requirements. Krinsky is a partner in the New York firm of Rabinowitz, Boudin, Standard, Krinsky, and Lieberman.

For the first time since the SWP's initial victory in 1979 over the federal government's undemocratic reporting procedure, however, the FEC imposed a restriction on the exemption. The commission ruled that the SWP campaign committee must now assign "a code number for each contributor and [report] that code number when disclosing a contribution by that person." At the March 6 hearing, FEC attorney Jonathan Levin said he would recommend extending that onerous procedure to others currently exempted from federal reporting requirements.

Quarter-century battle

Since 1971, the U.S. government has required all federal candidates and campaign committees to file frequent and detailed reports identifying contributors of more than \$200, as well as those who are paid for rent, printing, and other services. Reports are required to list the name, addresses, and occupation of the contributor as well as the amount contributed. These reports are open to the public.

From the outset, Socialist Workers campaign committees have refused to comply with these procedures and have mounted a legal and political battle to defend the right of privacy of those who contribute to SWP election efforts. Since party members and supporters have long been targeted by government police agencies and rightist outfits, the SWP has argued that disclosing the names of contributors would simply constitute a ready-made "enemies list."

The SWP explained that its advocacy of a workers and farmers government and of socialism; its participation in the union movement and labor struggles; and its involvement in the fight against imperialist wars, for Black rights, women's equality, and the rights of the foreign-born resulted in a decades-long U.S. government disruption program against it going back to the build-up for World War II. The party and its supporters have also been the target of threats and attacks by right-wing individuals and organizations, employers, the police, and state and local governments.

Disclosure of the names of contributors to SWP election campaigns, the party argues, would hand a further weapon to the government, bosses, and rightist outfits to wield against those who oppose their policies.

The fight for exemption from disclosure

was part of a broader campaign by the party to maximize the political space the workers movement can use to organize and engage in struggle. As the material submitted to the FEC this year makes clear, the SWP runs candidates in elections across the country, actively distributes socialist publications and revolutionary books, maintains public offices around the country, and functions in the labor and other mass movements.

By 1979 the public campaign and court rulings had established that the financial disclosure law, as applied to the SWP, was a violation of the First Amendment right to freedom of association and privacy. This year's Federal Election Commission ruling, known as an advisory opinion, is built on those victories.

Some 70 incidents documented

In their submission, the socialists provided extensive documentation of incidents of harassment and threats from 1990, the time of the last FEC ruling, through the end of 1996.

This year's FEC advisory opinion notes the SWP has "provided descriptions with supporting signed declarations or other documentation as to approximately 70 incidents of harassment, many from private sources that include acts of vandalism against SWP offices and SWP-related bookstores; threat and acts of violence from persons identifying themselves as members of the Ku Klux Klan; threats and acts of violence by anti-Castro activists; negative actions by, or statements from, employers against persons apparently as a result of those persons' association with the SWP; and abusive behavior toward SWP candidates or other persons publicly associating with the SWP."

The ruling also notes "documentation of approximately 20 incidents involving police interactions with SWP workers." It says that the "incidents sometimes appear to involve actions by the police that were apparently motivated by a hostile feeling toward the SWP or views expressed by the SWP."

The FEC concluded from these cases that the "SWP and persons publicly associated with it have experienced a significant amount of harassment from private sources in the 1990-1996 period," and that, "such harassment appears to have been intended to intimidate the SWP and persons associated with it from engaging in their political activities and in expressing their political views. The opinion added that there is "also evidence of continuing harassment by local police."

At the same time, the new ruling states that "the hostility from other governmental sources appears to have abated." It says that the documentation submitted by the SWP "does not present evidence [similar to that in the party's 1990 petition] indicating negative attitudes toward the SWP" on the part of federal government agencies.

The SWP's attorney Michael Krinsky replied to their claim in a written comment on a draft of the advisory opinion that FEC attorneys had supplied to the SWP less than a week prior to the March 6 hearing.

Ongoing dangers from Washington

Krinsky pointed out that the SWP's petition for a renewal of its exemption had reviewed the extensive documentation of federal government spying unearthed as a result of a historic lawsuit filed by the SWP against the FBI and other government agencies and the political campaign that accompanied it. In 1986 federal Judge Thomas Griesa ruled in favor of the SWP, finding that the FBI had engaged in a decades-long pattern of activity that violated the constitutional rights of the SWP and Young Socialists Alliance, their members, and supporters.

Krinsky wrote in the



Militant/Mike Baumann

SWP gubernatorial candidate Bob Miller (right) campaigns in Jersey City, New Jersey, March 9. Party won continued exemption from reporting names of contributors.

November request that "the past history of the federal activities against the SWP remains relevant... given its long duration, extraordinary intensity, and gross illegality.... It is hardly surprising," he wrote, "that the history of FBI disruption, warrantless burglaries, warrantless wiretaps, informant penetration, and the like, still intimidates and still hampers the ability of the SWP to solicit contributions and to engage in educational and political activities."

The SWP's petition for an extension also presented evidence of continued federal animus toward the party and its supporters since 1990. It cited three recent cases:

Priscilla Schenk, a unionist and SWP campaign supporter in Iowa, was interrogated by the Secret Service at her workplace in 1991 about her political views.

Milton Chee, a production worker at the Alameda Naval Air Station in California, was subjected by his employer to campaign of harassment culminating in a Hatch Act investigation in 1992.

Jason Coughlin had his security clearance pulled and was reassigned from his job as a computer programmer by the Air Force after he attended a socialist conference in 1991.

The draft FEC advisory opinion said the SWP has failed to provide "complete information" about the Chee and Coughlin cases on the basis of which evidence of ongoing federal harassment could be substantiated.

"The draft opinion fails to note," Krinsky wrote in his March 4 reply to the commission, "that Chee was first questioned by the Navy about political speech, his distribution of a flier for a 'Militant Labor Forum' event. It fails to note that Chee was twice formally cautioned against 'passing out literature of a political nature,' supposedly a violation of Navy regulations concerning 'contraband material.'"

Krinsky also supplied additional documentation concerning the character of the "extensive interrogations [of Chee] on two occasions as to his political affiliations, activities, and associates, including internal assignments and meetings of the Socialist Workers Party branch in San Francisco, ostensibly as part of the Office of Special Counsel investigation into possible violations of the Hatch Act."

The Hatch Act is an undemocratic piece of legislation to curtail workers' rights adopted under the Roosevelt administration in the 1930s. It prohibits federal employees from supporting or running in partisan elections. Chee, a candidate in a non-partisan election for board of supervisors in San Francisco in 1992, had been endorsed by the SWP.

In his reply to the FEC draft, Krinsky asserted that the record "demonstrates that the Navy was concerned with, and broadly investigated, Chee for his perceived political association with the Socialist Workers Party, and did not confine itself to Hatch Act matters."

As to the case of airman Jason Coughlin, Krinsky replied that "the draft opinion fails to recognize the import of the explanation by Brigadier General Jensen, USAF, Deputy Director for Analysis, Concepts and Systems, for the suspension of Coughlin's security clearance and for the initiation of a security investigation: 'because of your alleged involvement with socialist organizations, contact with a foreign national, and the perception of your questionable loyalty, honesty, and reliability which exists in your previous workercenter.'"

Responding to the draft opinion's claim

that the outcome of Coughlin's case had been unclear in the SWP's initial petition, Krinsky reviewed the information that had been presented there. "No further development of the facts was needed," Krinsky explained that since the termination of the airman's position as computer programmer and of his security clearance remained in effect until he was granted separation from the Air Force on the basis of the fact that he was not able to advance in the field in which he enlisted.

Krinsky's reply to the FEC draft opinion was available to the press at the March 6 hearing. The advisory opinion adopted by the six FEC members changed the draft slightly in light of the material submitted on behalf of the SWP, stating that the Coughlin case "presents the possibility of a chilling effect on public association with the SWP."

Requirement on coding of contributors

Krinsky's March 4 reply to the FEC draft also objected to the imposition of the new requirement that SWP campaign committees assign a code number for each contributor and report those numbers to the government. This restriction was rationalized in the draft opinion as a way to permit either FEC officials or private citizens reviewing the SWP's reports "to determine whether contributions in excess of the limits are being made."

Responding on behalf of the SWP, Krinsky wrote that "there appears to be no reason why such a burden should be added now when it has not been thought necessary for the preceding twenty-three years of the SWP's exemption." He added that "imposing such a requirement places an unreasonable burden on the reporting procedures of a party whose small vote and small number of contributors have no bearing on the stated aims of federal reporting regulations."

At the March 6 hearing this new regulation was the subject of some discussion among FEC members and the commission attorney Levin, who prepared the draft. Commission member Scott Thomas said he had looked up Socialist Workers campaign committee reports and found that few of them raised over the \$5,000 minimum that requires the filing of a report. From reviewing the Socialist Workers 1996 National Campaign Committee's reports, Thomas said, his conclusion was that the socialists appear to have a large number of small contributors to their election efforts.

Levin acknowledged that "on balance there is not a concern that they are exceeding the limits," but said the coding requirement was the only way to determine if a violation was occurring. He said that several state election boards have had a similar requirement in place for a number of years.

"Why are we doing this?" another commission member asked. "We don't want to get into litigation, do we? Will the regulation be applied to other parties, such as the Communist Party?"

Levin said that as of now the Communist Party, which also has an exemption from the reporting requirements, does not have the coding requirement, "but when they come up for review, yes, we would extend this to them as well."

The commission voted to approve the six-year extension, the draft advisory opinion as amended, and the newly imposed reporting requirement.

Greg McCartan is the SWP National Campaign Director.

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Clinton, Congress attack abortion rights

BY HILDA CUZCO

Opponents of a woman's right to have an abortion have stepped up their efforts to roll back this gain with the reopening of the debate in Congress on a bill to outlaw a type of late-term abortion procedure. President William Clinton has said that he will approve the measure, if it is amended slightly. Votes are expected in both houses of Congress before the end of March.

The bill would ban a procedure medically known as "intact dilation and evacuation," or D&E. Opponents of abortion rights have demagogically dubbed it "partial-birth" abortion. If the law is adopted, doctors performing this operation could be subject to up to \$250,000 in fines and two years in prison, and anybody assisting in the procedure could also be held liable. The only exception currently stipulated in the bill is if the procedure were necessary to save the life of the woman.

In April 1996, Clinton vetoed an earlier version of the bill, but said he would have signed it if exceptions were also granted in cases where pregnancy threatened a woman's health. Last December, the president told reporters that if legislators "will help me with language here and do it in good faith, I will happily sign this bill," a position he still holds.

The proposal to ban these late-term abortions was first introduced in 1993 by Republican representative from Florida Charles Canady as an amendment to the Freedom of Choice Act. That legislation, aimed at restoring some abortion rights restricted by the Supreme Court rulings in 1989 and 1992, never reached a final vote. Canady's amendment, which he argued for on grounds that the Freedom of Choice bill would have restricted states from banning late-term abortions, was narrowly defeated.

A new version of the ban on intact D&E abortions passed the House and Senate last

year, accompanied by a campaign to describe the supposed "horror" of this procedure. Opponents of abortion rights produced graphic diagrams and lurid descriptions of the operation, which were widely shown on TV and in the press. The *Washington Post* quoted Canady in a September 1996 article as saying "The difference between the partial-birth abortion procedure and homicide is a mere three inches."

Those supporting the antiabortion bill included many legislators who in the past have said they support women's right to choose. New York Democrat Senator Patrick Moynihan, for instance, called the procedure "as close to infanticide as anything I have come upon in our judiciary." Others in this category included House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt, a Democrat from Missouri, and Rep. Susan Molinari Republican from New York.

Many pundits have joined in the chorus, serving to shift the debate away from the question of women's rights. In a March 11 column in the *Washington Post*, for example, Richard Cohen argued, "a third-tri-

mester fetus is too much like a child, and the D&E is too gruesome a procedure for me to approve."

The number of intact D&E abortions performed has also become a point of debate between supporters and opponents of the ban, despite the fact that there are no clear statistics. Antiabortion forces have played up recent statements by Ron Fitzsimmons, executive director of the National Coalition of Abortion Providers, a lobbying group based in Alexandria, Virginia, representing 200 abortion clinics. In February, Fitzsimmons told ABC television that he had earlier lied on how many late-term abortions are performed. Fitzsimmons said that in the "Nightline" program of November 1995, he mentioned that there were no more than 450 intact D&E procedures done a year. Now he claims the number is as high as 5,000. Proponents of the ban claim this somehow makes it more important to end the procedure.

At a March 11 hearing in Congress, representatives of abortion rights organizations debated the issue of late-term abortion. One

of them, Kate Michelman, president of the National Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League, stated that the issue is whether Congress should be dictating medical procedures, as well as "women's constitutional right to privacy and the protection of women's health."

Meanwhile, state legislatures in Mississippi, Colorado, and New Jersey voted in January in favor of banning "partial-birth" abortion. A similar measure was adopted last year in Michigan, but has yet to be in effect. A bill awaiting approval in the Maryland House and Senate would fine anybody performing the procedure \$1,000 and subject them to up to two years in prison. The New York State Senate approved legislation March 10 that would ban D&E abortion, with penalties of up to four years in prison for doctors involved.

State governments have adopted a range of other restrictions on abortion rights as well. In January, Virginia became the 27th state in the United States to require young women under 18 to notify a parent before having an abortion.

Unionists bring support to steel strike

BY JOHN SARGE

STEBENVILLE, Ohio — Nearly 200 unionists gathered in Detroit the early morning of March 15 in sub-freezing weather. That began a day of solidarity with the 4,500 members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA), who are on strike against Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel. The workers gathered to begin a caravan of over 75 vehicles, taking more than two tons of food and thousands of dollars raised for the striking workers.

The caravan was organized by USWA District 2. Each vehicle carried signs "Caravan For Justice — Real working people, helping hard working people." The Wheeling-Pitt strikers are fighting for a guaranteed pension plan on a par with plans now in place at unionized integrated steel mills organized by the USWA.

Unionists involved in the solidarity action came from USWA locals across Michigan, along with a few from Wisconsin. The largest contingent was from Local 1299 at Great Lakes Steel, National Steel's Detroit area mill. Members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) union from at least 10 locals in Region 1A, Southeast Michigan, took part, and were joined by small groups of workers from other unions. About a dozen workers who had been on strike against Detroit's two daily newspapers for 20 months turned out bringing donations of food. The newspaper workers, whose international unions had proposed an unconditional return to work in February, are still locked out of both newspapers. No workers have been recalled.

When the caravan arrived here in



Militant/Cecelia Moriarty

Some 200 unionists marched in solidarity with Wheeling-Pitt strikers in Steubenville

Steubenville, the Michigan participants were joined by workers who had traveled from Columbus, Ohio, and the Chicago area. They marched together to the front gate of the steel mill for a short rally.

The visiting unionists then recessed to USWA Local 1190's hall for lunch and an indoor rally of about 400 people. Speakers at the rally included a local union official, the chair of the USWA's negotiating committee, the USWA director of District 2, Harry Lester, the UAW Region 1A director Bob King, the president of the Detroit Metropolitan Council of the AFL-CIO, and a locked-out Detroit newspaper worker Kate DeSmet, who invited the steelworkers and others to come to Detroit on June 20 and 21 to protest against the newspaper bosses.

A major aspect of the rally was presentations of the donations brought by the visiting unionists. Steelworkers from Manistee, in the northern part of Michigan, had brought over a ton of food and \$2,000. They had left northern Michigan at 2 a.m. to join the Detroit caravan. Local 1299 had also collected over a ton of food and is on a campaign to raise a dollar a week per member for the strike fund. Steelworkers from the Bethlehem Steel Works in Gary, Indiana, brought a check for \$6,394 raised in their mill, and promised more.

Meanwhile, Wheeling-Pitt and its parent company WHX were dealt a major setback March 3. Judge Jennifer Sargus of Belmont County Common Pleas Court overruled the Ohio Bureau of Employment Services, granting over 3,700 strikers working in Ohio benefits effective Oct. 1, 1996, the first day of the strike. The company had earlier won rulings against unemployment compensation for the strikers in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia.

The ruling by Sargus was immediately appealed by WHX, but denied. That means strikers should receive checks while the company's appeal works its way through the courts. In her decision, quoted in the Steubenville *Herald-Star*, the judge found

that "uncontradicted testimony establishes that in 1994 [contract talks with the company] recognizes a commitment 'to discuss a renewed defined-benefit plan.'" Ron LaBow, chairman of WHX, and now currently engaged in direct negotiations with the USWA, has falsely claimed in his anti-union media campaign that a guaranteed pension plan was never a negotiable issue and has refused to discuss one.

Morale was high on the picket line the day after the decision. Paul Crowe, a maintenance worker at the Mingo Junction, Ohio, mill said that all along the company was preventing an end to the strike. "We're not the ones keeping us out," Crowe said. In addition to strikers feeling vindicated by the ruling against WHX, Crowe welcomed the visible solidarity now joining the fight. The strike gets a lot stronger "when you don't feel like your alone," Crowe added.

One example of the steady flow of support coming into the mill towns in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia was reported in the *Herald-Star* March 9. The day before, some 40 steelworkers showed up in a bus, including veterans of the 1984 Danly Machine strike from Cicero, Illinois; workers from Kenosha, Wisconsin; and other workplaces in Chicago. "The Chicago-area Steelworkers spent about an hour at the Follansbee plant gates before moving south to meet with pickets at the Beech Bottom plant," the article reported.

Meanwhile, the same day that the unemployment decision was handed down, WHX posted a \$34.6 million loss for the quarter. According to the WHX release on its 1996 fourth quarter loss, it "includes the effects of three months of the strike at its Wheeling-Pitt operations. The results reflect the loss of revenue and production from Oct. 1 to Dec. 31," the *Herald-Star* reported.

John Sarge is a member of UAW Local 900 in the Detroit area. Tony Dutrow, a member of USWA Local 1557 in Pittsburgh, contributed to this article.

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2,700 auto workers walk

Continued from front page

has hired hardly any workers. Most of the workforce is transferred workers from plants GM has shut down over the past decade. On the picket lines there were auto workers from the Detroit area; Andersonville, Indiana; Janesville, Wisconsin; and from California.

The picket lines are being honored by Teamster drivers who work for Ryder Commercial Carriers and by construction workers who are building a new body shop for a new GM model truck.

The automaker is planning to launch the new truck in 1999. The company claims that the new model will require 30 percent less labor hours to build. Whether this claim will materialize will depend, in part, on the outcome of the current battle over jobs and working conditions.

The strike comes on the heels of a three-day walk-out at another GM truck assembly plant in January by 4,300 IUE workers in Moraine, Ohio. Unlike its rivals at Ford and Chrysler, GM has reached local agreements with only 60 percent of its 105 UAW locals. In response to the strike, a GM spokesperson said, "We are facing an extremely competitive market out there..."

These negotiations will be watched

closely by UAW locals without local agreements, to see who gets the upper hand. Like other UAW locals, the union, which nearly went on strike in 1995, has been preparing for a showdown with the auto giant for most of the year.

In a related development in the auto industry, Ford Motor Co. has announced plans to drop production of the Ford Thunderbird and three other models. This will mean closing down the car unit at the Loraine assembly plant in Ohio. This is the first car assembly plant Ford plans to shut down since 1982.

Ford says about 1,800 UAW workers will be laid off later this year. In addition, another 700 parts workers who supply materials to Ford will also lose their jobs. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, this is "the first of several moves intended to shrink Ford's North American capacity."

Another press report from the *Chicago Tribune* said that "at least seven of Ford's auto assembly plants may face partial or complete shutdown in the next five years as the company moves to consolidate as well as eliminate product lines."

Frank Forrestal is a member of UAW Local 551 at Ford in Chicago.

Clinton's CIA nominee retreats under fire

BY NAOMI CRAINE

Anthony Lake withdrew from nomination to head the Central Intelligence Agency March 17, saying that extensive Senate confirmation hearings were "hurting the CIA and NSC [National Security Council] staff in ways I can no longer tolerate." This came in the midst of an unfolding scandal over Democratic Party fund-raising at the White House and charges that Beijing sought to buy influence in the 1996 U.S. elections.

Hearings on Lake's nomination were sharply partisan, reflecting the desire of major sections of the ruling class to prevent liberals like Lake from heading essential repressive institutions such as the CIA.

It's not that Lake didn't have good credentials to run the agency. He was the national security advisor in President William Clinton's first administration. As such, he served as one of the architects of U.S. foreign policy over the last four years. He was one of the main advocates of sending U.S. troops into Haiti in 1994, and has played a central role in Washington's involvement in Yugoslavia. One of the things Lake got roasted for in the Senate hearings was not informing Congress that while Washington was formally pushing an arms embargo on all of Yugoslavia, the Clinton administration backed arms sales by Tehran to Muslim forces in Bosnia. Later, when Washington's "let it bleed" policy had run its course, Lake was involved in drawing up the "peace accord" in Dayton, Ohio, for NATO troops to occupy and partition Bosnia.

Last November, when Washington was probing possible military intervention in eastern Zaire, Lake ordered CIA flights over the area, supposedly to learn where thousands of refugees from Rwanda had gone.

Lake's career got off the ground in Vietnam, where he was stationed with the U.S. State Department at the beginning of Washington's buildup of the war in Indochina in 1962. By 1970 he had advanced to the position of aide to Richard Nixon's national security advisor, Henry Kissinger. He resigned that post, stating disagreement with the U.S. invasion of Cambodia, but later explained that he thought Washington couldn't win the war. Lake again served in the State Department under James Carter's administration in the late 1970s.

In his bid for the post of Director of Central Intelligence — responsible for overseeing not only the CIA but 12 other spy agencies as well — Lake came under fire from the right for being "too liberal." Among other complaints were his resignation during the Nixon administration and a statement Lake made on television that he was not absolutely certain Alger Hiss was a Soviet spy. Hiss was a U.S. official jailed on perjury charges during the McCarthy witch hunts for denying accusations of spying for Moscow.

Another complaint voiced in the right-wing press was that Lake might be hesitant to use covert action, a charge the nominee vehemently denied.

Concerns over these issues are serious ones for the wealthy rulers in the United States, since they are now, and will more and more, use military might around the world as the keystone for advancing U.S. imperialist interests. How best to do this, and who best to carry it out, is what the Lake nomination debate was all about.

Accusations over 'Chinese money'

Lake's nomination also got caught up in the scandals over campaign financing that continue to swirl about the White House. The latest round of charges which have a decidedly jingoistic tone to them, involve supposed efforts by the Chinese government and Asian businessmen to influence elections in the United States through campaign contributions.

In mid-March the FBI asserted that Beijing tried to funnel money to Democratic Party candidates in the 1996 congressional

elections. The FBI told this to several legislators in June 1996, and said it also warned two officials of the White House National Security Council, which was under Lake's direction. Clinton says he and his staff, including Lake, were never informed. In a public standoff, officials from the White House and the Justice Department accused each other of lying about when the Clinton administration had been informed of the matter.

These allegations came out as part of a broader hue and cry over fund-raising at the White House by Clinton, vice president Albert Gore, and their staff, which is supposed to be illegal. Of the many people who apparently gave big money to have coffee or stay overnight at the president's abode, news reports have particularly played up those campaign contributors and fund-raisers who had ties to China and Indonesia. A typical example appeared on the editorial page of the *New York Times* March 16. There Steven Weisman speculated that as more facts come out, "The warnings delivered to Attorney General Janet Reno and the National Security Council about Chinese efforts to influence the American election will look like understatement."

A related charge that Lake was grilled on in the Senate hearings revolved around Roger Tamraz, an oil financier who the CIA

said had been "helpful in a number of ways" and who is also under indictment in Lebanon on embezzlement charges. Tamraz, who contributed \$177,000 to the Democrats over the last two years, was invited to the White House at least four times in 1996 despite cautions by NSC staffers, after asking the CIA to put in a good word for him. Lake said he knew nothing about the affair. CIA officials announced March 17 they were launching an internal investigation.

On top of this there were other, more routine charges of improper conduct by Lake, such as his conflict of interests in holding stock in energy companies that could be affected by decisions he made as national security advisor.

As the president looks for a new nominee to head Washington's spy operations, he must face the fact that the CIA "has been battered during the Clinton Administration by one disaster after another," an article in the March 19 *New York Times* noted. These include public reports on the cop agency's nefarious operations training the militaries in Guatemala and Honduras to torture opposition forces, the collapse of some of its covert operations against the government of Iraq, the conviction of two CIA agents for selling information to Moscow, and the fact that U.S. agents have recently been caught carrying out economic espionage in France,

Germany, Italy, and India.

Push for NATO expansion advances

Meanwhile, Clinton is gearing up for his trip to Helsinki, Finland, to meet with Russian president Boris Yeltsin and push ahead with Washington's campaign to expand NATO into central and eastern Europe. This move, strongly opposed by Moscow, is part of war preparations by Washington and its allies against the workers state in Russia.

Earlier this month, Clinton appointed Jeremy Rosner to a new post as head of the administration's public campaign for NATO expansion. Rosner was previously an analyst for the Carnegie Foundation, a big-business foreign policy think-tank. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright and other State Department officials are now planning to address a series of "town meetings" across the country leading up to the July NATO summit that will take up expansion of the imperialist military alliance.

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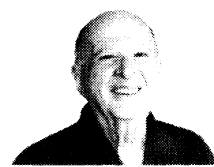
CALENDAR

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Sober-minded — "... record unemployment in many mature economies... job insecurity, societal stress... the yawning gap be-



Harry Ring

tween rich and poor.... It's time to tighten portfolios, we may be in for a wild ride." — Financial adviser Rob Brown in the Toronto *Globe and Mail*.

No borders for social crisis — In previous recessions, Switzerland's unemployment rate never

went past 1 percent. It's now 5.7 percent. The government wants a greater army role in ensuring domestic "order." It proposes giving the troops handcuffs, clubs and tear gas. Said a division commander, "We have studied the Los Angeles riots very carefully."

Free advice — "People are learning about capitalism. Everyone has to realize, no one told the people that they had to invest [in pyramid swindles]. It's not easy to get money, especially without working." — Gilbert Galanxhi, spokesperson for Albania's ministry of foreign affairs.

Great white father — You're skeptical of the claim that donors to the Democratic National Commit-

tee got nothing in return? Well, here's proof. Officials of two native tribes in Oklahoma — with an 80 percent jobless rate — emptied an emergency relief fund to donate \$107,000 to the Democrats with the expectation that land stolen from them in 1869 would be returned. The land has not been returned.

Top this one — A White House aide said the prez was "troubled" by the disclosure of the Oklahoma rip-off. And Democratic officials said they would return the money if the two tribes officially asked for it. If not, they said, the money will be used for Native American voter outreach.

Imperialist chutzpah — In its war on Vietnam, Washington na-

palmed and carpet-bombed the country. Now, as a price for greater trading rights, it is forcing the Vietnam government to repay up to \$140 million for U.S. loans made to its defeated puppet regime in South Vietnam. The loans were allegedly for food and for infrastructure improvements.

Slow leak — At the Brookhaven Laboratory on New York's Long Island, a storage pool for nuclear reactor waste has been leaking radioactive tritium into ground water since 1985, twice as long as previously estimated. At monitoring wells nearly a half mile away contamination is four times the federal standard. But, the lab says, there's no threat to drinking water. Meanwhile, the feds agreed to switch 500

nearby families to another water source.

No Acts of God? — Adecco, a California temp agency, offers employees medical and dental plans. "Summaries" of what's not covered fill two brochure columns. Our favorites: "Suicide or attempted suicide.... Acts of war (declared or undeclared)."

Lower ranks? — In Rajkot, India, cops blinded seven men accused of minor offenses by rubbing chili powder in their eyes. Reporting this, a London *Times* correspondent explains that the "lower ranks" of India's cops are corrupt and abusive. He adds that local police officials demanded a full report, but "it is rare for police to prosecute their own officers."

Irish journal reviews book on James P. Cannon

Below we reprint a review of *James P. Cannon — As We Knew Him* by Jack Barnes and others. It was reviewed by Jim Monaghan, and appeared in the 1996 issue of *Saothar*, a journal of the Irish Labour History Society.

BY JIM MONAGHAN

Jack Barnes (ed), *James P. Cannon As We Knew Him*, (Pathfinder, New York, 1976), pp. 200 np

James P. Cannon (1890-1974) was one of the key figures in the foundation and early development of the American Communist

BOOK OF THE WEEK

Party (CP). He later went on to found the American Trotskyist movement. His father was born in Ireland, but emigrated young enough to have been an activist in the Knights Of Labor, one of the early trade unions in America. James P. Cannon was born in Rosebud, Kansas in 1890. As a young man he joined the Industrial Workers Of The World (IWW). In the IWW Cannon was a protégé of Vincent St. John and a friend of both Big Bill Haywood and Frank Little, who was later lynched in Butte, Montana.

It is hard to visualise now, but in the period before the First World War there was explicit class warfare waged in America, as the capitalist class tried to crush the nascent workers' movement represented by the IWW and the Socialist Party. The big strikes and lockouts of Lawrence, Patterson — and Butte in 1912 and 1913 rivaled and even exceeded those of Dublin in 1913 in intensity. The employers were ruthless, in defence of their interests. When the workers lost they paid an enormous price; in some cases the entire workforce was replaced, and the militants run out of town. The state forces made no pretense of neutrality. Faced with the First World War the Left in America, as elsewhere, split. The news of the Russian Revolution galvanized many, Cannon amongst them, into an attempt to form a new party based on Marxism. In the confusion of rival groups which proliferated, Cannon supported the more Americanised group around

John Reed. Eventually this group was accepted as the model for the new party rather than the main rival, which was based on federations of non English speaking national groupings.

In the CP, Cannon and William Z. Foster emerged as the leaders of the more practical wing which orientated toward the trade unions and American born workers. Cannon set up the International Labour Defence to defend class war prisoners whatever their political persuasion. These included Sacco and Vanzetti, Mooney and many others. Cannon's prestige among IWW members was a major asset to him. He worked closely with Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, who at this stage was outside the CP. His allies and friends included Williams F. Dunne, who had led a general strike in Butte, and Tom O'Flaherty, older brother of the novelist Liam O'Flaherty.

In 1929, at a Comintern conference, Cannon read Trotsky's critique of the direction which the USSR was taking under Stalin's influence. Reading this brought together all Cannon's reservations about the Comintern line and he became a supporter of Trotsky. On his return to America he organised a secret faction before his inevitable expulsion from the CP. Tom O'Flaherty, Max Shachtman and Martin Abern of the Party leadership followed him, as did the younger Dunne brothers. Many of Cannon's closest friends remained in the CP, where they then tried to save their own Party positions by denouncing Cannon. The CP tried to eliminate Cannon's group — which initially still regarded itself as a faction of the CP rather than as a separate organisation — through the use of goon squads and violence. Cannon, however, had friends from all parts of the left milieu who were willing to defend his democratic rights even when they disagreed with his views. Over the next decade Cannon built the most efficient Trotskyist organisation in the world. The Dunes led the great strike in Minneapolis which ushered in the rise of the Congress Of Industrial Organizations (CIO). Their success here enabled them to merge with A. J. Muste's American Workers' Party, a group which had led the Toledo Strike in 1934. In 1938, after a period of steady growth the Socialist Workers' Party was formed.

The movement split in 1940, essentially over the question of whether the USSR was still a worker's state to be defended by the left despite its shortcomings. Cannon and or-

thodox Trotskyists (including Trotsky himself) held that this was so. It is a debate which has now been overtaken by history. Cannon was gaoled with a number of his comrades in 1944 under the Smith Act which was designed for use against all those who could be described as subversives in an attempt to destroy the group's influence in the working class. The CP applauded this measure, but was less enthusiastic when the same tactic was later used against the CP in the McCarthy era.

Cannon's Socialist Workers' Party (SWP) survived the 1950's, as did the CP. The rest of the American left effectively disappeared. The SWP played a major role in the civil rights and anti-war movement during the 1960s. Cannon assisted T. Draper in his classic history of the CP, earning a reputation for honesty and accuracy in his memoirs. This prompted Draper to say that for Cannon, unlike many of the other CP leaders, the memories were still fresh, and he was not ashamed of them.

This book is a collection of anecdotes and memoirs of Cannon by friends and associates. It is, therefore, somewhat episodic. It should appeal to those with an interest in American politics and has a relevance broader than merely for those with Trotskyist sympathies. It is often forgotten that many of the inspirations of the Irish Labour movement come from the west rather than the east. Larkin and Connolly

and their ideas were influenced by American experiences and debates, as was the concept of the OBU (One Big Union). Interesting in its own right, this work should also whet the appetite for the forthcoming biography of Cannon by Bryan Palmer, the Canadian Marxist historian. The books by Cannon I strongly recommend are *Socialism On Trial* (1942) and *Notebook Of An Agitator* (1958).



Cannon speaks at 1948 rally in New York protesting antilabor Smith Act

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



March 31, 1972

LOS ANGELES — President Nixon assumed that the appointment of Romana Acosta Bañuelos as Treasurer of the United States would persuade some Chicanos that they had a representative in his administration. He might even have thought that this would include the workers at her food plant in suburban Gardena. (Not counting, of course, those seized at the plant shortly after the announcement of her appointment and deported to Mexico for lack of residency documents.)

One thing is clear now. Bañuelos isn't likely to win votes for anyone among the workers at her plant. They're on strike against sweatshop wages and working conditions.

More than 200 workers at Ramona's Mexican Food Products went on strike March 8, three months after their last contract expired. According to Rosa Peres, a young woman who makes tamales at the plant, a major demand is the 40-hour week. Many workers get only three or four hours' work a day at \$1.95 an hour. Their union, Teamsters Local 630, is also demanding a 50-cent-an-hour wage increase, longer vacations, and dues checkoff.

Work is being speeded up considerably on the production line. Rosa Peres says that workers who have been making 17 dozen burritos in 45 minutes in the past are now told to make that many in 15 minutes. Many workers have quit, unable to keep up with the new pace. Some can't last more than a few hours.

The company, which does an annual

business of \$6 million, subjects women workers to humiliating purse searches, suspecting they might be stealing a few tacos.



March 29, 1947

Three weeks ago the Chiang Kai-shek dictatorship began a wholesale bloody massacre of unarmed workers and peasants in Formosa, through General Chen Yi, governor of the island. Brutal suppression and a continuing reign of terror is Chiang's reply to the demands of the Formosan people for self-government and relief from the strangling rule of foreign monopolists, their corrupt government officials, and military depotism.

The massacre began on March 8. Some 4,000 people were killed. Large-scale arrests of Formosan leaders swept the island, many of whom were executed. Those arrested included public leaders, publishers and members of the National Assembly, which was to have convened on March 15 to present the demands of the people. This monstrous crime was committed by Chiang in the name of "preserving order" and wiping out "Communist inclinations."

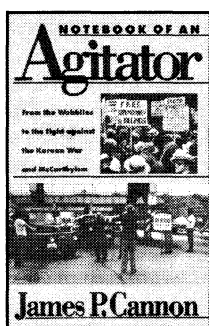
The "sullen, bitter resentment" of the masses is so deep that on March 22 a resolution demanding the dismissal of Governor Chen Yi was adopted by an overwhelming majority of the Kuomintang's Central Executive Committee. Although such committee resolutions are usually mandatory on the government, Chian has as yet taken no action to dismiss the bloody butcher who is carrying out his orders in Formosa.

James P. Cannon A FOUNDER OF THE COMMUNIST MOVEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES

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For international solidarity

The march in Brussels by tens of thousands of workers from across Europe protesting jobs cuts shows the broad desire among working people to unite internationally to combat the devastation wrought by the capitalist system in its death agony. So does the united response of Renault workers in France and Belgium to the company's announcement that it will close a plant in Vilvoorde, Belgium. But the type of national socialism that these fighting workers heard from both the Stalinist and social democratic representatives of the labor movement who spoke at the March 16 demonstration, runs counter to their instinct for working-class solidarity.

French Communist Party leader Robert Hue called the demonstration the "burial of Maastricht," referring to the treaty on European monetary union. In a December interview, he made clear that his party's opposition to the imperialist trade policies is based on the needs of France. As if the interests of French workers are the same as those of the French ruling class! He said, "We need a national currency. That's what gives a country its strength and independence."

The leaders of the Communist Party have a long track record of making peace between workers and the rulers in France in the name of the national interest — from 1930s to today. Far from leading workers to defeat fascism, it was their misleadership that led to the defeat of the revolutionary upsurge in 1936 and opened the road to the Nazi occupation and the Vichy regime.

Social democratic politicians like Lionel Jospin, head of the Socialist Party in France, likewise try to keep workers in the framework of the capitalist rulers, calling for a "social Europe" — that is reforms within the framework of the European Union. But this is a "union" of capitalist nations, in a period when the world capitalist system is in an economic depression. The Socialist Party, like the leaders of most other social democratic parties in Europe including Belgium, backed the colonial policy of their own ruling class for years and eventually led the workers of France into World War I to defend the interests of the French rulers.

Far from granting reforms, the bourgeoisie in every nation in Europe is trying to find ways to slash workers' wages, living conditions, and social gains in order to boost

their profits. They are driven to do this by the fundamental laws of capitalism. Taking either side in the debate between the different interests in the ruling classes of Europe about how best to defend the profit system is a dead end for working people — it leads to nationalism, not internationalism. Only through a decisive struggle *against* the bosses and their system — regardless of the shifting economic, political, and military alliances among the different nation states — can the working class defend itself and forge the unity needed to overturn the wages system and open the road to organizing society to meet human needs and potentials, not those of big business.

The Stalinist and social democratic misleaderships advance anti-immigrant chauvinism at home and support for their "own" governments' imperialist course in Africa and throughout the semicolonial world. This course opens door to fascist forces, such as the National Front in France and the Vlaams Blok in Belgium, to gain ground. These organizations are bred by capitalism in crisis as its ultimate defense against the struggles of workers and small farmers who would overthrow it. The fascists use radical, nationalist demagoguery to win adherents among the middle class and demoralized workers looking for answers to the social and economic problems they face. They scapegoat immigrants, and particular bosses and politicians who they say are corrupt, not the class system they are part of. They pretend that workers can defend themselves against the crisis with import controls and buying nationally produced goods, but this only gives workers' own bosses more power over them. The fascists aim to build a cadre that can ultimately be used in the streets to smash the workers' organizations.

They must be answered with a program that truly advances interests of the international working class. This includes demands such as jobs for all, a shorter workweek with no cut in pay, massive public works programs to create more jobs, equal rights for all immigrants, and cancellation of the Third World debt, which the imperialist rulers use to suck blood from millions of workers and farmers around the world. Is this "realistic?" Only with a fight that breaks completely from the bosses and all their policies, uniting toilers of all nationalities. That's the struggle that's needed.

Tel Aviv begins provocative construction

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Despite worldwide opposition and vows of increased Palestinian resistance, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu moved ahead with plans to construct 6,500 Jewish housing units in occupied Arab East Jerusalem. Dozens of Palestinians who tried to stop the bulldozers that began breaking ground March 18 were confronted by hundreds of Israeli troops in riot gear, backed by snipers and helicopters. The next day 300 Palestinians marched in protest in the West Bank town of Ramallah. The project at Jabal Abu Ghneim, known as Har Homa in Hebrew, would complete a ring of Jewish settlements surrounding East Jerusalem, which Palestinians claim as their capital, and cut off the city from the West Bank. "We see our land taken in front of our eyes and we can't do anything," Ibrahim Abu Teir told the Associated Press. He was forced to give up seven acres of land for the new apartments, as were many other Palestinian residents of Umm Touba, a neighborhood adjoining the construction site. On March 19, the Israeli Supreme Court refused to order a temporary halt to the construction requested by Palestinian landowners and others.

The United Nations General Assembly on March 13 voted 130 to 2 to condemn the Israeli construction plan as "illegal" and "a major obstacle to peace." Only Tel Aviv and Washington voted against the resolution.

Speaking before the UN body, Palestinian observer Nasser al-Kidwa pointed out that Israeli policies "aim at the Judaization of occupied East Jerusalem... as well as continuing Israel's colonial settlement campaign in the Palestinian territory, occupied since 1967."

The assembly resolution is almost identical to one the U.S. government vetoed a week earlier in the Security Council. All 14 other Council members had voted for the measure. U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations William Richardson defended Washington's refusal to vote against Israel. "The General Assembly ought not to interject itself into this process, which can only build mistrust and harden the position of both sides," he stated.

Israel's '2 percent' solution

A week after announcing plans to begin construction on the new settlement in East Jerusalem, Tel Aviv added fuel to the fire by declaring that it would now cede another 2 percent of the territory it occupies in the West Bank.

On March 7, the Israeli cabinet voted 10-7 for the territory transfer. The actual proposal, dubbed the 9 percent plan, transfers about 7 percent of the West Bank — which was already under Palestinian civil authority — from joint Israeli-Palestinian control to full Palestinian control and 2 percent now under full Israeli control to joint control. This action was the first of three further transfers mandated by the Israeli-Palestinian agreement signed in Oslo, Norway, in September 1993. The Israeli government insists that it maintains the sole right to decide how much land to cede and the timing of these withdrawals.

Palestinian Authority officials promptly rejected the Israeli government's withdrawal plan. "We want the Israelis to stop the policy of dictation," said Palestinian negotiator Saeb Erekat. "We must decide the scope and dimension of the [troop pullback] together."

In response to these developments, Palestinian Authority president Yasir Arafat called an emergency meeting in Gaza March 15, to discuss the crisis provoked by Tel Aviv's latest moves. In attendance were delegates from Russia, the European Union, Japan, Norway, Egypt, Jordan, and the United States. The conference was strongly opposed by the Israeli government, which was not invited. Representing Washington was Edward Abington, the consul general in Jerusalem. At the conference Arafat pointed to the continuing expropriations of Palestinian land for bypass roads and "security perimeters" around West Bank Jewish settlements, the demolition of Arab houses, the confiscation of identity cards in Jerusalem, and other pressures on East Jerusalem Arabs to leave the city. He characterized these steps as "a serious ethnic cleansing campaign." Tel Aviv also recently ordered the Palestinian Authority to close four of its offices in East Jerusalem.

Attempts by the Arab delegates to pass a resolution criticizing the Zionist state were blocked by the U.S. representative, who declared that Washington would not agree to any outcome that attacked Tel Aviv.

In an interview with the Israeli daily *Yediot Ahronot*, Arafat warned, "This is not just 'another crisis.' This is the most serious crisis since the Oslo process began, and it has far-reaching implications.... The government of Israel has halted the [peace] process."

Even King Hussein of Jordan, one of the most ardent supporters of Israeli government policies, felt the need to distance himself from Netanyahu's latest moves. In a letter delivered to the Israeli prime minister March 9, Hussein warned that construction of the Jewish housing settlement in Jerusalem would bring "inevitable violent resistance."

Since 1967, more than a third of the area of East Jerusalem has been expropriated by the Israeli regime for construction of more than 40,000 homes solely for Jews. Arabs are allowed to live and build on only about 10 percent of the land in East Jerusalem. The city as a whole has an Arab population of 28 percent.

Brian Williams is a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 2609.

Struggle in Albania

Continued from Page 8

royal family or the president. They are all scum," said a woman who identified herself as Mimosa. She took away a door that she said would make good firewood. Many people complained of lack of electricity, bread, and water in Durres, which still reportedly remains under the government's control.

In southern Albania, opposition to imperialist intervention runs deep but is far from unanimous. Most of those we interviewed said they are against foreign troops coming into the country. Some even said they would resist any such military force. "Any army coming in will face an armed people," said a farmer in his 30s, who identified himself as Christakis and asked that his last name not be used. Interviewed on a field outside the village of Frashatme, on the road between Saranda and Gjirokastra, he said he was one of the few relatively young farmers left in the area. Most young people from these villages have immigrated to Greece. But two older shepherds there, Thodoras Kazaais and Panayiotis Argiris, both 67, expressed a similar opinion. "We can take care of Berisha ourselves," Argiris said, "like we took care of the Nazis and their lackeys here back in the 1940s." Both of these shepherds fought with the partisans at that time.

"If Europe and other countries come it will be to serve their own plan, not the people," said Christos, a delivery driver for the main supermarket in Gjirokastra, who asked that his last name not be printed, "you don't know what they will do. We've seen what they've done in Bosnia," he said, referring to the NATO occupation of that Yugoslav republic. "Nobody will give up our arms."

"When your donkey sinks in the mud, only you can pull it out," said Sotiris, a mechanic at the Rekor shoe factory in Gjirokastra. He offered only his first name, as the company manager stood near the plant gate where the workers gave the interview. "Only the Albanian people can solve our own problem, and not any foreign power."

Every day that goes by with Berisha still in the presidency, however, and with insurgents having difficulty organizing some functions in the cities they control — like putting an end to looting and robberies going on at night, or ensuring proper supplies of food and other necessities — the arguments for imperialist intervention are gaining ground. This is more common among shop keepers and other small businessmen frustrated with their stores being closed for more than ten days now.

On March 18, Yiannis Kranidiotis, the Greek deputy foreign minister, came to Saranda as part of a three-day tour of southern Albania and met with members of the town defense council. Offering "humanitarian aid," he raised again the idea of an international police force, for

which Athens has already committed several hundred officers. After the meeting, a raging debate took place outside the city hall between Gjevat Koucia and others who were arguing for "law and order" to be established immediately by any means, including foreign troops. "This is anarchy, not revolution," said Yiannis Mglaris, a store owner who is also in the middle of building a hotel. "We need order."

What sparked rebellion

On the boat to Saranda on March 18, Stavroula Meniou told us he worked as a housecleaner in Greece for two years and had put all his savings in two pyramid schemes, one of which was operated by the state bank. "I lost everything," he said. "I'd like to see Berisha hang." All workers interviewed by *Militant* reporters blamed the president and his Democratic Party for promoting this capitalist scam, profiting from it, and then lying in an attempt to absolve the regime from responsibility in the fraud.

Sotiris said most of the 400 workers at the Rekor factory took part in the antigovernment rallies demanding the state compensate them for their losses. Many of these workers had put some of their wages of about \$60 per month in the pyramids, hoping to increase their meager pay. The largest demonstrations in Gjirokastra swelled to 15,000 people on February 28 and March 1, nearly half the town's population. On March 2, small groups of people torched the town's police station and courthouse. Prisons were also thrown open and inmates released. When Berisha attempted to send in commanders with helicopters to reinforce operations of SHIK agents, the secret police, working people broke into the armory, took weapons, and chased government agents and troops into the mountains. Sotiris said all workers at Rekor now have rifles or pistols.

The hatred for the secret police is widespread. Skender Arapi, a taxi driver, showed us the charred remains of four cars outside Saranda. "That's where a SHIK agent was burned alive in his car as he tried to flee town," Arapi said. Minella Bala said Saranda's self defense unit caught one of the SHIK agents sent to town by the government the first week of March. He had a "blacklist" of 15 people with orders to kill them. "We had him tell the story in front of 4,000 people in the main square," Bala said. "The citizen's committee then sent him to Vlora, where he is from, to be tried and punished."

It is also noteworthy that the main targets of attack at the beginning of the revolt were the police agents, court-houses, prisons, and some of the army barracks. "The po-

Continued on Page 15

Rebels hold their ground in Albania

Continued from Page 14

lice were thieves themselves," has been a common comment. Some other installations, like the large state-owned hotel in Saranda, were also burned and looted before any semblance of order was restored. But the city halls and the prefectures in both Saranda and Gjirokastra were left intact and are now being used as meeting places for the citizens' committees.

'Market reforms' = economic collapse

More than 500,000 Albanians in a population of 3.2 million deposited as much as \$1.5 billion in the pyramid schemes, nearly half of Albania's GDP in 1996.

But this financial fraud was only the straw that broke the camel's back. A deep economic crisis has been mushrooming since early 1996 as the result of the "market reform" measures of Berisha's administration. Berisha was elected to the presidency in 1992 after the shattering of the former Stalinist regime of the Socialist Party. The SP is the former Communist Party or Albanian Workers Party, which was renamed following mass mobilizations by workers and students for democratic freedom and better economic conditions. The Democratic Party favored attempts to more rapidly integrate the Albanian workers state into the world capitalist market, which included heavy reliance on loans from the International Monetary Fund in selling off some shares of state assets to foreign investors. The initial rise the rate of growth in the GDP and lowering of inflation in the mid-1990s has been quickly reversed in the last 14 months.

The outskirts of Gjirokastra, one of the main industrial centers in this region, are now dotted with decrepit buildings of clothing factories, dairy plants, and steel fabricating shops that closed after state subsidies were cut. Some 7,000 workers toiled in these factories until 1990. The industrial workforce that is now employed has been reduced to less than 2,000. In fact, 90 percent of industry is now shut down throughout Albania. The Rekor show company, a joint venture between the government and Greek capitalist Spiros Papafiotou, was opened three years ago. Workers there make \$20 less per month than the average wage of \$80 in the public sector. According to Thanasis Dinou, a journalist for *Zori Topoli*, the daily newspaper of the Socialist Party, it is now cheaper to import household items such as pots, pans, and utensils from neighboring countries than fabricate them in Albania, where the technology in the state plants is obsolete and the productivity of labor is nearly a quarter of what it is in capitalist Greece.

Most workers interviewed said the economic situation did improve for a couple of years between 1992 and 1995, as many more stores opened, offering consumer goods previously unavailable under the Stalinist re-

gime of Enver Hoxha, who ruled dictatorially from the time of the degeneration of the Albanian revolution in the late 1940s until his death in 1985. Prices now are out of reach for most working people. Inflation has jumped to 18 percent since the beginning of this year. A loaf of bread, for example, costs 75 cents, while the daily pay of an employed industrial worker ranges between two and three dollars.

"The Greek, Italian, and other capitalists who come here to invest are here to rob us, not develop our economy," Skender Arati said. In addition to offering lower wages, like at Rekor, merchants from Greece often sell farmers equipment "that doesn't work, that is worse than the old Chinese busters that we have," Arati added.

The plains between the mountains on the way to Gjirokastra are now bare land used mostly for sheep herding and cattle raising. Very few farmers grow wheat or barley as they used to do until 1990. "It is now cheaper to buy flour in Greece and pay to transport it here than grow our own wheat," said shepherd Panayiotis Argiris. Berisha cut most state aid to farmers. "In the last three years we have had to buy feed and fertilizer for the little we grow for our own use from Greece through the remittances of our sons and daughters who work there as immigrants," Argiris added. This shepherd spoke highly of the agrarian reform that provided land to till to most landless peasants by expropriating large estates. But he condemned the forced collectivization of the peasants under Hoxha's reign, which was carried out between 1956 and 1960.

"Now we went from one dictatorship to another," Argiris said. Under Democratic Party rule, the government has attempted to privatize agriculture by dividing up former collectives and giving parcels of three to five stremas [one acre = four stremas] per family member. "For example, I got 23 stremas," Argiris said. "But the land is divided up in four plots, all away from each other, making any rational cultivation impossible unless we form cooperatives again." At the same time there are no incentives for such cooperatives or state aid for loans to get seed and equipment. Farm machinery is antiquated and spare parts are hard to find. Everyone we spoke to in this rural area told us that agricultural production in the region has collapsed.

Ruling caste fractured

While these dire economic conditions, which by all account are worse in the more mountainous northern part of the country, affect working people most, the pyramid fraud brought financial ruin to other layers of society as well. These include small and medium businessmen, bureaucrats in the state administration, and officers in the armed forces who had all sunk money in this scam, lured by the fantastic prospect of tri-

pling their investment within months.

This is reflected in the massive desertions of army, navy, and air force officers. In some towns in this region, local officials participate in meetings of the newly formed defense councils. Saranda's mayor, for example, sits in on some meetings of the town's citizens' committee. Elsewhere, the fractures in the ruling caste are more complex. In Gjirokastra, the mayor's office is used for meetings of representatives of the opposition political parties, which in their majority are repelled by the uncompromising stand of most on the city's defense council, organized by Agim Gozica, a former army officer.

Isuf Cepani, another former army lieutenant in Gjirokastra's citizens' committee, insisted that the demands of the group he leads are the resignation of Berisha and guarantees of state compensation for losses in the pyramid fraud. These committees, though, are organizing not only defense but other functions a state government would carry out.

Cepani also said the National Front for the Salvation of the People had recently received a message of solidarity from a citizens' committee in Shkoder, the largest city

in the north.

Thanasis Dinou, the SP reporter, did not have much sympathy for the council's insistence on the resignation of Berisha.

"This is not a time for armed revolt and guerrilla movements," he said. "We need to restore order and respect the constitution. There is a new government that includes the opposition and new elections have been called." He also stated that the aims of the Democratic Party are not that far apart from those of the Socialist Party. "Capitalism is the only avenue today. We just have to do it in a humane fashion. The pyramids were false capitalism." Dinou praised the "market reforms" of the Chinese government.

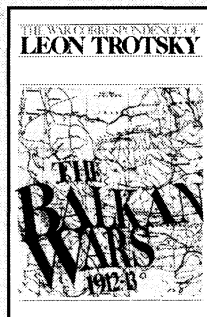
Ajid Gioni, a construction worker who belongs to one of the defense units in Saranda, expressed a different view. "The only capitalism we've seen from the Italians, Greeks, Berisha, and the others is robber capitalism of the worst kind. It doesn't sit well with me."

Bobbis Misailides and Natasha Terlixis, airline workers in Athens Greece, and members of the Federation of Foreign Airlines Workers, contributed to this article reporting from Saranda and Gjirokastra.

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LETTERS

O.J. and double jeopardy

The column by *Militant* editor Naomi Craine in issue #10 discussed the double jeopardy issues involved in the Simpson, and other trials. It raised, however, many questions that deserve some more discussion.

Craine stated that retrying Simpson violated the Fifth Amendment. While the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution prohibits twice putting a person "in jeopardy of life and limb," in the second Simpson trial only his wealth was ever, in fact, in jeopardy.

Unlike in criminal cases, in civil courts the presumption of innocence does not apply — "preponderance of evidence" and a two-thirds majority of jurors is sufficient for a verdict.

When she states that the procedures in the second Simpson trial amount to a "dangerous abuse of democratic rights that was carried out," she appears to say that civil suits are inherently more undemocratic than other legal proceedings under capitalism.

Workers and fighters everywhere need to understand the democratic acquisition represented by the presumption of innocence. But does the *Militant* mean to say that workers'

compensation cases, discrimination suits, civil rights cases, among others, should put the same burden of proof on the accuser, (the injured worker for example) as in criminal law?

Craine also refers to the retrial of Lemrick Nelson, whom a state jury acquitted of the stabbing death of Yankel Rosenbaum in 1991, as they did not believe the cops' testimony. Nelson was retried and convicted on federal civil rights charges, which Craine says was a travesty of justice.

However, she refers to the federal prosecution of murderers of civil rights activists on the 1960's as a gain for the working class. Surely the *Militant* bases this position on more than approval of one or another outcome, but that was not developed.

In his book *Live from Death Row*, framed political activist Mumia Abu-Jamal opposed the retrial on federal civil rights charges of the Los Angeles cops who beat Rodney King, because he considered this an example of double jeopardy that

could be applied to any fighters. I recall that the *Militant* viewed this case differently. It would be useful to explain how and why.

Keep up the good work.
Kathleen Denny
Oakland, California

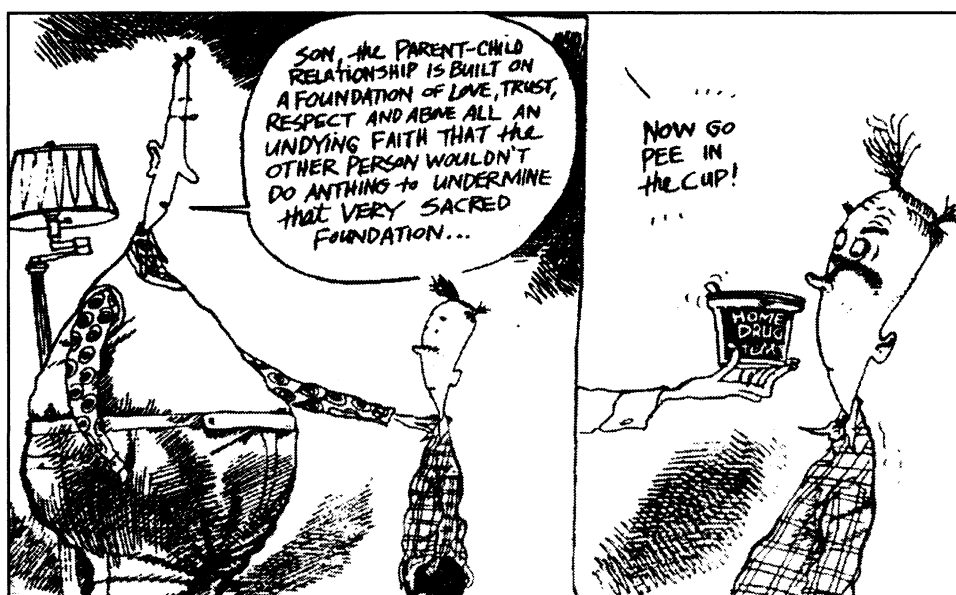
Are workers in Albania really 'ruined'?

I have a criticism of one sentence

in the otherwise terrific article by Argiris Malapanis on the rebellion in Albania that appeared in issue #11.

In the middle of the article the following sentence appears: "These get-rich-quick-capitalist scams then began declaring bankruptcy, ruining the lives of hundreds of thousands."

Is it really true, however, that hundreds of thousands of lives were



ruined?

The mass actions occurring in Albania, in large part led by those in the south who lost their savings in these pyramid scams, suggest that hundreds of thousands have begun new lives as fighters, not had their lives ruined. Perhaps it would have been better to say that hundreds of thousands were financially devastated or lost their life's savings. But to say that their lives were ruined, suggests that these fighters have no future. And they seem to be proving the opposite day-by-day.

Robbie Scherr
Seattle, Washington

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.

Marchers in Brussels call for jobs

BY CAROLINE BELLAMY
AND NAT LONDON

BRUSSELS, Belgium — Tens of thousands of workers from Belgium, France, and elsewhere marched through the heart of the Belgian capital March 16, protesting job cuts and calling for a shorter workweek. The three Belgian union federations called the demonstration in solidarity with workers fighting for their jobs, after a series of walk-outs and other actions in defense of Renault car workers in nearby Vilvoorde.

Renault bosses announced February 27 that the Vilvoorde assembly plant will close in July, axing 3,100 jobs. An equal number of jobs will be cut as a result at local companies that sub-contract work from the auto giant. As word of the closure first spread through the plant, workers rushed to the parking lot just in time to stop 50 car transporter trucks from hauling away thousands of newly produced cars. The factory has now been occupied for two weeks and 4,500 cars are being held "hostage" as workers demand that the plan to close the plant be canceled.

Most of the demonstrators on March 16 were industrial workers from Belgium. In addition, a contingent of about 5,000 came from France, including a large number of Renault workers, as well as smaller delegations from Austria, Germany, Greece, Italy, Spain, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Portugal, and the United Kingdom. Organizers said 70,000 participated in the demonstration; the cops put the figure at 40,000.

Banners produced by the unions called for a "Social Europe," referring to demands that the European Union pass legislation that would lead to "a Europe of citizens, not a Europe of money; a fair tax system which favors employment, not capital," as a leaflet passed out at the rally put it.

Officials of the main workers organizations promoted the idea that the Maastricht Treaty, which outlines plans for European monetary union, is to blame for rising unemployment and attacks on workers' living standards. Robert Hue, leader of the French Communist Party, called the demonstration "the burial of Maastricht."

Michel Nollet, president of the FGTB social democratic trade union in Belgium, told demonstrators, "You have come to Brussels to say no to a Europe ruled by money and competition, no to a Europe of restructuring, delocations, and closures."

French Socialist Party head Lionel Jospin said he joined the march "to say no to a conception of Europe that produces 18 million people out of work and weak growth."

Jean-Marie Page, an assembly line worker at Volkswagen in Brussels for 10 years, shrugged his shoulders at these explanations. "We fought for what we've got now," he said, "and we'll have to fight to keep it and keep on fighting. If things go on like this we'll just have the rich and the poor, and most of us will be the poor."

Handmade placards carried slogans in solidarity with workers at Renault and the Forges de Clabecq, an integrated steel mill where workers have been resisting 1,800 job cuts since December. Some 50,000 people demonstrated February 2 at Clabecq against its closure.

One group carried black crosses with the name of a closed or downsized factory on each one. Another demonstrator simply wore a white plastic sack on which he had written over and over "I'm sick of it." A militant contingent of young workers from the Volvo plant in Ghent, Belgium, chanted "Renault, Volvo, solidarity" as they marched.

For a shorter workweek

"32 hours!" proclaimed a number of banners demanding a cut in the work week to four days. The daily *Le Soir* reported, "The union organizers [of the march] are going to be pushing for a reduction in working time, aiming at a four-day week. This is the package that [Belgian prime minister Jean-Luc] Dehaene is trying to sell to the head of Renault, Louis Schweitzer, which in the end



Militant/Pete Clifford

Contingents of workers from across Europe participated in March 16 demonstration

will mean a reduction in labor costs." The French daily *La Tribune* adds that Dehaene's proposal involves a 32-hour week in return for a reduction of some 33 million French francs (\$5.8 million) in the employer's social security contributions. The paper didn't comment on what effect this may have on social benefits overall. Capitalist politicians and union officials hold up Volkswagen in Germany as an example of a similar agreement. There, the automaker agreed to reduce the work week to four days rather than cut 30,000 jobs, but at a cost to the workers of 16 percent of their gross salary.

The closure announcement shocked workers at Vilvoorde, some of whom heard the news on the radio as they started the evening shift. The final part of a \$238 million investment program at the plant was completed only months ago. "When you see so much money put in," said Jean Pas, a Renault worker and shop steward, "you think maybe I will buy that house after all." Vilvoorde workers were often told that their cars topped Renault's group quality assessments. In 1994, workers had agreed to the implementation of a flexible working system of nine-hour shifts and a variable number of working days each month. The *Financial Times* bluntly commented that the experience showed "flexibility cannot guarantee jobs."

Renault is 47 percent owned by the French government and 53 percent by private shareholders. In addition to the Vilvoorde factory, the company has plants in France, Spain, and Portugal. Later this month it is expected to announce its first loss in 10 years, of some \$848 million.

Days after the closure announcement, on March 5, 17 busloads of striking workers traveled to Renault's Douai assembly plant, just 30 kilometers over the French side of the border. Outside the closed gates of the Douai plant, French union officials attended a rally with the striking workers.

Young workers from Vilvoorde changed the established program for the rally, however, when they managed to pull the Douai factory fence out of its concrete foundations. Nine hundred strikers entered the factory in a demonstration that stopped production lines. They chanted "même patron, même combat" (same boss, same struggle) and "tous ensemble" (all together), the chant made popular by the striking railroad workers in 1995.

"When we first got word of the Vilvoorde plant closure," said Nouredine El Madkour, a young worker at Renault's Flins assembly plant 50 kilometers outside Paris, "many of my co-workers thought that this meant their jobs here in France were more secure. But the next day Renault announced it was cutting 2,700 jobs in France as well. Workers began to realize that only by supporting the Vilvoorde workers could we protect our own jobs." El Madkour, who was born in Morocco and has attended demonstrations in support of undocumented workers in

France, was only recently hired by Renault.

Unions in France, Belgium, and Spain called a one-hour work stoppage in every Renault plant in the three countries on March 7. The press called it the first "Euro-strike." The action became a total one-day shutdown of the two Renault assembly plants in Spain. In Belgium, Renault workers were joined in the stoppage by auto workers in Ford, Volvo, Volkswagen, and GM Opel plants. "This is the first time all the factories have come together in solidarity," said Jos Deloos, a worker in the Ford body plant in Genk.

On March 11, the same unions called a "Euro-demonstration" of striking workers. Ten thousand workers from the three countries converged on Renault headquarters in Boulogne-Billancourt in France.

The international strike and demonstration of Renault workers has received wide support. Among the crowd at the March 11 rally was a delegation of undocumented workers who have been occupying churches in France to demand "papers for everyone." One of these fighters, Madjiguene Cissé, said, "The undocumented are in solidarity with Renault because we are all workers, like the truck drivers, postal workers, and rail workers. We know these 'downsizing' plans very well. In Senegal they are done by the World Bank, here by Renault. But they are all the same," she said.

Other layoffs in auto industry

Renault chief Schweitzer stated that closing the Vilvoorde plant was a "painful" decision but the plant had wage costs that were 30 percent higher than the nearby Douai plant on the French side of the border. He pointed to the previous closure of the No. 1 assembly line in the Valladolid factory in Spain in 1991, the Billancourt assembly plant in France in 1992, and the Creil plant in France and Setúbal plant in Portugal in 1996 as other "painful" decisions.

Other auto companies in Europe have announced layoffs as well. In February, Ford said it would cut 1,300 jobs at its Halewood plant in Britain. Business papers have proclaimed the layoffs as the start of "Europe's great car war," as auto companies try to cut "over-capacity" in the face of a stagnating market.

In addition, Schweitzer says he is worried about increased competition from Japan when the European market becomes open to unrestricted access by Japanese companies in the year 2000. Currently, import quotas have limited Toyota sales to 5 percent of the French market and 16 percent of the market in Germany.

Schweitzer was loudly attacked by political figures in both Belgium and France. Belgian authorities declared that Schweitzer's actions were "economic terrorism" and urged workers to sue Renault in a European court. French President Jacques Chirac claimed he was "shocked by the methods used" by Renault. The French

paper *Le Monde*, however, reported that both French and Belgian authorities had been informed of the plant closure weeks in advance.

The Belgian government tried to lead the Vilvoorde workers into a "boycott French goods" campaign. The small town of Ans canceled its order of cars from Renault. The mayor of Ans is also the Belgian Federal Transportation Minister. The next day, the Interior Minister canceled an order of 150 Renault cars for the Belgian police. The cities of Namur and Liege followed suite. Initially, some of the Vilvoorde strikers supported the "boycott French" campaign. Some of them told reporters that they had voted for the Vlaams Blok, a fascist party espousing Flemish nationalism. Vlaams Blok has ties to the fascist National Front in France.

Most workers pulled back from a "boycott Renault" campaign when they saw it would separate them from Renault workers in France. Nonetheless a number of strikers at the Billancourt demonstration had photocopied signs saying, "This is my last Renault, and you?" Such signs have been widely distributed among Vilvoorde workers, and many have used them as car stickers. However, much more prominent were the two slogans chanted in French over and over, "Renault solidarité" and "même patron, même combat" (same boss, same struggle). Some strikers tore down Vlaams Blok posters during a demonstration in Brussels.

The local union of the General Federation of Labor of Belgium (ABW/FGTB) at Vilvoorde has proposed to the French and Spanish unions at Renault to launch a common campaign for a 10 percent reduction in working time, which they say will be sufficient to ensure that the Vilvoorde plant remains open.

Renault workers are planning a further week of action, with its high point on March 20 when Renault will officially announce its financial results for 1996.

Caroline Bellamy is a member of the Transport and General Workers Union at Ford's Dagenham plant in London. Nat London is a member of the CGT union confederation at Renault near Paris. Martin Hill contributed to this article.

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