

# THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

INSIDE

Quebecois self-determination  
central to Canadian revolution

— PAGES 6-7

VOL. 62 NO. 14 APRIL 13, 1998

## UAW members gear up for fight at Case Corp.

Workers rally support as contract talks continue

BY RAY PARSONS

BURLINGTON, Iowa — Some 3,300 United Auto Workers (UAW) members were working without a contract at Case Corp. as negotiations between the UAW and Case continued beyond the March 29 expiration of the current agreement. Case is a major producer of farm and construction equipment with five plants in Wisconsin, Illinois, Iowa, and Minnesota.

Unionists at Case plants in East Moline, Illinois, and Burlington, Iowa, have told the *Militant* that the company is seeking to impose increased mandatory overtime and cuts in benefits for current and future retirees.

In the days leading up to the original March 29 deadline, UAW locals approved strike authorization votes by big margins. The unionists and their supporters have been organizing rallies and other events to oppose the company's demands.

Retired unionists organized informational picketing to protest the company's proposed cuts in pensions. Some 40 workers turned out for one such action in Burlington, and similar protests were held in East Moline and Racine, Wisconsin.

In East Moline, workers organized a rally and car-horn honking at shift changes to

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## Labor solidarity in Ohio



Militant/Cecelia Moriarity  
Steelworkers on strike at Middletown Tube Works in Middletown, Ohio, join March 15 rally in solidarity with MSI strikers in Marietta, Ohio. See page 15.

## UN council imposes sanctions on Belgrade

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

The United Nations Security Council approved an arms embargo against Yugoslavia March 31 on Washington's initiative, under the guise of supporting the struggle for national rights of Albanians in Kosovo.

The government of China abstained from

**No to sanctions against  
Yugoslavia!** — editorial, p. 14

the vote. Shen Guofeng, Beijing's deputy ambassador to the UN, said the decision "may create a bad precedent and have wider negative implications."

"We fully recognize that the security of the region affects broader international interests, and that deterioration of the situation in Kosovo constitutes a threat to international peace and security," stated U.S. ambassador to the United Nations William Richardson.

Washington's interests in the region include deepening NATO intervention in the Balkans to restore capitalism in Yugoslavia, Albania, and other workers states; tighten the encirclement of Russia in the east; and maintain U.S. hegemony in Europe. This is tied to expanding NATO into Eastern and Central Europe and repositioning U.S. forces closer to the Russian border.

The UN Security Council resolution also calls "upon the Kosovar Albanian leadership to condemn all terrorist action, and emphasizes that all elements in the Kosovar Albanian community should pursue their

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## Pro-independence university student group holds congress in Puerto Rico

BY WENDY LYONS  
AND JAKE PERASSO

MAYAGÜEZ, Puerto Rico — Close to 100 members and guests attended the 24th National Congress of the Federation of Pro-Independence University Students (FUPI) in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico.

A declaration passed by the Congress describes the colonial bondage the organization is dedicated to fighting: "U.S. imperialism still exercises illegal control over Puerto Rico in matters of defense, citizen-

ship, foreign relations, immigration and emigration, currency, postal service, communications, foreign trade, air and maritime transport, parks, forests, and natural resources. It also wields the power to unilaterally impose whatever federal legislation it wants on Puerto Rico." The declaration insists, "The independence of Puerto Rico, for our membership, is a struggle that is not negotiable."

FUPI was founded in 1956 during an upsurge in the struggle for Puerto Rican inde-

pendence. In recent years the organization dwindled in size. The congress marked a turning point in reconstructing a national *independentista* organization of students.

Local FUPI chapters are experiencing new growth. "Young people today are more interested [in the independence movement]. Their parents are having a hard time, and that is reflected among the youth," declared Rafael Cancel Miranda, a long-time independence fighter who served 28 years in

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## 'Militant' calls special effort to put sales drive on target

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

"Eight people participating in the Federation of Pro-Independence University Students (FUPI) Congress bought subscriptions to *Perspectiva Mundial*," said Rollande Girard. The organization was celebrating its 24th Congress March 27-29 in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico. She said participants at the gathering also purchased two copies of *The Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara*, two copies of *Puerto Rico: U.S. Colony in the Caribbean*, and eight other Pathfinder titles.

"Several of the youth who stopped by our literature table had been in Cuba for the 14th World Festival of Youth and Students and others were planning to go there in May as part of an exchange between the FUPI and the Union of Young Communist of Cuba," Girard stated. "Many of the 100 people at the event said they never met people from the United States who supported independence for Puerto Rico, and they expressed interest in what communist workers and youth do in the United States."

These are the kind of anti-imperialist fighters *Militant* supporters aim to reach

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### The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

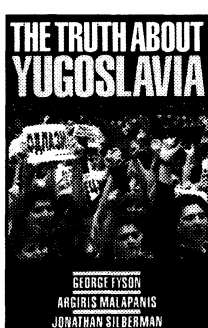
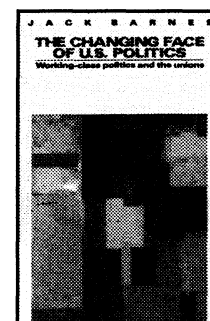
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Locked-out Crown oil workers fight frame-up — page 3

### Students in Indonesia continue protests against government

For the second day in a row hundreds of students demonstrated across Indonesia March 26. For more than a month students have been protesting the economic crisis and the resulting social conditions in that Asian country, as well as calling for the ouster of president Suharto. In Medan, about 875 miles from the capital city of Jakarta, hundreds of students held antigovernment protests. In Jakarta about 400 students from the state-run University of Indonesia held a rally; and 200 others gathered at Trisakti University, a private college. The day before, police and soldiers attacked a protest of 1,000 students at Solo university. The youth responded with stones. At least 39 students were injured when cops assaulted them with sticks and clubs.

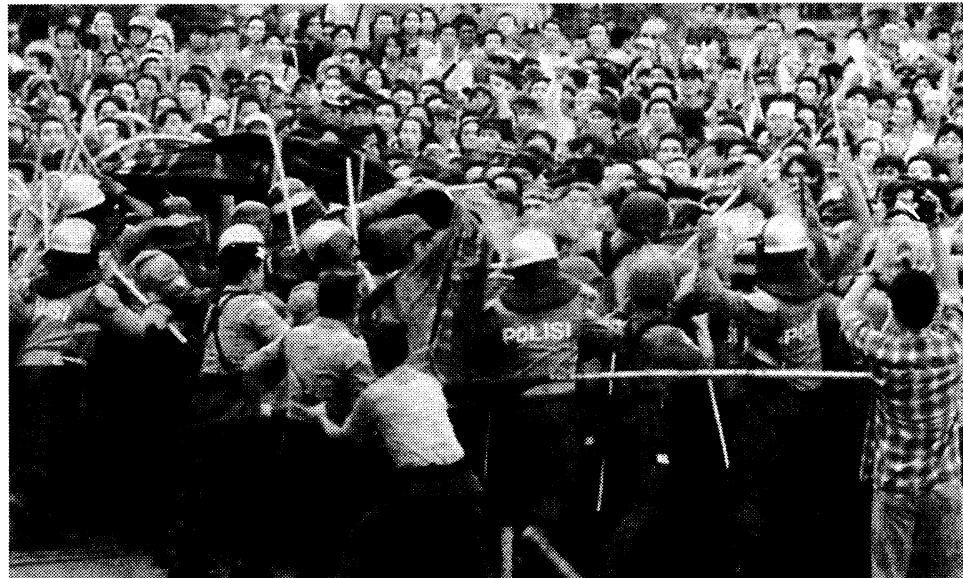
### Malaysia: immigrants fight cops

Immigrant workers held in four detention centers in Malaysia rebelled against cop brutality March 26, setting the camps on fire and battling with 3,500 police. After a police officer was killed in the Semeniyh camp, the cops moved in and viciously attacked the detainees, most of them undocumented workers from Indonesia. In the Machap Umboo camp, witnesses said, the riot police lobbed tear gas and beat immigrants with batons.

Seeking to scapegoat undocumented immigrants for the recent economic crisis in that country, the Malaysian government has arrested tens of thousands of workers, who are being held in 10 severely overcrowded detention centers. The government has deported nearly 19,000 immigrant workers since January and pledged to deport 10,000 each month.

### Airline workers strike in Ireland

After Ryanair withdrew security passes and barred airport entrance to 39 baggage handlers on strike at Dublin Airport, 2,000 workers in the country's largest airport struck for five hours March 7, forcing the company to negotiate. As the strikers picketed the airport, the other workers refused to cross their line and effectively closed it down for the day. The Ryanair baggage handlers have been on strike demanding union



Indonesian students protesting rising prices battle cops in Surabaya in mid-March

recognition since January. The company has now threatened to seek financial compensation for the cancellation of flights. Sinn Fein, the party leading the fight for a united Ireland and to rid the northern six counties of British troops, called on all who value workers rights to continue their support for the unionists. Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams said the party's members "would not use the airline during this dispute."

### Germany: public workers win small raise, gov't pushes for cuts

After widespread strikes and protests by workers belonging to the DAG and OTV public sector unions, workers in Germany won a 1.5 percent pay increase this year. Workers in the eastern part of Germany will get an additional 1.5 percent rise in wages. One of the union's demands, which will cover 3.2 million workers, has been wage parity between unionists in the two parts of Germany. The wage increases will put workers in the East at about 86.5 percent of wages in the West. Union officials are still negotiating with employers over whether to peg the wage increases to cuts in benefits and sick pay. Mediators in the talks have called for workers to begin contributing to pension plans, which are now paid for by the employers, as well as proposing part-time work

for older employees.

### Greece: workers hold work stoppage over wage cuts, two-tier

Workers at the state-owned Olympic Airlines in Greece held a three-hour work stoppage March 24. They were protesting a "re-constructing" plan proposed by Athens that includes workers acquiring shares in the company in lieu of wage increases and individual contracts instead of a union contract. The airline unions have already rejected plans for pay cuts of 20 percent, increased hours, and a two-tier wage system. The government says the plan is aimed at reducing Athens' national deficit in order to be allowed into the European Monetary Union.

Athens has already passed several laws that allow the government to overrule collective agreements on pay and working conditions at state-owned enterprises that don't make a profit. The Greek Confederation of Trade Unions called a one-day general strike for April 9.

### Tel Aviv: still no troop pullout

Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced March 27 the rejection a White House proposal for Tel Aviv to withdraw its troops from about 13 percent of the occupied Palestinian territories. Netanyahu instead proposed a 9 percent withdrawal plan, which Palestinians have made clear is not acceptable.

The Israeli prime minister faces staunch opposition within the government to any pullout. Right-wing politicians in Tel Aviv have vowed to bring down the Netanyahu regime if the Palestinians win their land back. Under a 1997 agreement the Israeli government pledged to carry out three pullbacks by the middle of this year. So far, none have occurred. Washington's plan includes that the troop withdrawal would be monitored by the U.S. government. The White House is also demanding the Palestinian Authority pledge to outlaw incitement against Israel and provide lists of all members of the Palestinian security forces.

### Gold prices drop, S. African mine boss cuts 6,000 jobs

Gold prices are at their lowest in two decades. In response, one of South Africa's largest gold exploiters, Gold Fields, says it will lay off 6,000 workers at two of its mines. This is in spite of a deal made between the company and the union to lessen the impact on workers when mineral prices drop. South Africa is the world's largest producer of gold. In the last year, however, mining companies in that country have laid off 50,000 workers and expect to lay off 100,000 this year.

### Brazilian Indians take back land

Quiriri Indians in Brazil took back their land March 26 after the government refused to move on a 1982 agreement to return the stolen territory. Armed with bows and arrows and dressed in full war paint, the Quiriri took back their land in the municipalities of Banae and Quinjingue, about 930 miles northeast of Rio de Janeiro. In 1982 the government of Brazil designated the area as Quiriri ancestral lands. It also agreed to pay 1,360 families compensation in order for the land to be returned to the Quiriri. So far only 400 families have received any money.

### Truckers block roads in Mexico

Dozens of drivers lined up their tractor-trailers along some of Mexico's major highways March 23 after launching a work stoppage. The drivers say they will continue their protest until the government addresses truckers high registration fees, the rising cost of diesel fuel, and other concerns.

Meanwhile, Mexican president Ernesto Zedillo has introduced legislative measures to make it easier for foreign capitalists to buy up national banks there.

### Killer cop convicted, again

Walter Budzyn, a Detroit cop previously convicted for killing a Black worker in 1992, was found guilty of involuntary manslaughter in a second trial on March 19. Budzyn had been convicted of second-degree murder in the first trial for his role in the beating of Malice Green. An unemployed steelworker, Green died from savage blows to the head from Budzyn's and his partner Larry Nevers' flashlights after being stopped in his car.

After serving nearly four years in jail of his original 8-18 year sentence, the Michigan Supreme Court reversed Budzyn's conviction last July and granted him a new trial. Budzyn, who remains free, will return to court April 17 for sentencing. His manslaughter conviction could be punished with as little as probation or a sentence matching the time he has already served. Budzyn's partner, Larry Nevers was released from prison at the beginning of the year when his sentence was overturned. No new trial date has been set for Nevers.

— BY MEGAN ARNEY

Jean Luc Duval from Detroit contributed to this column.

## THE MILITANT

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# Locked-out workers at Crown oil fight 'sabotage' frame-up

BY PATTI HIYAMA

HOUSTON — "We've been knocked down again and again," said Elroy Jacobs, one of the 252 workers locked out of Crown Central Petroleum's refinery in Pasadena, Texas. He was at a candlelight vigil celebrating the second anniversary of the lockout in February. "First, we got locked out, then the NLRB [National Labor Relations Board] ruled against us, then the FBI [Federal Bureau of Investigation] came after us, now Crown has filed a lawsuit against us. But we're still here, still fighting; we just keep coming back."

The combative spirit of the locked-out workers was seen again in mid-March at a meeting of around 30 union activists to discuss stepped-up solidarity, especially around the new challenge posed by Crown's lawsuit. Crown filed a civil lawsuit in federal court on Jan. 15, 1998, charging 14 operators who had worked at the catalytic cracking unit at Crown with committing more than 400 acts of sabotage with the "knowledge, consent and encouragement of the union." The suit also charges the secretary-treasurer of Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW) Local 4-227 and the union local itself, along with the 14 unionists, with conspiracy to commit sabotage. It was filed just before the statute of limitations expired.

The allegation of sabotage was used by Crown to justify its lockout of members of OCAW Local 4-227. Their three-year contract had expired on Feb. 1, 1996, and negotiations were deadlocked around management's insistence on laying off hourly workers without regard to seniority, replacing union workers with temporary workers, and other major concessions.

On February 5 managers escorted all the unionized employees out of the plant and locked the front gates. They have kept the refinery running continuously since then with managers, secretaries, and replacement workers.

"The reason why we're here today is that we are still out here resisting — over 200 out of 252 still come out to walk the picket line every week — but we also need to reach out and involve others in our fight," said Dean Cook, one of the defendants in the lawsuit, who opened up the March 17 meeting in solidarity with the two-year-old struggle. "Look at the civil rights movement in this country. They had some good leaders, but it wasn't until tens of thousands got out in the streets that they won. It takes people to make change."

The meeting was held at the union hall of OCAW Local 4-227. Four of the defendants named in the lawsuit were present, as well as around a dozen other locked-out unionists from Crown, fellow OCAW members from the Lyondell-Citgo and Shell Oil refineries, some members of other area unions, and students from the University of Houston.

Cook presented a brief history of the lockout, explaining that Crown postponed the lockout until after a record-breaking freeze had passed and experienced operators and maintenance workers got the units running smoothly.

## 'Sabotage' charge a pretext for lockout

The OCAW charged the company with unfair labor practices for locking the workers out without just cause. The National Labor Relations Board ruled that while Crown had not proven that there had been sabotage, Crown only had to believe that there was sabotage to justify their action.

The FBI opened up a criminal investigation of Crown's charges about a month after the lockout. "They came out at 6 a.m. to get us unaware and stayed for two and a half hours," stated David Arnold, another defendant who had worked 27 years for Crown. "I asked if I needed a lawyer present, and they said no. Finally, I had to tell them to leave because they were asking more and more personal questions, and I was getting mad."

"But read the lawsuit and see," Arnold said. "Nobody would sabotage the plant. It would be like committing suicide, because

we were working there and would have been the first to go."

Crown offered a reward of \$20,000, which was eventually increased to \$60,000, for information leading to a conviction for sabotaging the refinery. There were no takers, but the FBI never closed the case.

"The civil suit filed by Crown is really an attack on all workers," asserted Dean Cook. "They want to take away our homes, our cars, our savings, anything we have left since the lockout. They want to clean out the union treasury. They want to intimidate workers so they will be afraid to speak out and exercise their rights. They want to make workers afraid of being sued, of being investigated by the FBI."

He also pointed to the law firm hired by Crown as an indication of the high stakes involved in this suit. The firm is Akin, Gump, Strauss, Hauer & Feld, "a Washington powerhouse ... one of the city's most visible legal and political institutions," according to the *New York Times*. Robert Strauss, one of the senior partners, was national chairman of the Democratic Party in the 1970s and later U.S. Ambassador to Moscow. Vernon Jordan, a close advisor of President Clinton, is another partner.

Cook reviewed some of the specific charges mentioned in the lawsuit and detailed how events and conversations had been distorted, taken out of context, or flat-out lied about. The defendants have met to put together a point-by-point refutation of each allegation of sabotage.

"Basically, we've been charged for doing nothing but our normal jobs," said another defendant, Tommy Clark. "There isn't any evidence of sabotage, let alone a conspiracy."

## Public defense of framed-up unionists

People at the meeting agreed that a public defense of the 15 unionists charged with sabotage and conspiracy to commit sabotage was necessary to win the case and had many ideas for what to do next.

"We ought to let everyone know about that law firm, scandalize them for representing Crown," volunteered B.J. Powell, an operator at Lyondell-Citgo Refinery. "They're high up in the Democratic Party and isn't the Democratic Party supposed to be the party of working people? What are they doing representing Crown, which locked out workers?"

"Maybe a bunch of us could file an *amicus curiae*, or friend of the court, brief," suggested Doug Bennett, another operator from Lyondell-Citgo. "That way we could show that you aren't alone and have a lot of

## More than 100,000 across France protest rightist National Front



Militant/Derek Jeffers

More than 100,000 people rallied March 28 in Paris and 40 other cities across the country to protest the ultrarightist National Front (FN) party. The lead banner read: "Together for liberty, equality, and fraternity." Chants included, "F like fascist, N like Nazi," and "Down! Down! Down with the National Front!" The FN received 15 percent of the vote in mid-March provincial elections. In five provinces members of French president Jacques Chirac's Rally for the Republic (RPR) party and the allied Union for French Democracy (UDF) accepted the votes of FN counselors to win the provincial presidencies. The five have since resigned under pressure from Chirac and other politicians in the RPR and UDF. The March 28 protest culminated a week of demonstrations against the FN.

support. Another way to get out your side is to get interviews with the media, like the series of articles in the *Houston Chronicle* about 'worked to death.' I know they stirred a debate in our plant. If no one else knows how ridiculous the charges are, it's no good."

Other participants raised the idea of defendants speaking to union meetings or informal house meetings, and proposed going out in the community door-to-door. One idea that received broad support at the meeting was an open letter to Crown, calling on the company to drop the charges in the lawsuit, stop the lies about sabotage, and end the lockout.

Patsy Butler, a former heavy equipment operator at Lyondell-Citgo, backed this idea, saying, "That's the broadest way to get out to people. We can gather signatures in our workplaces and in the community so people who wouldn't come to the picket line or meetings can still show their support."

"Another thing is to encourage people to get out to the picket line," said Jerry Freiwirth, an operator from Shell Oil. "Most of my co-workers think the fight is over, but if they come out to the picket line, they'll see — up close and personal — that this isn't so."

Alvin Freeman, the chairman for the Crown unit of OCAW Local 4-227, was introduced from the audience. He greeted par-

ticipants, saying, "We welcome your input and participation in our fight. This is a very positive step in the right direction."

Some of the operators from Lyondell-Citgo described what is beginning to happen at that refinery as the company gears up for early negotiations. Virtually all other oil companies nationally have offered a three-year extension of the present contract to 2002. Lyondell-Citgo and other Citgo plants have refused to go along with this pattern, claiming they need more concessions. Many of their demands are similar to those of Crown before the lock-out. The present contract ends Jan. 31, 1999. Lyondell-Citgo is starting to harass some of the more outspoken workers, trying to enforce stricter discipline, spreading rumors about sabotage to cover management mistakes, and other actions familiar to the Crown workers.

"I want to warn you Lyondell-Citgo workers to watch your backs. Management is building a case against you already," said Tommy Clark. "At least you have some time to get ready; we didn't."

The meeting ended with the decision to broaden support by building the next bi-weekly meeting.

Patti Iiyama is an operator at Lyondell-Citgo refinery and a member of OCAW Local 4-227.

## Workers occupy Vancouver sawmill protesting company plans to shut plant

BY PAUL KOURI AND ROGER ANNIS

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — Two hundred workers at the Canfor company's Eburne sawmill here voted March 30 to continue their occupation of the factory and stick to their demand that the company reverse its decision to close the facility. Members of the Industrial Wood and Allied Workers of Canada (IWA-Canada) Local 2171 have occupied the mill since March 26. "We've turned down the buyout, now the struggle is really on," explained Robert Hobbs as he emerged from the union meeting and vote held inside company gates.

Canfor has offered a lucrative buyout to the workers, all of whom have 15 or more years' seniority as a result of several rounds of jobs cuts in the past 10 years. The buyout was recommended by IWA-Canada officials, but not the local plant committee. "The company says it will offer us jobs at its other mills, but we don't believe the jobs are there," explained Jeff Pazik in an interview the previous day. He said Canfor has closed five sawmills in the Vancouver area over the past decade. Workers have erased the word

"Safety" from the signs at the entrances to the sawmill and substituted "Lying," so the signs now read, "Lying Is Number One At Canfor."

Sham Atwal, who has worked 25 years at the sawmill, said, "We are not just fighting for ourselves here. Workers at the other companies in the area are encouraging us and telling us to not give up. They believe that they may be next." The union commit-

tee at Eburne has traveled to gain support for the occupation from sawmill workers at the Interfor sawmill at nearby Squamish and from 300 loggers at Canfor Eburne's logging site on Vancouver Island.

Paul Kouri is a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 2952. Roger Annis is a member of the International Association of Machinists Local 764.

### Labor's Giant Step

The First Twenty Years of the CIO: 1936-55

Art Preis

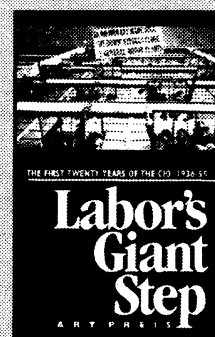
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Leon Trotsky

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# Tensions in Chiapas rise, peasants resist

BY LAURA GARZA  
AND ROSE ANA BERBEO

MEXICO CITY — "The government hasn't carried out what it signed," said Vladimir Montes, 17, at a march in Mexico City's main plaza, the Zócalo. "They think that after a time they'll tire out the EZLN [Zapatista National Liberation Army]. It's illegal for the military to be there — they should get out" of the state of Chiapas. Marchers carried signs demanding freedom for political prisoners, and chanted, "Chiapas, Chiapas, no es cuartel. Fuera ejército de él." (Chiapas, Chiapas, it's not a garrison. Get the army out!)

Leticia Ramírez, a nurse who joined the protest, stated, "Until the government demilitarizes Chiapas, there won't be peace."

The March 16 protest of more than 1,000 people initiated a 100-hour march around the Zócalo. It was called by the National Indigenous Congress (CNI) to oppose a newly announced government initiative to supposedly settle the conflict in southern Mexico.

While tensions remain high in the region of Chiapas, with thousands of federal troops permanently ensconced there and the assassination of indigenous activists an ongoing occurrence, President Ernesto Zedillo signed an initiative on March 14, still to be voted on in the Mexican legislature, proposing changes in the constitution in the area of indigenous rights and culture. The measure signaled an offensive by the government aimed at portraying rebel peasant organizations, the EZLN, and anyone else who doesn't accept Zedillo's proposals for dealing with the conflict in Chiapas as a dangerous obstacle to peace.

Zedillo claims the constitutional changes will guarantee autonomy, promote bilingual education, and guarantee impartial justice, thereby bringing the government into compliance with the San Andrés accords, signed in 1996 by representatives of peasant organizations and government officials. But a number of points the fighters in Chiapas had hoped to address through the accords do not

appear in the proposal. These include the removal of the massive military presence in the region; guarantees of autonomy over ruling bodies that have real authority over the laws to which residents are subjected; and a guarantee of the indigenous people's right to the land, which is the heart of the dispute in the region. The San Andrés accords were the result of negotiations the government was forced into after its initial attempts to smash the peasant uprising that began in January 1994 were met with widespread protests. But the agreements were never implemented. Negotiations over their implementation broke off as the government continued its military offensive.

The constitutional initiative was greeted with widespread opposition from peasant organizations in Chiapas, organizations in support of indigenous rights, and representatives of opposition political parties. In full page ads taken out in several newspapers, the CNI urged people to join a hunger strike during the 100-hour action in the Zócalo and spelled out conditions for resuming talks. These conditions include the reactivation of the negotiation process with previously agreed upon bodies as intermediaries; freedom for Zapatista political prisoners; and an end to the militarization of the region and to the threats against indigenous communities from military and paramilitary groups.

Among those protesting in the Zócalo March 16 were representatives of a group of 700 peasants who had come directly from Chiapas to demand freedom for 12 prisoners, as well as to call for an investigation into the murder of seven Tojolabal Indian activists whose bodies were discovered in February.

The government's recent moves are aimed at justifying further actions against



Militant/Dan Dickeson

More than 1,000 marched in Mexico City March 16 demanding troops leave Chiapas

the peasant population. Zedillo's initiative comes in the context of a stepped-up campaign against the EZLN, portraying it as responsible for the violence in the region, and continual activity of rightist paramilitary groups who have been given free reign by the army. It was this situation that led to the December 1997 massacre of some 45 peasants in the town of Acteal, Chiapas, which brought worldwide attention to the region once again.

The government has been running a series of television commercials that show happy natives and end with the assurance, "The government is complying with the San Andrés accords." But along with this has come headlines in the big-business press demanding the Zapatista leadership respond positively to Zedillo's proposals or be at fault for the impasse in the so-called peace talks. One government spokesperson has been widely quoted as saying that if the EZLN rejects the proposal, the semilegal status it has enjoyed in the form of a suspension of arrest orders could be ended.

"This is one of the most dangerous moments we have faced in four years," stated Rodrigo Chávez, an organizer of the 100-hour protest. He echoed a widespread sentiment that Zedillo's moves head in the direction of initiating further military action against the EZLN and its sympathizers.

Meanwhile, the government sought to use the sharp drops in the price of oil on the world market to continue its assault on the standard of living of Mexico's working class. Government officials have indicated the Zedillo administration will take measures to maintain stability in the economy, including further slashing social spending to make up for the drop in revenue it receives from taxes on oil exports. Finance Minister José Angel Gurria announced March 24 the second such "adjustment" to the budget this year.

Laura Garza is a member of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) in Houston. Rose Ana Berbeo is a member of the IAM in Newark, New Jersey.

## Caterpillar workers: truthful 'Militant' articles were important during struggle

BY JOSHUA CARROLL

CHICAGO — "We would like to thank the many, many people from the *Militant*... who helped us and for their great coverage through this struggle. They helped us on our picket lines and at our rallies.... Their true fact reporting articles were very important to us," read a letter from six union activists from East Peoria, Illinois, who have been involved in the seven-year battle by the United Auto Workers (UAW) against Caterpillar.

The letter was read by Verónica Poses, a member of the National Executive Committee of the Young Socialists, to an audience of 60 people attending a one-day socialist regional socialist conference in Chicago to welcome back *Militant* reporters Argiris Malapanis and Jack Willey from their trip to the Balkans and Cairo.

The conference, with participation from around the Midwest, was the site of the most successful fund-raising for the \$110,000 international *Militant* Fund campaign to date: some \$5,400 was collected in checks and cash. Supporters of the *Militant* in Chicago collected more than \$4,000 in contributions there. Participants from Des Moines contributed \$510, and those present from Minneapolis and St. Paul, Minnesota, donated \$650.

Malapanis and Willey gave an eyewitness account of the revolt by workers and farmers in Kosovo fighting for the right to self-determination for the Albanian population there, and the moves by imperialist powers toward military confrontation with Yugoslavia, Russia, and other workers states. They also spoke about a meeting in Cairo of the World Federation of Democratic Youth, and the historic opportunities today to begin to rebuild a worldwide anti-imperialist youth organization. Willey referred to the demonstrations of tens of thousands of students in Egypt against U.S. imperialism's war threats against the people of Iraq. Those involved in these actions and the mobilizations for self-determination in Kosovo were among the forces out of which a new anti-imperialist international movement would be built, he stressed.

During the discussion following the presentations, several participants described talking to co-workers who are Albanian and Yugoslav about the fight for Kosovo's independence.

Malapanis pointed out that one of the most important things socialist workers can do is help these workers link up with Puerto Rican independence fighters, workers involved in fights against Caterpillar and other bosses, and others in struggle.

Several conference participants described how workers involved in struggles appreciated the *Militant's* coverage, not just of labor battles but of other fights of workers, farmers, and those fighting national oppression.

Ray Parsons, a worker at Bridgestone/Firestone in Des Moines, talked about how he and other supporters of the *Militant* from Des Moines sold 68 copies of the paper in three plant-gate visits to workers involved in a contract fight at Case Corp.

BY JULIETTE MONTAUK

NEWARK, New Jersey — *Militant* supporters around the world have begun to host political meetings to raise money for the *Militant* Fund.

Here in Newark, Ma'mud Shirvani spoke on the growing conflict between imperialism and the workers states in the Caspian Sea region. Those attending the meeting contributed nearly \$1,000 and made pledges for \$3,000.

At a special *Militant* Labor Forum in Christchurch, New Zealand, partisans of the *Militant* received \$765 in pledges and donations. Patrick Brown, the featured speaker, reported on the recent International Book Fair in Havana, which he participated in to promote books published by Pathfinder Press. Brown was also part of a *Militant* reporting team

in Cuba that among other things interviewed cooperative workers near Havana on how they are meeting the challenge of organizing agricultural production. Brown spoke at a similar forum in Auckland the week before, where the 25 people present pledged or donated \$930.

From Birmingham, Alabama, socialist steelworker Meg Novak reports that *Militant* supporters there who are members of the United Steelworkers of America have taken on a goal of raising \$75 from co-workers for the fund. Novak also said supporters of the socialist paper in the Birmingham area have taken steps to accelerate collection of previously made pledges and get back on schedule.

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Militant Fund Drive March 14 - May 10			
CITY/COUNTRY	GOAL	PAID	%
<b>Canada</b>			
Montreal	1,517		0%
Toronto	2,414		0%
Vancouver	1,000		0%
<b>Canada</b>	<b>4,931</b>		<b>0%</b>
<b>New Zealand</b>			
Auckland	930		0%
Christchurch	700		0%
<b>New Zealand</b>	<b>1,630</b>		<b>0%</b>
<b>Sweden</b>	<b>700</b>		<b>0%</b>
<b>United Kingdom</b>			
Manchester			
London			
<b>United Kingdom</b>	<b>1,000</b>		<b>0%</b>
<b>United States</b>			
<b>Chicago</b>	<b>9,500</b>	<b>4,131</b>	<b>43%</b>
<b>Des Moines</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>725</b>	<b>29%</b>
<b>Philadelphia</b>	<b>4,000</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>25%</b>
Boston	6,000	1,280	21%
Detroit	3,500	656	19%
Pittsburgh	5,000	550	11%
Newark	8,500	900	11%
Twin Cities	7,000	650	9%
Birmingham	2,500	200	8%
New York	14,000	640	5%
Atlanta	3,200	30	1%
Cleveland	3,000		0%
Houston	6,000		0%
Los Angeles	9,000		0%
Miami	2,500		0%
San Francisco	10,000		0%
Seattle	7,000		0%
Washington, D.C.	3,000		0%
Other		25	
<b>U.S. total</b>	<b>106,200</b>	<b>10,787</b>	<b>10%</b>
<b>INT'L TOTAL:</b>	<b>114,461</b>	<b>10,787</b>	<b>9%</b>
<b>SHOULD BE:</b>	<b>110,000</b>	<b>27,500</b>	<b>25%</b>



# 'Militant' supporters plan to step up sales April 4-19

Continued from front page

through the international drive to sell subscriptions to the socialist weekly and its sister magazine *Perspectiva Mundial* in Spanish. Supporters of the socialist press are preparing a two-week special sales effort starting April 4 and ending April 19 to put the international subscription campaign back on track, which has slipped 7 percent behind schedule. Participating in events like the FUPI congress and organizing consistent sales activities among workers and young people in struggle highlight how supporters of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* can take advantage of political opportunities open right now to reverse this trend and win new readers to the socialist press.

Socialist workers in Miami, who organized the sales and reporting team to Puerto Rico, "strive to have consistent teams going door-to-door in the Black and working-class communities," wrote Angel Lariscy in a note to the *Militant*. "A regional sales team went to Tampa last weekend to sell door-to-door near the Air Force base and at the University of South Florida, where they sold one *Militant* subscription and 21 copies of the paper, including four issues sold to active-duty GIs."

"We went to visit the Maple Leaf meat-packers who recently ended their strike in Burlington, Ontario, and sold two subscriptions," said Rosemary Ray from Toronto. "One of the new subscribers also bought the Pathfinder book *The Truth About Yugoslavia — Why Working People Should Oppose Intervention*."

Many *Militant* supporters have reported that some of their co-workers are from Yugoslavia, Albania, and elsewhere in that region. The *Militant*'s coverage from the recent reporting trip to the Balkans can be a special attraction, and anyone who subscribes can buy the book *The Truth About Yugoslavia* for a special price of \$5. New subscribers can also take advantage of a special offer to buy *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions* — in English, Spanish, or French — for \$15 when the sign up.

Ray said the two meat-packers have been invited to attend the April 10-12 convention of the Communist League in Canada and the concurrent socialist conference (see ad on page 6). "We invited some Tamils to the convention who are involved in fighting the deportation of a Tamil

refugee," she added. Tamils, an oppressed nationality in Sri Lanka, are fighting for self-determination on the southeast Asian island. The Young Socialists are also building the convention by setting up a class on the Cuban revolution at York University.

Janice Lynn in Washington, D.C. reports activists there participated in several events last week where they sold 10 *Militant* subscriptions and 10 copies of various issues of the Marxist magazine *New International* (in French, English, and Spanish) and some 60 Pathfinder titles worth \$650.

"On March 25 several thousand Albanians demonstrated calling for independence for Kosovo," Lynn wrote. "One *Militant* supporter sold 22 single copies of the paper and two subscriptions. While one of the official demands of the demonstration was for NATO intervention, participants were glad to see a paper that supported their independence struggle. Two people from the demonstration came to a *Militant* Labor Forum later in the week for further discussions on the fight of Albanians for an independent Kosovo."

Lynn said a *Militant* supporter from Boston joined the D.C. sales team at the March 27 "Jericho 1998" demonstration. More than 3,000 people, overwhelmingly young, rallied at the White House demanding amnesty and the release of political prisoners in the United States. The team sold 10 subscriptions and 29 Pathfinder titles there, mostly to high school and college students.

"We sold 26 copies of the *Militant* to workers at the plant gate of Case Corp. in Burlington, Iowa," reports Ray Parsons, a member of United Steelworkers of America in Des Moines, Iowa. "We found that at least 15 of these workers knew the paper from getting it before, or from seeing it around the plant, and so they got their money out as soon as they saw we were there. One worker said he had bought a subscription on his own recently. In four plant gate sales we have sold nearly 100 copies of the paper and two subscriptions."

*Militant* supporters in Des Moines are organizing a regional sales team to packinghouses, working-class communities, and campuses in the Midwest April 18-25. Anyone interested in joining can contact them through the listing on page 12.

## 'New International' on Iraq is top seller at Mexico City book fair

BY CRAIG HONTIS

MEXICO CITY — "I came to your booth in 1996 and again last year, and I bought *Che Guevara, Cuba and the Road to Socialism*," said 22-year-old Alonso Arriaga, as he looked through the books at the Pathfinder booth at the 19th International Book Fair here. This time, Arriaga's selections included the Spanish-language editions of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-class Politics and the Trade Unions*, and issue no. 1 of *Nueva Internacional*, containing "The Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's Assault on Iraq," both by Jack Barnes.

Participants purchased more than 200 Pathfinder books and pamphlets during the March 13-22 fair, totaling over \$1,500. This included 53 copies of *New International*, the magazine of Marxist politics and theory distributed by Pathfinder, in both Spanish and English. The top seller, with 23 copies, was issue no. 1 of *Nueva Internacional*. That was followed by 21 of the newly-released Spanish-language edition of *Celebrating the Homecoming of Ernesto Che Guevara's Reinforcement Brigade to Cuba*. Pathfinder supporters also sold eight copies of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* in Spanish.

Organized by Pathfinder supporters in Los Angeles, 10 volunteers from five cities across the United States staffed its booth.

In addition to the book fair, other young people met Pathfinder team members at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM), one of the largest campuses in Latin America. Throughout the week, Pathfinder tables set up at the departments of Political Science, Philosophy, and Econom-

ics resulted in wide-ranging discussions, and brisk sales.

Tens of thousands of workers, students, and book professionals came to visit the booths set up by a couple of hundred book distributors, publishers, and bookstores who participated in the fair. The widespread interest in the Cuban revolution was noted in *La Feria de Minería*, an attractive booklet published daily during the fair, where the booth of Cuban publishers was featured on the front-page of one of its issues with an accompanying article.

Pathfinder Press hosted a reception at the book fair March 21 where Luis Madrid, a representative from the publisher's office New York, spoke about the importance of Pathfinder's arsenal for fighters today. A young woman attending the reception, who bought a subscription to the *Militant*, explained she was particularly interested in going to Cuba to learn more about the revolution, and its relevance for Mexico.



Selling Pathfinder books at March 13-22 Mexico City book fair

Militant/Dan Dickeson

### SUBSCRIPTION DRIVE MARCH 14 - MAY 10

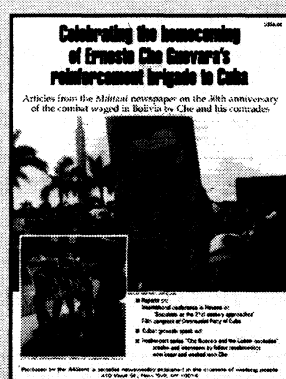
	Militant Goal	Sold	%	PM Goal	Sold	NI Goal	Sold
Sweden	16	7	44%	6	2	10	5
New Zealand							
Christchurch	25	8	32%	1		8	1
Auckland	35	9	26%	2		8	1
Wellington	4	1	25%	1		1	
N.Z. Total	64	18	28%	4	0	17	2
Canada							
Vancouver	50	14	28%	6	1	20	6
Toronto	45	11	24%	8	2	20	7
Montreal	25	4	16%	7	4	25	10
Canada Total	120	29	24%	21	7	65	23
United Kingdom							
London	45	10	22%	8	1	35	6
Manchester	26	4	15%	2		18	3
UK Total	71	14	20%	10	1	53	9
United States							
Boston	50	16	32%	20	7	40	12
Philadelphia	35	11	31%	8	0	10	2
Atlanta	30	9	30%	13	2	18	3
Miami	45	13	29%	22	7	20	8
Houston	40	10	25%	10	5	10	11
Washington, DC	45	11	24%	15	1	15	10
Cleveland	35	7	20%	8	2	10	
Los Angeles	100	19	19%	50	6	50	38
Detroit	40	7	18%	8	1	15	
Seattle	70	12	17%	15	2	25	
New York	150	17	11%	75	17	75	17
San Francisco	80	9	11%	30	11	35	5
Chicago	90	9	10%	40	2	30	7
Newark, NJ	125	13	10%	50	6	60	20
Des Moines	45	4	9%	25	2	25	2
Birmingham, AL	50	4	8%	10	4	15	2
Pittsburgh	50	3	6%	3	0	15	1
Twin Cities, MN	70	4	6%	12	3	20	
U.S. Total	1150	178	15%	414	78	488	138
Australia	16	2	13%	5	3	10	1
Iceland	9	1	11%	1		3	
Int'l totals	1437	249	18%	460	91	643	178
Goal/Should be	1400	350	25%	450	113	600	150

#### IN THE UNIONS

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

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

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# Quebecois self-determination is central to

BY JOHN STEELE

TORONTO — Ottawa's drive against the resistance of the Quebecois nation to their national oppression took a new twist March 26, when federal Conservative Party leader Jean Charest resigned his position in order to lead the Quebec Liberal party into the next provincial election expected this year.

Charest, who has the backing of Ottawa and ruling class politicians throughout the country, aims to prevent another Quebec referendum on sovereignty by defeating the bourgeois nationalist Parti Quebecois government in Quebec City. The PQ government, led by Premier Lucien Bouchard, is committed to holding the third Quebec sovereignty referendum since 1980 if it wins the majority of seats in the Quebec national assembly.

In the last referendum in October 1995, Canada's capitalist rulers suffered a serious political defeat when the "Yes" to sovereignty forces came to within 1.6 percentage points of winning and the majority of Quebecois, who number six million out of Quebec's population of seven million, voted "Yes." Since then, Ottawa has failed to weaken the desire of millions of Quebecois for their own country.

As a result, the tone has sharpened in ruling class circles over how to "save" Canada from the "unpatriotic separatists" who want to "wreck" it. Canadian nationalist rhetoric and flag-waving directed against the Que-

becois has intensified, closely related to Ottawa's participation in Washington's war drive against Iraq and military buildup in Yugoslavia and Central Europe.

This chauvinist campaign aims to prevent working people inside and outside of Quebec from supporting the struggle of the Quebecois for independence, justice, and equality. Some politicians and others have suggested that in the event of a sovereign referendum victory, Ottawa should use armed force to keep the federal state intact.

A example of this was the March 17 lecture on "Quebec Whistles Dixie" by Princeton University historian James McPherson. It was delivered to an overflow lecture at the University of Toronto. McPherson, an "expert" on the 1861-65 U.S. Civil War, argued, "The causes of the U.S. Civil War bear an uncanny similarity to the situation in modern-day Quebec." McPherson claims that Ottawa, by fighting against Quebec independence, promotes a progressive and enlightened "civic nationalism." Those fighting for Quebec sovereignty, he says, are narrow-minded "ethnic nationalists" with a backward and reactionary outlook similar to that of the southern slaveholding confederacy that fought to secede from the United States.

McPherson's lecture was published in the March issue of *Saturday Night* magazine. The nationally-circulated English-language *Globe and Mail* published a summary of the

talk. It will also be rebroadcast nationally on CBC Radio One's Ideas May 6, and published in March in a 90-page booklet.

To explain the truth about the Quebecois struggle, and counter this chauvinist, anti-Quebecois campaign, which serves only to buttress the rule of Canada's billionaire capitalist families, the Communist League and the Young Socialists sponsored a series of weekend classes for working-class fighters and youth. The classes were given at an international socialist educational conference in Seattle, a Feb. 28-March 1 weekend class series in Toronto, and a March 22 class series in Montreal. The class presenters were Communist League Central Committee member Michel Prairie, and Montreal Young Socialist leader Jason Phelps, who is a member of the United Steelworkers of America.

## Decades resisting national oppression

"The need for their own country is the conclusion that millions of Quebecois have drawn after decades of struggle against the institutionalized national oppression they experience at the hands of the federal government," explained Jason Phelps in his class presentation.

"The majority of the workers at the factory where I work are Quebecois, but the boss is an English-speaker," said Phelps. "However, our union contract is written in French and it says that written communica-

tions in the plant must be in French."

Phelps explained that 25 years ago most union contracts were written in English. The right to work in French was won through massive struggles of workers, youth, and others. Today this right is codified in Quebec's Law 101 adopted by the Parti Quebecois government in 1977. The federal government has used the Supreme Court to weaken this law on several occasions.

"The Quebecois nation has been forged in the struggle against oppression based on their language, which is French," said Phelps. "The Quebecois national consciousness has its roots in the resistance to the forced assimilation policy of the government that was put in place after the defeat of the 1837-38 bourgeois democratic revolution," he continued. "The rebellion was spearheaded by revolutionary workers and farmers who lived in what is now Ontario and Quebec.

"Their demands included the equality of those who spoke French and English," said Phelps. "But, the defeat of the revolution led to institutionalized discrimination against those who spoke French. This oppression was at the heart of the Canadian confederation formed in 1867.

"The resistance of the French majority to the divide-and-rule policies of the British-backed rulers was later reflected in consistent and often massive opposition by Quebecois to participation in Ottawa's imperialist wars, including World War II."

Phelps noted that a substantial industrialization of Quebec occurred in the first decades of the 20th century, leading to the formation of a modern Quebecois working class. This explains why by the beginning of World War II, the oppression of the Quebecois had become increasingly explosive. Quebecois workers earned 10-25 cents an hour less than workers in Ontario and worked 4-12 hours longer per week. In 1941 the Quebec infant mortality rate was 75.9 per 1,000 births. In Ontario it was 45.6. The tuberculosis rate was qualitatively higher in Quebec than Ontario. The illiteracy rate was double. Out of 27 libraries in Quebec only nine were French-language. Stores signs in downtown Montreal were mostly in English. In major department stores like Eaton's it was difficult to get service in the French language. Hospitals and other social services were inferior for Quebecois. The Quebecois were also placed in a political straight jacket by the federal government, which refused to recognize them as a nation with the right to self-determination, up to and including independence.

Phelps described how the explosion of union battles across Canada before and after the Second World War, which consolidated the industrial unions, continued on into the 1950s in Quebec, long after it had ended in the rest of Canada and the United States. Massive struggles of newly-organized hospital workers, teachers, and other government employees reached their peak in the 1960s and 1970s, dovetailing with militant community and student mobilizations. The demand for the right to live, learn, and work in French was raised by hundreds of thousands of fighters who simply refused to "speak white" any more. The Quebecois fighters strongly identified with the Black civil rights movement against the racist system of segregation in the southern United States and the anticolonial revolutions particularly in Cuba and Algeria.

## Dynamic of national struggle

Canada's capitalist rulers were terrified at the uncontrolled character of the nationalist and union mobilizations and the difficulty the new and weak union bureaucracy had in keeping it in check, Phelps added. Above all Ottawa feared the tendency for the struggle to evolve toward independent working-class political action and to win support among working people in the rest of Canada.

"In October 1970, following the kidnapping and killing of a Quebec government minister by the FLQ (Quebec Liberation Front), Ottawa used the pretext of an 'apprehended insurrection' to declare the War Measures Act and ordered the Canadian army to occupy Quebec," said Phelps. "Hundreds of students, nationalists, union activists and leaders, socialists, and others were picked up in the dead of night and jailed for weeks without charges. The troops occupied Montreal during a civic election when a

Socialist Conference ♦ April 11 ♦ Toronto

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**SPEAKER: Argiris Malapanis**

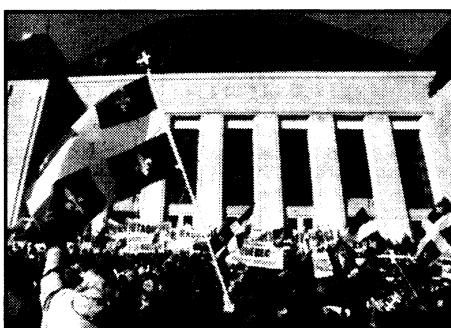
staff writer for the 'Militant' newspaper; co-author of 'The Truth about Yugoslavia: Why Working People Should Oppose Intervention'

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- ♦ Report from Cairo Conference of the World Federation of Democratic Youth
- ♦ From Ireland to Puerto Rico, from Namibia to Cuba and the U.S.: A Vanguard of Anti-Imperialist Youth Are in Contact

**SPEAKER: Jack Willey**

organizer, National Executive Committee of the Young Socialists in the U.S.



Top: Striking meatpackers picket Maple Leaf Foods in Edmonton, Alberta, December 1997.

Bottom: Supporters of Quebec independence rally in Ottawa, February 1998.

### SECOND SESSION FIFTH CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION OF THE COMMUNIST LEAGUE IN CANADA

(Open to delegates and supporters)

Opens Friday evening, April 10  
Adjourns by 5 p.m. Sunday, April 12

### TORONTO, SAT., APRIL 11

Clarion Essex Park Hotel

300 Jarvis Street

[near Yonge and College subway]

9 a.m.-10 a.m. Registration

10 a.m.-12:15 Eyewitness to  
Resistance in  
Kosovo and Albania

12:15-1:30 p.m. Lunch

1:30-4:00 p.m. Rebuilding an Anti-  
Imperialist Youth  
Movement Worldwide

[4:30 p.m. Second session of Communist League  
convention resumes with main political report]

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Jack Willey and Argiris Malapanis will be just back from  
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# Canadian revolution

newly-formed union-based party threatened to gain wide support as a jumping off point for a province-wide labor party. The embryonic labor party movement collapsed under the weight of the military occupation and charges it was a front for terrorism."

But Ottawa's move succeeded only to temporally dampen the movement. By the fall of 1971, it was in full swing again. The union and student mobilizations culminated in a spontaneous province-wide general strike of tens of thousands in 1972 to defend union leaders jailed in the context of a fight by public sector unions for a \$100-a-week minimum wage. The towns of Sept-Îles, Thetford, Sorel, and Joliette were occupied during several days by workers, the police were chased from the streets, and labor councils took control of aspects of life for a brief period.

The massive struggle by Quebecois against their national oppression had a big impact on the labor, student, and women's movements across the country. Quebec unions were at the forefront of the 1973-74 struggles for a sliding scale of wages against raising inflation and of the 1975-1976 fight against Ottawa's imposed wage freeze. The struggle launched in early 1970s by women in Quebec for abortion rights eventually led to the 1988 historic decision by the Supreme Court of Canada to void Ottawa's anti-abortion law.

Through the 1970s however, a reformist trade union bureaucracy was consolidated. Acting as a transmission belt for the class interests and values of a newly developing layer of Quebecois capitalist families and professional middle class, it was able to channel the struggle of Quebec's workers and farmers behind the bourgeois nationalist Parti Quebecois that had emerged from a split in the Quebec Liberal party. The PQ was elected for the first time in 1976.

In 1980 the PQ government held a sovereignty referendum. Despite mobilizations in the streets, campuses, and factories it was defeated after a massive campaign of threats by Ottawa and economic blackmail by corporations threatening to leave Quebec.

"The defeat of the 1980 sovereignty referendum took place on the eve of the deep 1981-82 recession, and the very beginning of a 15-year retreat by the labor movement across the country in face of the austerity drive of the bosses and their government. The downturn hit the Quebecois hardest and national oppression began to deepen as the employers moved against the gains won in past struggles" said Phelps. "In this context, in 1982 Ottawa was able, without Quebec's consent, to impose on it a new federal constitution that undermined a number of its historic rights."

"In contrast, the October 1995 sovereignty referendum coincided with a rise in working-class resistance in Canada, the United States, and other imperialist countries such as France," said Phelps. "This growing resistance was reflected in the fact that the 'Yes' side almost won the referendum. Once again, for sure, the struggle for Quebec independence will be on the front lines of the fight against Canadian imperialism."

## Fight for workers and farmers gov't

Communist League leader Michel Prairie reviewed how the participation of communists in the fight against national oppression had "irreversibly transformed the communist movement in Canada."

"There was no communist organization in Quebec in the early 1960s," said Prairie. "In response to the explosive character of the class struggle and the radicalization of Quebecois youth, the League for Socialist Action, the then-predecessor organization of the Communist League, sent some of its members from Toronto to Montreal in 1964 to open a branch, learn French, and participate in the union, student, and national struggles."

"Through their participation in the struggle, communists reached the conclusion that the Quebecois were an oppressed nation," said Prairie. "They advocated that all working people across Canada support the Quebecois fight for national self-determination."

"In 1970, one month before Ottawa sent the army into Quebec, communists took a position in support of the fight for Quebec's independence and fielded a candidate for mayor in the Montreal municipal elections,"

Prairie continued. "They decided to campaign to convince working people everywhere to support the fight for Quebec independence because winning support for this struggle is a precondition for forging working-class unity in this country."

"The fight for the independence of Quebec is an integral part of the fight to replace capitalist political power in Ottawa with a workers' and farmers' government," Prairie explained.

"It has mobilized hundreds of thousands of workers and youth in powerful mass struggles against the most decisive enemy of all working people in Canada — the Canadian imperialist state and its government in Ottawa. Today this struggle is a major obstacle for the ruling class in its austerity drive against workers across the country. It also hampers Ottawa's Canadian nationalist flag-waving efforts to convince workers to support its imperialist foreign policy, including the use of Canadian troops against working people in places like Bosnia, the Middle East, and against the Albanian independence movement in Kosovo."

Prairie described the lessons communists drew from their sectarian decision to call for abstention in the 1980 Quebec sovereignty referendum. This error was made on the grounds that the referendum was organized by a capitalist government led by the bourgeois nationalist Parti Quebecois. "As communists, we understand that the fight for Quebec independence won't be won in the ballot box, but in the factories and in the streets by the action of millions of workers, farmers, and youth," said Prairie. "But when millions of working people draw a line between themselves and their oppressors in Ottawa—as it was the case in 1980—we have to throw ourselves in the battle as it actually happens, without condition. This is why we campaigned for the 'Yes' side in the 1995 referendum."

"The continued resistance of new genera-



Demonstrators wave Quebec flag at a pro-sovereignty rally in Montreal Feb. 20, 1998.

tions of Quebecois to their national oppression is a fighting example to all working people," Prairie pointed out. "This resistance is a weapon that can be used to overcome the divisions along national lines imposed on us by our class enemies and their hired politicians in Ottawa, in whose class interests it is to keep Canada a prison house of nations."

"Understanding this is a life and death question for other oppressed people like Canada's 1 million Native people, who face intense racism and national oppression at the hands of the federal government," said Prairie. "Despite violent repression by the cops

pendence.

"Understanding this working-class line of march is the bedrock for the Communist League's strategy of building a unified, centralized, communist party based in the industrial working class and its unions," said Prairie. "It is only with this kind of leadership organization tying together in a single fist working-class fighters from Quebec and the rest of the country that victory against the oppressors and warmakers in Ottawa will be possible."

John Steele is a member of International Association of Machinists Local 2113.

## University students in Puerto Rico host pro-independence conference

### Continued from front page

U.S. prisons for his anti-imperialist actions. He continued, "Most of the university students are the children of working people. When workers are under attack, such as through the effects of privatization, their children pay the consequences." The rise in pro-independence sentiment "is not a coincidence, it is based on objective reality."

A one-day general strike of the labor movement here last October, in response to threats by the Puerto Rican government to privatize the telephone company, had a deep impact that was registered at the Congress in comments by students who participated in that action.

FUPI chapters have also helped organize protests in Vieques, where a U.S. Navy base occupies some two-thirds of the island. In the last several years there have been more than a dozen protests against a proposed radar installation on the island. In a document adopted by the congress, FUPI declared, "Our homeland is one of the main launching points of U.S. imperialism in the Americas. It is the military bastion from which they secure their domination over Latin America."

"They steal our land to attack other people!" declared FUPI member Ismael Guadalupe Torres from Vieques during the congress discussion.

Pedro Zenon commented, "We don't want the navy in Puerto Rico, Cuba, or in any other place. We want a world free of the military boot that crushes us daily."

FUPI has a rich history of resisting militarization of Puerto Rico. During the early 1970s, FUPI waged a successful fight for the expulsion of the Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) from the Rio Piedras campus of the University of Puerto Rico.

Political presentations and discussions at the congress included the history of the U.S. invasion and colonization of Puerto Rico, the fight to free Puerto Rican political prisoners, a history of the student movement for independence, and an official presentation of FUPI's political principles. There were

video showings on the U.S. invasion of Panama, and the fight of the people of Vieques against U.S. military occupation of their land.

The political principles debated and adopted pledged to continue the fight for independence and socialism, for autonomy and democracy in the universities, for unifying progressive forces, for international solidarity, for environmental justice, and against patriarchal ideology.

Numerous changes were proposed from the floor, most of which strengthened the anti-imperialist character of the documents.

Frank Torres, national president of FUPI, talked about the importance of international solidarity. "One of our political principles is international solidarity with all revolutionary processes and understanding that we come from a Latin American and a worldwide reality," he said. "We understand we have a common enemy, which is imperialism. We understand Cuba as one of the bastions that historically has generated great opposition to imperialism, specifically North American imperialism."

In an act of solidarity with the Cuban people, FUPI is planning to send a delegation to Cuba this summer, where they will dedicate a bust of Fefel Varona. Varona was a leader of FUPI during the 1960s who was killed by the U.S. military in Vietnam while on a solidarity visit.

The Young Socialists (YS) from the United States presented greetings to the congress. Cecilia Ortega, a member of the YS National Committee who is a chemical worker in Chicago, expressed solidarity with Puerto Rican independence fighters. She pledged efforts to build the July 25 demonstrations in the United States to free Puerto Rican political prisoners and celebrate the 100th year of resistance to U.S. imperialism.

Ortega described the participation of Young Socialists in struggles by workers in the United States, such as the UAW members at Caterpillar. "We have organized demonstrations against U.S. war threats against

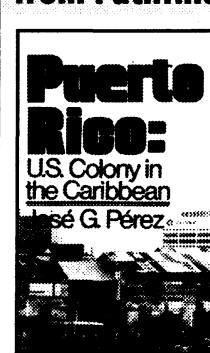
Iraq," she continued. "We explain to fellow workers and youth that the expansion of NATO is part of the preparations of the U.S. rulers' drive to take back the territories where workers made revolutions to free their countries from the grip of capitalism," Ortega said.

Participants of the congress included high school students who are members of the Pro-Independence Student Federation (FEPI). They described the challenges high school students face in the fight for Puerto Rican independence, such as the fight for free speech and the right to hold meetings against the overwhelming police presence in the high schools.

Ernesto Juan Delgado Soto described how he was expelled from high school for wearing a button celebrating Che Guevara's life around the 30th anniversary of Guevara's assassination in Bolivia. His classmates rallied to his defense, and Delgado was readmitted to school.

Wendy Lyons is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees in New York. Jake Perasso is a member of the Young Socialists in Santa Cruz.

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# Albanians rally for Kosovo independence

Those who led 1997 revolt against Berisha are in forefront of solidarity actions

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS  
AND BOBBIS MISAILIDES

TIRANA, Albania — "Kosovo is our blood." That was among the main slogans of a demonstration of 4,000 people here March 8 in solidarity with the struggle for self-determination of Albanians in Kosovo. Similar actions took place around the country the following days.

"We gathered outside the downtown campus of the University of Tirana and then marched to Skender Bay square to join the main rally," said Kliton, an engineering student at that school who asked that his last name not be used. About 2,000 students took part in the action.

The governing Socialist Party (SP), the main opposition Democratic Party (DP), and organizations throughout the country's political spectrum endorsed the demonstration. Prime Minister Fatos Nano of the SP spoke at the rally, along with Democratic Party chief and former president Sali Berisha. The big-business media in Greece and elsewhere in the region had given the impression that Berisha initiated the action and his party was the main force behind it.

"That was a token participation by the political parties," said Neritan Bushi, another student at the University of Tirana. "They have to do something when so many people support our brothers and sisters in Kosovo. But they are not so inclined to mobilize people in the streets, especially after last year's rebellion that brought down Berisha. It was the students who played the major role." Among the main initiators of the action were Albanian students from Kosovo who go to the university here.

Since early March, the Independent Students Union at the University of Tirana, in collaboration with the Kosovo student groups, has organized weekly marches and rallies at the Yugoslav embassy and elsewhere in the city, Kliton and Bushi said in a March 19 interview here. They are demanding an end to the state of siege of Kosovo by the regime in Belgrade and supporting self-determination for Albanians there.

Nano's government requested that NATO troops be deployed at Albania's border with Yugoslavia to supposedly stem the flow of arms and guerrilla fighters into Kosovo and "assure stability." Washington and its imperialist allies in NATO agreed to provide economic and technical support to Albania's military at a March 11 meeting in Brussels, but stopped short of accepting Tirana's invitation for dispatching a "peacekeeping force" at this time.

The Atlantic military alliance, though, took another step toward intervention about two weeks later. "Nato announced yesterday the dispatch of specialist advisers to Albania to help it beef up security on its border with Yugoslavia and crack down on smuggling of arms to ethnic Albanian Kosovars inside Yugoslavia," said the March 28 *Financial Times* of London. By the end of March, the Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe had set up a four-member civilian monitoring group at the Albania-Kosovo border to assess conditions.

Among the several dozen students, workers, and others interviewed by *Militant* reporters, opposition to imperialist military intervention ran deep.

"NATO means war," said Bushi. "Every time I hear 'peacekeeping' I worry. Look at what the United States is doing in Iraq. Look at what they've done in Bosnia," he added, referring to the 1995 U.S.-led bombing of that Yugoslav republic and its subsequent occupation by NATO troops. "We don't want them here or in Kosovo."

Many students and others drew on their experience with imperialist troops from Italy, Greece, and other countries being deployed to Albania last year. "It was a foxy way, a sneaky way for Europe to come in and try to profit from our problems," said Imelda Shinko, a student at the University of Vlore. Shinko helped organize defense for 57 students on hunger strike in that city in February 1997, which was the prelude to the uprising against Berisha there. "Twice I was part of bringing citizens to the university who came with bats, brooms, kitchen knives, sticks — whatever weapons they could find — to defend the students when

Albanians demonstrate in Tirana March 20 in solidarity with struggle for self-determination of Albanian nationality in Kosovo (right). March 15 silent demonstration of 20,000 in Pristina, Kosovo, to honor those killed by Serbian police (below).

Below: Militant/Argiris Malapanis



we heard Berisha's police were coming to bust up the hunger strike," she said. Many of the students and workers who led last year's revolt were also at the center of organizing the recent demonstrations supporting the popular resistance in Kosovo.

While such marches and rallies took place in neighboring Fier, as well as Shkoder, Durres, Elbasan, Korca, Gjirokastr, and many other Albanian cities, the mobilization in Vlore was reportedly the largest. Between 8,000 and 10,000 people took part in the March 9 rally at the city's Flamur Square (Square of the Flag) — the site of daily gatherings a year ago during the anti-government revolt. Vlore was the hotbed of that rebellion.

## The 1997 armed rebellion

The revolt was sparked in January 1997, when fraudulent investment funds promoted by Berisha's regime, the so-called pyramid schemes, collapsed and hundreds of thousands of working people lost their life savings. "I worked for two years in Greece in construction," said Bushi, "and I had put everything I had in the pyramids. All of a sudden it was gone."

About 300,000 Albanians have emigrated to Greece since the early 1990s in search of jobs and a living income. In Albania they are faced with widespread unemployment and drastic cuts in social services as a result of Berisha's "market reforms." Hundreds of thousands of others emigrated to Italy, Germany, and other countries in Europe and North America. The majority of these workers do not have legal papers and are often deported back to Albania.

These immigrant workers and other Albanians were lured to deposit their savings into the pyramids by promises they would double their money within two months. Many returned to Albania to reclaim their deposits upon hearing of trouble with the Ponzi schemes at the end of 1996. Having gone through experiences in the class struggle in Greece, Italy, and elsewhere, these workers played a central role in the rebellion against Berisha. Bushi, for example, who came back from Greece two years ago, was among those who took up arms to bring down the regime that had pushed the pyramids as a get-rich-quick scheme. "Berisha's promises of capitalism turned into a nightmare," Bushi said. "So we fought back."

Workers, farmers, students, and others took to the streets to demand compensation from the state, relief from the already heavy burden of the government's attempt to integrate Albania into the world capitalist market, and an end to police repression. Berisha tried to suppress the protesters with brute force. But hundreds of thousands resisted and got support from sections of the military and thousands of former army officers Berisha had dismissed as loyal to his rival,

the Socialist Party. By early March 1997, the government lost control of the southern half of the country. Albania's army and police were dissolved for a time, most of the population got arms, and jails were thrown open. The ruling bureaucratic caste — different than the bourgeoisie under capitalism because it owns no means of production — fractured. Residents of many towns, especially in the south, attacked agents of the hated secret police, the SHIK, and burned police stations. Rebel councils were formed and ran a number of cities in the south for several months.

To avoid the fall of the regime through revolutionary means — a development that would have boosted the self-confidence of working people and set a dangerous precedent for all the rival layers of the ruling caste — the Socialist Party joined the Democratic Party in a government of "national reconciliation." This coalition government invited imperialist troops to intervene to help it quell the rebellion under the guise of "restoring stability."

The governments of Italy, Greece, France, and other countries dispatched 7,000 troops in mid-April under the sanction of the United Nations. New elections were held in June and July, while the country was occupied by foreign troops. The Socialist Party won 101 seats in the 155-member national assembly, while the DP got only 27. Berisha resigned from the country's presidency July 23, which was one of the main demands of the rebels. Since then his party has boycotted most parliament sessions. SP leader Fatos Nano became the new prime minister. Most of the occupying troops left the country by mid-August. About 150 Greek soldiers remain in Tirana today, supposedly training Albania's military, which is still in the process of being reconstituted.

## Crisis of ruling caste

The revolt threw the rule of the bureaucratic caste in Albania — the privileged social layer that has held political power in that country since the degeneration of the socialist revolution half a century ago — into deep crisis. Following the victory in the antifascist struggle that ended the country's occupation by German and Italian troops, the partisans, who had united people of different nationalities, put in power a workers and farmers government. By the late 1940s, that regime had distributed land to the poor peasants, nationalized the means of production, and put in place economic planning and monopoly of foreign trade — ending the country's domination by imperialist powers and establishing a workers state, though it was deformed at birth from Stalinist domination.

By the early 1950s, a privileged social layer of government bureaucrats, company managers, army and police officers, and professionals crystallized as a caste that usurped

political power from the hands of the toiling majority. This layer was represented until 1990 by the Stalinist Albanian Workers Party, or Communist Party, headed by Enver Hoxha. Faced with a wave of strikes and demonstrations against austerity measures and for democratic rights, the Communist Party changed its name to Socialist Party in 1991. It lost elections to the Democratic Party the

next year. The leaderships of both the SP and DP hail from the Communist Party and represent competing layers of the same social caste. The Democratic Party calls for rapid restoration of capitalism, while the SP presents itself as social democratic.

The rebel councils that were formed during the uprising were very heterogeneous. They were comprised of people from different social layers who often had conflicting class outlooks. They included young working-class fighters who stepped forward to lead the revolt, former military officers who held high positions in the armed forces under Hoxha's regime and were dismissed by Berisha between 1992 and 1996, and officials of the Socialist Party. These committees were unable to provide an alternative to the government in Tirana and were dissolved gradually by the fall of last year.

Between April and October of 1997, armed gangs loyal to Berisha and others composed of outright criminal elements carried out widespread attacks on the population, especially in the south. These were occasionally aimed at rebel council leaders. They often included indiscriminate robberies and murders. The rebel councils were unable to organize effective defense of many cities. A number of their leaders were incorporated into the structures of the new government, which by early 1998 was able to reconstitute the police nationwide. There is now a measure of normalcy in the country, and most people report that the activities of the gangs have diminished.

At the same time, the government was only partially successful in collecting the arms distributed last year. The heavy weaponry, such as tanks and artillery, is now back under government control. But many people still have Kalashnikovs, AK-47 rifles, or other light arms at home. During the rebellion, 1,200 of the army's 1,500 weapons depots were destroyed and 600,000 arms were taken. As of last October, the government said it had collected only about 10 percent of them. As Minella Bala, a former leader of the citizens' council in Sarande, put it, "People still need them to defend themselves."

## Various assessments of revolt

The evolution of the rebellion dampened the expectations of many working people that they would get compensation for the savings they lost in the pyramids or that they would see their livelihoods improve soon. Some got demoralized and point to the taking up of arms against Berisha as an experience they wouldn't want repeated. Many others, though, are more self-confident after bringing down a hated regime.

These working people are not defeated and remain the main obstacle to the objectives of Washington and other imperialist powers, and to the hopes of the would-be capitalists here — restoring capitalist social relations in Albania and destroying the remaining gains of the revolution.

"Most of us took part in the uprising last year," said Raimoda Leva, a sewing machine operator at MC Clothing, a garment shop of 60 in Vlore, referring to her co-workers. "The revolt was a good thing, especially the first two months. But then there was too much violence and looting. For months we didn't have a job. At least now we do." The factory where she works shut down in March and reopened in September of last year. Her view was common among other workers in that plant.

Albert Shyti, 28, who worked as a laborer in Greece for five years, was one of the cen-



tral leaders of the Committee for the Salvation of Vlore that was formed during the rebellion. "What we did last year belongs to the past," he said in an interview in Vlore March 20. "Taking up arms is not something I would want to repeat. Although struggle is the only way to win something." Shyti, who ran unsuccessfully for the national assembly on the ticket of the Social Democratic Party in last summer's elections, and four other members of Vlore's former defense council have formed the Committee to Defend Popular Rights. "The government is now trying to put their own people in good jobs, the police, and the army," he said. "Our committee is fighting against that, for public works to rebuild the infrastructure and create jobs, for the right to unionize in private companies, and to get some of the money back from the pyramids."

Others looked back at last year's events with more optimism. "We rose up for our dignity," said Arben Lami, 21, a student at the University of Vlore. "Berisha would have still been here without that. And what we did served notice to all politicians about what may happen if they act like Berisha."

Deputy Prime Minister Bashkim Fino told parliament on March 12 that Vefa Holding, Kamberi, and three other companies had run pyramid schemes that had attracted US\$584 million from 138,500 Albanians. Hundreds of thousands of others were defrauded by schemes that shut down last year. Fino said depositors could only hope to get 10-20 percent of their money back because the assets of the five companies that are still operating were worth no more than \$50 million and their cash frozen in banks was less than \$11 million. Many of the managers of these schemes fled the country last year with large amounts of cash and one has been sentenced to five years in prison. The government says it will sell the remaining assets of these companies and distribute the funds to depositors sometime this spring.

Vehbi Alimucaj, the head of Vefa Holding, has been waging a campaign to be allowed to continue operating his firm. Besides defrauding 92,000 people, Alimucaj's company owns some chicken farms and real estate. He has organized a hunger strike by 20 of his "investors" who supposedly believe his claim they will get all their deposits back if Vefa stays in business. The government has ordered Vefa to sell its assets, which is popular among most people.

"These companies should be taken over by the government and their owners go to jail," said Neritan Bushi.

"The Ponzi schemes happened because we never lived under this system, capitalism," said Albana Vraneri, a University of Vlore student. "We were fooled."

Most workers, students, and others interviewed by *Militant* reporters said they no longer expect to get their money back from the pyramids. "The important thing is what we do now to fight for jobs and better social services," said Kliton.

#### Opposition to 'market reforms'

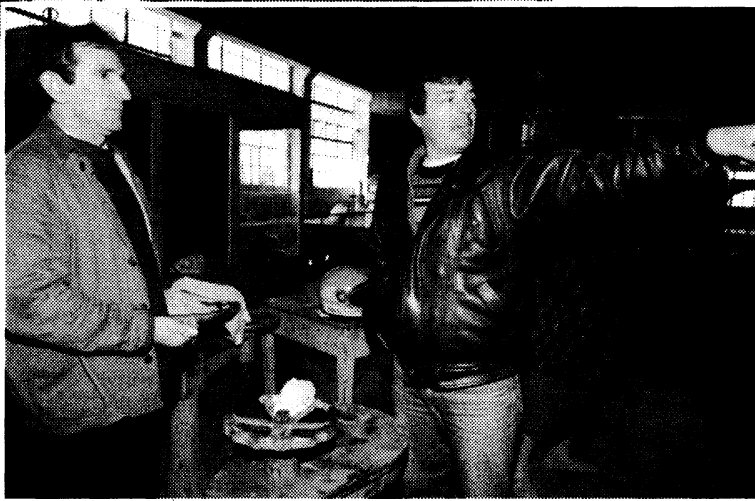
Albania, still a largely agricultural country of 3.2 million people, remains the poorest in Europe with per capita Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of \$340 per year. The "market reforms" implemented by the previous SP and Democratic Party regimes brought devastation to the country's economy.

As of 1993, some 92 percent of the land cultivated by collectives under Hoxha's regime and 62 percent of state farms were turned over to individuals and can now be sold on the market or inherited. Ownership of the land by foreign investors, though, is still prohibited by law. The small parcels of land farmers received amount to an average of 3.7 acres. Without any credit to purchase seed and fertilizers, or access to machinery, cultivation of the land came to a standstill in large areas of the country. An exporter of agricultural goods in the 1980s, Albania now imports about half of its needed foodstuffs. Cultivation has picked up a bit this year, a number of farmers and other Albanians reported.

After Berisha cut subsidies to state enterprises, 90 percent of industry was shut down, throwing hundreds of thousands on the



Militant photos: Argiris Malapanis  
**Garment worker Albana Lamaj at MC Clothing plant in Vlore, Albania (above). Factory is operated by Italian investor. "These people are here for their own good only, to rob us," said Guzmen Sejdiu, who works as a guard at the plant. "It would be better if the Albanian state could take them over." Workers at state-owned TEC thermoelectric plant in Fier (right). "Privatization? No way!" said Alfonse Lamce, on right. Many of these workers took part in last year's revolt and oppose NATO intervention in the region.**



streets. Despite the ambitious plans of Berisha's administration to sell off state enterprises to foreign investors, however, large-scale industries such as mining, oil refining, and electricity generating remain nationalized. Nano's government has pledged to continue the privatization plans, which many workers oppose.

The TEC thermoelectric plant outside Fier, 30 miles northeast of Vlore, has been on the long list of privatization for a number of years, but that day doesn't seem closer. "So far the privatization has remained on paper only," Moharrem Stokju complained to *Militant* reporters during a visit there last October. Stokju, who was the plant director at that time, had also gotten a lease from Berisha to operate Fier's state-owned hotel. These layers, whose loyalties alternate between the SP and the DP, are deeply convinced that capitalism is the future for Albania. They get a hearing among a number of workers and farmers, though limited. On this visit, workers told us the plant has a new director.

"Privatization? No way!" said turbine operator Alfonse Lamce at the TEC plant.

"We should stay with the state," added Nazife Resuli, with 25 years in the plant. "Privatization means layoffs and profits for the bosses. We run things around here."

The facility produces about a third of the country's electricity with about 650 workers, 30 percent of whom are women. Wages there range between \$100 and \$180 per month, higher than the country's average monthly wage of about \$80. One of the workers compared the pay and conditions in this plant with those of his wife, who works in a garment shop in Fier owned by an Italian investor. "She makes a third of what I do," said Albert Dano. "She works longer hours. She has no union protection. And sick leave, vacation pay, and other benefits we take as a given don't exist in that place."

#### Contempt for foreign investors

Contempt for foreign investors was widespread among most students and workers interviewed by the *Militant*. "They come here to profiteer," said Imelda Shinko, one of the University of Vlore students, referring to the Italian investors in town. "The only factories that are working now in Vlore are the ones run by Italians. Workers there make \$30-40 a month. Friends in Italy tell me workers there make that amount in one day for the same job! They pocket all the rest of the money from our sweat."

During a visit to one of these shops in Vlore, MC Clothing, Michelo Massimo, the Italian owner, boasted that the operation was quite profitable. That's why he stayed there through last year's revolt, he said, even though another plant he owned in Perat was damaged. He shut that factory down. "The T-shirts, pants, and jackets produced here are all exported to Italy," he said. "We make good money this way. But the state doesn't

give me insurance."

Wages there average \$55 per month. Even though there is no piece rate, many workers said employees have been fired because their production didn't meet the boss's desires. An effort to organize a union in this plant failed in 1996, said Albana Lamaj, 24, a sewing machine operator. "We don't have any rights here. We must change that."

As *Militant* reporters were leaving the plant, Guzmen Sejdiu, who works as a guard there, came outside and asked to speak to us. "I want to make sure you hear our side of the story," he said, referring to the comments by the owner. "These people are here for their own good only, to rob us. They pay nothing, they fire workers, and they don't even pay any taxes to the state as they are supposed to. Most of the time they bribe the tax collectors with a few shirts. It would be better if the Albanian state could take them over."

Such views are not uncommon, even though in many cases workers see foreign investment as the only way to replace backward technology, most of which comes from China; repair damages to equipment that occurred during the last year's unrest; and get production going. At the Ballshi oil refinery, for example, all 1,500 workers remain on the payroll, but with a reduced wage, even though the facility receives less than half of the 1 million tons of oil it processed in 1996 due to damages in the oil wells. A number of workers there have pinned hopes on an investor from Australia buying the plant.

The attitudes of garment and other workers in Vlore and Fier, though, are more prevalent and they play a role in making many foreign investors stay away from Albania. From the nearly 100 Italian businessmen who invested in Vlore, only 20 remain today, according to Massimo, with investments in garment shops, a shoe manufacturing plant, and in trading companies. "Most are still scared to come back after what happened last year," Massimo added.

These facts have had an impact on imperialist powers that are collaborating with the Fino regime. The Greek government, for example, that promised a \$700 million loan to Tirana last summer has only come forward with 10 percent of the amount so far.

The Fino government has restored a tiny part of the social wage Berisha had cut. Unemployment compensation is now about 60 percent of a workers' wage for a year after a layoff, we were told. Joblessness is about 50 percent, though, and most of these workers have been unemployed for more than a year. In addition, the government approved austerity measures pushed by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as a condition for loans. A new tax package, approved by the SP-dominated parliament last year, raised the Value Added Tax (VAT) to 20 percent from 12.5 percent and imposed VAT payments on electricity and other services.

"The new VAT tax means I have to pay a

quarter of my paycheck for electricity," said a worker at the Rekor shoe company in Gjirokaster, who asked to be identified only with his initials K. X. "The prices have gone up." Out of his daily wage of \$3 he has to spend two-thirds on food for him and his family of four. A loaf of bread, for example, costs 50¢ and a pound of meat \$2. "All the politicians are the same," K.X. said. "Not much has changed since last year." One of the reasons his family manages to survive is that he doesn't have to pay rent. As most Albanians, K.X. owns his house, one of the gains of the revolution.

Many workers mistrust the governing SP and other political parties that opposed Berisha. But even among them, a number point with pride to what they did in last year's revolt. "Things are better now," said Athina Soko, another worker at the Rekor plant, a joint venture between a Greek investor and the govern-

ment. "Our union here organized defense of the plant and in the city. We managed to take many steps to normalize the situation. The gangs have disappeared. Berisha is gone. And four of the factories here are back working."

#### Opposition to NATO intervention

It is these workers and young people who are also in the way of attempts by Washington and other imperialist powers to deploy their military forces in Albania.

While the Fino regime has dispatched additional troops to the border with Kosovo and has invited NATO to send troops to Albania, many working people are not favorable to the prospect. A few are even opposed to the measures of the government to restrict movement across the border with Kosovo. "If Albanians come from Kosovo, they should be welcomed. We don't need more troops at the border," said Eddie, an English-language professor at the University of Vlore who asked that only his first name be used.

"If NATO will do what the Italian and Greek troops did last year we don't want them here or in Kosovo," said Guzmen Sejdiu. "They came supposedly to restore order and stop the criminal gangs from terrorizing the population. But for months they sat and watched as that happened."

This was a common view, even among those who had illusions in the imperialist troops. "They came here as tourists," said Albert Shyti. "They did nothing for the people even when we asked them."

Only a tiny minority among those interviewed expressed support for the deployment of foreign troops last year. "They played a positive role because they frightened the gangs," said Valentina Alike, who works at the Rekor shoe plant in Gjirokaster. She was the only one among the dozen workers *Militant* reporters talked to there who held that view.

Others have drawn more explicitly anti-imperialist conclusions. "The U.S. has interests of its own," said University of Vlore student Elmida Nuredini. "That's why they want to intervene, not for the good of the Albanian people."

"The United States dropped atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki and has starved the Iraqi people for the last eight years," said University of Tirana student Kliton. "That alone tells you a lot."

Many of these students and others also emphasized their determination to continue actions to back the struggle for independence of Albanians in Kosovo. "We can't give practical aid, like arms, but we have to make clear our moral support," Nuredini insisted. "We will continue to raise our voices like we did on March 9 at Flamur square."

Jack Willey, organizer for the Young Socialist National Executive Committee, contributed to this article.

# California: 700 attend 'Dialogue with Cuba'

BY NORTON SANDLER

BERKELEY, California — Some 700 students, academics, and political activists participated in "A Dialogue With Cuba" conference at the University of California campus here March 19-21. A similar size crowd attended a concert featuring Cuban music and poetry the opening night of the event. More students participated the first day, which was the last school session prior to spring break. Many were learning about the Cuban revolution and its accomplishments for the first time.

The conference, which had been in the works for more than a year, was sponsored by the university itself with the faculty of various departments offering invitations to 20 individuals in Cuba and to representatives of the Cuban government's Interests Section in Washington, D.C., to participate.

The U.S. State Department denied visas to 11 of the 20 invitees. Among those excluded from the country were Carlos Fernández de Cossio, Chief of the North American Section of Cuba's Foreign Ministry; Olga Fernández Ríos, Director at the Institute of Philosophy; Pedro López Saura, Center for Biological Research; Alberto Juantorena, Cuba's vice president of the National Institute of Sport; and Sergio Arce, a Presbyterian Theologian. The State Department used a 1985 law that gives the government discretionary power to ban entry to representatives of the Cuban government, including those elected to its National Assembly and the Cuban Communist Party.

The FBI also barred entrance into the U.S. to three Cuban musicians slated to perform as part of the event. The FBI stalled their entrance from Canada, where they had been rehearsing, citing a statute that allows U.S. officials to investigate whether or not percussionist Pancho Quinto, jazz pianist Hilario Durán, and drummer Jimmie Bramely committed "crimes" during their last visit to the country in October 1997.

## Denial of U.S. visas to Cubans protested

The fight around the visas received extensive coverage in San Francisco Bay Area newspapers. The defense of academic freedom and right to travel to exchange views was a major theme of the conference. Ling Chi-Wang, head of the Ethnic Studies Department at U.C. Berkeley and a main conference organizer, told the press, "We are outraged that our government would use the visa approval process to undermine a legitimate academic conference."

"We thought this was going to be a nice little academic conference like we have all the time at the University of California," added Percy Hintzen from the university's African American Studies Department. "All of a sudden it exploded into an international incident."

Twenty-one members of Congress from California wrote Secretary of State Madeleine Albright urging her to reverse the visas denials.

Representatives from the Cuban Interests Section replaced those barred on several panels. Video tape presentations from several of the Cubans denied visas were also played at the conference sessions where they were slated to appear. Local musicians filled in at the last minute for the three Cuban musicians.

In his remarks at the opening plenary session, Fernando Remírez de Estenoz, head of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C., thanked the university for organizing the conference. He explained, "We support dialogue and we are certain that this idea of dialogue and exchange of ideas on culture and economic topics is a demonstration of sincere interests in our country."

"What has characterized our history is our long struggle for our independence, the commitment of our people to defend our sovereignty," he added. "Together with Puerto Rico we were the last Spanish colonies. The Cuban people lost one-fifth of our population in the 30-year war, the Spanish-American War or War of American Intervention, whatever you want to call it. With the introduction of the Platt Amendment, the U.S. granted itself the right to occupation, including the continued occupation of the Guantanamo Naval Air Base." Congress adopted the Platt Amendment, allowing U.S. military intervention in Cuban affairs,

in 1901 and forced it into the Cuban constitution. Remírez noted that "for us the only precondition to dialogue is respect—absolute respect for our rights, our dignity, freedom and sovereignty, achievements that only the revolution and socialism have made possible in the history of our country."

The conference had five plenary sessions and 13 workshops on topics including economic development, religion, racism, tourism and trade, journalism, urban planning, biotechnology, agriculture, youth, trade unions, literature and poetry, and film making. U.S. academics, politicians, and business representatives joined the Cuban participants on the plenary and workshop panels. Many of the U.S. professors indicated that they had visited Cuba during the past half decade. Questions from the audience were sent to the panelists on note cards.

## AIDS and health care in Cuba

A discussion took place in the workshop on "Public Health and the Health Care System: AIDS and Other Challenges." Dr. Jorge Pérez Avila, Director of the Havana AIDS Sanitarium, was on the panel along with three Bay Area doctors also involved in fighting AIDS. Avila said Cuba can be a model for public health because it provides free health care to all its citizens. He stressed that Cuba today badly needs U.S. pharmaceuticals and medical equipment that it is not allowed to obtain because of the U.S. economic embargo of that country.

# Cuban diplomat speaks in Seattle on Cuba and the fight against racism

BY GEOFF MIRELOWITZ

SEATTLE — "I want to be open, frank, and honest, as we have always been with our friends," Félix Wilson, First Secretary of the Cuban Interest Section, told a crowd of 65 people gathered at Seattle Central Community College, March 12. He spoke along with Roberto García, second secretary at the Cuban diplomatic office, at "A Dialogue on revolutionary Cuba — unparalleled strides in the fight against racism," organized by the Seattle Cuba Friendship Committee. The meeting was chaired by Kate Porter, a recent participant in the World Festival of Students and Youth held in Cuba last summer.

Wilson, who is Afro-Cuban, explained that while the meeting was billed as a discussion of race relations in Cuba, "it is important to talk about Cuba generally." This was the focus of his presentation, though he encouraged participants to ask questions and "speak about anything you want." Wilson reviewed the history of relations between the United States and Cuba, emphasizing that the framework was set 100 years ago when Washington sent U.S. troops to intervene in the so-called "Spanish-American War" in 1898 — a war Wilson said is more accurately called the "Spanish-Cuban-American War." Washington's goal, he asserted, has always been to dominate Cuba politically and economically and to even annex Cuba to the United States if possible.

Wilson told the audience that today U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright claims Washington, "can't let Cuba do what it is doing."

"What is Cuba doing today?" Wilson asked. "Trying to help other peoples, as we did in Angola." Wilson, who earlier served in Cuba's diplomatic corp in Africa, participated in the internationalist aid Cuba offered to Angola. Between 1975 and 1991, some 300,000 Cuban soldiers voluntarily served in Angola, helping deal a decisive defeat to the invading army of the apartheid regime in South Africa and boosting the struggle for a nonracial South African society. Over the years, Wilson said proudly, Cuba, a small country of 11 million people, has also sent numerous doctors, engineers, soldiers, and technicians abroad in response to requests for aid from other countries.

Today 350 Cuban doctors and 200 nurses are serving in South Africa at the request of the African National Congress-led government. These medical workers, he stressed,

## California: hundreds rally for farm workers



Militant/Ellen Berman

As part of the continuing struggle to organize the 20,000 farmworkers in the strawberry fields of California, 1,500 people marched in solidarity through the streets of San Francisco March 29 to demand "¡Justicia! ¡Ahora!" "Justice! Now!" There were many young people, including a contingent from the Chicano student organization La Raza at San Francisco State University.

Avila also said that Cuba has contained the spread of AIDS to just 703 cases in an island of 11 million through a combination of sex education for youth and others and because the country does not have a problem of drug addicts spreading the disease by sharing contaminated needles. Avila explained that those who contract the disease can live in sanitariums where they receive extensive health care and education. This measure also prevents spread of the disease. Another significant feature of the confer-

ence was the participation of Chinese-Cubans — Alfonso Chao Chiu, president of the Chung Wah Casino (Chinese Benevolent Society) in Havana, Cuba, and Yrmina Eng Menéndez, Director of the Cuba Chinese Development Group. In addition to participating in the conference, several of the Cubans visited San Francisco's Chinatown and met with community organizations there.

John Kavulich II, president of the U.S.-Cuba Trade and Economic Council, played

Continued on Page 11

serve in rural South Africa, poor, underdeveloped areas where many South African doctors will not go. Wilson pointed to Mozambique, the Congo, Zimbabwe, and countries of the Caribbean as others who are receiving Cuban aid today. "Cuba is always open to the world," he said. "We owe to the world because from the beginning we have had solidarity from the whole world," including, he said, those who have defended the Cuban revolution in the United States.

Wilson and García painted a picture of Cuba as a country that is still suffering from the effects of the "Special Period," a term Cubans use to refer to the difficulties that began with the end of development aid and trade at preferential prices with the Soviet bloc countries. The economic problems have been greatly exacerbated by Washington's tightening economic embargo on the Caribbean island. But, the Cuban diplomats stressed, the situation is markedly improved. "If you visited Cuba in the early 1990s," said Wilson, "today you will see changes." García pointed to a 7 percent increase in the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 1996 and a continuation of that trend in 1997. In 1998 he said, "we expect an increase of 2.5 percent in the GDP."

Wilson urged support for two pieces of legislation in the U.S. Congress that would ease some of the strictures of the U.S. embargo, particularly on food and medicine.

In the discussion period several people asked about subjects that touched on the issue of race. One question concerned rumors of discrimination against Black workers at the Hotel Seville, a Cuban hotel that is a joint venture with European capitalists.

"The race issue in Cuba has always been of interest to the leadership of the country," since the revolution triumphed in 1959 and laws banning discrimination were put into effect and enforced, Wilson explained. "If you compare what Black people had before 1959 and today there are tremendous differences." Without the revolution, said Wilson, "I wouldn't be here." He pointed to six Black ministers in the Cuban government, 10 ambassadors, and five members of the Political Bureau of the Communist Party as signs of progress and Communist Party policy.

At the same time, he explained, "I do not rule out some individual acts of racism. I cannot say 'no' to the situation you mentioned," he said because he was not familiar with the specific case. But, he said, "if the

government is aware of it, that kind of behavior will in no way be tolerated." He said he knew of two similar situations at other hotels where European capitalists were involved and "we told them we cannot accept that."

Marisella Fleites-Lear, a Cuban now living and teaching in the United States and active in solidarity activity with Cuba, explained that her father had taught her that Cuba is "a runaway slave that built a city of runaway slaves." The United States government cannot accept Cuba, he told her, "because the slave has become the master." She had heard that trade unions are not allowed in joint economic ventures in Cuba such as hotels, and asked Wilson if this was true.

Wilson replied, hotel workers do belong to unions. At the hotels that are partly owned by foreign companies, the unions do refrain from activity on the property of the hotel. But workers who suffer mistreatment — of a racist nature or otherwise — can go to their union to rectify the situation. In these cases the union will talk to the Cuban government, Wilson said, which deals directly with the hotel management.

Another exchange took place in response to a question about gay rights in Cuba. "Cuba has been changing with the world," Wilson answered. "Culturally Cuba is not different from the rest of Latin America," he said. Wilson explained that when he was a university student, 24 years ago, he was one of those who discriminated against gays. "I myself was part of a group like that. We weren't used to [homosexuality] and we didn't like it."

Wilson pointed to an experience he had in 1984 in Angola working with a military doctor who was known to be homosexual and who was deeply respected at the hospital where he worked. Today, the attitudes of many Cubans are changing as his has, Wilson continued, and gays and lesbians are able to express themselves more freely. "People now openly say they are gay. There are still isolated situations" of discrimination "but that is not the same as government policy. We recognize the need for equality," he said.

Wilson stressed the importance of political activity in the United States aimed at ending the U.S. embargo of Cuba. He encouraged invitations to speak throughout the United States. "You can ask the officials of the Interests Section to speak about anything about Cuba," he emphasized.



# Blacks file lawsuit against Boeing Co.

BY SCOTT BREEN

SEATTLE — Forty-one current and former Boeing workers — 40 African-Americans, and one Filipino-Native American — filed a job discrimination lawsuit against The Boeing Company. The lawsuit, filed in King County Superior Court on March 18, accuses Boeing of discriminatory hiring practices, discrimination in promotions, fostering a hostile work environment for Blacks and other minorities, retaliation, sexual harassment, and race-biased firings at Boeing's plants in the Puget Sound region. It seeks more than \$82 million in damages.

Boeing, the aerospace giant, employs 103,400 people in Washington state, and has a national workforce of 238,500. As of 1996, African-Americans made up only 4.7 percent of the total workforce.

Boeing has denied the allegations. "I don't believe there is truly racism at The Boeing Company," senior Boeing executive James Dagnon told the *Seattle Post Intelligencer*. According to the *Seattle Times*, Dagnon nonetheless admitted that the company has too few minority workers on its payroll, and went on to say that the company's internal system to hear discrimination complaints "broke down." He said that Boeing would investigate the allegations and "appropriately address" those found to have merit.

According to Oscar Desper III, an attorney for the plaintiffs, however, 17 of these workers had filed internal complaints against company discrimination, to no avail. "Those grievances were not satisfactorily resolved. There is clearly a deficiency between their words and conduct that takes place in their work environment." He said he spent six months reviewing more than 100 claims.

According to Desper, "Many who attempted to go through the Boeing process were retaliated against."

The plaintiffs attorneys said that within 24 hours of filing the lawsuit, they received more than 100 calls, mostly from other Boeing employees wanting to join the complaint, including from a group in Wichita, Kansas.

One Black machinist who called the *Seattle Post Intelligencer* said, "I was struck by this because I thought I was the only one being treated this way." He declined to give his name.

The lawsuit cites concrete examples of racist treatment at Boeing. For example, Donald Ballard, a Black worker at Boeing's Auburn plant with 19 years seniority, claims he was required to serve a 29-day probationary period after getting a promotion. White workers faced no such probationary period. He also said he faced a hostile work environment, in which he received obscene drawings and was subjected to racist jokes. Earl Johnson, also a 19-year Boeing veteran, says he was passed over for promotions that were given to white workers he had trained.

Geraldine Guyton, a material processor, said, "I've been discriminated and degraded as a Black person. A year ago, I had a nervous break down due to the fact that the supervisor was harassing me."

Michael Eckles said that six months ago, Boeing promoted 20 people into a computer-programming position, but none were African-American males. "I was told I would be given a chance to be a part of that program, but I wasn't." Eckles has been a machinist for 18 years. Most of the plaintiffs are members of the International Association of Machinists District 751.

Two workers — Robert Riggs and Joe

## 250 protest Boeing benefits cuts



Militant/Scott Breen

Some 250 Boeing employees rally against benefit cuts that the company is unilaterally imposing on workers not covered by union contracts. The protest was organized by the Seattle Professional Engineer Employee Association. The cut-backs will affect some 100,000 people, including clerical and secretarial workers, computer programmers, and others.

Gibson — allege their terminations were race-related. Gibson says that he was fired for a confrontation with a co-worker who used a racial epithet. Gibson was fired, while the other worker remains at Boeing.

Boeing claims to be making serious attempts to promote workplace diversity. They point to several programs: a diversity strategy promoting a culture of inclusiveness; hiring national consultant Roosevelt Thomas, author of *Beyond Race and Gender*, for advice on creating a more diverse work

force; a company-wide "people" initiative that promotes casual dress Fridays and continuing education and training; and support for affirmative action.

Solomon Williams, a Black worker at Boeing for 21 years, and a plaintiff in the lawsuit disputed Boeing's projected image. He described Boeing as "really a hostile place. They don't care about us."

Scott Breen is a member of IAM Local 751A at Boeing.

## Socialists win free speech victory in Minnesota

BY JEFF JONES

MINNEAPOLIS — Socialist election campaigners won a significant victory for free speech here when U.S. district court judge John Tunheim put his signature on the final order and permanent injunction enjoining the city of Minneapolis from enforcing three unconstitutional ordinances. The ordinances involve the process for obtaining permits to sell literature and set up tables on city streets and for posting fliers in public areas. Tunheim ruled that the permit process doesn't meet First Amendment requirements for guaranteeing freedom of speech. The Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor in the November 1997 election, Jennifer Benton, was also awarded \$3,200 from the city to pay all attorney's fees.

Both Benton and the city of Minneapolis agreed to the order signed by Tunheim on March 3. Following a temporary injunction issued by Tunheim against the city on October 28, city officials said they were going to try to rewrite and adopt amendments to the three ordinances. But after nearly two months they said they had been unsuccessful and agreed to not pursue defense of the existing ordinances in court. Tunheim written opinion, which explained the basis for the October temporary injunction essentially outlined the arguments for a permanent in-

junction. In the face of this the city decided to not continue what could be costly court fight.

The case began last August when a Minneapolis police officer gave Doug Jenness, then Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of St. Paul, citations for selling the *Militant* newspaper and for posting a flier on a lamp-post while staffing a campaign table in the Uptown area of Minneapolis. The police officer, moonlighting for the Uptown Association, a merchants' organization, compelled the socialist campaigners to shut down their table. Each citation carried a maximum penalty of 90 days in jail and a \$700 fine. Following the temporary injunction the city dropped both charges against Jenness. In return for Jenness not filing suit against the city for damages resulting from the citations, the city awarded the \$403.25 for Jenness' attorney's fees.

Benton filed a civil suit in federal court

on September 18 requesting an injunction and a ruling that the ordinances are unconstitutional. During the hearing in federal court, the city attorney said he wasn't as interested in sales of newspapers on city streets as he was about obstructing traffic with sidewalk tables. Benton's attorney, Randy Tighe, pointed out that setting up sidewalk tables was governed by a similar permit process as the other two ordinances and urged the judge to rule on it too.

The court fight went hand in hand with a political effort to make the case widely known and win support from as many people as possible. The Committee to Defend Free Speech sent petitions with several hundred names to Mayor Sharon Sayles-Belton, and won considerable publicity for the case in the local media. The committee also organized a public meeting in December to help publicize the case and raise funds.

Benton pointed to the breadth of this vic-

tory for fighters against police brutality, protesters against Washington's war threats, and trade unionists fighting for their rights. "The injunction applies to myself, the plaintiff," she said, "and all others seeking to engage in activities protected by the First Amendment."

Rebecca Finch, treasurer of the Committee to Defend Free Speech, in a wind-up letter to supporters, reported that the funds remaining after all expenses are paid will be donated to the Seattle Committee to Defend Free Speech. This committee is organizing the defense of Socialist Workers campaigners who were denied an exemption from disclosing the names of financial contributors from the Seattle Election and Ethics Commission. The amount to be donated is about \$700.

Jeff Jones is a member of the International Association of Machinists.

## 700 attend 'Dialogue with Cuba' meeting

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a prominent role in workshops and plenaries. Kavulich's group, funded by U.S. corporations including Archer-Daniels Midland, is trying to get the U.S. government to make adjustments in its economic embargo of Cuba. Kavulich said he has visited Cuba a number of times and that his group provided \$100,000 in financial assistance to the Catholic Church in Cuba during the recent visit of Pope John Paul II there, including paying for the red carpet the Pope walked on upon his arrival in that country. "Cuba will be good for investment," Kavulich stated. "It's a big island with a very strong labor force." He proposed a number of "reforms" in Cuba's judiciary system and labor code that he said could lead to reciprocal steps being made by Washington in easing its trade embargo.

Los Angeles area Congressman Esteban Torres, who played a leading role in organizing Congressmen to protest the visa denials, addressed the plenary on "U.S.-Cuba Relations." Torres has sponsored legislation in Congress to make exceptions for the export of food, medicines, and medical equip-

ment to the U.S. embargo, including the misnamed Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, or Helms-Burton law, enacted in 1996. Under these reactionary laws, the U.S. government can authorize donations of food and medicine and medical supplies to nongovernmental institutions in Cuba. The Torres bill would allow the Cuban government to purchase these items as long as they are not used for "purposes of torture or other human rights abuses" or to develop Cuba's biotechnology industry.

The final plenary focused on "Democracy, Elections, and Peoples Power." Cuban Interests Section representative Sergio Martínez was joined on the panel by former Berkeley Mayor Gus Newport and Pedro Noguero, a U.C. professor and former Berkeley school board member who said he spent three years in Grenada during that country's 1979-1983 revolution.

Martínez told the crowd, "Democracy cannot be attained without social justice, equality, and equal rights. The Cuban revolution allows this for the first time in the history of our country, based on our concept of direct participation of our people in

the decision-making of all aspects of our society."

"For over 36 years," added Martínez, "the U.S. administration has practiced an economic embargo and blockade against our country with very serious consequence on the lives of our people.... We are forced to use short-term commercial loans for capital development at very high interest. We must sell our sugar below world market price. Over 200 radio hours a day are broadcast into Cuba with slanders and instigation of terrorism."

Martínez further explained, "We cannot even compare the two exercises of democracy. We don't criticize anyone. We simply defend our right to choose our own path.... Our weapons are our example and our ideas—those we will never give up."


In the days following the conference, the Cuban participants spoke on several area campuses and at some community meetings.

Norton Sandler is a member of International Association of Machinists Local 1781 in San Francisco. Cathleen Gutekanst contributed to this article.

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# UN council imposes sanctions on Belgrade

Continued from front page  
goals by peaceful means only."

Fehmi Agani rejected this call. Agani is part of a 15-member advisory council established March 24 from representatives of political parties and other organizations among Albanians in Kosovo to set the agenda for possible negotiations with the regime of Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic. He also rejected another demand for unconditional talks with Belgrade. "We cannot accept the regime of terror and the condition to hold talks under such a regime," he said.

"This kind of resolution won't solve the problem or bring peace," said Albin Kurti, international officer of the Independent Students Union of the University of Pristina in a telephone interview from Pristina April 2. "The Serbian police must end their siege, withdraw their special forces, and stop repression against Albanians before any negotiations." The student group has been one of the main organizers of mass mobilizations in Kosovo demanding national rights for Albanians.

Kosovo is a region where 90 percent of the population is Albanian and 8 percent is Serb. Other inhabitants are Turkish, Gypsies, and other nationalities. It is formally part of the Republic of Serbia. Under the formerly federated Yugoslavia, Kosovo had autonomy and was self-governed. The Milosevic regime revoked Kosovo's autonomous status in 1989 and imposed a state of emergency that has been in place ever since. Instruction in Albanian was banned at high schools and colleges and most Albanians were fired from state administration, hospitals and clinics, and industry for refusing to sign "loyalty oaths" to Serbia. Faced with a new wave of mass protests for national rights that erupted last fall, Belgrade responded with brutal repression under the pretext of fighting "terrorism" by the Kosovo Liberation Army, a guerrilla group. Eighty-five Albanians were killed in the Drenica region in two assaults by Serbian police forces February 28 and March 5, and 19 are still missing.

On March 24 two more Albanians were killed in another Serb police attack in the village of Gillogjan in the Decan municipality of western Kosovo, near the border with Albania. A few days later 17-year-old Himë Haradinaj also died from wounds he suffered during that assault. A Serb policeman was also killed in this incident.

While the wave of mass protests for self-determination that swept Pristina, Kosovo's capital, since early March have subsided for the moment, about 30,000 people turned out for the funerals of the Albanians killed in Gillogjan March 27.

Meanwhile, Albanians were allowed ac-

cess to the Institute of Albanian Studies associated with the official University of Pristina on March 31. This was the first step toward implementing an accord between Belgrade and Albanian leaders that would end the ban on Albanian-language instruction in state high schools and the university system. "Three other university buildings and the high schools are supposed to be returned in April," Kurti said. "We are still skeptical on whether this will happen. Milosevic has reneged previous promises many times." The agreement is supposed to be implemented in phases by June 30. The two sides could not agree on a common teaching program, so classes in Serb and Albanian will be taught at different times and with separate curricula.

Pro-Belgrade Serbs are opposed to the accord and have organized repeated protests against it. They have taped placards reading "treason" outside university walls. "If this agreement is implemented there will be no Serbs left in this university by next school year," said Serb student leader Zivojin Rakocovic. Serb professors packed up and left the premises of the Institute of Albanian Studies once keys to the building were returned to Albanians.

In Belgrade the government devalued the dinar, the Yugoslav currency, by 20 percent on April 1. "This may be tied to fears that more UN sanctions may be in the offing after the arms embargo was imposed," said Zorica Trifunovic in a telephone interview from Belgrade that day. Trifunovic is part of Women in Black, most of whose members are Serbian. The group supports the struggle for self-determination for Albanians. "Prices of many items will now rise again and working people will pay for the

most part." Trifunovic is opposed to such sanctions, like most people in Serbia. A three-year UN embargo that ended in 1995 had crippled the Yugoslav economy.

The Russian government voted for the UN arms embargo after a reference in the resolution stating the situation in Kosovo constituted "a threat to international peace and security in the region" was deleted. Moscow had previously campaigned against the arms embargo and opposes economic and other sanctions on Belgrade pushed by Washington.

In Moscow, Russian president Boris Yeltsin's spokesman Sergei Yastrzhembsky sought to ease Belgrade's concerns with the Russian vote at the United Nations. Moscow has sold weaponry to Yugoslavia until recently. "These sanctions should not be seen as punishment for Yugoslavia," Yastrzhembsky said April 1. "We see no danger of full-scale armed clashes in Kosovo. We think there is every possibility that Belgrade and political leaders of the Albanian minority will find a way out of this situation by means of a political dialogue with the help of the international community."

The pro-capitalist government in Moscow has come into increasing conflict with Washington over expansion of NATO into Eastern Europe; U.S. policy on Iraq; and U.S. attempts to not only dominate the oil in the former Soviet republics of the Caspian Sea region, but to establish a stronger regional line of influence and pressure across the southern flank of Russia, from the Caspian all along the Silk Road.

Inside the United States, a number of capitalist politicians and pundits have been more candidly speaking about the aims of

U.S. foreign policy regarding NATO expansion. "Considering the UN's inability to conduct any sort of military operation; and Russia's internal instability, as well as its willingness to sell weapons to Iraq, Iran, and China; and its ex-Communist foreign and defense ministers allying themselves with Saddam Hussein, it is imperative the we strengthen NATO," wrote Caspar Weinberger, chairman of *Forbes*, in the March 23 issue of the magazine. Weinberger was U.S. secretary of defense between 1981 and 1987 under the Ronald Reagan administration.

"Russian opposition *should* be overcome or ignored," Weinberger said. Washington can't allow "our foreign policy to be set by Russian, French or Chinese objections — and our unwillingness to counter them. This is not why we fought — and won — the Cold War."

## From Pathfinder

### Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War

Jack Barnes

How the working class and its allies respond to the accelerated capitalist disorder will determine whether or not imperialism's march toward fascism and war can be stopped. In *New International* no. 10. \$14.00

Available from bookstores, including those listed on this page or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690. Fax: (212) 727-0150. When ordering by mail, please include \$3 to cover shipping and handling.

## UAW members prepare for fight at Case

Continued from front page

protest the company's demands and to build solidarity. In Burlington, auto workers organized "hammers down for justice." At preset times, three or four times a day, workers throughout the plant would stop work and pound hammers and tools in protest.

Twenty workers at the Burlington facility called off work on March 26. The company moved to discipline the unionists, but did not say when, or for how long, they would be suspended.

In a March 29 press release, UAW vice president Richard Shoemaker was quoted as saying, "The parties have made some progress in the negotiations. As long as progress continues to be made, we want to

continue the bargaining process."

In a March 31 interview a member of UAW Local 807 in Burlington, who asked not to be identified, reported that so far no contract points had been signed off in the negotiations, except for health and safety provisions some three weeks ago.

Meanwhile, advertisements for replacement workers for Case continued to appear as late as March 29 in the *Des Moines Register*.

Workers at Bridgestone/Firestone in Des Moines, Iowa, members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 310, picketed in front of Strom Engineering, the temp agency recruiting scabs for Case, on March 6 and again on March 20. The union-

ists passed out flyers explaining, "We were replaced and together we won our jobs back. If workers everywhere don't stand together now and say NO MORE it could be your job next. Help us save someone from being replaced."

Bridgestone/Firestone, a major tire producer, was the scene of a hard-fought strike in 1994-95. The company "permanently replaced" thousands of strikers in January 1995. Most strikers returned to work by June of 1996, and a new contract with the USWA was signed in December 1996.

Ray Parsons is a member of USWA Local 310 at Bridgestone/Firestone in Des Moines.

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## MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

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**Censorship and Art: Defend the Right to Freedom of Expression.** Fri., April 17, 7 p.m. 199 High St. (corner High and Tuam). Donation: \$3. Tel: (3) 365-6055.

### CORRECTION

The article "Leader of landless peasants in Brazil to tour United States" in last week's *Militant* incorrectly implied that José Rainha Jr., a leader of the Movement of Landless Rural Workers (MST) in Brazil, is currently in prison. Although Rainha has been convicted of frame-up murder charges and sentenced to 26 years in prison, he remains free while awaiting a second trial. The MST is organizing a campaign demanding he be exonerated of the false accusations.



**Probably so** — A California judge upheld the life sentence meted out to Kevin Weber under the state's "three strikes" law. He said Weber was the type that the legislature had



**Harry Ring**

in mind when it passed the law providing a life sentence for a third conviction. Weber's third offense? Stealing four cookies from a restaurant.

**Waste management** — Over a six-year period, manufacturing

companies shipped more than 271 million pounds of toxic waste like lead, dioxin, and arsenic to fertilizer companies and farms. It's usually included with nutrient substances like zinc. Federal labeling regulations cover the nutrient substances, not the toxic ones. No testing is required for smokestack ash, and waste can be sold to farms if it's deemed safe for landfills.

**He's a charter member?** — To brush up its image, the leader of Britain's Tory party urged that the party's 166-year-old Carlton Club admit women into membership. Huffed one member: "I have nothing against women having their own clubs, but the idea that everyone can go everywhere and there is nowhere men can go on their own, is very

annoying."

**Almost wish it were true** — According to an alleged study, managers face double their usual risk of heart attack during the week after they fire someone. What to do about it? The doc who led the study suggests diet and exercise. Which makes sense, it's easier than not firing people.

**Probably good for you** — The Associated Press article on boss risk also notes that some studies "suggest" that chronic job stress can contribute to heart disease. "However," it adds, "many experts are skeptical about how important this kind of stress really is because just about everybody who works for a living has at least some daily job

stress."

**'E' word back in Georgia schools** — Concerned by the low ratings given to the state's science curriculum, Georgia educators wrote a new draft in which the "e" word — evolution — is restored. Under pressure from politicians, the offending word was snipped from a mid-1980s curriculum. Instead, it resorted to such euphemisms as "organic variation."

**Step lively** — Tests confirm that electronic anti-shoplifting devices are risky for people with pacemakers. The signals can quicken the heartbeat, causing palpitations and dizziness. The Food and Drug Administration, advises shoppers with pacemakers to move rapidly

through exit security gates. We'd add a caution: But don't sprint. Might touch off a security cop.

**How about an SPCP?** — We don't know if San Francisco officials have accepted the offer of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) to permit homeless people to stay overnight as "roommates" to the dogs at its spiffy shelter, which features such amenities as couches, Persian rugs, and TV.

**Thought for the week** — "The more you think about it, the more bizarre it becomes because of the statement it makes is that the nicest shelter in town is going to be for the animals." — Paul Boden, director of the Coalition on Homelessness, comparing the SPCA quarters to the 600-bed city shelter.

## Sankara: 'Freedom can be won only in struggle'

Below we reprint excerpts from the speech "Freedom can be won only through struggle" by Thomas Sankara, a leader of a democratic and anti-imperialist revolution in Burkina Faso (formerly Upper Volta) from 1983 until his assassination in a counterrevolutionary coup in 1987. Sankara presented this speech to the United Nations General Assembly in October 1984. The struggle Sankara led to begin the transformation of Burkina Faso, one of the poorest countries in the world, provides an example to toilers in Africa and elsewhere of how social and economic advancement for the

### BOOK OF THE WEEK

overwhelming majority is possible only through struggle against the imperialist system that breeds underdevelopment and misery. The excerpt is taken from the book *Thomas Sankara Speaks*, copyright ©1988 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted with permission.

BY THOMAS SANKARA

A few simple facts serve to describe the former Upper Volta: A country with seven million inhabitants, more than six million of whom are peasants; an infant mortality rate estimated at 180 per 1,000 and an illiteracy rate of up to 98 percent, if we define as literate someone who can read, write, and speak a language; an average life expectancy of only forty years; one doctor for 50,000 inhabitants; a school-attendance rate of only 16 percent; and, finally, a Gross Domestic Product of 53,356 CFA francs per capita, or barely over \$ 100. The diagnosis before us was somber. The cause of the illness was political. The cure could only be political.

Of course, we encourage aid that helps us to overcome the need for aid. But in general, the policy of foreign aid and assistance produced nothing but disorganization and continued enslavement. It robbed us of our sense of responsibility for our own economic, political, and cultural territory.

We chose to risk new paths to achieve greater happiness. We chose to apply new techniques and to look for forms of organization better suited to our civilization. We abruptly and definitively rejected all forms of foreign diktats, thus creating the conditions for a dignity worthy of our ambitions. To reject mere survival and ease the pressures; to liberate the countryside from feu-

dal paralysis or regression; to democratize our society and open our minds to a universe of collective responsibility in order to dare to invent the future....

We swear — we state categorically — that henceforth nothing in Burkina Faso will ever again be undertaken without the participation of Burkinabè. Henceforth, we will conceive and decide on everything. This is a precondition. There will be no further assaults on our sense of decency and dignity.

Fortified by this conviction, we would like our words to embrace all those who are in pain and all those whose dignity is being trampled on by a handful of men or by a system intent on crushing them.

To all those listening to me, allow me to say that I speak not only in the name of my beloved Burkina Faso, but also in the name of all those who are suffering in any corner of the world. I speak in the name of the millions who live in ghettos because they have black skin or because they come from different cultures, and whose status is barely better than that of an animal. I suffer in the name of the Indians who have been massacred, crushed, humiliated, and confined for centuries on reservations to the point where they can claim no rights and their culture cannot enrich itself through beneficial union with others, including the culture of the invader. I speak out in the name of those thrown out of work by a system that is structurally unjust and periodically in crisis, whose only view of life is a reflection of that of the affluent.

I speak on behalf of women the world over, who suffer at the hands of a male-imposed system. We welcome suggestions from anywhere in the world on how to achieve the full development of Burkinabè women. In exchange, we can offer to share with all other countries the positive experience we have had with women who now participate at every level of the state apparatus and in all aspects of Burkina's social life. Women in struggle proclaim in unison with us that the slave who does not organize his own rebellion deserves no pity for his lot. He alone is responsible for his misfortune if he harbors illusions in the dubious assurance of a master's promise of freedom. Freedom can be won only through struggle and we call on all our sisters of all races to rise to the assault and fight to conquer their rights.

I speak on behalf of the mothers in our impoverished countries who watch their children die of malaria or diarrhea, ignorant of the fact that there are simple ways to save them. The science of the multinationals, however, keeps this knowledge from them, preferring instead to serve the cosmetics laboratories and provide plastic surgery to satisfy the whims of a few men and women whose charm is threatened by the excess of calories in their meals, the richness and regularity of which would make you — or rather us front the Sahel — dizzy. We have decided to adopt and popularize the simple measures recommended by the World Health Organization and UNICEF.

I speak, too, in the name of the child — the hungry child of the poor who furtively eyes the accumulation of abundance in the rich man's stores. The store is protected by a thick glass window; the window is protected by impenetrable bars; the bars are protected by a policeman in helmet and gloves, armed with a billy club and posted there by the father of another child who can come and serve himself, or rather be served, just because he has the credentials guaranteed by the system's capitalist norms....



Militant/Ernest Harsch  
Peasants in Pibaoré, Burkina Faso, at a rally in October 1987, hold a banner that reads: "Farmers of Burkina Faso: hoes yesterday, hoes today, machinery tomorrow."

In our opinion, we need a serious study that takes into account all of the elements that have led to the calamities that have befallen the world. In this regard, President Fidel Castro expressed our point of view admirably in 1979 at the opening of the Sixth Summit Conference of Nonaligned Countries when he declared, "Three hundred billion dollars is enough to build 600,000 schools a year with a capacity of 400 million children; or 60 million comfortable homes with a capacity of 300 million people; or 50,000 hospitals with 18 million beds; or 20,000 factories to provide employment for more than 20 million

workers; or make possible the irrigation of 150 million hectares of land, which with an adequate technical level could provide food for a billion people." If we multiply these figures by ten — and I am sure this would fall well short of today's reality — we will see what humanity squanders every year in the military arena in opposition to peace.

One can easily see why the masses' indignation rapidly becomes rebellion against the crumbs thrown their way in the insulting form of aid — an aid often tied to frankly contemptible conditions. One can understand why our struggle for development demands that we be tireless fighters for peace.

## —25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

### THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEETLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

April 13, 1973

On March 27 White House spokesman Ronald Ziegler announced President [Richard] Nixon intends to continue U.S. bombing of Cambodia until the rebel forces stop their military operations against the government in Phnom Penh.

According to the March 28 *New York Times*, "the consensus of Cambodian and foreign military experts is that without heavy daily bombing, rocketing and strafing of insurgent forces by United States aircraft, the Cambodian Army would collapse."

This implication that the Cambodian civil war is basically a case of aggression by North Vietnam was flatly contradicted by *New York Times* correspondent Henry Kamm in a March 23 dispatch from Phnom Penh. Kamm wrote that "reliable American sources report that hardly any North Vietnamese or Vietcong forces are still fighting against the Cambodian Army."

Kamm continues: "Military experts who have visited areas near Phnom Penh after American tactical air strikes report that nothing was left standing above ground in a section one-kilometer square."

But support for the rebel side is growing so quickly that even the saturation bombing by U.S. B-52s has not succeeded in crushing its advance. After the Lon Nol regime's recent crackdown against the na-

tionwide Cambodian teachers' strike "many of the students and intellectuals have either gone underground or slipped away to join the rebels," reported the March 26 *Washington Post*. The strike involves 45,000 teachers and students in areas controlled by the Vientiane government.

### THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

April 12, 1948

SOUTH ST. PAUL, April 7 — Two leaders of striking CIO packinghouse workers in south St. Paul have been arrested and two others cited for contempt of court. Milton Siegel, union field representative, was the first to be taken into custody. He was arrested for refusing to let police and office workers through picket lines at the Swift plant after a temporary restraining order had been issued. He was released on \$1,000 bail.

Meanwhile, union representatives are appearing in Dakota County district court to show cause why an injunction should not be granted to Swift and Armour to prevent mass picketing at plant gates. Obtained under the Stassen-inspired Minnesota Slave Labor Act, the injunction proceedings represent a test of this law. The union is basing the legal part of its case against the injunction on the fact that the Big Four packers (Armour, Swift, Cudahy and Wilson) did not bargain in good faith and therefore are not entitled to the benefits of the Minnesota law.

**FROM PATHFINDER**  
**Thomas Sankara Speaks**  
THE BURKINA FASO REVOLUTION, 1983-87

The leader of the Burkina Faso revolution recounts how peasants and workers in this West African country began confronting hunger, illiteracy, and economic backwardness prior to the 1987 coup in which Sankara was murdered. \$18.95.

**Thomas Sankara Speaks**

Available from bookstores listed on page 12.

## Support labor struggles

The *Militant* urges its readers to actively extend support to labor struggles unfolding across the United States, Canada, and elsewhere — from the 3,300 United Auto Workers members at the Case Corp. plants in the Midwest who are preparing for a possible strike, to the Woodworkers occupying a sawmill in British Columbia, to the locked-out oil workers at Crown Central Petroleum in Texas who are combatting frame-up charges of sabotage. This combativity indicates more willingness among unionists to stand up to the bosses' demands for concessions and is another reflection of the fact that the long retreat of labor movement is halted.

The labor movement and young fighters around the world should support this working-class resistance. The bosses count on the corroding effects of competition for jobs bred by the market system and its dog-eat-dog values to keep workers divided. The bourgeoisie is surprised when human solidarity comes together in explosive and unexpected resistance to assaults on workers' living standards, job conditions, and democratic and social rights. More than 1,000 workers from two dozen unions recently showed up at a soli-

arity rally in Marietta, Ohio, to support 80 striking Steelworkers who are fighting to keep their union and against forced overtime at low wages. Contingents of garment workers, coal miners, and steelworkers were among battle-tested unionists who came to the action looking to bolster each others' fights.

Class-conscious fighters should reach out to these struggles, bring others with them to the picket lines, and spread the word about this working-class resistance. The *Militant* and its Spanish-language sister magazine, *Perspectiva Mundial*, are important tools to build solidarity and bring together the struggles of fighting unionists with anti-imperialist fighters such as Puerto Rican youth demanding independence, and working people in other countries like the Albanians fighting for self-determination in Kosovo.

Taking the socialist press as well as Pathfinder titles like *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* to picket lines, plant gates, anti-imperialist conferences, and other political events are important steps to help build confidence and develop political consciousness among the layer of fighters who are beginning to take action.

## No Yugoslavia sanctions!

No to sanctions against Yugoslavia! That's what militant workers and youth should demand through forums, teach-ins and other activities. The arms embargo on Serbia and Montenegro imposed by the United Nations March 31, and economic and other sanctions pushed by Washington, have nothing to do with advancing the just struggle for self-determination of Albanians in Kosovo.

Many Albanians correctly denounce the charge by Washington and other imperialist powers that their just struggle is "terrorism." The U.S. government and other imperialist powers are, in fact, afraid of a "Balkan intifada," as a Greek newspaper put it. They are not content with an uncompromising fight for self-determination by the Albanian nationality in Kosovo — or for that matter by any oppressed nation. The U.S. rulers' aim is to cow fighters in Kosovo into following the "rules" Washington sets.

The pious concern of "democratic capitalism" for Albanians in Kosovo can be seen in the deportations of tens of thousands of Albanian immigrants by Bonn, Rome, and Athens. While attempting to portray themselves as defenders of the national rights of Albanians, Washington, Bonn and other imperialist powers are working overtime to take advantage of the turmoil to deepen the NATO military intervention into the Yugoslav workers state and tighten their encirclement of Russia. As Caspar Weinberger tells U.S. politicians who have doubts about expanding

NATO, the U.S. rulers didn't quite get the job done when the Stalinist regimes crumbled in Eastern Europe and the former USSR. In order to reestablish capitalist domination of those countries they must now try to finish the job by using their military might.

Calls by pro-capitalist forces among Albanians in Kosovo for sanctions on Belgrade and military intervention by NATO drag working-class fighters into the trap of imperialism. They draw them into placing their confidence on the very powers that have been the biggest perpetrators of war, colonialism, and oppression of one nation by another.

It is the fighting Albanian people in Kosovo who — relying on their own strength and help from their Serbian brothers and sisters who oppose Belgrade's repression — can eventually win the struggle for self-determination and replace the Milosevic regime with a government of workers and farmers.

Inside the United States and other countries, class-conscious workers must both oppose any sanctions by the imperialist powers or military intervention in Yugoslavia and support the struggle for self-determination of Albanians in Kosovo. In doing so it is imperative to reach out to working people who are Albanian with a revolutionary perspective and the truth about Yugoslavia, and bring them in contact with other fighters like Puerto Rican *independentistas*. There are 500,000 Albanians in the U.S., many of them factory workers. There is plenty of work to do.

## MST protests killings of peasant leaders in Brazil

BY ERNIE MAILHOT

MIAMI — Almost 400 landless peasants led by the Movement of Landless Rural Workers of Brazil (MST), in a show of defiance and protest against the murders of two of their leaders, reoccupied the Goiás II plantation in the state of Pará on March 29. Only days before two leaders of the MST in this Amazon basin state were murdered. Onalicio Araujo Barros, the founder of the MST in Pará, and Valentim de Silva Serra were gunned down in the same area where two years ago 19 members of the MST were killed in the Eldorado dos Carajás massacre. Several others were injured in the latest attack, including the wife of Araujo Barros.

The original occupation of Goiás II began on March 14 when 550 families moved onto this land. After daily harassment and threats from the military police, the peasants decided to retreat March 26. After having left the plantation they were confronted by 30 armed thugs led by landowners in the region, including Carlos Antônio da Costa from Goiás II.

When the peasants stopped to set up camp,

two of the landowners, Costa and Donizete, backed up by the gun thugs and military police, shot both of the MST leaders.

The Associated Press reported that 11 policemen have been charged in the murders. Ten of these were also among 153 state troopers accused in the Eldorado dos Carajás massacre. They are not expected to be tried until the year 2000.

The seven plantation owners who took part in the attack and murders are being held in preventive detention. They are accused only of being part of an association constituted to confront the MST.

In a recent statement, the MST said the latest killings "confirm the politics of the state government and its collaboration with the crimes of the large estates, and the politics of the federal government which gives incentive to the use of violence to solve deep social problems, notably agrarian reform." The organization has called for protests April 17.

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

## UK 'Countryside March' is reactionary

BY JULIE CRAWFORD  
AND TONY HUNT

LONDON — "The Countryside March," a reactionary demonstration of 250,000, took place here March 1. It was dominated by wealthy opponents of a possible ban on hunting with dogs, which had been proposed by a Labour Party Member of Parliament (MP). The *Financial Times* described the march as the "middle-class equivalent of the peasants' revolt." Hard-pressed exploited farmers and other social layers from rural areas, impelled by the impact of the capitalist economic crisis, also participated in the event, which had been heavily publicized in the media.

The *Daily Telegraph* built the demonstration and, along with other right-wing papers, celebrated the appearance of social unity it presented. Referring to fox-hunting — the main target of the proposed ban — the *Telegraph*, editorialized "something that has worked...for centuries is told that it must now be abolished because of an urban, anti-Christian ideology.... Respectable Britain is on the march...the backbone of the nation...those who have always been ready to fight for their country when required." The organizers did not feel confident, however, to hold a rally at the end of the march, which might have exposed the real differences underlying the appearance of unity.

The protest also opposed so-called "right to roam" legislation that would give people the right to travel over private land, the building of houses in rural areas, and the possibility of further restrictions on guns.

Many participants carried the "Union Flag," reflecting the chauvinist character of the demonstration. At the same time there were many marchers holding the national emblems of Scotland and Wales, oppressed countries within the United Kingdom. In addition there was a contingent of "country sports" supporters from Ireland marching behind an Irish tricolor and a small contingent from British occupied Northern Ireland. Popular slogans on placards were, "Don't ban our way of life," suggesting common interests between different social classes in the rural areas, and "Say no to the urban jackboot," emphasizing divisions between "town" and "country."

Ralph George Algernon Percy, described as "the 12th Duke of Northumberland," owns 120,000 acres, including 170 tenanted farms. He told *The Observer* before the march, "I think most people who live and work in the countryside feel they are facing a grave threat to their way of life."

One protester who would not give her name angrily told *Militant* reporters she was protesting the fact that Legal and General, a large insurance company, had bought up farmland for property development in Hertfordshire, a county near London.

### Protectionism

Nationalist and protectionist slogans were also popular, such as "Be British, eat British." Two pig farmers from the Isle of Wight carried a sign reading, "Make the Danish squeal." Danish pork producers are among the main European competitors to Britain. One of the pig farmers, who gave his name as Fiddler and said he employs two people, told the *Militant*, "Pig prices have dropped 50 percent — we have been hit hard." He thought the biggest problem was European Union (EU) hygiene regulations, which he claimed were unfairly applied to farmers in Britain.

The continuing BSE or "mad-cow disease" crisis was another issue. In March 1996 the then-Conservative government admitted a possible link between British beef infected with BSE and the deaths of a small number of people from Creutzfeldt-Jakobs Disease, its human equivalent. A worldwide EU ban on British beef exports followed, and is still in force today. This ban exacerbated the crisis facing farmers, prompting reactionary protests in December 1997, including dumping Irish beef.

Late last year the government banned sales of "beef on the bone" after scientists stated that there was a slight risk that bone tissue could carry BSE. In response Jenny Williams, a smallholder from Kent who took part in the Countryside March, told the right-wing *Daily Mail*, "It's become a nanny state."

The demonstration was organized by the "Countryside Alliance," formed last year by landowning and business interests. Its central leaders are Robin Hanbury-Tenison, a capitalist farmer who was educated at Eton, the top ruling-class school in Britain, and Eric Bettelheim, an attorney for a U.S. law firm in London. Among the other leaders are Gerald Grosvenor, the Duke of Westminster and reportedly the richest private landowner in the UK, and Hugh van Cutsem, a landowner in Norfolk described as a shooting companion of Charles Windsor, the heir to the British throne.

Conservative party leader William Hague and other Tory leaders participated in the protest. Initially the Labour party junior agriculture minister, Elliot Morley, denounced the march. In the end a junior minister for the environment, Michael Meacher, participated representing the government, according to *The Times*. A small number of pro-hunting Labour MPs and Liberal Democrat leader Patrick Ashdown also marched. The bill to ban hunting with dogs was the private initiative of Labour MP Michael Foster. It was effectively killed March 6 by Conservative filibustering and lack of support from the Labour government of prime minister Anthony Blair. Prior to the march his government also retreated on two other issues: watering down the proposed "right to roam" law and plans to build housing in rural areas.

A small number of rural workers attended the Countryside March. David Morton, a sawmill worker from Inverness in Scotland, spends his weekends hunting rabbits with dogs for local cattle farmers. The rabbits, he said, eat the crops farmers use to feed their cattle. Stewart Frost from Gloucester works full-time at this form of pest control. Foster's bill would make his livelihood illegal, he said.

### Communist League opposes hunting ban

Peter Clifford, Communist League candidate for Lambeth Council in south London, commented in an interview, "I'm opposed to a ban on fox hunting or other so-called country sports, regardless of the fact that these are mainly, but not exclusively, the pastimes of the wealthy and privileged. It is rarely in working people's interests to support a capitalist government taking more power to ban activities."

Clifford explained that the March 1 demonstration was the kind of action that sows the seeds for a fascist movement in the future. "This right-wing mobilization was the first time in recent decades we have seen angry middle-class people out on the streets in such numbers. It is from actions like this, and events like the emotional hoopla that surrounded the death of Diana Spencer last year, that a fascist movement can begin to take shape." Clifford concluded "the workers movement must oppose all chauvinist, 'Britain First' and other slogans and demands that pit working people against each other—across borders and between town and country."

"But at the same time we need to champion the demands of exploited working farmers and others in the countryside for measures that protect them against the ravages of the capitalist crisis. Working farmers should be guaranteed a living income for what they produce through their labor," Clifford said. "It is vital that the workers movement take this stance in order to forge a fighting alliance of workers and working farmers. The goal of that alliance is to wage the fight to take power out of the hands of our common enemy the landowners and capitalists of town and country and bring to power a workers and farmers government."

Julie Crawford is a member of the Amalgamated Engineer and Electrical Union in Manchester, England.



# 1,000 workers rally in solidarity with striking Steelworkers in Ohio

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

operators were in a separate building. The women who worked the punch presses and did the packing operations worked in another build-

## ON THE PICKET LINE

working conditions, and unions. We invite you to contribute items to this column as a way for other fighting workers around the world to read about and learn from these important struggles. Jot down a few lines about what is happening in your union, at your workplace, or other workplaces in your area, including interesting political discussions.

MARIETTA, Ohio — "I am amazed at the turnout," said Della West, the daughter of a mill operator on strike against Magnetic Specialty, Inc. (MSI) here. West was staffing an information and T-shirt sales table at the rally and helped build the event beforehand, fielding phone calls for information and distributing the MSI strikers' fact sheet. More than 1,000 people from some two dozen unions rallied here March 15 in solidarity with the 80 production and maintenance workers who have been fighting for a year to get union recognition and a contract. Workers at MSI voted to join the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) in August 1995, but the company refused to recognize the union and fired 16 pro-union workers. The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) upheld the union election and ordered the company to bargain with the union. The U.S. Sixth District Court of Appeals upheld the NLRB decision, and the company has begun negotiations with the local.

The majority of employees at MSI voted to strike, which began March 2, 1997, until the company recognized and bargained with their union. Several strikers reported that one highlight of strike activities has been the distribution of a "strike fact sheet" that details the company's attacks against the strikers. This flyer notes the firings due to picketing, and the company's regular threats of violence. Several workers were at the rally because this fact sheet had been distributed at their plant gate. One of the MSI strikers reported his local was proud to be on strike and optimistic about the future outcome. Many members of this local are young.

When asked what he thought the strike had accomplished so far, Tom Cline, an extruder operator, said, "Well, before the strike the mill

ing separated from us by a parking lot. We were two divisions. Now, we are one division." Even though 25 workers have crossed the line and the company added 80 replacement workers, Cline said there has been no weekend work for four weekends in a row. "We had to work seven days a week for about minimum wage." Melissa Boulding, a punch press operator, joined Cline and said "We've made a lot of friends. It's been rough but we've all enjoyed it."

A roll call of strike donations was taken as part of the rally. Some came from plant gate collections, and one contribution was from area Teamsters at UPS. The donations added up to thousands of dollars.

Numerous groups were there to show their support for the strike, including a contingent of newspaper workers from Detroit, who waged a long strike against that city's two main dailies; garment workers in the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees from Huntington, West Virginia; and some members of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA).

A contingent of 50 Steelworkers who waged a successful fight against Wheeling-Pitt Steel were also there and reported that all the workers who had been fired by the company during their strike were back at work.

Steelworkers from a local that fought against mandatory overtime as a safety condition several years ago at Ravenswood Aluminum Corp. in Ravenswood, West Virginia, also attended. Two young workers who were hired after the strike reported that with jobs created by the restrictions on overtime that were won by the long strike and because of the retirement of older workers at the plant, many new workers have been hired. "But I went through the strike with my dad," one pointed out, smiling.

Other supporters included a number of retired steelworkers from the LTV Hazlewood and South Side Works in Pittsburgh, who came as an organized contingent. LTV is in the process of shutting down the Hazlewood cokeworks rather than repair and maintain the works to meet U.S. government environmental standards.

After the roll call of donations, AFL-CIO secretary-treasurer Richard Trumka addressed the rally. After greetings from other speakers, rally participants marched from the Washington County Fairgrounds, past the plant to the strike headquarters for music and a picnic.

Several times during the rally and at the picnic area, workers came up to *Militant* reporters and asked to be included in the list of unions present at the rally, like a Trinity Casteel worker who said they had just won a contract after four years of struggle. He said we should also report on a strike taking place now at Monarch Rubber in Spenser, West Virginia.

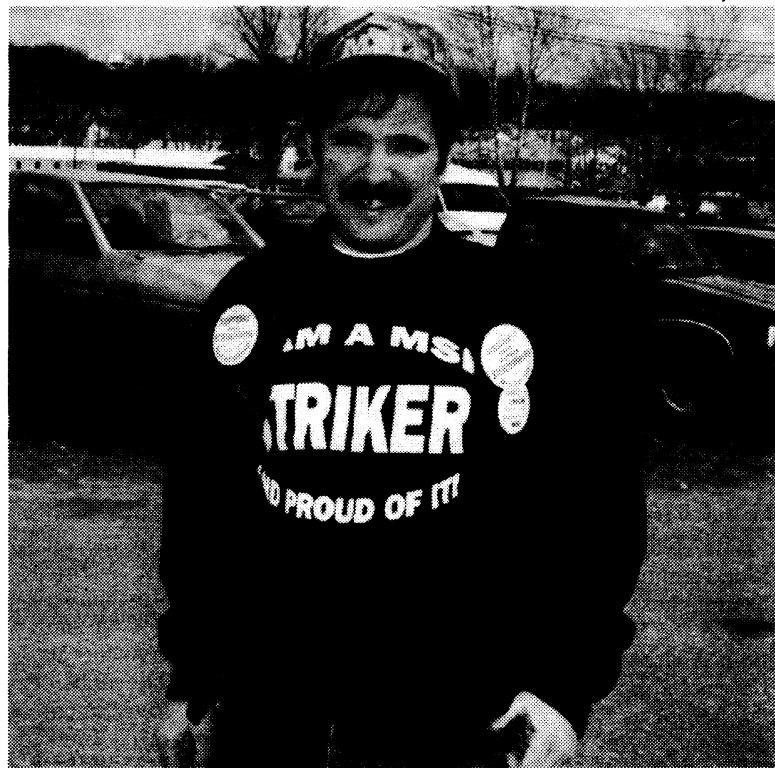
A contingent of 25 workers were at the rally from a three-year-old Steelworkers local in Middletown, Ohio. Bill Tucker reported their local of 52 went on strike four weeks ago against Middletown Tube Works, where they made tubing for heating and air-conditioning. Tucker, who had worked at the plant for five years, said, "The company wants to eliminate all breaks and lunch time, increase comprehensive health payments, and run our lives away from the plant." Workers would have to be on call at any time to come into the plant to work. When asked why they were at the rally, several striking steelworkers said at the same time, "To show our support and solidarity" with the MSI strikers. One striker added, "It's them today. Us tomorrow."

### Postal workers walk out in Liverpool, England

LIVERPOOL, England — Mail workers here walked off the job after management provocations and the announcement that mail was to be diverted to other Royal Mail sorting depots. After an announcement in the press that Liverpool's Coperas Hill sorting center was being closed and the work moved to a new site in Warrington, management cut the overtime in Liverpool and moved some work to Manchester, Bolton, and Preston. Workers walked out on the afternoon shift on March 23 and have picketed the building round the clock since then.

"Management has been trying to force a strike for 18 months" a striker who didn't want to give his name told *Militant* reporters on the 100-strong picket line March 25. The move to close the Liverpool sorting center is part of a reorganization of the postal service that is projected to result in up to 1,000 fewer jobs in this area. That is the central issue behind the strike.

James, a picket at the back gate



Militant/Cecelia Moriarity

### MSI striker Tom Cline at March 15 solidarity rally

of the depot who gave only his first name, said, "They have said all the full-time workers will keep their jobs but that still means all the temporary and part-time workers will be laid off. I'm a permanent worker but I'm opposed" to the reorganization. Officials of the Communication Workers Union (CWU), which organizes the postal workers, are promoting a "Speke for Liverpool" proposal, urging the Royal Mail to build its new depot in this area at Speke, which is in Liverpool, instead of in Warrington further down the road.

Some 1,500 people turned out in Liverpool March 28 for a march and rally to support the mail workers' fight against jobs cuts. Among those marching was a contingent of dock workers who carried out an 18-month struggle against their sacking by the Merseyside Dock and Harbour Co. A message of solidarity from a postal workers union local in New Jersey, United States, was read to the rally.

### Transit workers rally for better contract in Atlanta

ATLANTA — Four hundred bus drivers, train operators, mechanics and other transit workers rallied here March 23 to protest the lack of progress in their struggle for a contract. Workers at Metropolitan Atlanta Rapid Transit Authority (MARTA) are members of the Amalgamated Transit Union (ATU) Local 732 and have been without a contract since Dec. 31, 1997.

Some 150 union members rallied in the morning at the Lindbergh MARTA train station and then marched across the street to the administration building.

Bus and train operators are hired as part-time with no benefits and get \$11.02 per hour, after working 30 days at \$5.25 per hour during training. It is up to management when a worker goes full time, which sometimes takes up to 4-5 years. The

union wants benefits to cover all part-timers and higher wages for all workers.

Bus operator Donna Royal said, "They want to take money from us. If we drive a smaller bus, they want to pay us less. They want us to give up part of our pension and their 2.5 percent wage offer per year amounts to a wage freeze." Top pay for full-time drivers with three years' experience is \$15.81 per hour.

At 4 p.m. the same day 250 day-shift workers attended another rally at the same site. ATU Local 732 president Johnny McBurrows told the crowd that the company refused to negotiate and that's why the contract is in the hands of a "fact-finding" judge who will make a non-binding ruling soon. The last negotiation session was February 12.

Other speakers at the rally included Democratic party politicians who urged the MARTA Board of Directors to pressure the management negotiators to "do right."

Tarus Alexander, a bus operator, told the *Militant*, "We are the lowest paid drivers in a major city in this country."

Near the end of the rally workers chanted, "No Braves Shuttle!," referring to the shuttle buses that take people from the major MARTA train station to Ted Turner Field, on days that the Atlanta Braves baseball team plays at home. This reflected the workers' refusal to drive these special additional buses starting March 31, the day of the Braves' home-opener. This job action, workers feel, will put pressure on management for a better contract.

Cecelia Moriarity, member of the USWA in Clairton, Pennsylvania, and Young Socialists member Stefanie Swenko; Ann Fiander, member of the Communication Workers Union in Manchester, England; and Dan Fein, member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1996 in Atlanta, contributed to this column.

## — LETTERS —

### Anti-Klan action

On March 14, in Ebensburg, Pennsylvania, the location of the office of District 2 of the United Mine Workers, an estimated 200 people showed up to protest a KKK rally at the courthouse of Cambria County, western Pennsylvania.

The Coal County Anti-Klan Coalition, composed of local citizens, organized the protest.

The state Unity Coalition had come to town to persuade people to ignore the Klan, but it failed.

The anti-Klan protesters were made up of local high school students, students from St. Francis College and the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown, anti-hate group Christians, gay people, college professors, small businessmen, a punk rock contingent, International So-

cialist Organization members, Socialist Workers Party members, Black ministers, unemployed whites, and workers.

Some people have castigated the anti-Klan protest. A column in a local paper, the *Mountaineer Herald*, claimed that it was easy to condemn the KKK and blamed the civil rights movement, the women's movement, and affirmative action for causing whites to be angry. Others were cynical, claiming that people just showed up out of curiosity.

At the rally, it was pointed out that the 8.7 percent unemployment rate in Cambria County is the result of mines closing, mills shutting down, etc.

Also it was pointed out that the KKK served the interests of corpo-

rate America. Others who attended the rally have since written letters to the editor demonstrating that they were actually there to protest racism.

For many who had never protested anything, it was an educational experience and a consciousness raising experience. For all interests and purposes, it was a positive thing, despite the fact that protest organizers received more criticism than the Klan all along.

N. Brand  
Loretto, Pennsylvania

### St. Patrick's Day parade

On Sunday, March 15, Sinn Fein leader Martin McGuinness participated in Philadelphia's St. Patrick's Day parade and led the march with

the contingent of the "United Irish American Societies of the Delaware Valley." This grouping, also known as the Federation, is the umbrella organization for supporters of the Irish republican movement. Martin received an enthusiastic welcome from tens of thousands of Irish Americans and supporters of the Irish freedom struggle.

The parade this year was noticeably more political than any for the last decade or so. The theme of the parade was a political slogan, in religious form, "St. Patrick Bless the United Irishmen on 1798 and 1998." The theme float featured reenactors dressed as 18th century rebels and others dressed as IRA volunteers. An actor representing St. Patrick stood on a plywood mountain, in the center of the float

and blessed the freedom fighters.

The great majority of the contingents carried banners demanding freedom for Irish political prisoners, or British withdrawal from Ireland. Teamsters Local 155 carried placards demanding that the U.S. Postal Service issue a stamp to commemorate the Irish Famine (the Great Hunger) of the 19th century. Roy Inglee  
Wilmington, Delaware

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.

## Mandela rejects Clinton's demands on trade and breaking ties to Cuba

BY T.J. FIGUEROA

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa — "Moral authority dictates that we should not abandon those who helped us in the darkest hour in the history of this country," said South African president Nelson Mandela. "I am not going to betray the trust of those who helped us." Speaking at a joint press conference with U.S. president William Clinton in Cape Town, South Africa, March 27, Mandela was referring to White House attempts to pressure the South African government to break ties to the governments of Cuba, Iran, and Libya.

Clinton visited Ghana, Uganda, South Africa, Botswana, Senegal, and Rwanda from March 23 to April 2. The aim of this tour was to expand the penetration of U.S. finance capital on the African continent, deal blows to Washington's European rivals, and assert U.S. military power south of the Sahara.

The stops in Senegal and Rwanda highlighted Washington's success to date in asserting its dominance against the former colonial ruler there, Paris. The Uganda visit served to bolster support for the U.S. government in its campaign against nearby Sudan. The Botswana leg was ostensibly to highlight Washington's approval of that country's economic policies. But there are also widespread reports that a major air base is under construction in that southern African nation — and that it may be used as a U.S. military base in the future.

The White House staged a variety of events, photo opportunities, and conferences at which Clinton pushed a new trade bill and issued platitudes on slavery. He addressed the same themes at a sitting of South Africa's parliament in Cape Town.

But the attempt to dictate trade on Washington's terms drew sharp rebuke from the South African government, which hosted Clinton on a state visit.

A small army of 1,000 officials, politicians, businessmen, bodyguards and journalists accompanied the president, complete with a fleet of stretch limousines imported from the United States, an air armada of 15 military cargo planes, and several helicopters. This imperial display prompted not a small amount of irritation by people on the streets of Cape Town and Johannesburg.

### Debt trap for African countries

The devastating social conditions for working people in Africa are the legacy of colonial rule, neocolonial capitalist regimes, and imperialist oppression. The combined Gross Domestic Product of the nations south of the Sahara is today equivalent to one-fifth that of France. Half the population of 600 million lives on less than \$1 a day; more than half the population has no access to potable water; and more than a third can't get health care. Ninety out of every 1,000 children die before they reach the age of five.

These conditions are reinforced by the tribute that the African peoples must pay to Wall Street in the form of loan repayments and interest. The debt of African governments to imperialist banks stands at \$235 billion.

The situation is so bad that the Paris Club of capitalist governments has agreed to some debt relief. Asked about this in Cape Town, Clinton said that in order for there to be



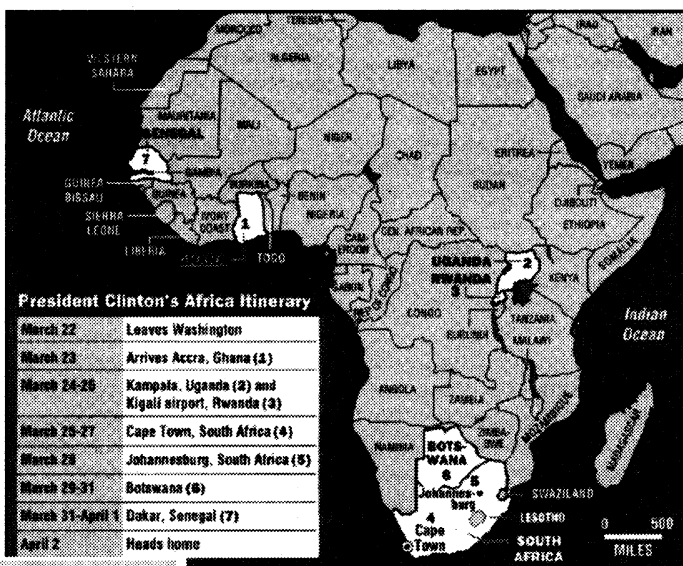
relief, governments must introduce policies "that will produce better results in the future.... If you just had uncritical 100 percent debt relief, other people would be reluctant to loan money in the future because they'd think they'd never get any of their money back."

### Africa trade bill

Clinton made a centerpiece of his trip promotion of the so-called U.S.-Africa Growth and Opportunity Bill, which was passed by the U.S. House of Representatives but has not yet gone to the Senate. The bill aims to promote U.S. access to African markets. Africa currently accounts for only 1 percent of all U.S. exports and 2 percent of imports, and receives less than 1 percent of U.S. overseas investment. It also comes at a time that the European Union is negotiating its own trade treaties with African governments.

The bill would expand by about 50 percent the number of products from Africa eligible for duty-free import to the United States. It calls for a plan for a U.S.-sub-Saharan Africa "free trade" area, which would help to muscle out capital from Europe and Asia. And it authorizes debt relief for those countries that meet with Washington's conditions for qualifying.

These conditions include trade "liberal-



Clinton's aim with six-nation tour of Africa was to extend dominance of U.S. capital in region. South African president Nelson Mandela (at left) and other ANC leaders said Washington's demands were "not acceptable."

ization," protecting U.S. intellectual and other property rights, reducing "high import and corporate taxes [and] controlling government consumption," removing curbs on investment, and privatizing state-owned companies. The last condition would allow for growing U.S. ownership of the national patrimony of countries in Africa. Under the legislation, the U.S. president would also "certify" that African governments are complying with austerity programs imposed by the International Monetary Fund.

### The bill 'is not acceptable' to S. Africa

ANC government officials have stressed their objections to trade imposed under these conditions.

In remarks broadcast over Radio France International as Clinton was flying into Cape Town, South African deputy president Thabo Mbeki criticized components of the bill. Washington's "trade, not aid" formula, Mbeki said, "is wrong." He emphasized later that these remarks specifically concerned countries to South Africa's north, where a cutoff of aid would have had consequences.

At the ANC national conference in December, Mandela sharply attacked the role of the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), saying it was doing the bidding of Washington and not responding to South Africa's needs. As a result, USAID said it would "review" its programs in this country.

At the joint press conference with Clinton, Mandela was even more blunt, saying that "we have serious reservations" about the trade bill. "To us, this is not acceptable."

The legislation has also come under fire by protectionist forces in the United States who claim it will undercut "U.S. jobs." They include Randall Robinson of TransAfrica and U.S. trade union officials. Peggy Taylor, legislative director for the AFL-CIO, complained that the bill's provisions on textile and garment trade would lead to "massive transshipments of Chinese products through Africa without attracting any new investment in the continent," reported the March 5 issue of the South African paper *Business Day*.

Clinton and Mandela also discussed Washington's objections to South African legislation on pharmaceuticals. The ANC majority in Parliament passed the Medicines and Related Substances Control Act late last year. It allows the government to shop on the world market for cheaper, generic drugs that can be provided at lower cost to patients at state hospitals and clinics. The Health Minister is also given rights to abrogate drug patents in the interest of providing medication. This has enraged the pharmaceutical monopolies, who claim their "in-

tellectual property" is at stake.

"Pretoria could find itself deep enough in the U.S. dog house to be denied the 'enhanced' trade benefits proposed" under the new legislation, wrote Simon Barber in the March 18 *Business Day*. South African officials say the law does not violate World Trade Organization rules and they will not withdraw it.

### Cuba 'gave us resources to win'

At the news conference with Mandela, a reporter asked Clinton about the recent decision of chemical company Sentrachem to cancel its contract to export pesticides to Cuba for use in the sugar harvest. This \$20 million contract formed the bulk of South Africa's exports to Cuba, which totalled 77 million rands (about \$15 million) in the first nine months of 1997. The South African government's official policy is to encourage trade with Cuba.

The U.S.-based Dow Chemical Co. bought Sentrachem last December. It ordered Sentrachem to break the Cuban contract to comply with the so-called Helms-Burton legislation, a component of the U.S. embargo against the revolution that aims to strangle the island nation economically.

Clinton said he had discussed it "briefly" with Mandela. "But the law is the law," he said.

In his opening statement to the press conference, Mandela forcefully defended South Africa's ties with Cuba, along with other governments not to Washington's liking.

"One of the first heads of state I invited to this country was [Cuban president] Fidel Castro. I have received in this country ex-president Rafsanjani of Iran. I have also invited [Libyan leader Moammar] Gadhafi to this country.... Not only did they support us in rhetoric, they gave us the resources for us to conduct the struggle and win. And those South Africans who have berated me for being loyal to our friends, literally, they can go throw themselves into a pool."

A reporter asked Mandela about the U.S. proposal for a military "African crisis response team," an initiative earlier shot down by the ANC government. "We did not discuss that one," Mandela replied. "Our attitude toward this question is very clear.... All that South Africa is saying is that a force which is intended to deal with problems in Africa, must not be commanded by somebody outside this continent. I certainly would never put my troops under somebody who does not belong to Africa."

It's not hard to fathom why.

As Clinton began his African trip, the local press picked up stories, based on reports by *Philadelphia Inquirer* reporter Mark Bowden, of a slaughter carried out by U.S. troops during Washington's invasion of Somalia. According to Richard Dowden, writing in the March 27 *Mail & Guardian*, "U.S. troops slaughtered more than 1,000 Africans, many of them women and children blown to pieces or burnt in their homes by helicopter gunships. It happened on October 3, 1993."

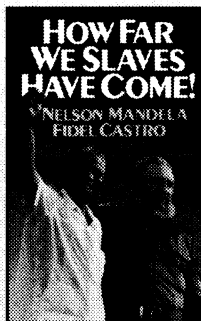
Several small protests met the Clinton entourage here. The Friends of Cuba Society condemned U.S. hypocrisy as it continues its "immoral and inhumane blockade of food and medication to Cuba."

Pickets organized by the Muslims Against Global Oppression awaited Clinton's arrival in Cape Town, with signs denouncing Washington's designs on Iraq, and the "onslaught against Islam by the Zionists and their allies in the West, especially America."

More than a few people wrote to the newspapers about the trip. One such letter, published in the March 26 *Johannesburg Star*, said that "the visit by the United States president Bill Clinton brings to our land the leader of a country that poses, for future generations, the greatest threat to human rights and human dignity the world has ever known."

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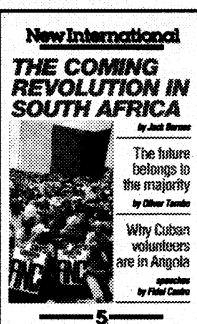
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