

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Cuban youth are welcomed
on arrival for U.S. tour

— PAGE 4

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 63/NO. 13 APRIL 5, 1999

Stop bombing Yugoslavia!

U.S., NATO troops out of Balkans! Independence for Kosova!

Working people everywhere should oppose the barbaric U.S.-led bombing campaign against the people of Yugoslavia. We should also champion the struggle by the Albanian majority in Kosovo for their national self-determination and independence. We urge



Demonstration in Chicago against U.S. and NATO bombing of Yugoslavia

Militant

NATO forces assault Belgrade and Pristina

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL
AND ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

U.S.-led NATO forces unleashed a heavy bombing campaign against Yugoslavia March 24, launching dozens of cruise missiles that wreaked destruction in Kosovo and Serbia, including near Belgrade, Yugoslavia's capital. The opening of the attack followed a White House ultimatum to the Serbian government of Slobodan Milosevic to accept a NATO military occupation force in Kosovo and other conditions demanded by Washington. The military assault is the biggest in Europe since World War II.

Several hours into the bombing, U.S. Continued on Page 9

EDITORIAL

our readers to organize and take part in protest actions, speakouts, and public forums with these demands.

The wealthy rulers of the United States are lying about the true objectives of their war moves. U.S. president William Clinton cynically claims Washington and other imperialist governments have unleashed their barrage of missiles out of humanitarian interest, to protect the Albanians in Kosova.

But Washington, London, Bonn, Paris, Ottawa and other imperialist powers are deadly enemies of the people of Kosova —

Continued on Page 14

Protesters: 'Stop bombing now!'

BY CAPPY KIDD

CHICAGO — An emergency picket line against the U.S./NATO bombing of Yugoslavia drew wide media coverage in the area.

Just a few hours after the bombing of Yugoslavia was announced, some 35 people converged on the Federal Plaza in downtown Chicago, carrying signs saying "U.S. Out of Yugoslavia," "Stop the Bombing of Yugoslavia and Iraq," and "Self-Determination for Kosova." The protesters chanted,

Continued on Page 14

Protests over police killing of Diallo provoke crisis for N.Y. mayor Giuliani

BY ALDUNCAN

NEW YORK CITY — The daily demonstrations here against the police killing of Amadou Diallo have provoked a political crisis for the administration of Mayor Rudolph Giuliani.

Tens of thousands of working people have taken part in protest actions since Diallo was shot by four cops February 4, refusing to let the brutal killing go by. The police fired 41 bullets at Diallo, a young worker from Guinea, as the unarmed man stood in the entrance to his apartment building.

A growing number of prominent political figures, many of them Democratic Party politicians, have been arrested at daily civil disobedience actions at One Police Plaza, the main police headquarters in downtown Manhattan, since March 9.

The list includes former mayors David

Dinkins and Edward Koch, congressmen Charles Rangel and Jose Serrano, state comptroller Carl McCall, NAACP president Kweisi Mumfe, comedian Dick Gregory, actors Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, and Dennis Rivera, president of the hospital workers union Local 1199 in New York.

These actions are organized by Democratic Party politician Alfred Sharpton and his National Action Network, Rev. Herbert Daughtry of the House of the Lord Church, and others.

The arrests have been heavily covered in

the media. Less widely reported are the simultaneous picket lines that have grown to 500 or more a day. Many of the pickets are workers who join in on their lunch break; others take a day off to participate in these noon-time actions. Other victims of police brutality and representatives from organizations who have been fighting against it like Parents Against Police Brutality participate.

Fellow Republicans have begun to take their distance from Giuliani. Interviewed March 21 on the national Sunday morning

Continued on Page 12

500 at Oscar protest say: 'Don't stand with Kazan!'

BY JOHN BENSON

LOS ANGELES — "Don't Stand for Kazan," chanted 500 people as motion picture industry personalities arrived for the 71st Academy Award Ceremonies. The demonstration was called to protest the presentation of a Lifetime Achievement Award to Elia Kazan by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences at the March 21 ceremony in downtown Los Angeles.

On April 10, 1952, Kazan informed on fellow writers and directors to the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). He claimed that eight people he had worked with in the Group Theater had been members of the Communist Party.

The *Los Angeles Times* tried to downplay the impact of the opposition to the award. They quoted award opponents as saying Kazan's appearance was "anti-climatic" and a "nonevent."

According to the *Times*, Kazan acknowledged applause when he received the award, saying, "I really like to hear that. I want to thank the Academy for its courage and generosity."

The size of the demonstration exceeded the expectations of organizers, the ad-hoc Committee Against Silence. Many more protesters showed up than could fit in the area blocked off by the police for the demonstration. As a result, about 200 of those protesting the award to Kazan rallied across the street from the main action.

Signs that were prepared by the Committee Against

Continued on Page 4



Militant/Brian Taylor

Daily protests are taking place outside police headquarters in Manhattan demanding jailing of cops who killed Amadou Diallo. Above, March 23 picket.

4,000 workers in Newport News rally to demand raise

BY OLYMPIA NEWTON
AND CLIVE TURNBULL

NEWPORT NEWS, Virginia — "Six, two, two! Six, two, two!" chanted some 4,000 members of the United Steelworkers of America Local 8888 (USWA) as they marched from their union hall past the shipyard gates to a rally outside the Newport News Shipbuilding (NNS) corporate office here March 18. Local 8888 is demanding a \$6 per hour increase in the first year and a \$2 per hour increase in each of the subsequent two years after the current contract expires April 4.

Union members also chanted "88 — Close the gate! 88 — Close the gate!" a slogan from the organizing drive and hard-fought 85-day strike in 1979 that forged the Local. Other chants were "Shut her down!" "What's the time? Union time!" and "What's the time? Contract time!"

Nearly every unionist at the rally wore a Local 8888 hat and T-shirt. Many workers carried signs reading, "Union Solidarity." Others read, "Local 8888 — No Justice No Peace," and "USWA Local 8888 will overcome." Annie Thomas, a ma-

Continued on Page 15



Tensions bubble in Mideast over sustained bombing of Iraq

Foreign ministers of the 22-member Arab League adopted a statement March 17 calling for respect of Iraqi sovereignty, but fell short of condemning the repeated bombing of Iraq by U.S. and British warplanes. The debate at the meeting reflected the pressure of growing anger among toilers in that region around the near-daily bombings. Syrian foreign minister Farouk Shara berated Washington and London, accusing them of using "double standards" to enforce UN resolutions against Iraq, while allowing the Israeli government to violate other resolutions that call for withdrawal of Zionist settlements occupying Arab territories. Shara warned the imperialist nations that their actions "threaten the security and stability of the region." After the U.S.-led invaders of Iraq began a new stage of bombing in December, there have been protests across the Middle East.

Since 1991 U.S. and British rulers have imposed a "no-fly zone" on two-thirds of Iraqi air space. In recent days, the Iraqi government has broken the "no-fly zone" to shuttle Muslims "pilgrims" to Mecca for the annual Haj. The Saudi Arabian government refused Washington's request to prevent the aircraft from landing there or seize them on arrival.

Workers in Israel demand raise

Workers in Israeli's military industry went on strike in early March for a wage increase. Workers at Bezeq, the largest telephone company in Israel, followed suit on March 12. On March 15 they were joined by 80,000 civil service employees demanding a 16 percent wage increase. Airports, sea ports, hospitals, clinics, half a million phone lines, and various other government and private institutions have been affected by the indefinite strike.

Finance Minister Meir Sheerit, according to his deputy spokesman, offered civil service workers a 3.8 percent pay rise to supposedly keep up with inflation, but this was rejected. Civil Service Commissioner Shmuel Hollander said workers would not be paid while on strike. The finance ministry issued a statement saying it was preparing for a

D.C. students resist cuts in education



Students from the University of the District of Columbia attend Washington, D.C., city council meeting March 16 to protest plan to relocate the school, the city's only public institution for higher education. Washington, D.C., mayor Anthony Williams announced the proposal along with a plan to drastically reduce the academic programs offered by the university, which have already been cut nearly in half.

drawn-out fight. Meanwhile, 400,000 other public sector employees have threatened to join the open-ended strike if the government does not implement a more substantial wage raise.

Miners rally across Ukraine

Fed up with the Ukrainian government's refusal to pay back wages, 20,000 coal miners across the Ukraine held protest rallies and "ground meetings" March 18. Officials tried their best to prevent nationwide actions, including declaring buses — usually used to take miners to work, but that day would transport workers to the actions — "not in working condition." The government now owes miners \$800 million and the figure swells by about \$25 million every month.

Ukrainian officials have earmarked a measly \$400 million for mining in the 1999 budget. Five thousand miners protested in Lugansk. Actions also took place in Pavlograd and Chervonograd. In Donetsk 8,000 miners slipped through police cordons to hold a demonstration calling for the government to resign due to its inability to pay off their back wages.

Oil layoffs in Venezuela

Venezuela petroleum bosses say they will fire 12,000 oil workers over the next six months, cutting their workforce from 42,000 to 30,000. Oil barons blame the steady downward slide in oil prices for the sackings. The price of oil in Venezuela, the western hemisphere's second-largest oil producer, dropped from \$16.32 per barrel in 1997 to \$10.76 per barrel in 1998.

Mexican gov't jails 'leftist rebels'

A Mexican court ordered Erika Zamora Pardo and Efrén Cortéz Chávez to serve five years in prison on charges of conspiracy and incitement of rebellion. Zamora and Cortéz were arrested last June during what the Associated Press describes as a "clash" between "antidrug" troops and a "rebel group" meeting in a schoolhouse in the village of El Charco. Villagers say the so-called antinarcotics squad surrounded the schoolhouse and massacred those inside. The Mexican government denies the allegation.

North Carolina clinic is bombed

A bomb partially exploded outside the Femcare clinic in Asheville, North Carolina, March 13 — shortly before the clinic was scheduled to open. No one was wounded. This same clinic was subject to an anthrax letter hoax in February, and a threatening phone call last July. The bomb, which was defused by cops, could have destroyed one end of the clinic if it completely detonated.

New Jersey cops settle race suit

The New Jersey State Police agreed to pay \$225,000 in a settlement with Dorothy Cobbs, a Black woman who said she was brutalized by traffic cops in 1996. Cops claim the settlement admits no wrongdoing and was done to avoid court costs. Cobbs, 52, says she was returning to New York from a trip to Atlantic City, New Jersey. New Jersey state trooper Patrick O'Dwyer pulled her over, claiming she had a busted tail light.

Cobbs said O'Dwyer swore at her, grabbed her by the wrist, punched her in the face, maced her, and tackled her as she fled across the highway median. Then he arrested her. At cop headquarters Cobbs was slammed against a wall, spat on, and abused further. O'Dwyer's claims he saw Cobbs driving slowly and pulled her over, supposedly to offer assistance. He said he smelled alcohol on her breath and asked her to get out of the car. He claimed she got out of line during questioning.

Skinhead guilty in Denver killing

Skinhead Jeremiah Barnum was found guilty of murder, attempted murder, and ethnic intimidation by a jury trial March 15 for the 1997 killing of a West African immigrant and the wounding of a bystander. Oumar Dia was standing at a bus stop in Denver when he was shot and killed by Barnum and his alleged cohort Nathan Thill. Jeannie VanVelkinburgh, who is white, was shot when coming to Dia's aid. She is now paralyzed. Barnum was sentenced to life imprisonment with no parole. Thill, who is accused of pulling the trigger, is scheduled to stand trial in April.

County official in Maryland says ballot limits will exclude 'riffraff'

The county council of Montgomery, Maryland, crafted a bill to quadruple the number of signatures needed by independent candidates to appear on the ballot in special elections to replace council members who leave office early. The bill has been pegged around council member Betty Ann Krahnke, who has fallen ill and may not finish her term. It would raise the number of signatures required to run for district council from 250 to 1,000. County-wide candidates would need 4,000 signatures, up from 1,000. One council member said the bill aims "to keep the riffraff off the ballot."

— BRIAN TAYLOR

THE MILITANT

U.S. hands off Yugoslavia, Iraq!

From Washington's near-daily bombardment of Iraq to the impending assault on Yugoslavia and the growing probes against China, the 'Militant' explains why the capitalist rulers of the United States are using military might to assert their domination and why workers and farmers must speak out against it. Don't miss a single issue!



SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

NEW READERS

\$10 for 12 issues

RENEWAL

\$15 for 12 weeks

\$27 for 6 months

\$45 for 1 year

NAME _____
ADDRESS _____
CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____
UNION/SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION _____ PHONE _____

CLIP AND MAIL TO THE MILITANT, 410 WEST ST., NEW YORK, NY 10014.

12 weeks of the Militant outside the U.S.: Australia and the Pacific, \$A15 • Britain, £7 • Canada, Can\$15 • Caribbean and Latin America, \$15 • Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, £8 • Belgium, 500 BF • France, FF80 • Iceland, Kr1,500 New Zealand, NZ\$15 • Sweden, Kr75 (Send payment to addresses listed in business information box)

The Militant

Vol. 63/No. 13
Closing news date: March 25, 1999

Editor: NAOMI CRAINE
Business Manager: MAURICE WILLIAMS
Editorial Staff: Megan Arney, Hilda Cuzco, Martin Koppel, Argiris Malapanis, Brian Taylor, and Maurice Williams.
Published weekly except for one week in December and biweekly from July to August by the Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Telephone: (212) 243-6392; Fax (212) 924-6040.

The Militant can be reached via CompuServe at: TheMilitant or via Peacenet at: themilitant
Internet: TheMilitant@compuserve.com or: themilitant@igc.apc.org

The Militant can be accessed on the internet at: gopher://gopher.igc.apc.org/11/pubs/militant

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

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY, and at additional mailing offices. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

Subscriptions: **United States:** for one-year subscription send \$45 to above address.

Latin America, Caribbean: for one-year sub-

scription send \$65, drawn on a U.S. bank, to above address. By first-class (airmail), send \$80. **Asia:** send \$80 drawn on a U.S. bank to 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

Canada: Send Canadian \$75 for one-year subscription to Militant, 4581 St. Denis, Montreal, Quebec H2J 2L4.

Britain, Ireland: £36 for one year by check or international money order made out to Militant Distribution, 47 The Cut, London, SE1 8LL, England. **Continental Europe, Africa, Middle East:** £40 for one year by check or international money order made out to Militant Distribution at above address. **France:** Send FF420 for one-year subscription to Militant, Centre MBE 175, 23 rue Lecourbe, 75015 Paris; chèque postale: 40 134 34 U. **Belgium:** BF 2,400 for one year on account no. 000-1543112-36 of IMei Fonds/Fonds du 1 mai, 2140 Antwerp. **Iceland:** Send 5,400 Icelandic kronur for one-year subscription to Militant, P.O. Box 233, 121 Reykjavík. **Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark:** 500 Swedish kronor for one year. Pay to Militant Swedish giro no. 451-32-09-9. **New Zealand:** Send New Zealand \$75 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand. **Australia:** Send Australian \$75 to P.O. Box K879, Haymarket, NSW 1240, Australia. **Pacific Islands:** Send New Zealand \$75 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand.

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

Washington cranks up trade aggression over steel, bananas

BY DOUG JENNESS

The political forces within U.S. ruling circles favoring more aggressive trade policies against capitalist competitors in other countries are gaining momentum. This was pointedly demonstrated by the March 17 vote of a big majority of the House of Representatives to impose curbs on steel imports into the United States.

Despite White House opposition to the bill, all but 13 Democrats voted for it; and even though the Republican leadership in the House opposed it, 91 Republican congressmen endorsed it. Chief sponsors for the "Steel Recovery Act," reflecting its bipartisan support, were Indiana Democrat Peter Visclosky and Ohio Republican Ralph Regula.

The editors of the *Financial Times*, a London daily, stated that the vote for steel import limits "is a warning shot that will be heard around the world. It does not mean the US is closing its market — yet. But it is a clear signal to Bill Clinton, and to America's trade partners, that they should prepare for trouble ahead."

Curtis Barnette, chief executive of Bethlehem Steel, said the House vote "is both symbolic and real. We are actively working with other steel companies and the unions to carry our message as forcefully as we can."

He was scheduled to press his case before the Senate Finance Committee on March 23. A similar bill, introduced by West Virginia Democrat John Rockefeller, is still being considered by the Senate. At this point it's not clear whether the legislation will get through the Senate, and even if it does, President Clinton's advisors say he will veto the measure. If signed into law the legislation would limit imported steel to the average monthly volume between July 1994 and July 1997. It would be up to the administration to decide whether to use tariffs, quotas, or voluntary restraints. In 1998 imports from

Russia, Japan, and Brazil underselling U.S.-produced steel increased 33 percent.

Last month the Clinton administration said it would impose tariffs on products from Brazil and Japan for their "dumping" steel in the United States, and got agreement from the Russian government for voluntary restraints. This, however, was seen as inadequate by the steel barons and the legislators backing the stiffer import curbs.

Patrick Buchanan, the ultraright politician who recently announced his bid for the Republican nomination in the coming presidential election, hailed the House vote as "a powerful message to the White House that we must stand with American steelworkers against foreign regimes that kill their jobs and destroy their towns by illegal steel dumping." He added, "The day of economic patriotism has returned to America."

Steelworkers president: 'America first'

In a similar nationalist vein, United Steelworkers of America (USWA) president George Becker declared, "Steelworkers and steel communities hold dear the notion that America's trade policies should benefit Americans first. That may be a novel idea in some quarters. But it was a winning idea today in Congress."

Becker attributed the outcome of the House vote to the "Stand-up for Steel" rallies held around the country in recent weeks and to the tens of thousands of letters sent to legislators in Washington, D.C. This campaign to defend "American" jobs, conducted in collaboration with the steel bosses, has been the USWA officialdom's principal focus of activity for months and its program for fighting for jobs.

The Clinton administration and the Republican leadership in Congress also favor a more aggressive trade policy. However, they aren't tactically convinced that the right course is to confront their competitors with

Economic crisis deepens in Peru



Police evicted some 2,500 street vendors — not without a fight — on February 18 in Lima, Peru. For several hours the vendors, trying to hold their ground, battled about 300 national guards and 300 municipal police. Owners of small factories and clothing stores near a busy shopping where vendors have been for about 15 years had complained of unfair competition.

import restrictions that are against World Trade Organization (WTO) protocol and would likely lead to retaliatory measures that could escalate into all-out trade war.

"Once we start doing this with one industry, other industries will line up," Rep. David Dreier (R.-Calif.) stated. "It's very dangerous to move down this road of Smoot-Hawley quota protectionism," referring to the 1930 Hawley-Smoot Act that lifted U.S. tariffs to an all-time high and sparked a wave of retaliatory protectionist measures.

William Archer, Republican from Texas and chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, put it this way: "The president's logic is clear. If the U.S. were to set up trade barriers now in our fragile world economy, we could have a much larger problem on our hands that would affect thousands more American jobs and threaten our economy." It would set a bad example, he explained to countries "whose leaders are under pressure to retaliate against American-made prod-

ucts."

However, during the House debate Rep. Dennis Kucinich (D.-Ohio) argued that even though the Clinton administration has not backed steel import restrictions, it has championed banana distributors. "Bananas did not build America," he stated. "Steel did. The administration cares more about bananas than about steel. Such a trade policy is, in a word, bananas."

Behind the banana war

Kucinich was referring to the seven-year trade conflict between Washington and the European Union over European trade restrictions on bananas produced in Central and Latin America and distributed by U.S.-owned companies. Recently this dispute has become very heated, and on March 3 the U.S. government announced that it was taking steps to impose up to 100 percent tariffs on more than a dozen European products.

This is in response to the EU's resistance to amend its banana-import rules to Washington's satisfaction. The products targeted, such as pecorino cheese and cashmere sweaters, will supposedly have greater impact on the European sellers than on U.S. buyers. The annual trade value of the goods is \$520 million.

The background is that before 1993, companies in non-EU countries controlled 95 percent of the European banana market. That year tariffs were imposed on bananas not grown in former European colonies in the Caribbean, where European distributors dominate.

This left U.S. growers and distributors, whose bananas come mostly from Central and South American plantations — especially from Ecuador, Colombia, and Panama — in a difficult position. In the last six years U.S. companies like Chiquita and Dole have seen their European market plunge 50 percent. The banana plantations tend to be larger in Central and South America than the Caribbean islands, and production costs are lower, making bananas from these countries more competitive.

In 1997 the WTO ruled that the EU had to relax its tariff structure on bananas by Jan. 1, 1999. The changes made were unsuitable to Washington, which led to the March 3 retaliation. Even though bananas are a very small portion of the trade between the United States and Europe, this dispute has become heated because it's on the cutting edge of stepped up trade rivalry between capitalists on both sides of the Atlantic. Both sides are becoming more aggressive as price competition accelerates.

Other issues Washington is pressing on are the EU's ban on genetically modified food and hormone-treated beef, which is, in effect, a trade barrier to many U.S.-produced agricultural commodities. It is also upset over European subsidies to Airbus, Boeing's chief rival in the aircraft industry.

Neither the EU nor Washington are trying to dump the WTO at this point; rather each is attempting to shape it into an instrument that can be used to give legitimacy to its own trade demands, especially as they go into another round of world trade talks later this year.

Doug Jenness is a member of USWA Local 9198 in Roseville, Minnesota.

University of Massachusetts students protest attack on affirmative action

BY TED LEONARD

AMHERST, Massachusetts — "Save Affirmative Action, Don't bring 209 to MA" and "Race does matter" were a couple of the signs that greeted the 400 students, faculty and others who heard Ward Connerly speak at Amherst College March 10.

Connerly served on the Proposition 209 Committee, which successfully campaigned for a California referendum barring affirmative action in state-funded programs. Connerly's lecture was entitled "Why Race Doesn't Matter." The program was sponsored by the Conservative Students Union at Amherst College and the Young American Foundation.

The Affirmative Action Task Force, which organized the picket line, also encouraged people to attend the lecture and debate Connerly.

Three weeks earlier, on February 19, University of Massachusetts-Amherst (UMass) chancellor David Scott announced the public university would end affirmative action for students who are Black or of other oppressed nationalities. The school would instead have a new admissions policy supposedly considering factors such as family income, level of family education, and geography.

More than 300 students marched and rallied March 3 to protest the Chancellor's decision. Signs at the action said "Defend Affirmative Action" and "Remember Goodell."

Two years earlier on March 3, students occupied the Goodell Library on campus. The occupation lasted for six days and demanded among other things the administration live up to its promise of a 20 percent

quota of undergraduate students of oppressed nationalities.

Also on the evening of March 3 a "Teach In/Speak Out" was held, sponsored by the Student Parent Campaign. Fifty people participated. Activists in the committee used the event to expose the school's record on support for "low-income" students. In 1995 with the help of welfare assistance there were 900 "low-income" students on campus. That number has now fallen to a little over 100.

Following Connerly's presentation, dozens of people lined up at the microphone to confront him. Amherst College student Justin Snider read a list of statistics exposing the white male job trust that exists in a number of occupations. He said there were only three possible explanations: "First, you could say that that's random, which I think is ridiculous. Second you could say white males are superior, and me being a white male I can tell you they're not. Third, which I think is the right answer, is that the game has been stacked."

A flyer passed out at the event noted, "With the legalizing of Proposition 209, at the University of California Berkeley campus, the number of African Americans admitted dropped by 66 percent, while the number of Latinos admitted decreased by 53 percent."

At UMass, the administration predicts enrollment of students of oppressed nationalities will drop about a third, from 19 percent to 13 percent.

Another rally and march was held on the UMass campus March 11 demanding a one-year moratorium on implementing the policy change and the creation of an independent committee to draft a new admissions policy.

Ted Leonard is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees.

AVAILABLE FROM PATHFINDER

ACTION PROGRAM
TO CONFRONT THE
COMING
ECONOMIC
CRISIS

Programme d'action
POUR FAIRE FACE A LA
crise
economique
qui vient

An Action Program to Confront the Coming Economic Crisis

A Program for International Working-Class Struggle Today

How a program to fight for jobs and affirmative action, and to combat imperialism's pillage of the Third World, is crucial to uniting working people internationally \$3.00 in English. Also available in French, Icelandic, Spanish, and Swedish.

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690. Fax: (212) 727-0150. Please include \$3 for handling.

Cuban youth are welcomed to U.S.

BY OLGA RUSSI

LOS ANGELES — An enthusiastic delegation applauded Cuban youth leaders Itamys García Villar and Luis Ernesto Morejón Rodríguez upon their arrival at Los Angeles International Airport March 21. The welcome was the start of a five-week visit by García and Morejón, who will speak at campuses in seven cities. Their visit is organized by the Los Angeles-based Committee on Cuban Youth and Education headed by Peter McLaren, a professor at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA).

"Thank-you for this warm welcome that is beyond our expectations," Morejón said to the delegation of close to 30 people who came to the airport to greet them. "During our visit here, we want to tell the truth about Cuba to the greatest possible number of people. This kind of welcome shows the support for Cuba that is found in the United States."

García, 27 years old, is a doctor of veterinary medicine. Morejón, 23, is a professor and general secretary of the Foreign Language School of the Enrique José Varona Teacher Training Institute. Both are mem-

bers of the Union of Young Communists.

In a March 12 letter from the Committee on Cuban Youth and Education, professor McLaren and committee volunteer Verónica Poses explained, "Our goal in this tour is to allow García and Morejón to explain the reality of the Cuban revolution for young people and to learn about developments in the United States in an open exchange of ideas and experiences."

They hailed the arrival of the Cuban youth and their having been granted visas by the U.S. Department of State, explaining, "this is a victory for freedom of exchange between Cuba and the United States."

On March 23 McLaren and his wife hosted a reception at their home for the visiting Cuban youth. Members of the Committee on Cuban Youth and Education, students from California state colleges in both Northridge and Los Angeles, and from UCLA attended. Other professors from UCLA; four members of the International Association of Machinists union who work at the Los Angeles International Airport; members of Amerindia, a group of Cubans



Militant/Carole Lesnick

Cuban youth receive warm welcome at their arrival in Los Angeles March 21

living in the U.S. who oppose the U.S. embargo against Cuba; and members of the Los Angeles Coalition in Solidarity with Cuba also came. Stacy Lee, president of the UCLA student government association, introduced García and Morejón, who both spoke briefly.

The Cuban youth will speak at meetings in the Atlanta area from March 25-27 and in Birmingham March 29-30 (see box below).

For more information on the five-week U.S. visit of García and Morejón, contact the Committee on Cuban Youth and Education, c/o Professor Peter McLaren, P.O. Box 951521, 3022C Moore Hall, University of California Los Angeles, Los Angeles, CA 90095-1521. The Committee can be reached by E-mail at ccye@netscape.net, by phone at (310) 766-3673, or by fax at (310) 206-3755.

500 at Oscar protest: 'Don't stand with Kazan!'

Continued from front page

Silence included "Don't Whitewash the Blacklist" and a blowup of a drawing by the cartoonist Conrad from the *Los Angeles Times* depicting the award statue "Oscar" sitting on his hands. Others brought signs that said, "Honor Courage, Not Kazan," "Grandson of Two Blacklisted Writers," "Witch-hunting A Lifetime Achievement??" "Elia Kazan, 1952's Linda Tripp," and "Rattling to the Government — No Way to Win an Oscar."

Three groups organized counter-demonstrations. The Ad Hoc Committee for Naming Facts, organized by the Ayn Rand Institute, brought signs saying "Silence Against Evil is Immoral," "Hollywood Communists Should Apologize," and "Kazan Told the Truth." The Jewish Defense League (JDL) and the Young Americans for Freedom (YAF) also demonstrated in support of Kazan. Among the YAF signs were "I Love Blacklists" and "What's wrong with naming a few commies?"

Several of those arriving in limousines at the Dorothy Chandler Pavilion to attend the ceremony rolled down their car windows and waved to indicate support to those backing Kazan. Several others in limousines indicated their support for those protesting the award.

Cinematographer Haskell Wexler stood up through the sky roof of his limousine as it passed the crowd. He held up a sign that said, "Kazan Is a Fink," and videotaped the protesters. Wexler is a member of the Academy Board of Governors and has been quoted in the press saying he regrets his vote

to give Kazan the award.

The mood of participants and organizers of the protest against the award to Kazan was upbeat and celebratory. Broadly smiling, many were congratulating each other. A number of people approached Leone Hankey, an organizer of the Committee for Silence, to thank her for the initiative to propose the demonstration. Don White, a leader of the committee, said after the demonstration, "We won here. We forced this to be an issue."

Joan Scott, one of the blacklisted writers present whose husband Adrian Scott was also blacklisted, commented: "It's marvelous to see all the old-timers protesting against an informer being awarded. It's wonderful all the young people learning about this."

The protest extended to inside the award ceremonies. According to the March 22 *Los Angeles Times*, when Kazan finally walked on stage to receive the award, about half of the audience remained seated and did not applaud. Dorothy Chandler Pavilion seats 2,850. Roger Ebert on ABC television's post-Oscar show estimated 60 percent remained seated. Several different media reported that among the actors not standing were Nick Nolte, Ed Harris, and Amy Madigan.

Rightists try to provoke confrontation

Several times during the protest outside, tensions began to rise.

About a dozen members of the JDL and YAF moved their counter protest directly beside the demonstrators who were protesting the award to Kazan — trying to provoke an incident. They singled out individuals, yelling vulgar and crude remarks, trying to stir up a confrontation. Some members of the Progressive Labor Party fell into this trap and responded. Committee marshals were able to calm the situation for the most part, though two scuffles did occur.

Young Socialist Mike Broumas was on a special team of marshals organized by the Committee Against Silence. This team faced the counter protesters of the JDL and YAF and separated them from those demonstrating against the award to Kazan. "They did everything they could to provoke us. Several of our marshals were women and the anti-woman insults they yelled were disgusting. But we were disciplined and we helped others among us to be more disciplined. I had never seen anything like this before. We succeeded in making this protest against the Kazan award a big victory."

Taunts of the counterprotesters included: "Kazan's the man," "You're all communists," "Che Guevara got what he had coming to him in Bolivia," and "Kill the cop killer," referring to Mumia Abu-Jamal, a Black journalist who was framed up and is on death row.

The controversy over the award to Kazan has been one of the main topics of discussion and debate in the media, on campus, and on the job over the last few weeks. A press conference held by the Committee Against Silence in Los Angeles March 18 helped gain attention to this issue in the media. Some of the blacklisted screenwriters, a blacklisted actor, and their supporters in Hollywood spoke.

A hundred people packed the room, about half of them media representatives. Originally scheduled to take place on the sidewalk in front of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences offices, the press conference was moved inside the building when the Academy responded to pressure from the media and the blacklisted.

Norma Barzman, a blacklisted screenwriter, spoke at the press conference. She answered a statement by actor Charlton Heston on the TV program, "Larry King Live" the previous evening. She said Heston repeated the claim that Kazan hurt no one because he only had only named names that had already been named before the HUAC.

"Being blacklisted was being harmed," Barzman said. "My husband [screenwriter Ben Barzman] and I had three small children. My family had to go to France to work." Barzman pointed out that many of

those who were blacklisted were active in the battles of the 1930s to organize the Screen Writers Guild and the strikes following World War II that led to the organization of the other unions in the film industry.

Becca Wilson, daughter of screenwriter Michael Wilson, also spoke. She explained how her father had co-authored with Carl Foreman the screenplay for the Oscar-winning movie *Bridge over the River Kwai*. Michael Wilson did not receive credit for the screenplay until after his death. He was awarded the Oscar posthumously. Becca Wilson added, "No apology from the Academy has ever been offered."

Nick Castle, a member of the Directors Guild of America, the Screen Writers Guild, and a member of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, said, "This award tries to put wind in the sails of those who look back to the time of the blacklist as the good old days." He urged others to join the protest outside the awards ceremony.

The March 19 issues of the entertainment trade periodicals *Variety* and the *Hollywood Reporter* ran full-page ads protesting the award to Kazan. The ads were organized through the efforts of the Committee Against Silence. More than 350 people signed the ads, including Castle, producer-director Carl Reiner, and actor Sean Penn.



Militant/Carole Lesnick

Protest condemns "Lifetime Achievement Award" for snitch Elia Kazan in Los Angeles March 21.

HEAR Cuban Youth Speak

ATLANTA

Friday, March 26 7:30 p.m.

Emory University
White Hall, Room 206

Sponsors: Emory University International Student and Scholar Programs; Emory University Office of Lesbian/Gay/ Bisexual/ Transgender/Life; Emory University Office of Multicultural Programs and Services; Atlanta Network on Cuba.

For more information, call (404) 377-4980.

BIRMINGHAM

Monday, March 29, 7:30 p.m.

University of Alabama-Birmingham
Smolian International House
1600 10th Avenue South

Sponsors: the International Studies Department, History Department, Department of Government and Public Service, Black Student Awareness Committee, Birmingham Cuba Youth Tour Committee.

For more information, call (205) 592-2377

Tuesday, March 30, 7 p.m.

Birmingham Civil Rights Institute
520 16th Street, North
Community Meeting Room

NEWYORK

Tuesday, April 6, 11 a.m.

Long Island University, LLC 124
Brooklyn, NY

Sponsors: Latinos Unidos, Haitian Club, Caribbean Students Association, History Department, Political Science Department.

Wednesday, April 7, 4 p.m.

State University of New York-Purchase
Humanities #1064,

735 Anderson Hill Rd., Purchase, NY
Sponsors: Latinos Unidos, OAIPIA, Purchase Environmental Society, Sistas, Department of Social Sciences, Department of Humanities.

For more information call: (914) 251-6991

Friday, April 9, 7 p.m.

Columbia Law School
Jerome Green Hall, Room 102
116th St. and Amsterdam Ave., NYC

Sponsors: Inst. of Latin American and Iberian Studies, Inst. for Research in African-American Studies, Asian American Studies Program, Latino Studies Program, Chicano Caucus, Casa Latina, Native American Law Students Association, United Students of Color Council, Black Students Organization, Students Promoting Empowerment and Knowledge, Roots and Culture Magazine, Center for the Study of Race and Ethnicity, Elementary, Pan-African House.

For more information call: (212) 854-0507

And:

Des Moines April 11-13; Seattle April 27-29; Los Angeles April 15-16, and April 19-21; San Francisco April 17, and April 22-24

Campaign to sell, read 'Capitalism's World Disorder'

The slaughter in Yugoslavia shows every sign of deepening and drawing in other countries. There is already a United Nations intervention force there — so-called "peace-keeping" troops — for the first time ever in Europe. We cannot predict whether the war will expand, or foresee the forms an escalation might take. Nor do we know how long the current imperialist "peacekeeping" will take; we do know the longer it takes, the more likely it is to turn into "peace-breaking." Our job as communist workers is to demand a halt to the imperialist intervention and fight every attempt to deepen it. We need to keep speaking the truth about the stake workers have in this struggle, and to support the toilers throughout the Yugoslav workers state who are trying to defend their social conquests and bring the butchery to an end."

— from "Youth and the Communist Movement" by Jack Barnes, 1992, in *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*

BY MEGAN ARNEY

Pathfinder's newest book, *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* by Jack Barnes, is the most important book workers and youth can be reading and selling as Washington rains missiles down on the Yugoslav workers state.

At meetings in mid-March, Socialist Workers in seven industrial trade unions took a goal to sell 500 copies of the book. The goal includes books sold to co-workers and to workers and farmers on picket lines, protest rallies, conferences, and plant gate sales they organize to participate in as part of political work on the job and in the union.

The new mood and growing confidence among workers and farmers throughout the country have led to some good initial re-

sults (see list below). Mary Martin, a member of the International Association of Machinists in Washington, D.C., wrote to the *Militant*, "I sold my first copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder* on the job on March 15. Lawrence, an IAM-organized aircraft fueller, had asked me a couple weeks ago for a book that explained capitalism. He is in his mid-30s. He used to work at Eastern Airlines before the strike. Now he works two jobs and said he has reached the point in his life when he thought he needed to try to figure out what was going on with the 'business world.' Lawrence said he had gone to a bookstore and they suggested a book by John K. Galbraith, but told him it was out of print.

"Another fueller who had bought books from me before told Lawrence to check out the ones I bring to work. But we kept missing each other. Finally, we met and I had the book with me. I showed it to Lawrence and he pulled out the money on the spot and paid for it," wrote Martin.

Susan Anmuth, a socialist worker in the United Auto Workers who works at Ford in Edison, New Jersey, sold six copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder* to co-workers in one week. She said the sales came after many discussions about working-class struggles today, from the sustained protests against the police killing of Amadou Diallo in New York to the strike by miners at the Jeddo Coal Co. in Pennsylvania and the fight by catfish workers in Mississippi for dignity. Anmuth reports that she systematically went through the book — from the cover, to the table of contents and the photographs. Several workers who purchased the book said they were interested in studying it with others.

Mike Galati, a meatpacker in New York, writes: "A Puerto Rican nationalist and a co-worker of mine with 26 years in the United Food and Commercial Workers bought a copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder* at a Militant Labor Forum protesting the Oscar to Elia Kazan. This is the second forum he has attended in the last few weeks.

Protests against austerity follow general strike in Ecuador



Protest in Guayaquil, Ecuador, March 22 against closing of Banco del Progreso.

BY JUAN VILLAGÓMEZ

LOS ANGELES — More than a week of strikes and protests forced the government of Ecuador to lift a state of emergency and substantially back down from plans to sell off several state-owned companies, raise the Value Added Tax, and sharply increase in gasoline prices. The government says these austerity measures are needed to meet the demands of the International Monetary Fund and renegotiate Ecuador's \$15 billion debt to the imperialist banks.

A general strike organized by trade unions, peasant groups, students, and others paralyzed the country March 10–11 in protest of the austerity measures imposed by Ecuadoran president Jamil Mahuad.

The government declared a state of emergency and deployed the police and army against the protests. On just the first day there were reports of some 100

arrests and three people killed by government forces. Oil workers, teachers demanding back wages, and many other workers took part in the strike. Indigenous peoples and transport workers blocked the Pan American Highway.

Union officials and leaders of the opposition political parties agreed to a compromise of March 18 that only partially rolls back the fuel price hike, which affects the price of anything that must be transported. Food prices have risen between 50 and 150 percent since the initial increase in gasoline costs. They also agreed to a presidential decree freezing half of most bank accounts for as long as a year.

Roadblocks are continuing in some indigenous communities. And protests broke out in Guayaquil March 22 when Banco del Progreso closed its doors, the eighth Ecuadoran bank to fold in four months.

"The sale came out of a number of discussions at work around the deepening resistance in the labor movement and the polarization in politics today. It all was a direct

result of discussions at the forum, including with two members of the Young Socialists on the history of Puerto Rico's fight for self-determination; with other workers on the importance of building solidarity with the striking miners at Jeddo; and the fight against police brutality," Galati continues.

"He was convinced to buy the book as he saw that it really was a handbook for understanding and participating effectively in the growing working-class struggles on a number of fronts today."

Members of the socialist Workers Party are also meeting with supporters of the party to encourage them to join in the campaign to sell *Capitalism's World Disorder*.

The *Militant* staff encourages our readers to send in stories and photographs. Every week we'll have a chart, which is updated every Tuesday at noon.

Socialist unionists help lead new stage in capital fund for Pathfinder's printshop

BY MAGGIE TROWE

DES MOINES, Iowa — When socialist workers in several industrial trade unions met in Chicago March 13–14, one point they discussed was how to help lead the next stage in the capital appeal for Pathfinder's printshop.

Since July 1998, supporters have contributed \$710,000 in capital contributions to help transform the printshop that produces Pathfinder books and pamphlets. As a result of this tremendous response, a state-of-the-art computer-to-plate machine now belongs to the printshop, drastically reducing the labor time needed for each book.

At the same time an international volunteer team has been working to put all of Pathfinder books in digital form. These efforts are making it possible to keep every Pathfinder book available as the need and possibilities for expanding their distribution increases.

The next phase of the fund — another \$250,000 — is needed to carry out a long-postponed reconstruction of the room that houses Pathfinder's three presses, adding climate control, an air-filtering system that reduces dust and chemicals, new windows and a new floor, and double doors to keep out drafts. These steps are essential for productive, high-quality printing and to help advance the collective work of the press crew, needed to succeed in maintaining a smaller shop.

The response to the fund so far has come both in contributions of up to a few

thousand dollars and in larger donations from those in a position to give tens of thousands from capital sources. Both kinds of contributions will be crucial to raising the \$250,000 needed in this stage of the capital fund.

At the March 13–14 meeting in Chicago of members of the Young Socialists and Socialist Workers Party in five industrial unions, SWP Trade Union Committee leader Joel Britton said, "We are reaffirming at these meetings the importance of the bonuses that communist workers in industry give to the capital fund."

Britton noted that the communist movement has a proud history of making it a practice to give the movement the so-called bonuses and "profit sharing" checks. Because the money is what capitalist bosses give workers in return for concessions on wages and working conditions, conscious workers view it as "blood money," Britton said, and proudly put it to good use for the capital fund that makes major improvements of the communist book production apparatus possible.

While in general the Capital Fund is for contributions of \$1,000 or more, an exception is made for these contributions from industrial workers. The "blood money" adds up. Since July 1998, a total of \$77,000 has been contributed in this way.

The SWP and YS members in the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) have contributed \$6,169; those in the United Auto Workers have given \$8,349; those in the United Transportation Union \$2,472; in the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW)

\$2,300; in the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) \$116; and in the International Association of Machinists (IAM) \$57,579.

SWP members who are in the USWA at a plant in Des Moines, Iowa, contribute their monthly "performance-based pay" checks every month. "These checks, based on a formula of how much workers' output exceeded the previous year's average due to speedup, began coming to us about a year ago," said Ray Parsons. "They have been averaging \$80–\$120 a month, and we send them in like clockwork."

The \$57,579 from members of the IAM includes stock pledged and in some cases already redeemed by socialists who work as cleaners and baggage handlers at United Airlines. The company introduced an "Employee Stock Ownership Program" several years ago to sweeten cutbacks. When workers leave United to take other jobs, they can cash in the stock.

Two socialists who are members of the UFCW in Marshalltown, Iowa, got \$100 bonuses at the end of 1998, a year in which Swift's profits soared as a result of speedup and rock bottom hog prices. After taxes, the "bonus" amounted to an insulting \$58, which the workers readily contributed to the Capital Fund.

To find out how you can make a capital contribution, write to the Capital Fund Committee, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

CAMPAIGN TO SELL 'Capitalism's World Disorder' TO CO-WORKERS

Unions	Goals	Sold
UAW	75	12
IAM	110	9
UFCW	80	3
USWA	80	2
UTU	80	1
UNITE	70	0
PACE	15	0
Total	510	25

'La Gaceta' discusses cultural influence of blacks in Cuba

BY LUIS MADRID

Under the heading "Glances at Cuban popular culture," the September-October 1998 issue of *La Gaceta de Cuba* contains numerous articles discussing the cultural influence of blacks in Cuba, the historical centrality of slavery and the struggle to abolish it in forging the Cuban nation, and the ongoing battle today to eliminate the legacy of racism inherited from capitalist society.

The Spanish-language bimonthly is published by the Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (UNEAC). Several of the topics addressed in the issue were among the questions discussed last November by the delegates to UNEAC's sixth national congress.

Most of the authors underline the particularly rich and complex process through which Cuba's national identity — *Cubanidad*, as they call it — has been, and continues to be forged. Some address particular manifestations of popular art, including music — "the backbone of Cuban art," while others still take up the decades-long effort by the working class in Cuba to develop a new set of values, a new culture.

The Cuban nation

"The word nation has gained prominence" in almost every aspect of Cuban life in the course of the decade, asserts Fernando Martínez Heredia in the lead article of this issue of *La Gaceta de Cuba*.

Entitled "In the Furnace of the 1990s — Relations between 'National' and 'Popular,'" Martínez's essay argues that this renewed presence is due in part to the "disappearance of safeguards that used to dominate Cubans' spiritual world," a reference to the political and economic ties Cuba maintained for three decades with the regimes of eastern Europe and the Soviet Union leading up to 1990.

The decade opened with the disintegration of those regimes, which translated into the collapse of 85 percent of Cuba's foreign trade — much of it on terms favorable to Cuba — making working people in the island more vulnerable to the workings of the world capitalist market and its crisis.

The disappearance, virtually overnight, of most of Cuba's foreign trade — occurring as the world capitalist crisis intensified, and compounded by the ongoing economic warfare organized by Washington — led to the most severe economic crisis in Cuba since the 1959 revolutionary triumph. Through the efforts of Cuba's communist leadership and working people, however, by 1996 the decline in industrial and agricultural production had bottomed out. Shortages of food and other essentials, though still severe, began to ease.

These "new circumstances and relations in which Cuban society is immersed," the editors of *La Gaceta* explain, coupled with a perceived "weakening" of Cuba's "national 'popular' culture" have been at the center of "some of the most intense polemics on Cuban culture in the last few years."

"National identity," writes Martínez, "is the result of a slow and prolonged accumulation of features . . . taken from numerous ethnic groups, their clashes, their relations, their fusion." In the case of Cuba, national identity is also "the result . . . of profound political revolutions that violently changed"

social relations.

The development of the Cuban nation and its culture is intimately linked to its "colonial and neocolonial" past and centuries of production, especially sugar production, based on slavery. "In many respects we are all 'blacks,' or something inferior to foreigners — even those who perceive their own countrymen as 'blacks' or inferior," notes Martínez.

This must be understood, he argues, because the weakening of Cuba's popular culture is rooted in the fact that "broad layers who have attained 'progress' as society perceives it," arrogantly dismiss popular culture as "pre-modern."

He sees the attitude by such layers as reflecting capitalism's ideological onslaught to "homogenize" culture worldwide, in an attempt to "neutralize, harness, and manipulate humanity's potential for rebelling as embodied in its advances, such as the growing tolerance in matters of politics, ethnicity, race, gender, and so on . . . Its rejection of poverty as a social, not a natural fact."

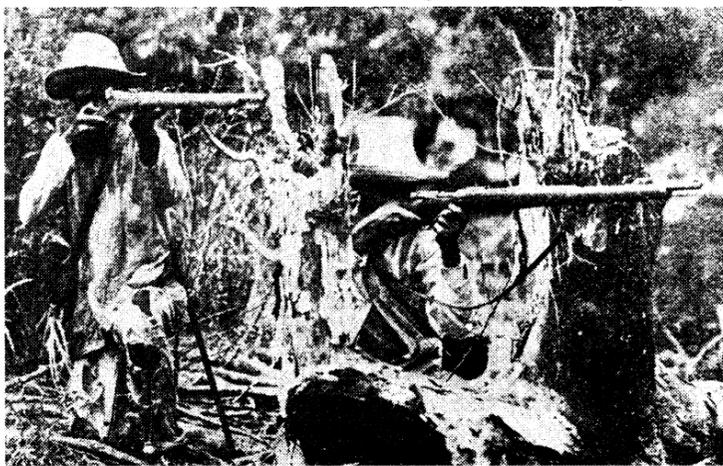
The role of the masses since 1959

Martínez calls especial attention to the watershed marked by the 1959 "socialist revolution of national liberation." Led by the Rebel Army, headed by Fidel Castro, "The masses of the oppressed broke free and multiplied their capacities to change society and themselves," he notes. "For years that liberating impulse has marched side by side with the revolutionary [state] power. This unity managed to knock down the limits of what is possible, and set out to change history."

During the UNEAC congress last November, President Fidel Castro recalled, "In Cuba we had to create a new culture, beginning with political culture — a different one from the culture of exploitation of man by man, of imperialist domination." He added, "if you want to make a revolution, if you want to change the existing economic and social order for an order based on equality and justice, you have to begin by changing the old culture of that society in many, many ways."

The accomplishments of Cuba's socialist revolution pointed a road forward for the masses of the oppressed in Latin America, thus raising the stakes for the ruling rich of the Americas, especially in the United States, to get rid of the threat posed by the Cuban example.

Soon after the workers' and peasants' victory, Washington set out to try and reverse the revolutionary course Cuba had embarked on. Such was the drive by Cuban toilers to defend their conquests, Martínez writes, that for nearly three decades the fight for socialism became practically indistinguishable from the development of Cuba's national



Top: Militant/Cindy Jaquith; Left: FAR Above, volunteer brigade building housing in LaGüinera, Havana, February 1990. Such projects were a key part of rectification: a process led by Cuba's most conscious working people to move away from bureaucratic policies that had become increasingly dominant for nearly a decade. Left, *mambises*, as combatants in the 19th century independence army were known. Blacks made up large portion of fighters for Cuba's independence struggle, which was intertwined with fight against slavery.

ground broken by the revolution, the abakuá societies' first national convention took place in May 1960. As regards Chinese, they were brought to Cuba as indentured servants at a rate similar to that of black slaves during the nineteenth century. Between 1853 and 1874, for instance, 150,000 were brought into the island.

The pervasiveness of these social conditions became a decisive factor, Figarola argues, that linked Cuba's struggle for independence from Spain with the struggle to abolish slavery. Even a *New York Times* correspondent noted at the time that in the Cuban Army of Liberation: "All regiments were made up of men of any and all colors . . . there was no regiment reserved for whites or blacks." Some even estimate blacks provided the majority of the army fighting for independence.

Although slavery can be legally eliminated, Figarola adds, its legacy, perpetuated by capitalism and the presence of the world market, "can continue to exist . . . in the minds of people for a long time afterward," manifesting itself in many ways.

He points to the precarious conditions many blacks live under, and "certain forms of racism that we, regretfully, are seeing reappear" in Cuba today. These include a racial "imbalance prevailing throughout our entire educational system," and the lack of serious studies that would help get at the root of other social questions, including the reasons for the disproportionate number of blacks in Cuban jails.

Reconquering blacks' role in history

A particularly interesting article in the issue deals with little known facts surrounding the Spanish colonial regime's killing of eight medical students accused of desecrating the grave of a Spanish journalist known for his allegiance to the colonial regime. The execution of the students "was certainly not the only 'historical event' that occurred November 27, 1871," writes Tato Quiñones. His article examines the way the revolutionary heritage involving blacks has often been overlooked or deliberately ignored.

In reviewing a hidden chapter of the otherwise well-known historical event that took place in the context of the first war of independence (1868-78), Quiñones goes back to quote a speech by Ernesto Che Guevara, the Argentine-born leader of the Cuban revolution, on the 90th anniversary of this event: "At the time, it wasn't just the blood of the students that was shed. I'll give you an underrated piece of news, one that even today is relegated to the background because it was of no significance for anyone else: The records show the bodies of five blacks killed by shotguns and bayonets."

Five black men — at least two of whom were members of abakuá societies — were killed while attempting to rescue the students facing the firing squad. While the ex-

Continued on Page 10

Subscribe now!



La Gaceta de Cuba

Journal in Spanish published six times a year by the Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba. A forum for discussion on culture, politics, and the challenges facing the Cuban revolution today.

One year: \$40
Special student rate: \$28

Available in bookstores listed on page 12, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

DISTRIBUTED BY PATHFINDER

identity.

Although filled with contradictions — resulting primarily from the spread of planning and economic management policies copied from eastern Europe and the Soviet Union — the 1970s were marked by a broad consensus among the Cuban people in support of the revolution, Martínez adds. But along with the consensus came a "bureaucratized ideology," he says, which not only assumed the right to decide what socialism was, but also became "the supreme bestower of grades, awards and punishments." It sought to exercise the same role on the cultural plane.

Martínez explains that a zeal similar to the one applied in the defense of the revolution during the 1960s, came into play on the cultural plane in the 1970s. In this stage "the national identity functioned as a defensive wall against 'actually existing socialism.'"

In the mid-1980s a fight was initiated in Cuba to move away from the bureaucratic policies that had become increasingly dominant for nearly a decade. At its height, the rectification process — as this battle came to be known — took on the character of a growing social movement led by Cuba's most conscious and disciplined working people. As the economic and political crisis accelerated from 1990 on, many of the special measures associated with rectification, such as the spread of volunteer work brigades to build badly needed housing, had to be set aside.

The country's forced immersion into and greater subjugation to the workings of the capitalist world market in the 1990s, has resulted in a sharpening economic and social differentiation in Cuba creating a "dislocation between what is Cuban and socialism," Martínez underlines. Layers in Cuba that defend "the market, the drive for profit, individualism, and selfishness . . . are attempting to gain ground."

For those forces to succeed, however, Martínez argues, they would have to uproot "fundamental elements of Cuba's break with capitalist domination, and deeds and values" conquered since the triumph of the revolution.

Slavery has marked our culture

"In the course of our history nothing has marked our culture . . . more than slavery," underscores Joel James Figarola in his article, "Into the Depths of Cuba, and Popular Religions." Slavery permeated the whole of society, Figarola remarks. "In Cuba everyone owned slaves. . . . Slaves were owned by whites, mulattos, blacks, and Chinese, as well as by artisans, peasants, laymen, clerics, masons, and members of the *abakuá*," the latter being secret societies formed originally by freed black men in Cuba.

As testimony to the political and cultural

Montreal garment strike was a victory

BY CARLOS CORNEJO
AND MICHEL DUGRÉ

MONTREAL — Since the December strike by 4,000 members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) in Montreal, some readers of the *Militant* have raised questions about the assessment summarized in the headline of a front page article by these correspondents: "Montreal: garment workers win strike" (see January 11, 1999 issue).

Garment workers fought against an attempt by the bosses to cut our wages. The garment

by 70 percent of UNITE members attending a December 10 meeting of more than 2,000 workers. That meeting, which allowed workers to collectively discuss the proposal, was a victory in itself: union officials had previously agreed to the bosses' demand that the vote be taken plant-by-plant during working hours.

In the following days, workers transformed a lockout by the bosses into a militant strike. Faced with this resistance and divided by growing competition among themselves, the employers' association crumbled. On December 21, the bosses announced they were withdrawing their proposal for a two-tier system and offered a 75-cent wage increase — about 8 percent on average — over three years. This proposal was generally accepted by workers, in votes taking place plant-by-plant during meetings where we discussed the issues collectively. At Samuelsohn, one of the four biggest plants involved, workers first rejected the offers and then voted in favor a week later.

Some readers have raised two questions about the extent of this victory. Wasn't the union weakened by voting separately on the companies' offers instead of fighting for a common master agreement as previously? And aren't the new contracts an acceptance that the decree will be abolished, eliminating all protection against a possible lowering to the minimum wage scale of tens of thousands of nonunion workers?

Since the bosses will continue their offensive and we have to prepare for a similar confrontation next time, it is clear that we would have been stronger by voting on the contract collectively. Montreal garment workers have learned the importance of

UNION TALK

bosses were surprised by our growing militancy and made the decision to retreat for the time being from their all-out assault.

The offensive, however, is not over yet. It is being waged on two fronts. The bosses propose to the Quebec government that it abolish the decree guaranteeing base rates to all workers of the Quebec men's clothing industry, unionized and nonunion. In their first offers to UNITE members, the bosses also proposed that there be no reference to wages in the collective agreement. After this was overwhelmingly rejected by a meeting of more than 3,000 UNITE members, the bosses, members of the Men's Clothing Manufacturers Association, proposed that the collective agreement include lower base rates for newer workers. This acid pill was sugarcoated with significant wage increases for those currently working. This scheme, which union officials agreed to, was rejected

Debate grows over S. Africa Truth Commission

BY T.J. FIGUEROA

CAPE TOWN, South Africa — The amnesty committee of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) on March 4 issued a ruling denying amnesty to 27 leaders of the African National Congress. The ANC leaders had applied for amnesty from prosecution on the basis of collective political responsibility for the struggle against South Africa's racist apartheid regime in the decades leading up to the first democratic, nonracial elections in 1994.

The 27 ANC leaders include the organization's current president and South African deputy president, Thabo Mbeki; Foreign Affairs Minister Alfred Nzo; Transport Minister Mac Maharaj; Foreign Affairs Director Jackie Selebi; Ambassador to Cuba John Nkadimeng; Defense Minister Joe Modise; and government spokesperson Joel Netshitenzhe.

This decision has added fuel to the debate on the Truth Commission, which was established by the ANC-led government in 1994 to uncover "gross human rights violations" committed under the racist regime. According to its guidelines, those who committed acts in defense of — or in opposition to — apartheid can apply for amnesty from prosecution. The commission is authorized to grant amnesty if these acts were politically motivated, and if applicants tell the whole story.

The TRC asserted that the act under which it functions did not include providing amnesty "for acts committed by their [the ANC leaders'] members on the basis of collective political and moral responsibility."

ANC secretary general Kgalema Motlanthe said the organization accepted the TRC's finding, but referred to a statement in Parliament last month by President Nelson Mandela that the original act had failed to provide for organizations to apply for amnesty, and that this should be amended.

Opposition parties ran with the TRC's ruling. Constand Viljoen, leader of the right-wing Freedom Front, said the decision meant the ANC leaders could be prosecuted for their actions. The former National Party, which oversaw apartheid for more than four decades and now calls itself the New National Party, took a similar stance. The Democratic Party implied the ANC leaders were hiding the truth from South Africans.

Much of the Truth Commission is composed of liberal clerics, lawyers, and judges.

Its ruling was celebrated by the liberal "friends" of the South African people.

The decision found favor with New York-based Human Rights Watch. "The Truth and Reconciliation Commission has made the right decision," said Peter Takirambudde, director of Human Rights Watch's Africa division in a March 6 statement reported on the front page of the *Sunday Independent* newspaper here. "The ANC cannot put itself above the law and expect its members to get amnesty if they don't take individual responsibility for their actions."

In a letter to Mbeki, Takirambudde urged the ANC president to accept that ANC members had committed human rights abuses and that the justness of its cause was no justification for this.

"The African National Congress called for and pioneered the establishment of the TRC, in a serious effort to ensure that the political conflicts of the past do not become a major obstacle to our common efforts to create a non-racial and non-sexist democracy," Mbeki said in a February 25 Parliamentary debate on the TRC's main report issued last year.

He saluted the TRC for "the discovery and exposure of the truth with regard to many instances of gross violations of human rights; the tracing of missing persons including their graves; the encouragement of reconciliation between perpetrators and victims of violations of human rights; the cultivation of a spirit of remorse among those who had done wrong; and the identification of some of the people who are entitled to receive reparation."

'Millions do not accept this conclusion'

But Mbeki attacked the commission's "erroneous determination of various actions of our liberation movement as gross violations of human rights, including the general implication that any and all military activity which results in the loss of civilian lives constitutes a gross violation of human rights."

"The net effect of these findings is to delegitimize or criminalize a significant part of the struggle of our people for liberation and to subtract from the commitment made in our Constitution to 'honor those who suffered for justice and freedom in our land.'... We cannot accept such a conclusion, nor will the millions of people who joined in struggle to end the system of apartheid."

The TRC made a number of high-profile



Militant/Grant Hargrave
Pickets at Samuelsohn are confronted by cop (at right with no hat) who intervened to prevent them from blocking truck. The December strike marked a victory for garment workers.

workers' unity through hard fought battles. We successfully fought twice for the right to discuss and vote on a proposed contract prior to the recent strike. Most workers didn't feel the need to do the same at the end of the strike, partly because the big majority saw the proposed agreement as a victory for us against the bosses. The bosses wanted to lower wages throughout the industry. Their attempt to reach this goal through these negotiations was defeated. The contracts we voted for were the result not of growing divisions among us, but of the collapse of the bosses' united front. The employers' final offers were exactly the same for all workers in all plants, with the same expiration date three years from now.

What negotiations for new contracts will look like in three years remains to be seen. But garment workers will go into them having pushed back the bosses' attempt to cre-

ate more divisions among us through the two-tier system.

As for the decree setting the base wage for the industry, we should remember that it has not been abolished yet.

Maintaining the decree or not was never on the table during the recent negotiations. Workers were posed with the need to defend themselves against an attempt to introduce a two-tier system in their collective agreement and in this way lower average wages. We successfully pushed back this attempt.

The bosses and the Quebec government will go ahead with their attempt to abolish the decree. For the employers this is a key element in their attempt to become more competitive against their main rivals in the United States. But the problem for them is that the abolition of the decree will not bring immediately what they were looking for in these contract negotiations: drastically lowering union workers' wages. For this they will still need to defeat us in a direct confrontation.

The fight to maintain the decree is in front of us. While opposing this measure, union officials have done nothing so far to mobilize union members. That kind of struggle is key to strengthening the union through opening the door for uniting union and non-union workers into a common fight against the bosses and their government. Union members are in a better position to do this, as a result of our victory against an attempt by the bosses to create divisions among older and younger workers.

In the last few months workers in the two biggest Montreal garment shops have succeeded in establishing a union: 2,500 workers at Peerless joined the Teamsters, while 1,300 working at Iris joined UNITE. These successful organizing drives illustrate the obstacle the bosses face in their attempt to lower wages of garment workers in Montreal.

Carlos Cornejo and Michel Dugré are members of UNITE at SFI Apparel in Montreal.

Kurds in Montreal demand: 'Free Ocalan and protesters'

BY GRANT HARGRAVE
AND JOANNE WALLADOR

MONTREAL — More than 200 Kurds and their supporters staged a spirited demonstration at the courthouse here March 8 demanding freedom for Abdullah Ocalan, the imprisoned leader of the Kurdish Workers' Party, and the release of Kurds arrested here during demonstrations in front of the Greek and Israeli consulates on February 16 and 19.

About 30 arrests have been made in Montreal so far. They face charges of participating in a riot, conspiracy, possession of weapons and inflammable matter, and assaulting the cops. The police, courts, and newspapers are working to portray those who participated in the protests as barbaric terrorists. But Kurdish spokespeople have explained that it was the police who reacted violently to their protests. To aid in making the arrests, police raided six television stations and seized footage of the protests.

The demonstrators, who included many young people chanted "Kurdish rights are human rights", "Justice for Kurds" and "Free our comrades." A leaflet distributed by organizers of the demonstration reported that 150 Kurdish businesses were closed for the

day in solidarity.

Although the big majority of the demonstrators were Kurds, supporters in the demonstration included several Greeks and some Quebecois students.

When the protesters arrived at the courthouse, there was already a smaller rally taking place sponsored by the Quebec Women's Federation to celebrate International Women's Day. Some of the participants in that rally made a point of giving roses to women in the Kurdish demonstration.

So far three Kurds have been refused bail and will be imprisoned until their trial. At their February 24 hearing, the lawyer for the prosecution, Serge Authier, argued against bail by saying, "Not a week goes by in Canada without groups blocking a street for one reason or another. I heard on the radio that some unionists blocked the airport in Halifax."

He continued his argument linking "union terrorism" and "terrorism" in general. The judge ruled against bail for the three, saying that the violence they are accused of was premeditated.

Grant Hargrave is a member of International Association of Machinists Lodge 1758.

What kind of 'lifetime achievement' do workers honor?

BY BERNIE SENTER

SAN FRANCISCO — Militant Labor Forums held here March 20 and in Los Angeles the night before called for protesting the Academy Award for "lifetime achievement" given to director Elia Kazan. Nick Castle, a member of the Directors Guild of America, the Writers Guild of America, and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences; and Joel Britton, a member of the Socialist Workers Party's National Committee, spoke to more than 100 people at the combined programs.

Castle pointed out that Kazan was one of the most highly regarded movie directors of his era, and had the right of first refusal for directing the best plays on Broadway. "But Kazan also has another claim to fame, another lifetime achievement," Castle explained. "For over 40 years he has carried with him the stigma of being one of Hollywood's most famous informers during the anticommunist witch-hunt of the 1950s," Castle said. "A stigma he wears, if not proudly, at least without public regret."

In April 1952 Kazan testified before the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). He identified eight colleagues as members of the Communist Party. They were subsequently blacklisted from the industry.

Britton told the audience, "Kazan named names to the U.S. government, a government that was on a drive to break the power of labor unions that had made tremendous gains through the 1930s."

Following World War II, Britton explained, "the capitalist ruling class of this country had to recover from the weaknesses they came out of the war with. Everyone talks of the strengths of U.S. imperialism, vis-à-vis other imperialist powers. And that's true."

But the U.S. government was unable to use its power to successfully roll back the advancing anticolonial and anticapitalist revolutions in China, Eastern Europe, and elsewhere. The labor upsurge and strike wave that swept the United States following the war was an enormous liability. The witch-hunt was the bosses' response.

Witch-hunt 'sanctioned state terror'

Castle said that Washington used the anti-communist offensive to "blacklist workers out of their jobs, imprison people, and in the case of the Rosenbergs, execute them. It was sanctioned state terror by congressional committees whose job was to break the spirit of anyone willing to put up a fight, to turn brother against brother. In the Hollywood witch-hunt, Kazan played their game."

Castle recounted, "Hollywood was not unaffected by the radicalization of the 1930s and the fight for union recognition. Battles by writers, actors and directors were sometimes bitter fights."

Castle played excerpts from *Hollywood on Trial*, a documentary that showed how the witch-hunt was initially orchestrated by the liberal Democrats in the Truman administration following the war. It gave wind to and was carried further by the incipient fascist current led by Sen. Joseph McCarthy in

the early 1950s.

"Lives were ruined," said Castle. "And of course the blacklisting and witch-hunting spread to most every other institution in the United States." It finally began to be reversed "when the blacklisting went a little too far in targeting central figures in the military brass," and with the rise of worldwide anticolonial struggles, the civil rights movement, and a little later, the Cuban revolution.

The March 10, 1952, issue of the *Militant* was on display at the San Francisco forum with its headline, "Witch Hunt Aimed at Unions, Detroit Smear Hearings Show." As the *Militant* pointed out at the time, the witch-hunters were really aiming their fire at the rank and file of the unions. In Detroit, with the aid of the union tops, the HUAC communist-baited the largest local of the United Auto Workers, Local 600.

Britton related the record of the Socialist Workers Party, "a good example of a working-class party, a communist party, that stood up to the witch-hunt and addressed every crime committed by the U.S. government and those who carried out its interests."

Throughout the witch-hunt the party ran candidates for public office, and with others waged an ultimately successful campaign to win the reinstatement of James Kutcher, a World War II veteran who was fired from his government job because of his membership in the Socialist Workers Party. That eight-year fight, which won substantial backing within the labor movement and among supporters of democratic rights, is recounted in the book *The Case of the Legless Veteran*.

Record of Stalinists in war, witch-hunt

"The SWP record and practice in opposing the witch-hunt stands in contrast to that of the misnamed communists in the Stalinist Communist Party [CP] on this question," said Britton. "During World War II, the CP joined in the most patriotic jingoism of the ruling class. In the name of fighting fascism, they politically disarmed the workers movement, subordinating every consideration in the class struggle, in the human and civil rights struggles to Washington's war effort."

"This included fingering people to the government, such as maritime workers who took off too much time between jobs. It included fingering people in war plants who refused to buy into campaigns to purchase government war bonds. The CP opposed the civil rights movement during the war, as helping the Nazis."

All these things the CP did were self-defeating and counter to the working class axiom of An Injury to One is an Injury to All. "They introduced a poisonous influence into the workers movement," said Britton.

"The Socialist Party of Norman Thomas trotted right along side the conservative labor officialdom, balking only if innocent non-communists were mistakenly charged," Castle said. "The Communist Party, which had looked toward the liberals, got the rug pulled out from under them by these so-called friends. Since they didn't have any orientation to the rank-and-file workers, they had

The Price of Bread in Ohio



Laura Gray

Cartoon by Laura Gray that appeared in *Militant* during witch hunt period

no place to turn for support. The blacklisted [individuals] were left mainly on their own."

Many of those who in the current controversy supported the award to Kazan, such as liberal historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr., have tried to justify their stance by pointing to the "horrors of Stalinism." There's all the difference in the world between the life-and-death questions that must be fought out within the workers movement and giving names to the greatest enemy of the workers of the world — the imperialist government in Washington, Britton said.

As an example, he pointed to the Socialist Workers Party's response to the 1943 film *Mission to Moscow*. The Hollywood movie was a piece of pro-war propaganda, produced with substantial backing from the Roosevelt administration. It was a white-wash of the Moscow frame-up trials carried out by the regime of Joseph Stalin against Leon Trotsky and other central leaders of the Russian Revolution.

The SWP organized picket lines outside the movie showings, handing out fliers exposing the lies contained in it. The party didn't call for a boycott, but warned people of what they would see and offered the facts. "That's the way to expose Stalinism and its crimes, not going to the state like Kazan did," Britton said.

Kazan award is about today

Both Britton and Castle made the point that the lifetime achievement award to Kazan is not primarily about the past. "It's about today, and it's about the future," they emphasized.

Britton told of the recent conviction of Puerto Rican independence activist José Solís Jordán based on the testimony of an FBI snitch and provocateur. On March 12, Solís became the 17th Puerto Rican independence fighter held today in U.S. jails.

"I urge everyone to be involved in protesting this," Britton said. "The length of the sentence of José Solís will partly depend on the Oscar protest. If they can give an award to a fink, a snitch, an informer like Kazan without resistance, then it will be tougher on Solís," he added.

Castle said, "Look back at the witch-hunt and the witch-hunters and you'll see the face of Patrick Buchanan," one of whose heroes is McCarthy. "And you'll know what some would like to have in store for the future. Kazan was not a fascist. But his example opens the door for supporters of the new demagogues that would head our world toward fascism and war. Workers and their allies, because of protests like this, will learn from the past and not allow a rerun, a sequel to the tragedies of the blacklist era."

There was substantial discussion following the presentations at both forums. Among the 45 people in attendance at the Los Angeles forum were several members of the International Association of Machinists union who work at Los Angeles International Airport, members of the Young Socialists, and activists organizing the protests against the award for Kazan that took place at the Academy awards ceremony two days after the forum.

In the discussion period at the San Francisco forum, one person noted the recent firing of Wen Ho Lee, who worked at the Los Alamos, New Mexico, nuclear research center, for allegedly passing bomb secrets to Beijing. "This is the political atmosphere they are trying to create today, designed to

rehabilitate Kazan and push us back."

Another participant in the program explained that her family was sent to the internment camps for Japanese-Americans in California during World War II. Her father, a member of the Communist Party, had gone to a party meeting and was urged to comply with the relocation order. CP leaders explained that the best way to defend the Soviet Union and the war effort was to go to the camps without protest. The rationalization was that in the Soviet Union, German workers were also being interned.

She also recounted the terrorizing effect of the post-World War II witch-hunt on her father who was pressured repeatedly into signing loyalty oaths to keep his job. Britton noted that the CP newspaper supported the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Britton made the connection between the protests against the award to Kazan and "the rise of working-class resistance, with thousands who are drawing far-reaching conclusions, some anticapitalist conclusions," as they are drawn into struggle against the employers, against police brutality, against the death penalty, for immigrant rights, and against attacks by the government on our social wage.

Britton pointed to the example of the locked out Crown Petroleum workers in Texas. Some of these workers are facing a lawsuit for allegedly sabotaging the plant. "The FBI approached workers one by one, offering them \$10,000 to name names" in their attempt to crush their fighting spirit and weave a conspiracy. "No one finked. Then the FBI raised the sum to \$20,000, and up to \$60,000 before they gave up."

"This shows how deep it is in the working class, that naming names, informing, ratting out is not acceptable."

"The fight of the Socialist Workers campaign in Seattle to be exempt from disclosing names of our contributors should be seen in this light," Britton said. "We've been able to maintain that right through a continued fight."

The U.S. military war games held in the Bay Area and Monterey called Operation Urban Warrior is an anticipatory move, Britton explained, designed to prepare for the heightened class combat coming. Other examples he mentioned included the almost daily bombing of Iraq, the coming NATO bombing of Yugoslavia, and the star wars military buildup that is designed for first strike capacity, not defense against "rogue states."

Castle addressed the objections of those that say, "forgive and forget; let's take the politics out of the award ceremony."

"To those people who want to forgive and forget, I would simply ask the question, who has the ethical right to forgive? Certainly not the Academy. The Academy was initially set up by the capitalist film producers to keep the unions out of the industry," said Castle.

"And forgiveness is usually based on some kind of recognition of sorrow. Something that is not forthcoming from Kazan. It seems that on the issue of separating politics and art, that line was crossed by Kazan himself with his cowardly act of betrayal."

In closing, Britton asked, "What kind of lifetime achievement do we want to honor? Generations in the future will respect fighters like José Solís for not trying to cut a deal."

FOR MORE READING

Washington's 50-year Domestic Contra Operation by Larry Seigle • The Second

Assassination of

Maurice Bishop by

Steve Clark • Land,

Labor, and the Canadian

Revolution

by Michel Dugré •

Renewal or Death:

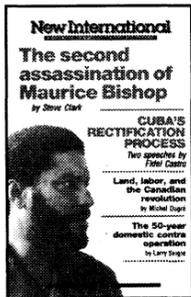
Cuba's Rectification

Process, two

speeches by Fidel

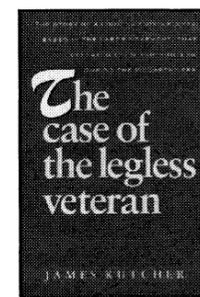
Castro

\$10.00



The Case of the Legless Veteran

James Kutcher



How the witch-hunters were challenged and defeated in a key case during the McCarthy era. The eight-year fight, supported by unions across the country, of a World War II veteran fired because of his communist views. \$19.95

Distributed by Pathfinder

U.S., NATO forces bomb Yugoslavia

Continued from front page

President William Clinton made a televised statement justifying the war action as in "America's national interest." The attack is needed to maintain "stability in Europe," he declared, evoking the specter of waves of Albanian refugees, social instability, and a wider war throughout the region.

The bombing campaign will "demonstrate the seriousness of NATO's purpose," the U.S. president emphasized. Not attacking Yugoslavia now would weaken "NATO, the cornerstone on which our security has rested for 50 years now." He argued that the lesson of the first and second world wars was that if U.S. forces did not intervene now, it would lead to a wider conflict in Europe.

As with all other U.S. assaults during his administration, Clinton wrapped the bombing of the Yugoslav workers state in the mantle of humanitarian concern and peace. "We act to protect thousands of innocent people in Kosovo," he stated. Clinton portrayed the U.S. target as "a dictator in Serbia who has done nothing since the Cold War ended but start new wars and pour gasoline on the flames of ethnic and religious division."

Washington and its imperialist allies are using the assault to deepen NATO military intervention into the formerly federated Yugoslav workers state and tighten their encirclement of Russia. Posing as defenders of the national rights of Albanians in Kosovo, they aim to use military might to accomplish what they've been unable to do by other means: bring closer the day of re-establishing the domination of capitalist social relations throughout Yugoslavia and deal another blow to Moscow, which has supported the regime in Serbia.

Russian prime minister Yevgeny Primakov abruptly canceled his visit to the United States March 24, turning his plane back to Moscow as it was approaching U.S. shores, to protest the NATO assault on Yugoslavia. Primakov had scheduled high-level talks on securing loans from the International Monetary Fund. Over the next day, the Russian government suspended its "Partnership for Peace" collaboration with NATO, recalled its envoy to the Atlantic imperialist alliance, and announced it was ready to safeguard security in the region by any means, including military steps.

The Russian government has been on a collision course with Washington over expansion of NATO into Eastern and Central Europe; the incessant campaign of U.S. assaults on Iraq; and U.S. attempts not only to dominate the oil in the former Soviet republics of the Caspian Sea region, but to establish a stronger line of influence and pressure across the southern flank of Russia — from the Caspian all along the Silk Road. The U.S.-run NATO has already taken major steps towards repositioning troops and military hardware in Europe closer to Russia's borders. Poland and Hungary, which along with the Czech Republic joined NATO March 12, have borders with former Soviet republics.

Sham of 'peace plan'

The U.S. government attack received bipartisan support, including among critics of the Clinton administration's foreign policy. In a Senate debate the day before the bombing, "most Democrats insisted that air strikes were necessary and inevitable," the *New York Times* reported. Other senators initially voiced reservations about U.S. stakes in the Balkan conflict. As the bombing appeared imminent, most big-business politicians closed ranks.

Interviewed on CNBC immediately after Clinton's speech, liberal Democratic congressman Robert Rush of Chicago compared Milosevic to Adolf Hitler and said he would "support the president. The president is doing the right thing."

The U.S. government must "take action to stop this rolling genocide," stated Republican senator Charles Hagel. "Whatever reservations about the President's actions in the Balkans," said Senate Republican leader Trent Lott, who earlier had helped lead the impeachment drive against Clinton, he would "stand united behind our men and women

who are bravely heeding the call of duty."

The Senate passed a resolution March 23 backing the bombing campaign. In the 58-41 vote, 16 Republicans joined all but 3 of the Senate's 45 Democrats in backing Clinton's actions.

U.S. officials have repeatedly declared their opposition to independence for Kosovo, a goal that today is supported by most Albanians as a way to end their second-class status under the chauvinist Serbian regime. About 90 percent of the two million inhabitants of Kosovo are Albanian; 8 percent are Serbs; and the rest are Turks, Gypsies, and other nationalities. The Clinton administration has used Belgrade's war against the Albanians' struggle for self-determination as a pretext for its military intervention, while letting the Milosevic regime do the dirty work of attempting to crush the independence movement.

Washington's is trying to establish a NATO occupation army inside Serbia and Montenegro — which now comprise the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia — using the cover of a political accord it seeks to impose on both warring parties in the Kosovo conflict. The rulers of the United States hope to deal a debilitating blow to the Serbian regime and disarm the Albanian independence fighters.

"Bluntly put, they want to kill enough Serbs and destroy enough of their war machine to prevent the defeat of a much less powerful rebel force, but not so many that the rebels will be emboldened to press for victory themselves," wrote *Washington Post* reporter Barton Gellman March 23.

The ultimate objective of Washington, London, and other imperialist powers — sweeping away the remaining gains of the Yugoslav socialist revolution of the mid-1940s — cannot be accomplished short of using ground troops and defeating working people in huge class battles.

After two rounds of talks in France, four members of a Kosovar Albanian delegation finally signed a U.S.-dictated agreement — touted as a "peace plan" in the capitalist media — that calls for deploying a 28,000-member NATO military force in Kosovo for three years. The accord demands the Kosovo Liberation Army (UCK) disarm and abandon its struggle for independence in exchange for limited autonomy from Belgrade.

Balking at the proposed occupation force, the Belgrade government refused to sign the pact. Instead, Serbian army troops and paramilitary police units continued their offensive against the UCK and the Albanian population, shelling and torching villages throughout Kosovo, and sparking a new wave of tens of thousands of refugees, many of whom fled to the capital city of Pristina. There are now an estimated 240,000 refugees in Kosovo and the surrounding region.

Washington and its NATO allies responded by evacuating their 1,300 "monitors" from Kosovo. Clinton sent his Balkans point man, Richard Holbrooke, to meet with Milosevic and issue the ultimatum of accepting the terms of the U.S.-sponsored agreement or face military assault.

Brutal assault, wave after wave

Beginning on the night of March 24, wave after wave of NATO warplanes and missiles struck areas throughout Yugoslavia. Explosions thundered in Pristina and around Belgrade. Missiles reportedly hit an aircraft plant in Pancevo, six miles north of Belgrade; Danilovgrad in the province of Montenegro; and the Serbian towns of Kragujevac and Novi Sad, among others.

The Pentagon initially offered few details on the scope of the destruction. It portrayed the attack as one directed not at civilian centers but at the Serbian government's military defense facilities.

The U.S.-led assault relied on a large concentration of military forces in the region. Washington has six Navy ships in the Mediterranean and Adriatic seas armed with Tomahawk missiles, and London has a submarine in the region equipped with cruise missiles. NATO commanders deployed 430 warplanes in the region, 250 of them U.S. aircraft, including 12 stealth fighters based in Italy and three B-52 bombers based in



Above, U.S. B-52H bomber takes off from England March 24 to carry out bombing assault over Yugoslavia. Right, protest in Chicago that day.



Militant

Britain, as well as two B-2 stealth bombers.

NATO has a force of 12,000 in neighboring Macedonia under French command, including British, French, German, and Italian soldiers, which are supposed to be the first part of the 28,000 imperialist troops that would enforce the U.S.-dictated accord. There are about 6,200 U.S. troops in the Balkans, including 350 in Macedonia.

A year ago, Washington struck agreements with the government in Macedonia as part of Clinton's "action plan" to create a "security ring" around Yugoslavia. In addition to the expansion of NATO into neighboring Hungary, this has included the opening of a new NATO "training" base in southern Macedonia, the deployment of U.S. military advisers in Albania, and the steady presence of parts of NATO's Sixth Fleet in the Adriatic. The current military assault comes after substantial implementation of this plan.

The Serb regime had an estimated 30,000 troops inside Kosovo, along with thousands more along the border. Serb forces total 114,000 troops.

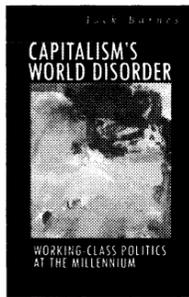
As the NATO forces moved in for the assault, spokespeople for the imperialist governments voiced the ritual words of concern about "collateral damage," that is, the deaths and maiming of working people in Kosovo and Serbia.

British prime minister Anthony Blair echoed Clinton in justifying the bombing of Yugoslavia. "We must act to save thousands of innocent men, women, and children," he declared, and "to save the stability of the Balkan region, where we know chaos can engulf the whole of the European Union."

Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium

Jack Barnes

The social devastation, financial panics, political turmoil, police brutality, and military assaults accelerating all around us are not chaos. They are the inevitable product of lawful and understandable forces unleashed by capitalism. But the future capitalism has in store for us is not inevitable. It can be changed by the timely solidarity, courageous action, and united struggle of workers and farmers conscious of their power to transform the world. This book has been written to bring closer that future. \$23.95 **Special offer \$17.95**



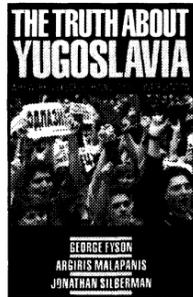
FOR MORE READING From Pathfinder

The Truth about Yugoslavia

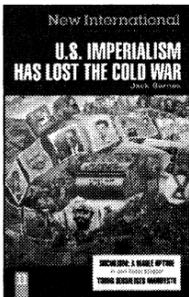
Why Working People Should Oppose Intervention

George Fyson, Argiris Malapanis and Jonathan Silberman

Examines the roots of the carnage in the Yugoslav workers state, where the U.S. and European powers are intervening militarily to advance their competing interests. Explains how groups of would-be capitalists — fragments of the former Stalinist regime — are fighting a war for territory and resources. **\$8.95**



In New International no. 11



U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War
Jack Barnes

The Communist Strategy of Party Building Today
Mary-Alice Waters

Socialism: A Viable Option
José Ramón Balaguer

Young Socialists Manifesto
\$14.00

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12 or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690. Fax: (212) 727-0150. Please include \$3 to cover shipping and handling.

Farmers fighting to keep their land speak at forum

BY JAMES HARRIS

ATLANTA — Georgia farmers and workers held a lively and informative discussion at the Militant Labor Forum here March 20. The forum, titled “We want our land back! Black farmers speak out,” was the first opportunity that many of the farmers present had to come together following the successful demonstration at the March 2 “Fairness Hearing” in Washington, D.C.

Farmers and their allies held a protest rally and then participated in that hearing to show their opposition to a proposed consent decree negotiated by lawyers in a class-action suit against the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for discrimination against farmers who are Black. Many farmers are opposed to the decree because it is totally inadequate to meet their needs, compensate for the discrimination they suffered, and put measures in place to prevent future discrimination.

The four featured speakers at the forum, all from different towns in Georgia, were Willie Head, a leader of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives and vegetable farmer from Pavo; Carl Parker from Ashburn; Lee Dobbins, secretary of Georgia Black Farmers and Agriculturists Association (BFAA) from Conyers; and Eddie Slaughter, national vice president of BFAA and a farmer from Buena Vista. Melvin Bishop, the president of Georgia BFAA, also attended and spoke during the discussion period.

Many of the other farmers present also spoke in the discussion. Eleven farmers attended the meeting along with a number of union members, activists opposed to the U.S. policies against Cuba, and interested youth.

“Many think that their food is grown in a department store,” said Willie Head to laughter in the audience. “This has a detrimental effect. We don’t just make crops grow out of the ground for economic reasons. We in-

sure that healthy babies are born. We don’t pour all these dangerous chemicals on our crops to make them grow six weeks earlier. I don’t believe in that. Economics is not what we are just interested in. But we need money to stay in farming.”

Referring to the county committees that administer agricultural policy and have systematically denied Black farmers loans, Head explained, “We have farmers down there now that are sitting on these local committees who I worked with in the mobile home plant. At one time, they didn’t have any more than I had. Then they get on these local boards and now they own 2,000 acres of land.

“The farmer takes what is given to him for his produce, for his cotton, for his corn. But then when I go down to buy fertilizer and chemicals, I have to give him what he tells me to give him. Is that fair? Is it fair for hogs to go to eight cents a pound and when you go down to the market to buy something for your family the meat is still \$2.25 a pound?”

“All this is tied in with the land — with capitalism. They got a book on display here we need to read,” said Head referring to the book *Capitalism’s World Disorder — Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* on the podium.

Carl Parker recounted his fight to retain his land against the best efforts of the USDA and USDA officials to foreclose on him. “The main thing is that we [farmers] stick together,” he said. “If we give up now we have lost the fight. We have to stand together. I’ve been talking to farmers in south Georgia about this lawsuit. We have to keep on pressing, attending the meetings and talking to farmers,” said Parker referring to the meetings the lawyers have set up to sign people up under the consent decree.

Lee Dobbins, recounted his experience in the fight for school desegregation in Greene

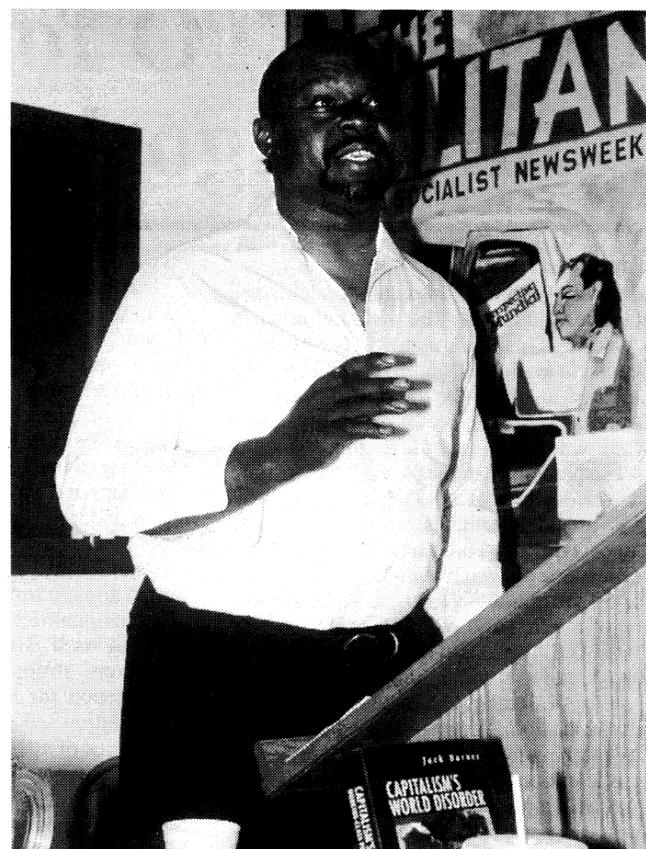
County, Georgia. “We are here because of moral and constitutional denial. I went to a newly integrated school. I had a constitutional right and a moral right to attend any school that I wished, but every day I was reminded that I had no right to be there. This was a daily thing. I never been called the ‘N’ word so many times in my life. I should have gotten combat pay.

“All my life I’ve wanted to champion a cause and BFAA is it,” Dobbins added. “Because it takes a lot of daring to go against the power of the system and stand up for something you believe in.”

What’s on the horizon for farmers? Dobbins asked. “My answer is it’s up to us to determine.”

Describing the media coverage that tried to sell the consent decree after it won a judge’s preliminary approval in early January, Eddie Slaughter began, “For all of you who are not farmers or don’t already know, as of January 5, 1999, ABC, NBC, CBS, FOX, CNN NEWS, and the *New York Times* are some of the most viscous liars in America. We did not accept that lawsuit, we did not settle that lawsuit.”

“We need to explain that everyone is not guaranteed the \$50,000 dollars [in compen-



Militant/Marla Puziss
Willie Head, a farmer from Pavo, Georgia, and leader of Federation of Southern Cooperatives, speaks at Militant Labor Forum.

sation]. This is not a settlement, this is a cover up. We want our day in court. Forget about the money, let’s talk about justice. We should go to court and demand discovery and demand that the books be opened. We must demand that the county committee system be destroyed,” said Slaughter.

He urged participants at the forum to join with workers who are struggling for their rights. Paraphrasing Fidel Castro, who Slaughter described as one of his heroes, he stated that only those who defend others will be capable of defending themselves. “You need to go out and support the catfish workers in Belzoni, Mississippi, and you need to go to Texas for the locked-out Crown workers on May 1 in Pasadena, Texas.”

One of the first to make a comment in the discussion was Gary Washington, a worker at Mead paper plant, who said he had invited co-workers to come. Some asked “what about the white farmers, were they giving support?” to the Black farmers?

Head responded, “maybe in other places they are, but where I am from they are not. Because we had to organize our very own cooperative.” Head explained that Black farmers had been kept out of the white cooperative in his area.

“Is there a difference between the big white farmers and the small white farmers,” asked a participant.

“Yes, there is a big difference,” said Slaughter. “Eleven percent of the biggest farmers in the United States get 90 percent of the government subsidies. Most of the biggest farmers control the county committees so the small white farmers suffers what we suffer. A lot of them now are saying they are facing the same thing we are facing.”

James Harris is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees.

National farmers union meets in Illinois

BY TIM MAILHOT

SPRINGFIELD, Illinois — About 600 farmers and delegates from throughout the Midwest and western states came here for the 97th annual convention of the National Farmers Union (NFU) March 5-8. Many were eager to discuss the problems working farmers face in staying on the land today. The views presented by the Democratic Party government officials and others who spoke from the platform offered no way to address these concerns.

Farmers and rural communities are facing a deepening economic and social crisis. Farm income in the United States has dropped 18 percent from 1996, and is projected to continue to slide through 2001. In the weeks before the NFU convention, the government-set base price farmers are paid for milk dropped by 37 percent.

“We can’t survive on that price of milk,” said Janet Nelson in an interview. She farms 400 acres in Prairie Farm, Wisconsin, raising corn, oats and alfalfa, 125 cattle, and 60 milk cows. “You can drive for miles and miles now and not even see a dairy farm anymore.”

Concerns about the possibility of surviving this current downturn boiled over the second day of the convention, following a talk by former secretary of agriculture Earl Butz. His talk extolled the virtues of the free market system, repeatedly noting the efficiency of the U.S. agriculture industry and supposed advantages of increasing corporate control from seed to store shelf. He summed this up saying, “We spend only 11 percent of our take home pay on food, the lowest in the world. Only 2 percent of the population is involved in production agriculture. That’s good. The adjustment has been hard for some, but it’s good they’ve gotten out. They’ve got good paying jobs now and we’re more efficient.” He downplayed concerns about food safety and increasing use of gene technology.

Farmer after farmer came to the microphone and challenged these views. A dairy farmer from Wisconsin said, “you learned to read, but can you see? The ones who still agree with you are from outside the farm and are investors. The family farmer who used to agree with you either changed his mind or is now out of business.”

Gary Hoskey from Iowa explained the dan-

gers of ground water pollution from leaking waste lagoons at large confinement hog farms. “You call us resources, but we’re humans, men, women, and children with real problems, real lives.

Others took up the lack of access to markets dominated by conglomerates, the difficulties confronting young farmers trying to get started, and continued loss of farm land. “You talked a lot about how we spend 11 percent of our take home pay on food,” said a farmer from Oklahoma. “When the future brings the full consolidation of corporate control, will we still spend only 11 percent?”

Leland Swenson, national president of the NFU, laid out the perspectives that the NFU would be organizing around in the coming year. He advocated lobbying efforts for a stronger “safety net” for farmers that included granting authority to the secretary of agriculture to set aside crop land from production to decrease overproduction, raising the cap on crop loans, mandatory price reporting for all processors for all their crop

purchases, country of origin labeling, a federal property tax rebate, and more money for building crop storage facilities on farms to avoid spoilage. He closed by extending an invitation to all U.S. farm organizations and agriculture and commodity groups to join in a national agriculture summit to find common issues around which they can organize together.

On the final day of the convention, U.S. secretary of agriculture Daniel Glickman addressed the delegates. He encouraged farmers to follow the example the United Steelworkers of America officials, who have joined with the steel bosses to organize the “Stand Up for Steel” campaign.

This is a reactionary campaign organized by major U.S. steel companies that call for laws to be passed against the “dumping” of foreign steel in the U.S. market at what they claim to be unfair prices.

Tim Mailhot is a member of USWA Local 310 in Des Moines.

‘La Gaceta’ discusses popular culture in Cuba

Continued from Page 6

education of the students has gone down as an important piece of Cuba’s history and is commemorated each year, no similar tribute is paid to the black martyrs.

This legacy, Quiñones writes, had been preserved orally by members of the abakuá. He includes excerpts of abakuá archival documents that back up its oral traditions. He remarks even more on the role of those traditions by drawing on a similar example involving General Antonio Maceo’s 1893 underground visit to Havana. The abakuá provided Maceo, one the central leaders of Cuba’s wars of independence, “with a safehouse near the harbor, in the area of San Isidro, from which Maceo communicated” with other independence fighters.

Intertwined with the confidence born of the renewed fight against the legacy of racism — along with gains made by women — is the tendency to engage similar battles on other fronts. A couple of articles in *La Gaceta*, for instance, take up the greater tolerance perceived in Cuba today in regards to sexual orientation, and also address re-

maining challenges, including recognition of the need to combat prejudices against homosexuals.

Reflecting Cuban society, “Cuban cinema has addressed various problems faced by women,” Mirtha Ibarra tells Mario Vizcaino in an interview in the September-October issue. However, she adds, homosexuality “has been taboo, so I thought that addressing it was exactly the right thing to do.”

Ibarra is best known for her leading roles in numerous films directed by her late companion and collaborator Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, including *Hasta cierto punto* (Up to a point), and most recently *Fresa y chocolate* (Strawberry and chocolate) and *Guantanamera*.

“I wanted to speak about things I had kept inside of me for a long time,” said Ibarra as she went over her script of *Eramos tan virgenes* (We were so virgin). In it she tells the story of a lesbian writer who, after 30 years, returns to the island full of expectations, Ibarra’s allegory to the question of gays in Cuba today. “As part of the generation of the 1960s . . . I felt an obligation” to

address this question, she says.

This issue of *La Gaceta de Cuba* is precisely what its cover says: a “glance” at the way these and other questions are being addressed in Cuba today. It is also an expression of the confidence gained by Cuban working people to take on these issues, a confidence born of their capacity to overcome the worst of the economic crisis as they did earlier in the decade.

In the face of a deepening capitalist crisis — and its accompanying onslaught on the toilers, and on their culture of resistance worldwide — the capacity shown over four decades by Cuba’s workers and peasants to struggle and win, Fernando Martínez writes, continues to represent “the example” for the oppressed the world over.

If that capacity is coupled with an effort to lead society “to look truthfully and without prevarications deep into its own bosom,” Martínez concludes, one can envision the “extraordinary force” the Cuban revolution can rely upon to wage the fight to eliminate racial discrimination as well as any other challenges before it.

Striking Steelworkers at RMI build solidarity rally for March 28

BY KEVIN DWIRE

WARREN, Ohio — Steelworkers on strike against RMI Titanium here and their supporters attended a spirited "Sock Hop and Family Fun Day" fund-raiser March 21.

The event was sponsored by WASN, a local talk-radio station that has supported the strike, and was held at the union hall of United Steelworkers of America Local 1375, whose members work at the WCI steel mill. The spirit of the strikers and supporters showed during two auctions. Workers gathered to pool their money in an auction for a "night on the town" with one of the WASN radio personalities. People gathered in a large circle, tossing their cash on the floor until the winning bid of \$750 was reached.

Striker Paul Moore, one of seven strikers arrested during a February 12 police assault on the picket line, donated the hat he was wearing that day, a civil war replica cap covered with union buttons. It brought \$375.

Mike Mignogna, a 27-year-old striker who is on the outreach committee of the striking USWA locals 2155 and 2155-7, told the *Militant* that over the previous week strikers had hit the road across Ohio to build the March 28 solidarity rally called by the union.

They took flyers on the rally to union members at Republic Steel in Canton, USX-Kobe Steel in Lorain, Wheeling Pitt Steel in Steubenville, and to the plant gates of LTV Steel in Cleveland. They addressed the meetings of the Lorain County AFL-CIO central labor council, and Jobs with Justice in Cleveland. Mignogna also said that steelworkers from USX in Gary, Indiana, are planning to go to Niles March 28.

Eight RMI strikers recently visited the picket lines of Teamsters striking East Manufacturing in nearby Randolph. One striker at the fund-raiser told the *Militant*, "The reason this strike is so strong is that 99 percent of the membership is involved."

These outreach activities follow a March 10 rally the strikers held at the Pittsburgh headquarters of USX steel, which is a part owner of RMI.

Members of the Laborers Union on strike for two years at Monarch Rubber in Spencer, West Virginia, have a flyer for the rally posted in their picket shack. Strike leader

Randy Whytcell says that they are working to get some strikers to Niles. He also said that steelworkers who just ended their strike against INCO in Huntington, West Virginia, were organizing to get to Niles. Steelworkers at MSI in Marietta, Ohio, who recently won a two-year strike for their first contract, are also organizing to get to the rally.

Members of the Alejandro Ramirez Defense Coalition in Cleveland heard a report on the RMI strike and rally at their regular meeting and several immediately made plans to car pool to Niles to get out information on his case. Ramirez is a Mexican farmworker who was framed-up on a murder charge in Painesville, Ohio, and is now serving time in prison.

Kevin Dwire is a member of United Auto Workers Local 1196 in Cleveland.



Militant/Tony Lane

Striking Steelworkers at RMI are organizing rally to reach out for solidarity. Above, a picket to support their strike at USX headquarters in Pittsburgh March 10.

Tobacco farmers demand their share

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Five hundred tobacco farmers drove their tractors through downtown Raleigh, North Carolina, March 1 to demand that they receive half of the state's \$4.6 billion settlement with cigarette companies. This action, and the ensuing fight in the state legislature, points to the growing militancy of these toilers on the land.

"The tobacco farmers in this state have been caught in a terrible situation through no fault of their own," stated Claude Neal, who plans to grow 55 acres of tobacco this year on his farm near Henderson, North Carolina. "If we don't get some help around here there will be a lot of farmers who won't be able to make land and tractor payments."

There are about 13,000 tobacco farmers in North Carolina, which is the nation's top tobacco-growing state. Over the past two years, these farmers have seen their income cut 35 percent as a result of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) decreasing the amount of tobacco leaf that they are permitted to grow. "I don't know a lot of people who could take a 35 percent cut in their incomes and not end up hurting," pointed out Jimmy Lee, a Johnston County

tobacco farmer who helped organize the March 1 tractorcade.

Unlike the production of many other crops, tobacco farmers are assigned a quota, essentially a government license to grow and sell a specified percentage of the national tobacco crop. This program is administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, which does out annual allotments before the start of each growing season based on estimates of the coming year's demand. In 1998, tobacco quotas for farmers in North Carolina were slashed 18 percent, on top of a 17 percent reduction the year before.

When the federal tobacco program was first started in the 1930s, specific quotas were assigned to farms. Over the past six decades these have been sold or passed on to other family members so that today very few of the quota owners actually grow tobacco. In North Carolina there are some 82,600 individuals or businesses that own or co-own quotas. They include more than a dozen state legislators, a member of the Rockefeller family, and other wealthy businessmen. Because nonfarmers control so much of the quota, many growers must rent or sharecrop much of the quota they need

each year. Rentals run around 35 to 40 cents a pound, on top of farmers' other costs of production. In order to help make ends meet, tobacco farmers have been demanding that the state legislature allocate to them in the form of direct payments half of the \$4.6 billion settlement assigned to North Carolina as part of the 1997 national tobacco settlement in which the cigarette bosses agreed to pay \$368.5 billion over 25 years.

Instead, the state legislature passed a bill on March 16 channeling half the state's share of this settlement into a charitable foundation and the rest to be split between two trust funds, one for tobacco farmers and quota holders and another for health programs. Each of these funds gets a quarter of the settlement, roughly \$1.15 billion. Many farmers, who packed the public hearings on this bill were disappointed about the outcome.

"They're setting up a board and selecting people to be in charge of dispersing the trust funds," commented Neal. "But who is better able to disperse this money in farm communities than the farmer?"

"I don't think they [the legislators] realize the seriousness of this thing," said Kenneth Talton, a tobacco farmer from Johnston County. "I don't think 25 percent will go very far. I don't think that's much help. There's no group that's hurt like the tobacco farmer."

In addition, a separate nonbinding agreement with major cigarette firms sets up a \$5.15 billion private trust fund supposedly to compensate tobacco farmers and allotment holders, many of whom are wealthy businessmen living off the farm. About \$2 billion of this is projected to be paid in North Carolina over the next 12 years. However, many of the state's tobacco farmers never expect to see any of this money. "My bank isn't going to want to hear about a trust fund," stated Dale Lucas, a Harnett county tobacco farmer. "We need something more secure than that when we go to get the money we need to run our farms."

Brian Williams is a member of the United Steelworkers of America.

Washington deepens probe against Medicare

BY MEGAN ARNEY

A bipartisan chorus of Democrats and Republicans are waging a political campaign to begin dismantling Medicare, the federal medical program for elderly and disabled people. One of the most serious probes has been the proposal a bipartisan federal advisory commission established by Congress and the White House in 1997 to look into ways to "reform" Medicare, the second-largest government entitlement.

On January 6 the commission announced a proposal, drafted by its chair, Democratic Sen. John Breaux, and Republican Rep. William Thomas, that would essentially put Medicare on the auction block. Breaux commented March 16 that while the plan was not adopted, "We have advanced the Medicare debate in a very significant way" by putting it on the table.

Under the proposed scheme, each of the 39 million Medicare recipients would receive a fixed sum to be used to buy private health insurance. Under the current system, the government program reimburses doctors directly for services to Medicare recipients.

In order to sugarcoat this plan, commission members suggested that more people could have coverage for prescription drugs. Currently, about two-thirds of those recipients of Medicare purchase supplemental insurance policies that cover drugs. The remaining 13 million pay for medicine taken outside of hospitals out of their own pocket.

Breaux also proposed making higher-income Medicare beneficiaries pay higher premiums than others, implementing means-testing. Currently, everyone pays exactly the same and gets exactly the same coverage (though those who can afford it can get additional coverage privately). The proposal

would have raised monthly co-payments — already set to double from \$45.50 to \$105 in 2009 — across the board. The eligibility age for Medicare would gradually increase from 65 to 67 years. And Medicare would no longer directly pay to help train doctors, interns, and medical residents, cutting \$2.2 billion in yearly subsidies.

By early March it became clear that the commission was slightly short of the majority of 11 needed to present an official recommendation to the White House and Congress. Ten out of 17 commission members — 8 Republicans and 2 Democrats — voted in favor of the plan.

U.S. president William Clinton announced he would come up with his own plan for long-term overhaul of Medicare, vowing to push it through Congress.

Medicare, which provides medical benefits for those over the age of 65, was established in 1965 as an extension to the 1935 Social Security Act. It is one piece of the social wage won through struggle in working-class battles of the 1930s and 1960s. This and other entitlements are the socialized part of workers' wages — universal rights for a class. The employers' assault on workers' wages and working conditions, and the government of-fensive against social entitlements go hand-in-hand, as the capitalist class tries to boost its sinking profit rates by keeping a larger portion of the wealth workers produce.

While there is bipartisan agreement in Washington that social entitlements should be cut, there is debate among wings of the capitalist rulers over how far and how fast to go. Liberal Democrat Senator Edward Kennedy, for instance, criticized the federal commission's plan, saying the approach was "the wrong prescription."

Senator John Rockefeller, a Democrat from West Virginia, said the proposal was "not an acceptable starting point for Medicare reform" as it was "simply too risky."

The liberal *New York Times* editors warned January 31, "Relying on the market means accepting a lot of flux. Last year, several private managed care plans abruptly decided to pull out of Medicare because the premiums were not covering their cost. That left 400,000 beneficiaries scrambling to find new doctors."

Breaux and Thomas have said they will bring the plan before other members of Congress anyway. Several prominent Republicans had backed the measure. "I believe we can pass this proposal or something very close to it in the Finance Committee and in the Senate," said Republican Sen. Philip Gramm. He also proposed that Medicare "have a budget" instead of being an open-ended entitlement.

Gramm was joined by Democratic Sen. Joseph Robert Kerrey, who called for an "income test," which would require Medicare recipients with incomes over \$75,000 a year to pay higher Medicare premiums.

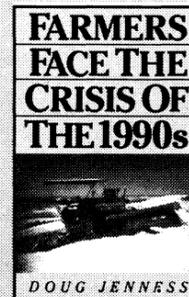
Meanwhile, Clinton asked Congress January 9 in his 1999 budget request to discuss a plan he proposed last year that would "adapt" Medicare to include U.S. citizens between the ages of 55 and 65. Instead of lowering the age for eligibility, since 3.2 million people between ages 55 to 64 are uninsured, the president proposes allowing laid-off workers age 55 or older the option to pay up to \$400 a month for health benefits. Medicare recipients between 62 and 64 would pay \$300. Today, anyone over the age of 65 is eligible for Medicare at \$45.50 a month. Nationwide, 17.6 percent of people under 65 years of age lack medical coverage.

FROM PATHFINDER

Farmers Face the Crisis of the 1990s

DOUG JENNESS

Examines the deepening economic and social crisis in the capitalist world and explains how farmers and workers can unite internationally against the mounting assaults from the billionaire bankers, industrialists, and merchants of grain. **\$3.50**



Available from bookstores listed on page 12.

Cops' killing of Diallo is crisis for N.Y. mayor

Continued from front page

TV show "This Week with Sam Donaldson and Cokie Roberts," New York governor George Pataki stated that the mayor was not "responding appropriately to criticism" over the killing. "The mayor has done an excellent job on issues like crime," he said, "and the police have done an excellent job, but the Diallo incident was so horrendous and so horrific that it has created a sense of moral outrage."

And President William Clinton, who has made putting more cops on the street a hallmark of his administration, stated in a national radio address in early March that he was "deeply disturbed" about police violence, alluding to the Diallo killing.

Giuliani has toned down his incendiary language under this pressure, no longer calling the protests "silly." At a March 23 news conference he said, "I believe there is a feeling in the minority community that police officers are unfair to them." But he maintains his defense of the cops, refusing to even suspend the four who shot Diallo.

The mayor's hard-line stance puts wind in the sails of rightist elements, especially those in the police department. At every demonstration at One Police Plaza there has been at least one counterprotester expressing support for the cops.

At a March 24 demonstration in the evening, supporters of the police were passing out leaflets encouraging people to hold a counter demonstration the next time at the same time as the anti-police brutality action. About 75 cops and others responded to that call, all of them white.

'The cops should be arrested'

The main demand of the hundreds of protesters at One Police Plaza is to arrest and convict the cops who killed Diallo. "This is outrageous," declared Dennis Larkee, 35, when asked his opinion about the Diallo killing. Larkee, a hospital worker, decided to come to the demonstration on his day off March 21. "The cops are no different from you and me, they should be arrested," he concluded.

"I'm here to protest the shooting of Amadou Diallo. This was a big injustice and a massacre," said 42-year-old Malik Muhammad, a construction worker and union shop steward, at the rally a week earlier. "I see the [civil disobedience] arrests as

one stage in the fight against this stuff. I'll come as often as it takes to demonstrate."

Among those at the March 24 picket line was 16-year-old Greg Coates, a student at East Side Community High in Manhattan. "I'm coming to rally because we need to have young people support this and also bring energy to it. I also want to tell other young people about what's going on. We can't let cops take the right to protest from us. Doing this can make a difference," he said.

"What the cops did to Diallo there is no excuse for. Nothing that Mr. Diallo did could excuse 41 shots being fired by them," said Amy Wolfe, a librarian. "This just confirms my view that the cops are racist, sexist, and antigay."

Ludmila Svoboda, a nurse and immigrant from the Czech Republic, echoed that view. "I'm totally fed up with how the police department treats people," she said. "People are gunned down because they fit a certain profile."

At the March 22 picket line large contingents of construction workers and United Auto Workers members were visible. While demonstrators have been overwhelmingly Black in the earlier actions, the protests recently have become more multinational.

For example, more than 200 people identifying themselves as Jewish joined in the March 24 action — many carrying signs in Hebrew against cop brutality. Several joined civil disobedience arrests.

New people are joining the actions every day. Wayne Wade, a clothing store owner and manager from Long Island, was at his first protest March 23. He drove an hour with two others to get there. "We came to lend our hand in support," he explained. "Police brutality is not just a problem in New York but all over."

In addition to the actions outside the police headquarters, there have been meetings and demonstrations by a range of groups. Daily pickets also occur at the Bronx courthouse, where the grand jury is considering whether to press charges against the four cops who shot Diallo.

A poll published in the March 16 *New York Times* reflected the impact the Diallo killing has had on many people in this city, including among some of those who have supported Giuliani's "tough on crime" stance in the past. When asked whether they agreed with the statement, "Most of the

police use excessive force," 51 percent of all New Yorkers said yes. That included 62 percent of those identified as Hispanic and 72 percent of those who are Black.

When asked whether they thought "based on current knowledge, the shooting of Amadou Diallo was tragic and there is absolutely no excuse for the way the police acted," 74 percent agreed, including sizable majorities in every racial category.

In this context, Police Commissioner Howard Safir was called before the city council to answer questions about the "street crimes unit." This outfit, which the cops who killed Diallo belong to, includes some of the most aggressive cops in the NYPD. It numbers about 400, a little more than 1 percent of the police department. It admits to stopping and frisking about 27,000 people last year, less than 4,000 of whom were charged with any crime.

The fight for justice for Amadou Diallo has encouraged others resisting police harassment and brutality. Residents of a block on 159th Street in the Washington Heights section of Manhattan organized a street protest to prevent the police department from establishing another "model block" where they live. On four other nearby blocks, and others around the city, police put up barricades on both ends of the street and demand identification from everyone entering.

London students occupy college and demand better education

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON — One hundred fifty students at the Camberwell College of Art gathered outside the college March 16 in support of a week-long sit-in. The students are demanding improved education through more resources and space, and more direct contact time with their tutors, explained one of the occupiers, Donncha Mac Raghnaill.

The College staffing budget was recently cut by around £120,000 (£1 = US\$1.63). The students are also demanding that tuition fees be reassessed and that no one be excluded from the college due to financial hardship.

The Camberwell college is one of five that come under the umbrella of the London Institute. Mac Raghnaill, a final year student at another of the five, the London College of Printing, said that as part of the students' efforts to extend the fight, they have called a demonstration outside

"The Diallo situation further enhanced what we already know, that there is a great deal of police brutality, and it has just made us more enraged," resident Stephanie Colley, 20, was quoted in the *New York Times* as saying. "Already, they come up to you if you're standing on the block and harass you, asking you what you are doing or asking for ID. The model block will only make it worse. It will make us prisoners in our own community."

"The New York Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialists," reads a statement issued by the organizations in response to the killing of Diallo, "join with the thousands who are protesting this brutal and racist killing. We urge all working people and youth to turn out to these actions, and organize other speak out to demand: 'Justice for Amadou Diallo! Jail the guilty cops now!'"

The statement continues, "The determination by thousands to stand in solidarity with the Diallo family and other victims of police brutality — from Anthony Baez to Abner Louima — make it harder for the city administration...and other capitalist politicians to cover up this crime by the NY police." Towards the end the document points out the brutality wreaked on Diallo is the same Washington has in store for the people of Yugoslavia and is carrying out with the near-daily bombing of the people of Iraq.

the London Institute headquarters.

"The occupation started when a student from nearby Goldsmith's College came and gave a talk. It caught our imagination. Spontaneously, we decided to take up the fight ourselves," Mac Raghnaill said.

"Students have discovered amazing creativity. For example, we've taken over the canteen and the food's never been so good or so cheap!"

The occupiers have continued classes with the support of the teaching staff and unions. They've organized guest speakers, a band, and a comedian to perform.

A shop steward from striking workers at University College Hospital came to talk. But the college administration responded by closing the library, threatening legal action, and employing 32 new security guards.

Messages of support can be e-mailed to: www.scuba.ndirect.co.uk

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

NEW YORK

Brooklyn

Stop the bombings! U.S.-NATO Hands off Yugoslavia! Self-determination for Kosova Albanians. Speaker: Argiris Malapanis, staff writer for the *Militant* newspaper, member of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party, and co-author of *The Truth about Yugoslavia*. Sat., March 27, Dinner: 6:30 p.m., Program: 8:00 p.m. 59 Fouth Ave. (Near the Atlantic and Pacific subway stops). Donation: \$5 for dinner, \$4 for program. Tel: (718) 399-7257.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Stop the bombings! U.S.-NATO Hands off Yugoslavia! Self-determination for Kosova Albanians. Speakers: Olympia Newton, Young Socialists; and Clive Turnbull, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., March 26, Dinner: 6:00 p.m., Program: 7:30 p.m. 1930 18th St. N.W. Suite #3 (Entrance on Florida Ave.) Donation: \$5 for dinner, \$4 for program. Tel: (202) 387-2185.

CALENDAR

PENNSYLVANIA

Pittsburgh

Hear Geronimo Pratt speak about Political Prisoners Mumia Abu-Jamal, and Death Row. Fri., April 2, 7:30 p.m. *Soldiers and Sailors Memorial*. For more information, call (412) 734-8315.

Correction

In editing the article "Report shows UK cop racism, attacks rights" in the March 22, 1999, issue, the *Militant* incorrectly stated that "Stephen Lawrence was stabbed to death by a racist gang... as police looked on." The cops arrived on the scene after the stabbing and looked on as Lawrence bled to death.

IF YOU LIKE THIS PAPER, LOOK US UP

Where to find Pathfinder books and distributors of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, *New International*, *Nouvelle Internationale*, *Nueva Internacional* and *Ny International*.

UNITED STATES

ALABAMA: Birmingham: 111 21st St. South Zip 35233. Tel: (205) 323-3079. Compuserve: 73712,3561

CALIFORNIA: Los Angeles: 2546 W. Pico Blvd. Zip: 90006. Tel: (213) 380-9460. Compuserve: 74642,326 **San Francisco:** 3284 23rd St. Zip: 94110. Tel: (415) 282-6255, 285-5323. Compuserve: 75604,556

FLORIDA: Miami: 137 N.E. 54th St. Zip: 33137. Tel: (305) 756-1020. Compuserve: 103171,1674

GEORGIA: Atlanta: 230 Auburn Ave. N.E. Zip: 30303. Tel: (404) 577-7976. Compuserve: 104226,1245

ILLINOIS: Chicago: 1223 N. Milwaukee Ave. Zip: 60622. Tel: (773) 342-1780. Compuserve: 104077,511

IOWA: Des Moines: 2724 Douglas Ave. Zip: 50310. Tel: (515) 277-4600. Compuserve: 104107,1412

MASSACHUSETTS: Boston: 780 Tremont St. Zip: 02118. Tel: (617) 247-6772. Compuserve: 103426,3430

MICHIGAN: Detroit: 7414 Woodward Ave. Zip: 48202. Compuserve: 104127,3505 Tel: (313) 875-0100.

MINNESOTA: St. Paul: 2490 University Ave. W., St. Paul. Zip: 55114. Tel: (651) 644-6325. Compuserve: 103014,3261

NEW JERSEY: Newark: 87A Halsey.

Mailing address: Riverfront Plaza, P.O. Box 200117. Zip: 07102-0302. Tel: (973) 643-3341. Compuserve: 104216,2703

NEW YORK: New York City: 59 4th Avenue (corner of Bergen) Brooklyn, NY Zip: 11217. Tel: (718) 399-7257. Compuserve: 102064,2642 ; 167 Charles St., Manhattan, NY. Zip: 10014. Tel: (212) 366-1973.

OHIO: Cincinnati: P.O. Box 19300. Zip: 45219. Tel: (513) 662-1931. **Cleveland:** 1832 Euclid. Zip: 44115. Tel: (216) 861-6150. Compuserve: 103253,1111

PENNSYLVANIA: Philadelphia: 1906 South St. Zip: 19146. Tel: (215) 546-8218. Compuserve: 104502,1757 **Pittsburgh:** 1103 E. Carson St. Zip 15203. Tel: (412) 381-9785. Compuserve: 103122,720

TEXAS: Houston: 6969 Gulf Freeway, Suite 380. Zip: 77087. Tel: (713) 847-0704. Compuserve: 102527,2271

WASHINGTON, D.C.: 1930 18th St. N.W. Suite #3 (Entrance on Florida Ave.) Zip: 20009. Tel: (202) 387-2185. Compuserve: 75407,3345.

WASHINGTON: Seattle: 1405 E. Madison. Zip: 98122. Tel: (206) 323-1755. Compuserve: 74461,2544.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney: 1st Flr, 176 Redfern St., Redfern NSW 2016. Mailing address: P.O. Box K879, Haymarket Post Office, NSW 1240. Tel: 02-9690-1533. Compuserve: 106450,2216

BRITAIN

London: 47 The Cut. Postal code: SE1 8LL. Tel: 0171-928-7993. Compuserve:

101515,2702

Manchester: Unit 4, 60 Shudehill. Postal code: M4 4AA. Tel: 0161-839-1766. Compuserve: 106462,327

CANADA

Montreal: 4581 Saint-Denis. Postal code: H2J 2L4. Tel: (514) 284-7369. Compuserve: 104614,2606

Toronto: 851 Bloor St. West. Postal code: M6G 1M3. Tel: (416) 533-4324. Compuserve: 103474,13

Vancouver: 3967 Main St. Postal code: V5V 3P3. Tel: (604) 872-8343. Compuserve: 103430,1552

FRANCE

Paris: Centre MBE 175, 23 rue Lecourbe. Postal code: 75015. Tel: (01) 47-26-58-21. Compuserve: 73504,442

ICELAND

Reykjavik: Klapparstíg 26. Mailing address: P. Box 0233, IS 121 Reykjavik. Tel: 552 5502. INTERNET: milph@mmedia.is

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland: La Gonda Arcade, 203 Karangahape Road. Postal address: P.O. Box 3025. Tel: (9) 379-3075. Compuserve: 100035,3205

Christchurch: 199 High St. Postal address: P.O. Box 22-530. Tel: (3) 365-6055. Compuserve: 100250,1511

SWEDEN

Stockholm: Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St Erksplan). Postal code: S-113 42. Tel: (08) 31 69 33. Compuserve: 100416,2362

How about leashing the cops? — In New York, dogs are allowed to run unleashed in parks at certain times, in certain areas. Now mounted cops are policing



Harry Ring

parks, issuing \$100-per-dog tickets to owners who unleash their pets in the wrong place at the wrong time.

The 'justice' system — Gen.

David Hale was permitted to take an honorable discharge — and his pension — despite charges of sexual "improprieties." A court martial then found him guilty of having affairs with the wives of four subordinates. He was given a \$10,000 fine, to be deducted in installments from his monthly pension, plus a reprimand. Enlisted men and women often face jail time for such charges.

A plug — "Our bourgeois, not content with having the wives and daughters of their proletarians at their disposal...take the greatest pleasure in seducing each others wives." — *Communist Manifesto*.

The weaning process — Three people died in the intensive care unit of a Siberian hospital when power was cut off for a debt to the local utility. The *Los Angeles Times* explains: "To comply with Western conditions for multibillion-dollar loans, Russia is trying to wean consumers from subsidized power.... However, it is difficult to put the energy system on a capitalist footing when institutions and individuals have little or no money to pay for utilities...."

A Beanie Baby under every pillow? — Ty Warner, head of Ty Inc., and creator of the Beanie Baby, is apparently still doing nicely, as

hopeful speculators invest wallets-full in "retired" models of the bean bag. Branching out, Warner just spent \$275 million for New York's ultralux Four Seasons Hotel. Average nightly rate, \$600 plus.

Social commentary — You go to your med center for a procedure that takes the starch out of you. On departure, you get a list of do's and don'ts for the next 24 hours — get rest, don't drive, etc. Final prudent point: "Do not sign important documents."

House-hunting? — You can have Princess Margaret and "several other royals" as neighbors, not

to mention the Sultan of Brunei. Just plunk down £35 million for London's Kensington Palace Gardens. You can mention to folks it's the most expensive house on the market. A five-story building, it includes 10 bedrooms and bathrooms. Garage space for at least six cars. An "impeccable" neighborhood. Privacy ensured by a 30' wall.

P.S. — In dollars, how much is £35 million? "If you have to ask...."

Shop till you drop — "Shopping may bring Christians closer to God than going to church, according to the official church liturgy for the millennium" — London news item.

The capitalist witch-hunt — and how to fight it

The following is an excerpt from a resolution titled "The Capitalist Witch-Hunt — And How to Fight It," adopted by the February 1950 meeting of the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party. It appears in an Education for Socialists series titled *The Fight Against Fascism in the U.S.A.* It is copyright © 1976 by Pathfinder Press, and is reprinted by permission.

BOOK OF THE WEEK

Liberals, labor officials and the Stalinists often call upon the government and its agencies for action against ultra-reactionary elements. Jewish groups, for example, request the Post Office Department to ban anti-Semitic literature from the mails. Defaming the Trotskyists as agents of fascism, the Stalinists during the war demanded the suppression of *The Militant*, etc.

No dependence on capitalist state

The working class and the minorities must vigorously oppose every transgression upon their civil and constitutional rights, from whatever quarter they come, and utilize every safeguard provided by law. But they cannot entrust the protection of their liberties to the capitalist regime or expect powers-that-be to stop or eradicate the menace of fascism.

First, the government itself today spearheads the assault upon the people's rights. The President orders the loyalty purge; Congress passes anti-labor legislation; the courts levy fines and issue injunctions against the unions. Second, the capitalist parties work hand in glove with white supremacists in the South and Big Business enemies of labor in the North who are behind the witch-hunt.

Third, the authorities have time and again demonstrated by their action and inaction their lack of interest in punishing or removing the perpetrators of violence against the Negroes, the unions, and the liberties of the people. Neither the Federal or State governments convict any lynchers in the South. Nor have the officials displayed much zeal in uncovering the murderous assailants of Carlo Tresca, William Lurye, the Reuthers, and other labor figures.

Government shields fascist elements

On the contrary, the capitalist state apparatus screens and shields fascist forces and collaborates closely with them. In Peekskill the local authorities and police connived in

the attacks by the mobsters and hoodlums; [New York] Governor [Thomas] Dewey's investigators whitewashed their role; and the entire paid press tried to unload responsibility for the violence upon the "reds."

Even when, under pressure, government officials pretend to move against mobsters and Ku Kluxers, they only make theatrical gestures to appease outraged public opinion without actually punishing the real criminals. For every slight tap the capitalist agencies offer the right, they deliver a hundred harsh blows against the left. This has been illustrated by the Smith Act. While the 30 Fascists indicted under this Act in wartime were left off scot-free, the Trotskyists and Stalinists were convicted and given heavy jail sentences.

The same procedure has been followed in the loyalty purge. While the Attorney-General's blacklist includes a few fascist groups, in practice it is almost entirely applied against members of leftist organizations. The U.S. Department of Defense has given away the whole game by omitting the Ku Klux Klan, Silver Shirts, and similar fascist outfits from its own subversive list applied to draftees.

"Under conditions of a capitalist regime," Trotsky once wrote, "all curtailment of political rights and freedoms, no matter against whom they may be originally directed, in the end inevitably fall with all their weight on the working class — especially on its most advanced elements."

How to fight fascism

Class-conscious workers should not fall into the trap of demanding infringements of anyone's civil rights, including those of the fascists. At the same time they should recognize the real situation and make it plain to others. The civil rights of fascist elements are not being threatened; the authorities are in league with them. They are in no danger of persecution or need of defense. They are not the victims but the sponsors and beneficiaries of the current repressions.

The menace of fascism does not arise from their propaganda but from their gangsterism, their mob attacks upon advanced workers, Negroes, and labor organizations. With tacit acquiescence of the authorities, the fascists operate as extralegal agencies of repression against the institutions and freedoms of the working class and minorities. Consequently, the real situation is that the labor organizations and minorities are obliged to act in self-defense to protect themselves against reactionary violence.

The history of Italy and Germany conclusively proves the folly and futility of relying upon the capitalist government, its police, or its parties in the fight against the fascists. The masses can safeguard their rights, their lives, and their organizations only by mobilizing the



Militant/Martha Harris

Workers shouldn't fall into trap of demanding the government infringe on anyone's rights because those laws will be used against the working class. Mobilizations like the one above in Uniontown, Pennsylvania, in 1980 are how to answer fascist forces.

full strength of their own forces in the most vigorous united and independent defensive actions against the race-bigots, anti-Semites, union-busters, and mobsters who threaten them.

Organized labor has the ability as well as the duty to assume the leadership in this struggle. The trade unions are not only the chief bulwarks of democracy and the centers of proletarian power; they are likewise the main target of the capitalist authors of the witch-hunt whose ultimate objective is the destruction of the labor movement. The

anti-labor campaign and anti-red hysteria are inseparable aspects of the monopolist drive toward the establishment of a police state in this country. Thus the defense of civil liberties is a life-and-death matter for American labor.

Without full democracy and freedom of expression inside the unions, they cannot effectively fulfill their tasks of defending the welfare of the workers and leading the struggle against reaction. Thus the fight for union democracy is directly interlinked with the general struggle for civil liberties.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



April 5, 1974
CHICAGO — Union women — 3,200 strong and representing 58 international unions — gathered here March 23-24 for the founding conference of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW).

They had come to discuss how they could fight through their unions against low wages, unemployment, and dead-end jobs that women workers face across the country.

The size of the conference was a clear sign that many trade-union women do want to unite to fight against their oppression. The turnout far exceeded the expectations of the conference organizers, who quickly ran out of literature, food, and hotel rooms.

Large contingents were brought by the United Auto Workers (UAW), the Teamsters, American Federation of Teachers (AFT), and American Federation of State, County and Municipal employees (AFSCME).

Members of the United Farm Workers (UFW) attended, and hundreds of women wore UFW boycott buttons, and some sporting two or three.

The majority of delegates were rank and filers, not union officials, and there was strong sentiment for rank-and-file participation in CLUW activities. One reflection of this was in the elections to the National Coordinating Committee. A number of rank-and-file unionists were elected, after women voiced concern that there be rank-and-file representation on the NCC.

Unfortunately, there was little discussion of the specific issues that had brought women together at the conference. Most of

the time was consumed by discussion of structure and general goals of the coalition, leaving no opportunity to talk about how to fight the different forms of discrimination women face, or the types of activities local CLUW chapters can engage in.



April 4, 1949

CHICAGO, March 25 — Even while the Stalinists themselves are under capitalist government attack, they continue to violate the democratic rights of other working-class groups. Last Saturday night, the Stalinists assaulted a group of Socialist Workers Party members and friends peacefully distributing leaflets and copies of *The Militant* at a Communist Party meeting at the Ashland auditorium, called to protest the trial of the CP leaders in New York.

The SWP leaflet pointed out the dangers to the labor movement in the current witch-hunt, showing the connection between the CP trial, the wartime imprisonment of 18 SWP leaders under the Smith Act, the purge of James Kutcher, and the reactionary Broyles Bills now being pushed through the Illinois Legislature. It repeated the SWP's offer to join with the CP in a united defense of all witch-hunt victims.

Many of the people entering the hall took and read the SWP leaflet with interest. The Stalinists then organized a squad of 20 to 25, who emerged from the hall and assaulted the distributors. The latter vigorously defended themselves, but were badly outnumbered and were forced to withdraw.

EDUCATION FOR SOCIALISTS

What Is American Fascism?
Writings by Arthur Combs, Harry Frank Thayer, and General Joseph W. Custer
By James P. Cannon and Joseph Hansen

From Pathfinder

What Is American Fascism?
James P. Cannon and Joseph Hansen
Analyzing examples earlier in the 20th century — Father Charles Coughlin, Jersey City mayor Frank Hague, and Sen. Joseph McCarthy — this collection looks at the features distinguishing fascist movements and demagogues in the United States, from the 1930s to today. \$8.00

The Fight against Fascism in the U.S.A.
Forty Years of Struggle Described by Participants
James P. Cannon and others
Lessons from the fight against incipient fascist movements since the capitalist crisis and labor radicalization of the 1930s. \$8.00

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690. Fax: (212) 727-0150.

U.S., NATO hands off Yugoslavia

Continued from front page

and of Serbia and the rest of Yugoslavia. The U.S. rulers have exploited the conflict in Kosova as a pretext to expand the NATO occupation in Yugoslavia, keep tightening the imperialist military noose around Russia, and assert Washington's "indispensability" as the number one European power. From Greece to Italy to Germany, Albanian immigrants have been expelled en masse or treated as pariahs, like other foreign-born workers.

Yugoslavia is a workers state, where workers and farmers eliminated capitalist rule in the 1940s. During World War II, working people in Yugoslavia defeated the Nazi occupiers and overthrew their native capitalist and landlord exploiters, dealing a blow to imperialist rule in Europe. They established a single federated workers state. They benefited from land reform, nationalization of industry, and other social conquests. By fighting together against a common class enemy, workers and peasants who were Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, and Albanian substantially broke down the national and religious divisions fostered by the former capitalist rulers. The Stalinist misleadership that headed the Yugoslav government in the following decades, however, looked after a privileged bureaucratic caste and eroded the working-class gains of the socialist revolution. Despite important advances, the second-class social status of Albanians in Kosova was perpetuated.

In the early 1990s the ruling caste in Yugoslavia degenerated into warring gangs that grabbed for land and power under the cloak of nationalism. Taking advantage of this and fueling the conflict, the U.S. rulers let Yugoslavia bleed as these gangs of would-be capitalists fought over Bosnia. Then Washington stepped in, spearheaded a NATO bombing campaign, and forced the parties involved to accept a U.S.-sponsored accord in Bosnia. Under the Dayton accords, an imperialist occupation force remains there, with no departure date.

The opening of the Balkan Wars of the 21st century — now continuing in Serbia and Kosova — is a product of the breakdown of the capitalist world order. Through its intervention in Yugoslavia, Washington seeks to strengthen its position in relation to its imperialist rivals in Bonn, Paris, London, and elsewhere. At the same time,

the U.S. rulers will be unable to reimpose capitalism without taking on and defeating the workers and farmers of that country in bloody class battles.

The struggle by Albanian working people for their self-determination in Kosova is part of workers and farmers increasingly becoming actors in politics and defending the remaining gains of their workers state against capitalists and would-be exploiters. That is why Washington and its cohorts are hostile to the Kosova independence struggle.

The NATO occupation of Yugoslavia is part of the pattern of growing confrontation with the workers state in Russia. Moscow reacted sharply to the U.S.-led bombing because it correctly senses Russia is the ultimate target. This fact is reinforced by the drive to expand NATO to the Russian borders.

Working people in the United States and elsewhere have no interest in this assault on our fellow workers and farmers in Yugoslavia. The bombing of the people there is paralleled by the stepped-up brutalization of working people here — increased police brutality from New York to California, accelerating raids against immigrant workers, greater use of cops against unionists on strike. Thus, the growing fightback by workers and farmers at home is an obstacle to the war aims of the U.S. rulers.

The truth about Yugoslavia must be told, the lies answered one by one. A working-class voice must be heard that points to our common class interests with the toilers of Yugoslavia.

Those who oppose the U.S./NATO bombing of Yugoslavia should bring these facts, and bring fellow workers, to other social protest actions — from the protests against the killing of Amadou Diallo by New York cops, to meetings to hear the truth about the Cuban revolution, to union picket lines around the country. Demonstrations and picket lines that oppose the imperialist war moves and support the struggle for self-determination in Kosova are also needed.

One of the most powerful tools to explain the truth is the new Pathfinder book *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*. This is a time to campaign to get the book into the hands of as many workers, farmers, and politically minded youth as possible.

NATO bombing

Continued from Page 9

Bosnia — which rapidly forced the Bosnian Serb forces to accept a U.S.-imposed deal — is that Belgrade's regular forces, especially those stationed in Serbia, have displayed a willingness to fight.

The Russian government, on the other hand, reacted sharply against the NATO assault on Yugoslavia.

Russian president Boris Yeltsin broke off Moscow's relations with NATO, recalling its representative to it. "What we have now is the intention of NATO to enter the 21st century wearing a uniform of a world policeman," Yeltsin stated.

Other politicians in Russia have called for military aid to Belgrade. "If we quickly supply them with S-300 [anti-aircraft] missile systems, and if they bring down a dozen American aircraft, the U.S. public will clamor against Clinton and this war will backfire on him," said retired general Alexandr Lebed, governor of the Krasnoyarsk region in Siberia.

The Chinese government also expressed its opposition to the NATO assault.

In the United States, top union officials fell into line behind the White House. Clinton gave an early version of his March 24 war speech the day before at the national convention of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME), and received warm applause from the gathering of officials and staffers.

Demonstrations in the United States

There were small scattered demonstrations in the United States March 24. Albanian-American organizations in New York and elsewhere rallied in support of the U.S.-led bombing, arguing that it would protect the interests of the Albanian population in Kosova and distributing flyers describing Milosevic as the ultimate "evil." Serbian-American groups opposed the assault while supporting the Milosevic regime's war on the Kosovar Albanians.

A demonstration initiated by Workers World Party in New York condemned the NATO bombing but lent support to the Serbian regime and denounced the independence struggle in Kosova. In a statement announcing the protest, the International Action Center asserted that "the Yugoslav government is resisting the demands by the U.S. and NATO to dismember its country" and that the pro-independence UCK was armed and financed by the NATO powers.

A picket line of 125 people outside the White House the same day, initiated by the Washington Peace Center, was quickly dominated by a large group of Serbians opposed to the NATO bombings and supporting the Milosevic regime. Several carried buttons and T-shirts with the slogan "Proud to be Serbian." At one point, several of the Serbs circled Clive Turnbull, who was distributing a Socialist Workers Party statement demanding "Stop the bombing of Yugoslavia! Self-determination for Kosova Albanians!", and verbally assaulted him, saying he was "Albanian" and demanding, unsuccessfully, he leave the picket.

The struggle for Albanian self-determination that has erupted in Kosova over the past decade is a response to the systematic discrimination faced by the Albanian majority under the rule of Belgrade. In response to growing mass demonstrations by Albanian working people against austerity and for national rights, the Milosevic government revoked Kosova's limited autonomous status within Serbia in 1989 and imposed martial law. For several years the UCK has waged an armed struggle for independence. The savage repression unleashed by the Serbian regime has led most Kosovar Albanians to shift from supporting autonomy to favoring independence.

Most leaders of the political parties that predominate among Albanians in Kosova have voiced support for NATO intervention as the only way to protect the population in Kosova from repression by the Serb forces.

As with the earlier war in Bosnia, Washington is using the conflict in Kosova as a pretext to advance its own imperialist goals. In the early 1990s, the U.S. government sabotaged one initiative after another by the French, British, and German governments to act as power brokers in the Yugoslav workers state, where rival wings of the ruling bureaucratic caste were waging a savage war for land and power to maintain their parasitic existence. Washington successfully pushed for NATO air strikes in 1994 as the occupation force in Bosnia dominated by British and French troops, under a United Nations banner, faltered.

Following that NATO bombing, the Clinton administration pressured all the warring parties into a "peace" conference on a U.S. military base near Dayton, Ohio. Under the U.S.-orchestrated Dayton accord, Washington headed an occupation army of 60,000 NATO troops. About 6,700 U.S. troops lead the NATO occupation force in Bosnia to this day.

The current military assault, however, is already unleashing uncontrollable forces, as the reaction by Moscow shows, and can spark a wider conflict in the Balkans.

U.S. judge orders Cuban funds be given to rightists' families

BY BILL KALMAN

MIAMI — On March 18 Federal Judge James King ordered that the more than \$6.2 million owed by five U.S. phone companies to the Cuban telephone company for calls made last year be paid instead to the families of three Cuban-Americans shot down while invading Cuban airspace in 1996.

King had earlier ruled that the payments be frozen pending a final decision. In response, Empresa de Telecomunicaciones de Cuba S.A., the Cuban joint phone venture with Italy, stopped direct phone links with the five U.S. companies February 25. Most U.S. phone companies hadn't made a payment since Dec. 29, 1998. AT&T owes the Cuban phone company the most, \$4.1 million. MCI WorldCom, LDDS, IDB, and WillTell also owe funds that will now be given to the rightists' families. Sprint is not affected by the ruling.

In 1997, King ruled that the Republic of Cuba and the Cuban Air Force owed \$187 million in damages to the families three provocateurs, members of the U.S.-based counterrevolutionary group Brothers to the Rescue, who had flown into Cuban airspace despite repeated warnings to cease and desist. They were shot down Feb. 24, 1996, when Cuban forces acted to protect their territorial integrity.

The federal court's attack on Cuban sovereignty will likely mean that phone service will remain curtailed between the two countries. The five phone companies are already routing calls from the U.S. to Cuba through third countries, resulting in higher calling costs. Calls from Cuba to the United States appear to be affected harder than phone calls originating in the U.S.

Lawyers for the relatives of the rightists have made it clear that they will attempt to use King's latest ruling to take further actions against Cuban sovereignty. "We're going to get the money," insisted Miami lawyer Aaron Podhurst at a press conference. "Nobody has the right to not follow a federal judgment."

The lawyers are now looking at pursuing some \$6 million annual fees that U.S. airlines pay Cuba for flying over the island on international flights and for airport landing

rights. Lawyer Francisco Angones even indicated that money generated by the scheduled baseball games between the Baltimore Orioles and the Cuban national team could be affected. "It's a great idea, we'll look at it," he said. The U.S. Justice Department is now reviewing the decision on the telephone payments.

Chicago protest

Continued from front page

"1,2,3,4, stop the US/NATO war" and "Stop the Bombing Now." The rally was covered by the local ABC television affiliate, local Fox News, the Spanish-language Univision channel 66, WMAQ-AM (a major all-news radio station), National Public Radio and the *Chicago Sun-Times*. Several participants were interviewed at length including Joshua Carroll, recent mayoral candidate for the Socialist Workers Party, which called the demonstration.

Several passersby congratulated the pickets, one came forward to shake hands. Every passerby shown on the ABC news story that night opposed the bombing.

One of those at the picket line was Mary M. Johnson, a veteran prison-reform, anti-death penalty, and anti-police brutality activist. "The bombing of Yugoslavia is wrong," Johnson told the *Militant*. The U.S. rulers "are always interfering in other people's business when they can't even bring justice in the United States." Johnson continued, "I heard them talking on TV about this bombing as if they were playing some video game. I identify with people of Kosova who are fighting for their independence; however, here it is the U.S. government that crushes the aspirations of its own people for independence."

Speakers at a brief rally to conclude the picket included Carroll of the SWP, Leighton Christensen of the International Socialist Organization, and Rev. Ron Schupp.

Cappy Kidd is a member of the United Auto Workers.

4,000 workers rally in Newport News to demand pay raise

Continued from front page

terial supply clerk for 17 years, carried a sign, "I love building ships, but I have to work at Hardee's to make ends meet." Many shipyard workers have had to take second jobs.

"I think we work for a group of corporate slave owners," said Adam Gardner, a pipe fitter for 16 years. "They want us to work and make them billions of dollars in profits, and they give us peanuts. It's not going to work this time. We're going to get our share of the pie this round, by any means necessary."

Jorge Vicente, who works as an outside machinist and was born in Puerto Rico, said, "The company says in its safety program that its most important asset is the employee. If that's true, how come we are forced to work overtime nearly every weekend just to make ends meet? Another problem is low wages."

The 1995 contract imposed a wage freeze with three lump-sum payments of 5 percent, 4 percent, and 3 percent of basic pay. It also included cuts in vacation and paid holidays.

Most workers have not had a wage increase in 10 years. "The cost of living goes up every year, but our wages haven't gone up," said Dwayne Wilson, a 10-year material handler. "The company says we're world-

class shipbuilders, but the company treats us like second-class citizens."

Walter Haynesworth, a ship-fitter with 27 years at the yard, added, "Retirement is another big issue. An average man, after 44 years in the yard, would retire with \$280 pension per month, which is a disgrace. You can't live on that."

Constance Warthen, a material supply clerk for 18 years, said, "They took 2 and a half days vacation from us in the last contract. I just want us to get our fair share."

"We're going to have to stand together like never before," said Arnold Outlaw, Local 8888 president, at the rally. Other speakers included representatives from the International USWA, the state AFL-CIO, the Longshoreman's Association, and members of the Local negotiating committee.

In some parts of the yard, union members were not permitted to leave work for the 2:00 p.m. rally. Some of those forced to remain refused to do any work until the 3:30 p.m. shift change as a protest. Elsewhere nonunion members left, even if not attending the rally.

Gearing up for the contract fight, some 2,000 workers rallied at the yard gates on January 26, blocking traffic for nearly an



Militant/Olympia Newton
Members of United Steelworkers of America Local 8888 rally at Newport News March 18

hour. More than 1,000 members attended the union local meeting February 27 to hear a report on the negotiations.

The 6,900-member local is negotiating on behalf of 9,200 yard workers. Since negotiations began January 14, the local has been on an organizing drive to increase union membership. According to Outlaw, Local 8888's membership at the yard is at an all-time high (73.4 percent) in this right-to-work state. When the concession contract was negotiated in 1995, union membership was at 58 percent.

As if anticipating a labor battle, the Newport News *Daily Press* reported March 13, "Newport News police are preparing for possible shipyard strike." The article noted that police chief Dennis Mook had been "in contact with the State Police about the need for assistance from troopers."

In 1979 city and state police attacked Local 8888's picket lines in an attempt to crush their strike. The cops tried to storm the union's headquarters, but were driven back by the determined Steelworkers.

Union officials announced a meeting would be held April 1 at the Hampton University convocation center, where all USWA members would be able to attend, to report on the company's contract proposal.

Mary Martin contributed to this article.

Postal workers in Britain to bosses: 'We're a force to be reckoned with'

BY PETE KENNEDY AND JOHN HORNIMAN

MANCHESTER, England — A fight for workers' rights in the workplace stopped all postal deliveries in the commercial and downtown area here March 12.

More than 100 delivery workers, members of the Communication Workers Union (CWU), began a sit-down strike action at the giant Oldham Road Royal Mail depot after the bosses attempted to readmit to the shop floor a manager who had been party to a threat of physical assault against a worker on the job. Royal Mail officials claimed the work stoppage was "unlawful."

To enthusiastic applause, all drivers, loading bay workers, and door staff also walked off the job in solidarity with delivery workers and joined the action, bringing the number involved to around 175.

The sit-down action continued for six hours while union officials negotiated with Royal Mail. When Royal Mail refused to guarantee that the manager involved would not be readmitted, strikers set up picket lines

around the depot and began turning away deliveries. Picket signs won immediate support from passing traffic on the main Manchester to Oldham Road. "This is great!" agreed postal workers Dave Muirhead, 20, and Terry Coogan, 23, when the action started to roll.

"This is not just about one incident, its about the whole arrogant way managers treat us," said Denis, an older worker. Muirhead cited another incident involving the same manager. She had falsely informed Muirhead and Pete Kennedy that her husband was a police officer in the Drug Squad, and then proceeded to ask the two workers if they took illegal drugs.

The union representatives of hundreds of processing workers, the bulk of the depot, who sort mail for the surrounding region, stated that with the picket lines up, their members were not prepared to stay in the building and that they would join the action. At this point, the CWU regional officer informed the pickets that the CWU national office had called for a suspension of the

picket lines until a meeting the following day when a new proposal would be considered. The roughly 25 workers still on the picket line discussed this and voted to lift the picket. While no guarantee was won, Royal Mail withdrew the attempt to deploy the manager in question on the delivery floor for now, and announced an investigation into workers' complaints. Most workers expressed the view that the union had been greatly strengthened through the action. "We showed them we are a force to be reckoned with," was a typical comment.

Coogan later told the *Militant*, "I was pleased and surprised at the level of unity shown. When the other workers walked out in solidarity it meant a lot to me, much more than I would ever have imagined. I felt we were all in it together. It was inspiring to see we could overcome the divisions and show we had a real union."

Pete Kennedy and John Horniman are members of the CWU at the Manchester Delivery Office.

PATHFINDER

The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

WORKING-CLASS POLITICS AND THE TRADE UNIONS

Jack Barnes

A handbook for workers coming into the factories, mines, and mills, as they react to the uncertain life, turmoil, and brutality of capitalism in the closing years of the twentieth century. It shows how millions of workers, as political resistance grows, will revolutionize themselves, their unions, and all of society. \$19.95. Also available in Spanish and French.

Available from bookstores listed on page 12.

LETTERS

Protest Kazan award

The thoughtful *LA Times* articles by actors Richard Dreyfuss, Robin Bartlett and Allen Garfield on the ill-considered special Academy Award to Elia Kazan are powerfully persuasive.

As great a talent as Mr. Kazan is — talent long ago recognized by the Academy — a Life Achievement Award honors a whole life as a role model, an honor sadly not due Mr. Kazan. His own choices and actions in participating in the Witch-hunt place him beyond the pale of such honor.

I am proud that my Unions, Screen Actors' Guild [SAG] and the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists [AFTRA], AFL-CIO, along with the Writers' and Directors' Guilds created and sponsored "Hollywood Remembers the Blacklist" at the Academy of Motion Pictures in the Fall of 1997. We officially and correctly apologized to our members living and dead — and to the American people — for collaborating in the Witch-hunt and Blacklist of the 1950's.

I was five years old when the terror reached its height; the oldest

child in a non-political, Irish Catholic working class family in Philadelphia, Pa. Yet even I carry disturbing ghostly memories of that time. Fleeting images of anger, threat and betrayal; barely remembered spectral nightmares on a tiny black and white screen.

The fact that I didn't understand what was going on and that my parents, themselves wavering between disquiet and approval, couldn't explain what it was all about made it all the more frightening. I can only imagine the fear of people actually caught up in the maelstrom — and of their five-year-old children.

As horrid and disgusting as the personal ruin and ethical abandonments of the Witch-hunt were, there was a broader evil afoot in those events. The lesson to our country was: if they can do it to Hollywood, they can do it to anybody — and then they did.

The government and the employers went on a ten-year rampage that enforced conformity in every walk of American life — from movies, TV and radio, to our magazines and newspapers, in our churches, schools and community groups, to

the entire Union movement — to be different was to be disloyal.

A subtle evil enforced by a not so subtle terror, which destroyed an entire generation of American leaders, few of whom were communists. The fact is, if you were a progressive, militant leader in any realm, you were suspect, and quite often hounded out of leadership and livelihood.

Our country lost thousands of dedicated, honorable leaders to the hysteria. And we lost 10, 20, maybe 30 years of progress and human rights.

As an example, the trade-union movement is only now recovering from the destruction of its independent, militant leadership forty-five years ago. (Ironically, it was the Blacklist that destroyed democratic leadership in our Unions and handed them over to the very corrupt, doing nothing, thug "labor leaders" that Kazan attacks in "On the Waterfront.") It took the movements for civil rights, women's rights and against the Vietnam War to revive progress and some serious political debate in our country.

So the moral tab for collaborat-

ing in the Witch-hunt goes even beyond the wretched, sordid personal betrayals. It is a debt owed our nation and all its people. We are owed not only apologies, but a refund on our stolen legacy of free speech and free association. Honoring collaborators only increases the debt and the final cost of reconciliation.

This Life Achievement Award asks us not only to forgive — which many by heart and conscience have done — but also insists we forget, which neither by heart, conscience nor right can we ever do.

John P. Connolly
Actor
Hollywood, California

Misleading headline

The headline "New right-wing party is formed in Canada" on page 3 of the March 22 *Militant* was edited from the author's title, "Conference votes to form new right-wing party," in a way that is not accurate and in fact misleading.

As the article explains, a majority of the delegates at the February 19-21 "United Alternative" conference

initiated and dominated by the Reform Party expressed themselves in favor of forming a new party. But no new party was launched there. Before any founding convention is held — possibly in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, at the end of the year or in 2000 — a lot can happen.

For the time being, substantial forces from the Conservative Party and portions of the Reform itself are opposed to it. The right is going through the same kind of crisis in Canada as in Britain, Germany, France, and the United States — fragmentation and rightward polarization, without a clear pole emerging yet.

Michel Prairie
Montreal, Quebec

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.

Response to killing of Irish lawyer highlights weakening of British rule

BY PAUL DAVIES

MANCHESTER, England — The assassination of Rosemary Nelson has become a flashpoint in the struggle against British rule in Northern Ireland. Nelson, a prominent lawyer known for defending Irish nationalists and exposing the sectarian and oppressive policing of Northern Ireland by the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), was killed in a car bombing March 15 in Lurgan, near Belfast. A pro-British loyalist death squad, The Red Hand Defenders, claimed responsibility.

Nelson had represented residents of the Garvaghy Road community in the town of Portadown in their struggle to reroute sectarian Orange Order marches and to defend their community from an ongoing siege by pro-British loyalist thugs. Following her funeral, nationalist residents of the Garvaghy Road resisted attacks by rightists and RUC cops.

Nelson's funeral cortege began 500 strong as it left her home in Lurgan, and grew to more than 5,000 by the time it reached St. Peter's Church where she was buried. The funeral march passed large notices demanding "Disband the RUC."

In an attempt to take some of the heat off the RUC, Chief Constable Ronald Flanagan announced that a cop from another force, David Phillips from Kent, would head up the police inquiry into the death. Flanagan also announced that he would be calling on Louis Freeh of the FBI to help with the inquiry.

Leaders of Sinn Fein, the party leading the struggle for a free, united Ireland, have pointed to this as an unacceptable attempt to whitewash the killing.

Nationalists resist rightist provocations

Following the funeral, nationalist resistance was sparked in Portadown when crowds of loyalists taunted, "Where's Rosemary?" just outside the Garvaghy Road. The rightists have laid siege to the nationalist community since May 1998. The RUC arrested a number of the Catholic residents and then assaulted Brendan MacCionnaith, a spokesperson for the residents, as he asked to speak to a senior cop.

Tens of thousands of Irish nationalists converged on Belfast, in the north of Ireland, two days after Nelson's murder to celebrate St. Patrick's Day. This was only the second year that the parade had passed through the city. Unionist (pro-British) politicians on the Belfast City Council had withdrawn funding from the event because of the presence of Irish tricolor flags, an emblem of Irish nationalism.

It is the continuing actions of Irish nationalists in their thousands and their irrepressible determination that is driving the process of political change, and weakening British rule. Following Nelson's murder much public attention has been focused on the RUC. It emerged that the British government's own "Independent Commission for Police Complaints" had registered opposition to the RUC's handling of previous death threats against Nelson with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Marjorie Mowlam. Last year Nelson had lodged a statement with a U.S. Congress subcommittee on international relations detailing death threats made against her by members of the RUC, and recounting how she was assaulted by RUC officers in 1996 as the RUC forced a sectarian and triumphalist Orange Order march along the Garvaghy Road.

Following Nelson's murder, publicity has been given to the British-Irish Rights Watch report into RUC collusion with the loyalist thugs who assassinated another nationalist lawyer, Pat Finucane, in 1989. Finucane was allegedly killed by the Ulster Freedom Fighters, another loyalist paramilitary group. Pressure continues to mount as over a 1,000 lawyers signed a call by Finucane's family for an international, independent inquiry into his death.

In a sign of the growing fragmentation of



Militant/Doug Cooper

Above, Garvaghy Road residents' contingent in Bloody Sunday commemoration march, Derry, Northern Ireland, January 1999.

Unionist forces, Frank Curry, a leading loyalist who press reports say was linked to The Red Hand Defenders, was gunned down in Belfast. That organization said they believed another loyalist group, the Ulster Volunteer Force, executed Curry.

In the wake of the protests that followed Nelson's death, the British government began to weaken on its insistence that there must be "decommissioning" — that is, handing over weapons — by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) prior to Sinn Fein's participation in the new Northern Ireland Assembly Executive. For several months the govern-

ment had been trying to isolate Sinn Fein, and undercut the struggle that it leads for end to British rule in Ireland, by acquiescing to demands of the Ulster Unionists for IRA decommissioning. For the first time, a joint statement in mid-March by U.S. president William Clinton, British prime minister Anthony Blair, and Irish prime minister Bartholomew Ahern makes a tacit acknowledgment that the agreement signed between political parties last year does not set decommissioning as a precondition for Sinn Fein's participation in the new government bodies.

A March 19 article in the right-wing *Daily*

Telegraph was headlined "Blair gives ground on IRA arms handover."

An article in the *Irish Times* reflected the nervousness in circles of bourgeois public opinion, while also violence-baiting Irish nationalists. It stated that "the 'unaccountability' of events is much underestimated by politicians.... We simply do not know what the outcome may be of the murder of Rosemary Nelson, of the escalated schedule of Orange marches at Drumcree over the coming months... of a 'tactical' deployment of 'armed struggle' by the IRA to 'nudge' things along."

Commenting on the stance of forces in Ireland towards decommissioning, the west Belfast publication *Andersonstown News* argued, "Where was a sizable body of opinion that found it hard to understand why the IRA couldn't hand over a small amount of weaponry in order to kick start the executive, the murder of Rosemary Nelson has crystallized thinking.... It's now widely accepted that to continue to insist on the IRA handing over weapons to a David Trimble-inspired timescale is a serious retrograde step."

Speaking at an event in Scranton, Pennsylvania, Sinn Fein's chief negotiator Martin McGuinness explained that Unionist leaders "oppose these changes because they want to hold onto power, or the perception of power.... They cannot tolerate the idea of shared power or equality."

Following March 17 discussions with Ulster Unionist Party leader and first minister designate of the new Northern Ireland Executive, David Trimble, Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams commented on requests that the IRA decommission: "I cannot deliver from the IRA what the British government couldn't achieve in the last 30 years."

Paul Davies is a member of the TGWU.

Sinn Fein leaders tour cities in U.S.

BY MEGAN ARNEY

SOUTH ORANGE, New Jersey — A dozen leaders of Sinn Fein, the party leading the fight for a united, free Ireland, spoke to hundreds of people across the United States March 11-18.

After the killing of a prominent lawyer Rosemary Nelson (see above), the events took on the character of protest meetings. "Clearly this mechanism of appointing an English policeman to get at the truth [about Nelson's murder] will find no support or confidence among nationalists," Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams said in a press release while in the United States.

Martin McGuinness, Sinn Fein's chief negotiator, called the attempt by the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) to involve the FBI "a cynical exercise to deflect criticism from the role the RUC played in setting up Rosemary Nelson."

During the tour an event entitled "Equality Agenda: Northern Ireland in 2000" was held here at Seton Hall University and at Columbia University in New York March 12-13. Several Irish politicians and activists spoke on the panels that discussed and debated the struggle in Northern Ireland. Sinn Fein's Bairbre de Brun spoke on the panels.

Ulster Unionist Party leader and first minister designate of the new Northern Ireland Executive, David Trimble, also spoke. He attempted to justify efforts to block representation of Sinn Fein on the Executive by calling for the Irish Republican Army (IRA) to surrender, or "decommission," its weapons.

Decommissioning is "not even up for discussion as far as republicans are concerned," declared Sinn Fein councilor Alex Maskey in response, speaking to a meeting of about 30 people here on March 16. The Belfast city council member also condemned the British and Dublin governments for effectively supporting the Unionists' stance.

Audience members in New Jersey spoke about different fights they're involved in — from protesting police brutality to supporting the Puerto Rican independence struggle and solidarizing with the striking miners in Pennsylvania. Maskey indicated interest in these and other fights, saying, "Everywhere we [Sinn Fein] go now, we are starting to reach out for links with other struggles."

Below are reports on a few of the other events during the 40-city Sinn Fein tour.

DETROIT — The Detroit leg of the tour was "hampered slightly" because Sinn Fein's representative, Mitchel McLaughlin, would not be speaking to the *Detroit News* or *Free Press*, said the chairperson at a meeting of 250 people here March 15. That is because the two papers refuse to reach labor agreements and reinstate hundreds members of five unions. At the end of the meeting McLaughlin spoke with the some of the locked-out workers who attended the event.

Others participants included activists from the Xicano Development Center, a center for immigrant rights and the rights of Latinos in Detroit. A couple of Arab-American immigrant rights activists also attended.

When asked to comment on the siege on Garvaghy Road, McLaughlin replied, "Today's murder of Rosemary Nelson is a direct outgrowth to that siege." He explained the residents face "nightly violence," and charged the British government with "allowing the siege to continue."

John Sarge

CHICAGO — Sinn Fein leader Mitchel McLaughlin addressed about 250 people in three meetings here. He spoke about Trimble's refusal to appoint Sinn Fein its seats in the Northern Ireland Assembly. "If

[Trimble refuses to seat Sinn Fein], we won't shed any tears. The Executive Committee and the assembly were concessions to the loyalists," McLaughlin declared. "What we wanted was the All-Ireland implementation bodies. We want to preserve that. We will make it clear that we are firmly committed to the peace process."

McLaughlin explained that according to the April 10 agreement, decommissioning of IRA weapons has to be voluntary and based on a climate of trust. He noted there are still 20,000 armed British soldiers, 14,000 armed members of the RUC, 140,000 legally licensed weapons — mostly in the hands of Protestants — and countless "illegal" weapons in the hands of loyalist paramilitary organizations that must be addressed.

Cappy Kidd

BOSTON — Martin Ferris, a Sinn Fein senior representative, spoke to some 150 people in New Bedford, Massachusetts, March 15. He told *Militant* reporters that the crowd, which gave him a standing ovation, included fishermen fighting to make a living under worsening conditions. Ferris also spoke to about 60 people at Harvard the next day.

Ted Leonard

MIAMI — Joe Cahill spoke in Fort Lauderdale, Florida, March 15 and again on a local campus the next day as part of the national tour of Sinn Fein leaders.

Cahill told 100 people who gathered here that "there is no peace in Ireland, there is only a peace process." He said "the time has come when we must sit down and talk. We are duty bound to make this thing a success. Unification of the country is our objective, which can only be achieved through the unity of Catholics and Protestants together."

Eric Simpson