

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

'Ebonics' plan stirs
debate in California

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 61 NO. 02 JANUARY 13, 1997

Thousands at rally in Ohio show support for steel strike

BY TONY DUTROW

STEUBENVILLE, Ohio — Thousands poured into this city's St. John Arena December 22 bringing support and solidarity to the Wheeling-Pittsburgh strike. Estimates of the size ranged from 2,500 by the local media to 4,500 by the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) international union, the organizers of the "Holiday Solidarity Rally." Some 4,500 steelworkers in eight mills in Ohio, Pennsylvania, and West Virginia have been on strike since October 1 against Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel Corp.

This rally debunked the claims by the Wheeling-Pitt bosses that little support exists — among strikers or in the mill towns and cities in the Ohio Valley region — for the central demand of the strike: to restore a guaranteed pension plan taken away following a 1985 bankruptcy ruling and subsequent 89-day strike.

Rocky Lewis, a pipe-fitter and welder at Wheeling-Pitt for seven years, pointed to the main banner behind the speakers platform that read: "The Company Will Give in the Day They're Convinced WE NEVER WILL!"

"What we're interested in is getting back
Continued on Page 11

Pathfinder offers books by Marx, Engels, Lenin at half price

BY MICHAEL BAUMANN

NEW YORK — In the first few days of Pathfinder's special sale of the *Collected Works* of Marx and Engels, and of Lenin, seven of the Marx and Engels, and three of the Lenin sets have been ordered. Pathfinder has also announced that selected titles by the three communist leaders are available for 50 percent off until January 31 in both

See special book advertisement
— Pages 8-9

Spanish and English.

"This is a good start," says business manager Sara Lobman. "Many more sets will be sold in the next few weeks as people around the world learn about the sale and, in some cases, pool their resources to take advantage of it. Members of the Young Socialists are among those who decided to get the entire published writings of the these founders and historic leaders of the communist movement."

The works, which represent a fundamental tool for building and consolidating a working-class movement, have been placed on sale at an extraordinary introductory price intended to get them into the libraries of

Continued on Page 5

S. Korea general strike answers antilabor laws

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

As 1996 drew to a close, the south Korean government was confronted by the largest strike action ever in the country. The walkout began December 26 when 150,000 unionists from 82 worksites struck to protest antilabor legislation adopted by the National Assembly. The action quickly grew to include hundreds of thousands of members of the Federation of Democratic Unions and the Federation of Korean Trade Unions, which have a total membership of 1.7 million.

Carmakers, shipyards, and other industries were brought to a standstill, and other facilities like public transportation and hospitals were rendered minimally operational. The government sent police in full riot gear to attempt to break up various actions with clubs and tear gas. While many of the strikers returned to work New Year's Eve, union officials have called further walkouts beginning January 3.

The 11 new antilabor laws include provisions allowing employers to carry out mass layoffs and making it easier to hire part-time, temporary, and replacement workers. The Employers Federation tried to argue that this

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Thousands of south Korean workers participate in a December 27 sitdown protest in Yoido Plaza, Seoul. Striking workers paralyzed the entire country for several days.

Belgrade is unable to quell protests Capitalist powers step up effort to impose pro-imperialist regime

BY ARGIRIS
MALAPANIS

The new year dawned in Yugoslavia with sustained street protests against the anti-democratic measures of the Stalinist regime in Belgrade. Tens of thousands of people have defied restrictions on demonstrations in the capital of Serbia announced by the government of Slobodan Milosevic on Christmas day.

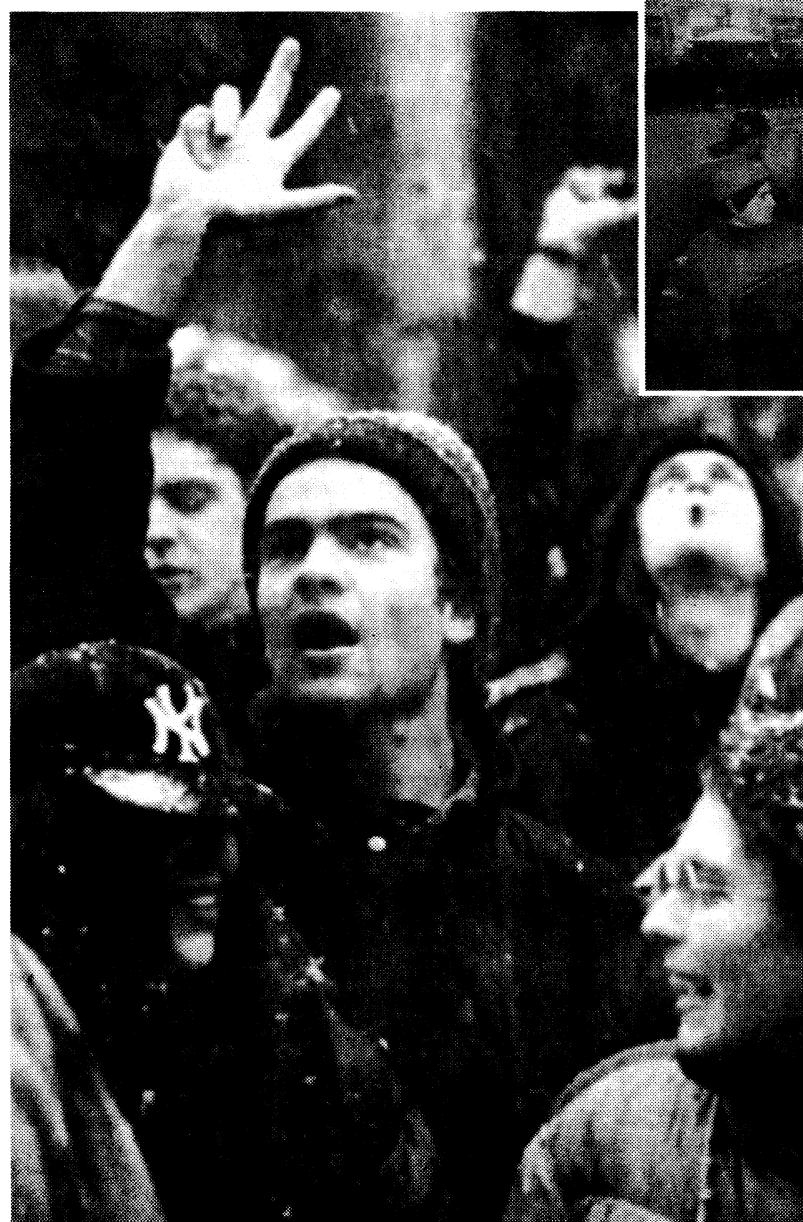
Despite the deployment of thousands of riot police in the streets, the beatings of some protesters and reporters, and the killing of one demonstrator on December 24, daily marches in Belgrade and other Serbian cities are pressing the demand that Milosevic reverse the annulment of earlier municipal elections results. The opposition coalition called Zajedno (Together), made up of five parties, claims to have won 14 of Serbia's 19 largest cities, including Belgrade, in the November 17 ballot. The Milosevic regime did not accept the results, setting off the wave of protests a day later.

Washington, Bonn, and other capitalist powers, which have been occupying parts of the Yugoslav workers state with thousands of NATO troops for over a year, are trying to take advantage of the unrest to push for replacing the regime in Belgrade with a government more subservient to imperialism. Meanwhile, Moscow has issued warnings to these powers to refrain from intervening in the internal affairs of Serbia.

Milosevic has used a combination of concessions and repressive measures to try to defuse the protest movement, without great success so far.

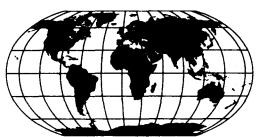
To counter the opposition protests, Belgrade began organizing a series of pro-government rallies in factory towns such as Backa Topola and other industrial centers and rural areas. Some came to these actions because they were promised food or pay and given bus rides. Other workers attended because they bought into the stories of the Milosevic propaganda machine, describing the government as socialist and pro-worker and the opposition as pawns of foreign imperialist powers.

Most of these protest rallies have been poorly attended. In the town of Kragujevac, for example, a
Continued on Page 12



Students (above) protest in downtown Belgrade. Serbian police in full riot gear (inset) blocked access to the main square, and swept the capital dispersing protests taking place on the streets.

Tupac Amaru group takes hostages in Peru — page 3



Lebed forms party in Russia

Ousted Russian national security adviser and former presidential candidate Alexander Lebed launched the Russian Popular Republican Party December 27, pronouncing President Boris Yeltsin too ill to rule. Speaking to supporters at a resort outside Moscow, Lebed said he would unite those "disappointed in both the Communists and the so-called democrats." Hammering away at Yeltsin's illness, Lebed declared, "The man elected president has stopped running the country" and should "rest himself at his dacha [country home] and care for his grandchildren." Lebed, a former general, said his party would represent the military brass, small and medium businessmen, and intellectuals.

No agreement over Hebron

As 1996 came to a close, Palestinian and Israeli negotiators failed to reach agreement on whether, how, or when Tel Aviv will withdraw its troops from the West Bank city of Hebron. The government of Benjamin Netanyahu has refused to abide by the withdrawal, stipulated in the earlier PLO-Israeli accord. Netanyahu has also been aiding and financing the building of new Israeli settlements in the West Bank, including in east Jerusalem, which may provoke new hostilities between Tel Aviv and Palestinian patriots.

On December 30, hundreds of thousands of workers walked off their jobs in Israel, shutting down many businesses and services. The strike, organized by the Israeli Histadrut Trade Union Federation, was called to protest privatization plans, cuts in social services, and higher taxes on gas and cigarettes that Israeli trade union officials say will lead to large-scale layoffs and lower wages. According to Associated Press, some among the strikers also oppose Netanyahu's policy of giving large subsidies to Israeli settlers in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Paris bids adieu to U.S.-led surveillance flights in N. Iraq

The French government is pulling out of the U.S.-led flight surveillance mission over northern Iraq, effective early 1997. Begin-



In Hebron, West Bank, students demonstrate for the reopening of the Islamic University, which Tel Aviv closed last spring. Israeli authorities allowed the campus to reopen in December.

ning in 1991, Washington and other imperialist powers used a Kurdish uprising suppressed by the Iraqi government of Saddam Hussein to try to get a foothold in the Middle East. The U.S. government and its allies set up Operation Provide Comfort, a so-called humanitarian mission allegedly to protect the Kurds in northern Iraq.

Paris opted out of the surveillance flights claiming the stated aims no longer include "the humanitarian element." Paris will continue to participate in similar missions over southern Iraq. The French government has had profitable relations with Baghdad, once a major French trading partner. Many reports in the news media also noted the growing disagreements between Paris and Washington in the last year — from the election of a new United Nations secretary general to the structure of NATO's southern command.

Thai workers torch Sanyo plant

About 2,000 workers at a Sanyo Universal Electric plant in Thailand burned the office building and four-story warehouse con-

taining refrigerators, TVs, and air conditioners, to the ground December 17. They were protesting a substantial reduction in year-end bonuses. Bonuses and overtime pay make up a substantial proportion of take-home wages for most workers in Thailand. "The management says they don't have enough money to give us more," a factory worker, who identified herself as Anna, told reporters. "But they are lying. I've been working here seven years and this is the first time they'll give us less than the previous year." Police arrested and charged six workers with setting the blaze; the workers denied the charges.

The following day authorities responded to another protest against reduced bonuses, this time by 1,500 workers at the Krung Thai Bank, Thailand's second largest commercial bank. The government offered to make up the difference with last year's payment.

Protesters arrested in Nepal

Nepal police arrested 139 protesters December 12 following an antigovernment strike on the eve of a no-confidence vote in parliament. Some activists reportedly stoned and burned cars. Krishna Dhoj Khadka, a member of Samyukta Jana Morcha, a left-wing group leading the strike, said protesters were barred from holding antigovernment demonstrations. Morcha accused the ruling regime of killing 70 activists this year who opposed deals between the governments of India and Nepal giving India joint river access. He also said the government failed to bring development to Nepal. The strike shut down some businesses. Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba and his 14-month-old coalition government was thrown into crisis a week earlier. Some members of the National Democratic Party, a coalition partner of the ruling Nepali Congress party, said they

could no longer support Deuba as prime minister. Five NDP members resigned from Deuba's cabinet.

U.S. jet drops bomb near Okinawa airport

On December 12 a U.S. jet fighter dropped a 1,000-pound bomb just seven miles west of Naha airport, the main civilian airport in Okinawa, Japan. The Pentagon said the pilot was forced to jettison the bomb as he was trying to land the plane at a nearby U.S. military base. U.S. Marine Corps officials claim the deactivated bomb, lying 150 to 200 feet below the surface, will not explode. Japan's Maritime Safety Agency issued a warning for all boats to stay away from the site.

This incident took place a week after Washington and Tokyo agreed to reduce the U.S. armed forces on the island. U.S. forces occupy 20 percent of Okinawan land. The agreement came after many protests by Okinawans, tormented by the noise and the harassment of the military bases.

Guatemala 'peace' accord signed

The Guatemalan government and representatives of the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity (URNG) signed a "peace" accord December 29. The agreement formally ends the civil war in that country and requires the disarmament of the guerrilla fighters over the next month. It includes a general amnesty that "extinguishes criminal responsibility" for offenses deemed to be political. More than 140,000 people were killed and 40,000 are listed as "disappeared" in 36 years of civil war, most of them civilians killed by the Guatemalan Armed Forces. In the early 1980s the regime burned entire villages in a "scorched-earth" policy. Approximately 1 million Guatemalans were forced into exile or displaced by the fighting, out of a population of 10.5 million.

Wall St. bubble keeps swelling

The Dow Jones industrial stock average hit a new high December 27, closing at 6,560 on the eighth straight day of increases. The upswing took the leading stock indicator more than 100 points higher than when Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan provoked a sell-off in early December by warning of "irrational exuberance" in the markets.

Warning that worldwide deflation could endanger the soaring international stock markets, an article in the December 21 *Financial Times* of London cautioned, "Equities are priced on the assumption that earnings will continue to grow — something that worldwide recession might prevent." Barton Biggs, director of global strategy at the Morgan Stanley investment bank, commented, "My instinct is very strong that things have just been too good for too long."

— BRIAN TAYLOR

THE MILITANT

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Militant/Argiris Malapanis
Protest against war and 'ethnic cleansing' outside federal parliament building in Belgrade, July 1992.

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Túpac Amaru seizes hostages in Peru

BY HILDA CUZCO

The occupation of the Japanese ambassador's residence in Peru by members of the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA) December 17 showed a weakening of Peruvian president Alberto Fujimori's regime, and highlighted the worsening economic conditions facing working people in that country.

Hundreds of guests, including prominent international and local diplomats, businessmen, and government officials, had gathered at the residence of Japan's ambassador, Morihiro Aoki, to celebrate the Japanese emperor's birthday. According to several reports, a handful of MRTA commandos captured the residence, located in the wealthy neighborhood of San Isidro, a suburb of the capital city Lima. The reports said MRTA members rushed over the concrete walls, while others gained access disguised as waiters. The guerrilla fighters called for the release of several hundred of their imprisoned comrades and other demands.

The day after the takeover, the government declared a state of emergency in the capital and the neighboring port of Callao. The measure restricts public meetings and gives the police broader powers to search homes and detain suspects.

Among the 83 people still held hostage, as of December 30, are the ambassadors of Japan, Bolivia, and Honduras. Along with them remain many high-ranking Peruvian officials, including anti-terrorist chief of police Gen. Máximo Rivera and Gen. Guillermo Bobio of the national security police. Five congressmen from Fujimori's party remain hostages, along with the foreign minister, minister of agriculture, a supreme court justice, and others.

During the first hours, the MRTA released women, children and some elderly men, among them the mother and sister of President Fujimori. In subsequent days, scores of ambassadors, business executives, journalists, a Peruvian legislator, and various businessmen were released. One of the last released hostages, Juan Enrique Pendavis, president of the Peruvian Exporters Association, stated, "We were not tortured, either physically or psychologically."

After days of refusing to deal directly with the MRTA, Fujimori's representative, Domingo Palermo, who is the minister of education; the Catholic bishop of Ayacucho, Juan Luis Cipriani, a close friend of Fujimori; and Red Cross representative Michael Minnig met December 28 with the MRTA leader Néstor Cerpa Cartolini, known as Comandante Evaristo, in the occupied residence. After that meeting 20 hostages were released and in a new communiqué MRTA guerrillas reportedly rejected being called terrorists and expressed their willingness to negotiate. They also demanded improvement of the political prisoners' conditions.

Initially the MRTA had demanded, through telephone calls to radio stations, the release of 300 to 500 imprisoned comrades, including the group's top two lieutenants; safe passage for the guerrillas holding the hostages; a "war tax" payment; and an economic program to help Peru's working class.

In a public speech December 21, Fujimori flatly refused to negotiate with the guerrillas and instead demanded that the MRTA rebels put down their arms. "My proposal is concrete: that the captors put down their weapons before a commission of guarantors and that they let the hostages go, without exception. This way, the possibility of the use of force by the Peruvian state will be ruled out."

Washington backs hard stance

U.S. secretary of state Warren Christopher emphasized Washington's support for Fujimori's position. "The United States has a strong policy against making any concessions, and we advise all those involved to follow that policy," Christopher said in a news conference. At that time officials from the U.S. embassy and the Agency for International Development were among the hostages. The U.S. government also sent a military contingent, trained in storming buildings and hostage situations, to Peru.

On the other hand, Japan's foreign minister, Yukihiko Ikeda, met with president Fujimori at the presidential palace Decem-

ber 19 urging the Peruvian President to respect Japan's sovereignty over the residence. No other commentary was given by the Japanese delegation. Under international law, the Peruvian government has jurisdiction over diplomatic facilities, but needs permission from the foreign government to exercise any action on the property.

Since 1990, when Fujimori first took office, Tokyo has provided millions of dollars in loans to the Peruvian government. During a visit to Peru in August by Japanese prime minister Ryutaro Hashimoto, Fujimori, who won reelection in 1995, received a pledge of \$600 million in loans. In addition, 24 Japanese corporations have set up operations in Peru. Executives of many of these companies, including Matsushita Electric Industrial, Toyota Motor Corp., and Nissan Motor Corp., were among the hostages in the Japanese ambassador's residence.

History of Túpac Amaru group

The guerrilla group MRTA took its name after Peruvian rebel José Gabriel Condorcanqui Noguera, Túpac Amaru II, who led an indigenous insurrection against the Spanish conquerors in 1780. The group was founded in 1982 by forces from the Socialist Revolutionary Party — Marxist-Leninist (PSR-ML) and the Movement of the Revolutionary Left (MIR). Its central leader, Victor Polay Campos, is serving a life prison sentence.

In 1984 the MRTA, launched itself as an armed organization. The group has targeted military and police installations, banks, and U.S. interests, such as attempting to fire-bomb the U.S. embassy and setting fire to several Kentucky Fried Chicken restaurants. The MRTA has also used "expropriated" goods to distribute among the residents of slums. Accounts in the big-business press estimate the MRTA, which operates in the central Huallaga valley jungle in eastern Peru, at around 300 to 600 members.

The MRTA has distanced itself from the Stalinist Peruvian Communist Party (PCP-SL), known as Shining Path or Sendero Luminoso, which uses terrorist methods to try to impose its policies on working people. Shining Path considers all organizations and parties, to be revisionist enemies.

The MRTA has suffered blows under the counterinsurgency measures of the Fujimori regime. Last year, police raided a safe house of the guerrilla group arresting 23 people, among them a U.S. citizen, Lori Helene Berenson, whose case drew international publicity. Members of MRTA were arrested on charges of planning to capture the Peruvian Congress. Berenson, who sympathizes with the MRTA and insists in her innocence, has been sentenced for life in the maximum security prison of Yanamayo, in Puno, convicted of treason.

Repression, horrendous jail conditions

In an interview with Peter Novak of *Junge Welt*, Norma Velazco, a representative of the MRTA, emphasized the demand to release the political prisoners from the government notorious jails. "According to antiterrorist laws, only close relatives are allowed to visit the political prisoners," she said. Referring to the Yanamayo prison, located at 12,700 feet of altitude in the Andes, Velazco explained, "The weather makes life very hard for the prisoners, the wind gets through the bars and it is always cold. Many of the prisoners suffer respiratory and stomach diseases."

This description has been echoed by Rhoda and Mark Berenson, the parents of Lori Berenson. They had visited her in early December and described the physical weakness of their daughter. "There is no heat, or water, very little food, and of course her hands have developed arthritis and she suffers chronic laryngitis," Berenson's father told the New York paper *El Diario/La Prensa* in an interview published December 30.

To try those accused of terrorism, Fujimori has set up a system of "faceless" military courts, and the suspects are sentenced in less than 24 hours, with no possibility of defense. Velazco also points out that the prisoners are allowed but "a half-hour monthly visit.... They can only be out of their tiny cells for half an hour per day. They



Workers fired from the Moraveco factory in Lima demand back wages and a contract. The Fujimori government has made it easier for employers to lay off workers.

have no access to radio, or television sets, and are denied medical attention. The food is poor, usually rotten, and the prison authorities put shattered glass, rats or roaches in it. These conditions are the same for men as women. But the women have also to put up with abuse and sexual harassment. There is no water in the prisons, and the prisoners only receive one gallon of water a day to drink, bathe and wash."

When Fujimori took office hyperinflation had soared to 7,650 percent. The gross domestic product (GDP) had fallen 11.9 percent in 1989, and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) had declared Peru "ineligible" to receive further international loans. Two weeks after his inauguration, Fujimori began to decree brutal austerity measures to satisfy the demands of the country's international creditors. With 22 million inhabitants, the number of people living below the official poverty line jumped from 9 to 14 million.

His measures passed laws making it easier for employers to lay off workers. Workers younger than 24 years old are considered "apprentices," can be paid below the minimum wage, and are not covered by the social security system. To comply with the IMF demands for "tax reform," an agency was created to squeeze as much tax income as possible into the government coffers. By 1994, the GDP was growing at a rate of 12.9 percent. But according to the *Wall Street Journal* of December 13 the GDP growth figure may only be 2 percent for 1996.

Fujimori, a Bonapartist figure, won the 1990 elections against Alan García and right-wing novelist Mario Vargas Llosa on a theme of "honest government." With the help of Vladimiro Montesinos, today head of the secret police, Fujimori built an array of allies within key military circles. Montesinos, a former army captain and a lawyer, helped Fujimori get through tax-evasion charges during the 1990 electoral campaign.

In the name of crushing the Shining Path guerrillas, Fujimori gave broader powers to the military in the late 1991. After Congress overturned such laws, Fujimori closed down the legislature and suspended the Constitution in April 1992. In a "self-coup," Fujimori justified the dissolution of Congress, saying its members had failed to deal with drug traffickers and the guerrillas. He called new congressional elections in late 1992, but continued to trample on democratic rights.

The military enjoys total impunity from prosecutions. In June 1995, Congress passed an amnesty law that freed all military and

police officers arrested on charges of violation of human rights crimes, including those serving prison sentences. According to a North American Congress on Latin America (NACLA) report of July/August, 1996, The military retains control over a third of the country's territory.

Step-up in privatizations

Since Fujimori took office in 1990, 173 out of 183 state-run enterprises have been privatized. The Chinese government bought the iron enterprise Hierro Perú, Telefónica de España bought the national telephone company. The banks have also been privatized, or have established partnerships like Banco de Crédito del Peru with Morgan Guaranty Trust of New York. The state oil company, PetroPeru, and the ports have been tough nuts to crack, however. A referendum proposed by the Civic Committee for Democracy — set up to oppose the privatization of the oil company — involved workers, students and other activists in collecting 1.2 million signatures. Congress then passed, a law giving parliament the power to decide whether or not to proceed with a referendum — which nipped the action in the bud.

As part of making Peru more attractive for investment, the Fujimori regime lowered tariffs on foreign goods from 66 percent to 15.7 percent. Many companies have laid off workers to curb operating costs. By 1995 unemployment in Peru rose to 25 percent. Today out of 10 people, one has full-time job, seven are underemployed, and two are unemployed. Since 1990 the number of public employees has been slashed from 470,000 to 210,000.

Fujimori also began to take more aggressive steps to promote privatization in the agricultural sector. In July 1995, Congress adopted a "law of private investment." This measure aims to reverse large portions of a 1969 land reform. Peasant organizations have protested against the new law as it does not offer any guarantees of legal ownership in communal lands.

There have been a number of cases of resistance among workers against privatization and austerity measures. In May construction workers on strike were attacked by police in Lima. They were on a 24-hour national strike over salaries and labor conditions. The next day municipal workers and others participated in the labor action. Voicing their opposition to privatization plans of the government, some 2,000 oil workers struck in northern Peru in February. The Talara refinery there will be the first to be privatized and 1,500 workers dismissed.

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Pathfinder fulfillment is up and running

BY GREG MCCARTAN

NEW YORK — "An entirely new operation is going on line today in Pathfinder's print shop — a professional distribution center for revolutionary books and pamphlets," said Karen Ray. "Through an intensive one-month effort we've transformed the third floor of the Pathfinder Building, making it into a part of the factory that produces the books workers and youth the world over need in order to be effective in our struggles."

Ray organizes the operation to fill orders from Pathfinder, which publishes the works of revolutionary leaders of the communist and working-class movement from Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, to the leaders of the Socialist Workers Party today.

Starting January 2, shop workers began picking orders to fill invoices, packing up and shipping the books around the world,

tracking inventory levels to insure no title goes out of print, and maintaining the publisher's stock in good condition.

"We have 110 invoices from Pathfinder to fill over the next two days," said Ray, "including orders from Pathfinder bookstores, university bookstores for classroom use, and other retail outlets and libraries."

In order to continue upgrading the building and machinery needed to produce the books, socialists launched a \$280,000 capital fund at the end of February. Fund director Dave Prince reports that as of the end of December \$235,500 has been pledged by 79 people. Those who want to help complete the fund can write to Pathfinder at 410 West St., NY, NY 10014 or call (212) 741-0690.

Ray said dozens of volunteers from 20 cities in the United States, and from Australia, Britain, Canada, Greece, and Sweden participated in the project.

Over the course of the four-week effort, volunteers discussed how events in the world class struggle pointed out the need to produce and distribute the lessons of the workers movement, and Marxist analysis of current developments in politics: Hundreds of thousands of workers in south Korea went on strike to protest government antiunion measures; tens of thousands of youth and others involved in protests in Yugoslavia stood up to the regime's use and threats of violence; Washington continued to press ahead with plans to cut Social Security; and the stock market's gyrations

pointed to the underlying instability of the world capitalist economic system.

"For many who came to New York to get the pick-and-pack operation set up," said project organizer Kevin Dwire, "this was the first time they had a chance to gain first-hand knowledge of the place the Pathfinder Building and the shop have in producing revolutionary literature. It gave everyone involved a better feel for the centrality propaganda work has for the communist movement as we join working-class struggles today."

Dwire also emphasized that the "way the pick-and-pack operation project was organized was very important. We took the deadline seriously and put out a call to get the volunteers we needed. When we fell behind our schedule we worked extra hours to get back on track."

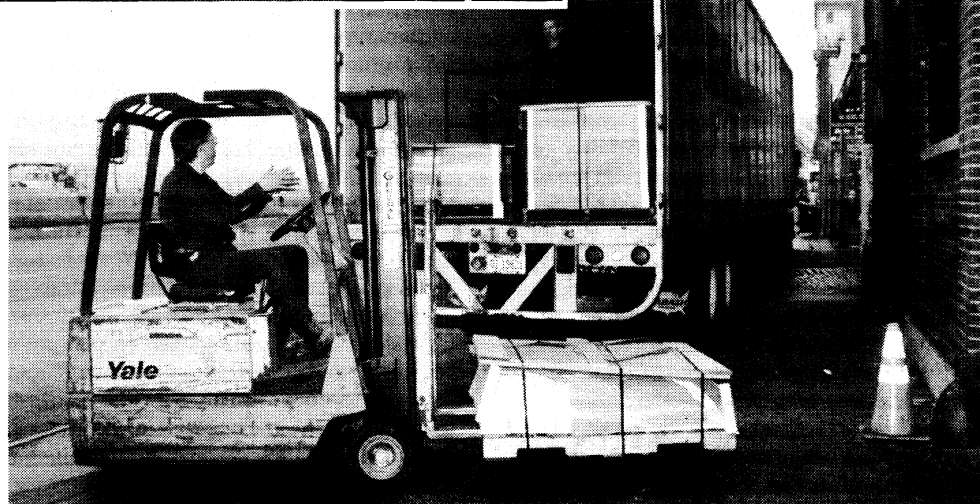
Ved Dookhun, a leader of the Young Socialists who was part of the project steering committee, noted that for the large number of YS members who participated the effort was "a real learning experience and a chance to appreciate the importance of the books and to understand politics. 'What struck me was how workers and young people transformed an entire floor into a pick-and-pack operation. None of us were specialists, but we organized every detail that needed to be done,'



Militant/Hilda Cuzco
Printshop workers Karen Ray and Doug Hord pack and ship Pathfinder book orders January 2.

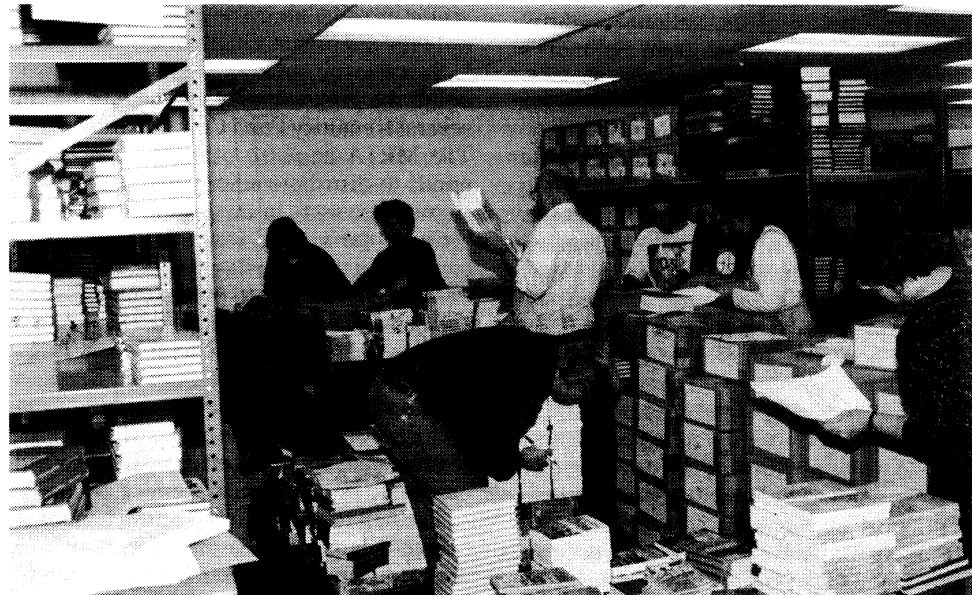
he said.

Pathfinder organized a sale of slightly damaged books that turned up as volunteers unpacked skids, cleaned each item, and put them on the shelves. Participants in the project bought \$2,000 worth of literature.



Militant/Argiris Malapanis Inset: Eric Simpson

While truckloads of books were arriving for Pathfinder fulfillment operation, work was also under way to repair wall of building with weatherproof siding (inset).



Militant/Brian Taylor

On the third floor of Pathfinder building, where pick-and-pack operation is based, volunteer crews sorted, cleaned, inventoried, and shelved tens of thousands of books.

— YOUNG SOCIALISTS AROUND THE WORLD —

Volunteer work crew was learning experience

This column is written and edited by the Young Socialists (YS), an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information about the YS write to: Young Socialists, P.O. Box 14392, St. Paul, MN 55114. Tel: (612) 644-0015. Compuserve: 105162,605

BY DIANA NEWBERRY
AND PATRICIA O'BEIRNE

NEW YORK — Many members of the Young Socialists and other youth joined in the last weekend of the project to get Pathfinder's pick-and-pack operation up and running here December 28-29. They were part of the volunteer crews that assembled shelves, unloaded dozens of pallets of books, and cleaned, counted, inventoried, and shelved the literature.

A couple of Young Socialists from Cleveland drove five hours out of their way, passing through Pittsburgh and Morgantown to pick up others on their way to New York to be a part of this project. Four Young Socialists from Montreal also came down to volunteer for a few days.

Sébastien Desautels, a 20-year-old YS member from Montreal, was seeing the Pathfinder building for the first time. "I never thought this building has everything it has in it. I thought it was just a printing press. Seeing how the *Militant* and the books

are made was impressive," he said after getting a tour of the building.

Desautels, who works in a cardboard factory, said, "All the work we've done is different than working in industry. Here you know why you're working, because these are tools for the struggles of the working class. It was good to work hard, not for an hourly wage, but to have more books in the building to be better able to organize our movement." He and another YS member from Montreal decided to stay an extra day to help finish work on the pick-and-pack project. Desautels, along with other volunteers, took advantage of a sale of damaged books to stock up his library, buying dozens of titles by Malcolm X, Ernesto Che Guevara, Thomas Sankara, *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party* by James P. Cannon, and others.

Antonio Olivo, a 21-year-old worker from New York, also volunteered for the project. "What inspired me the most was all the different books. What you could see was that as a team we could reach our goal, and our goal is to make a revolution. This has encouraged me to read more," he explained, as he carried a book by Malcolm X and a copy of the *Action Program to Confront the Coming Economic Crisis* that he bought at the sale.

Aaron Armstrong, a 20-year-old student and member of the YS from the Twin Cit-

ies, came to help for three days. He and another YS member from the Twin Cities raised money to pay for their way to New York. "I wanted to help the work get done, and I wanted to see the press and publishing house," Armstrong said. "I was really impressed, seeing what goes into putting out the *Militant*. I got to see *The Bolivian Di-*

ary [of Che Guevara] coming off the press! It was a really good experience, because we go out and sell this literature, and it's up to us to keep it running."

Diana Newberry is a YS member in Morgantown, West Virginia. Patricia O'Beirne is a YS member in Montreal.



Militant/Argiris Malapanis

YS members helping project and working in printshop take advantage of book sale

SELL THE BOOKS WORKERS OF THE WORLD NEED

Join the campaign to sell Pathfinder books and pamphlets

Pathfinder holds sale on titles by Marx, Engels, and Lenin

Continued from front page
workers and fighters, including many who have been won to the movement out of struggles that have taken place over the last few years.

Until January 31, the *Collected Works* of Marx and Engels can be purchased for \$399, and the *Works* of Lenin for \$199. "We have a layaway plan for the *Collected Works* so that even if you don't have the full amount right now you can reserve a set of these writings," Lobman said.

Pathfinder Bookstores, branches of the Socialist Workers Party, and chapters of the Young Socialists around the world will be promoting the sale. Socialists in New York, for example, are planning classes on Marx, Engels, and Lenin's writings during the month of January as part of building up interest in the special offer among members of the Pathfinder Readers Club, socialist workers and youth, and others who want to learn more about building the communist movement today. In New York alone, five people have said they plan to place orders for the *Collected Works* of Marx and Engels, and three for the Lenin writings.

The individual titles now on sale include books and pamphlets that are not easily available. They take up some of the most basic questions that have faced the modern working class since its inception more than 150 years ago. Why is unemployment endemic to capitalism? Is a "fair day's wage for a fair day's work" possible in such a society? Can the unions play a revolutionary role in the fight to overturn the wages sys-

tem? These are among the questions taken up by Frederick Engels in a series of popular articles written for the working-class press in Britain in 1881. Collected in the pamphlet *The Wages System*, these articles are available today as part of the special sale.

Was there ever any chance the North would lose the U.S. Civil War? What are the special challenges, and opportunities, facing the working-class movement in the United States? The collection *Marx and Engels on the United States*, drawn from articles and letters they wrote from the 1840s to the 1890s, looks at the rise of U.S. big business, the formation of a new, multinational working class in North America, and the prospects for a socialist revolution in a "New World" that had never been subjected to the traditions of a medieval past.

Also available as part of the sale is the pamphlet *Genesis of Capital*, one of the best introductions to Marx's three volume work. Made up of a full chapter of the first volume of *Capital*, the pamphlet describes the series of events — written in "letters of blood and fire" — in which peasants were driven from the land and stripped of the tools of production in order to convert them into the "rightless" proletarians required by the emerging factories in the cities.

On the Paris Commune, a collection of Marx and Engels's articles and letters on the class battles in Paris in 1871, where the working class held political power for the first time, opening a new stage in the struggle to overturn capitalism, is available at a special reduced price.

The *Selected Works of Lenin*, also part of the sale, makes available in three volumes some of the most important works of the leader and organizer of the October 1917 revolution in Russia. These include "State and Revolution," "Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism," the "April Theses," and "Better Fewer but Better."

Titles in Spanish include many of the above, as well as Engels's *Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State*, the collection *On Colonialism* of articles by Marx and Engels, and Marx's *Wage-Labor and Capital*.

The special offer on all these books is available through Pathfinder bookstores around the world (see list on page 12), to anyone who is a member of the Pathfinder Readers Club. The *Collected Works* can be ordered through a local Pathfinder Bookstore or directly from Pathfinder.

Monthly Sales of Pathfinder Books to Non Pathfinder Outlets — November 1996

City	Goals	Nov	Oct	Sept	Aug
Atlanta	32	0	2	1	94
Birmingham	50	2	0	10	39
Boston	50	42	7	36	79
Brooklyn				16	144
Chicago	60	410	16	31	184
Cleveland	40	1	0	96	77
Des Moines	35	219	211	15	0
Detroit	60	5	0	0	30
Greensboro	36	32	0	0	117
Houston	32	40	1	0	27
Los Angeles	95	23	103	34	246
Miami	42	100	0	0	10
Morgantown	25	0	0	141	18
New York		152	85	102	520
Newark	133	0	2	3	35
Peoria	21	4	1	0	1
Philadelphia	49	8	0	10	45
Pittsburgh	49	7	1	1	0
Salt Lake City	40	7	16	11	2
San Francisco	74	62	3	41	71
Seattle	60	7	14	6	56
Twin Cities	67	13	3	9	0
Washington, D.C.	42	1	1	21	1
TOTAL	1092	1135	466	584	1796
GOAL	1400				

Not a member of the Readers Club yet? You can join for only \$10 a year. Membership not only enables you to take advantage of special offers like this; it also entitles you to a regular 15 percent discount off the price of any other Pathfinder title.

S. Korea general strike combats antilabor laws

Continued from front page
measure "would be used only if firms were in extreme difficulties." They also offered to institute so-called development programs that focus on vocational training. Neither union federation gave credence to the offer.

The laws would allow third party arbitration and ban multiple unions at any worksite until 2002. They also would include a ban on unrecognized, currently constituted unions until the year 2000. Concretely, this means continuing the illegal status of the Federation of Democratic Unions, the country's second-largest union federation with 500,000 members.

Another measure adopted by the assembly gives extended powers to Seoul's political police, the Agency for National Security Planning. When President Kim Young Sam took office in 1993 he was forced to curtail powers of the spy agency, used extensively by a series of military dictatorships from the 1960s through the 1980s. The new law restores many of its domestic surveillance and investigation powers.

In the December 27 issue of the *Washington Post* Kevin Sullivan wrote, "Strengthening the intelligence agency appears to be part of Kim's plan to crack down on anyone who supports north Korea, including students who staged large pro-Pyongyang rallies in Seoul last summer" demanding reunification of the Korean peninsula.

Predawn meeting passes antilabor laws

The protest strikes began hours after the ruling party held an exclusive, six-minute meeting of legislators to pass the laws at 6 a.m. December 26, without opposition members present. The ruling New Korea Party, which holds 157 of the 299 seats in the National Assembly, said they held the secret meeting because the opposition party members had physically blocked previous attempts to have the vote.

More than 100 opposition politicians held a sit-down action at the assembly building to protest their exclusion from the vote.

The two union federations declared the passing of the new laws "null and void." "There will be no back down," said Kwon Young Gil, head of the Federation of Demo-

cratic Unions.

"This action of a general strike is a historical struggle in order to defend the rights and living standards of workers," said Park In Sang, chief of the Federation of Korean Trade Unions. This group, the only legal union federation in south Korea, represents about 1.2 million workers at many smaller shops and workplaces in the country. The Federation of Democratic Unions represents the larger industries like auto and shipbuilding.

Members of that union at Hyundai Motor Corp. and Kia Motors, Korea's largest car makers, were among the first to walk out. South Korea is the world's sixth largest automaker with a production capacity of 10,000 cars a day, 4,000 of which are exported. Estimated daily loses at Hyundai Motor alone are placed at \$55 million. Korea's largest shipbuilder, Hyundai Heavy Industries Co., which handles a third of the world's shipbuilding orders, was also idled. Workers from 14 major hospitals in Seoul joined in on day two of the strike, with all employees except those assigned to emergency duties leaving their jobs, union officials said.

The stock market in Seoul fell by 2.8 percent the first day of the strike, to its lowest point in 1996, and the next day plunged to its lowest point in three years. The Associated Press reported that south Korea is expecting a record \$20 billion trade deficit for the year as well.

"The government will not tolerate this illegal strike for any reason," proclaimed Finance and Economy Minister Han Sung Soo on December 27, the second day of the strike. Deputy Prime Minister Han Seung Soo said, "The government makes it clear it will punish all illegal actions."

Thousands demonstrate in Seoul

The next day some 7,000 marchers took to the streets in Seoul demanding an end to the new antilabor laws. Most were striking workers, with some students joining in solidarity. Waving union banners and chanting "Down with Kim Young Sam!" and "Kim Young Sam betrayed us!" protesters were met by 3,000 cops in riot gear and armored vehicles, armed with rifles. Demonstrators

hurled rocks at the riot police, as the cops sprayed activists with streams of tear gas. Twelve people were reportedly arrested at the action, charged with participating in an illegal march. Workers were already preparing a rally for the next day.

Hotel cook Cho Chul saw little difference "between Kim Young Sam and old military dictators.... There's physical repression, as there was before, and now in addition there's economic repression as well."

Despite the crackdown, workers continued holding actions. "I'm worried about the possibility of a violent crackdown or of being fired," said Chong Mi Sook, a 28-year-old striking nurse at Inha University Hospital in Songnam, "But I will strike every day until this is resolved."

On December 29, nearly 20,000 workers rallied in Seoul's business district chanting "Overthrow the Kim Young Sam government!" Unionists threatened to block the nation's main north-south highways with strikers if the laws were not repealed.

Following the first physical assaults on strikers, government officials said the number of strikers was decreasing, saying the

number of those participating was down to 120,000. On December 29 the two unions placed figures at 372,000 and growing, as did independent news organizations in the country. Many members of the Federation of Korean Trade Union walked out that day, staying out until New Years Eve. Some strikers stayed out through the holiday, and on January 2 the Federation of Democratic Unions issued a call for renewed strikes the next day. Banking unions have called a one-day work stoppage for Saturday, January 4.

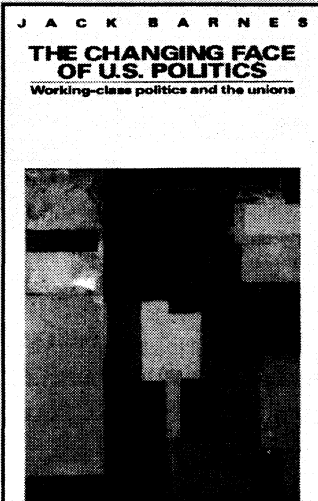
Meanwhile, the Seoul regime returned the remains of 24 north Korean soldiers to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea December 30. The men were hunted down and killed by south Korean forces after their submarine was grounded off the south Korean coast September 18. Seoul accused Pyongyang of sending spies in the watercraft to infiltrate. The north Korean government maintains that the entry into south Korean territory occurred accidentally during a training exercise. On December 29 Pyongyang issued a statement expressing "deep regret for the submarine incident... that caused the tragic loss of human life."

Available from 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, ceaseless 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

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Gingrich in trouble over Congress post

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

Newton Gingrich, the Speaker of the Republican majority in the U.S. House of Representatives, is in hot water. Calls that he step down by his Democratic opponents, as well as a few of his fellow Republican politicians and some conservative commentators, are mounting. Media attention focused on the issue after Gingrich admitted that he misled the House ethics committee's investigation into his conduct.

The controversy mushroomed as the 105th Congress is about to be seated, and as Democrats and Republicans are debating their tactical differences over how to carry out the next round of the rulers' assault on Social Security, Medicare, and other gains of working people.

The inquiry into Gingrich's affairs on charges he improperly used tax exempt funds for political purposes has been going on for months. It picked up steam during the 1996 election campaign, as Republicans abandoned the most draconian sections of their "Contract with America" — the drastic social cuts Gingrich and the Republican majority failed to push through Congress in 1995.

Leading up to the Republican takeover of the majority in the House of Representatives in 1994, Gingrich allegedly used funds from the tax exempt Abraham Lincoln Opportunity Foundation for television workshops aimed at recruiting conservative activists to his causes. The foundation was set up by Colorado Republicans supposedly to help poor children in urban areas.

On December 21, Gingrich acknowledged he had provided the House ethics committee with "inaccurate, incomplete and unreliable statements" about a course he taught at two colleges in Georgia, which promoted his right-wing views. At issue is whether he improperly used a tax exempt program to fund his election to Congress and push his partisan purposes, a charge Gingrich had denied until a week earlier.

A summary of an ethics committee report released the same date said that Gopac, a "political action committee" that Gingrich headed until 1994, had promoted the course,

and that Gopac employees had raised funds for it — a possible violation of tax law.

In an essay in the December 26 *New York Times*, conservative columnist William Safire called on Gingrich to step aside and not stand for reelection as Speaker when Congress reconvenes on January 7. The question for Republican leaders, Safire said, is "who, as Speaker, can best balance the budget, deregulate the economy, get to the bottom of the Clinton scandals, and overhaul the tax system?..."

"We see the G.O.P. weighed down by the albatross of ethical condemnation around this Speaker's neck."

On December 29, Republican Representative Michael Forbes of Long Island, New York, announced he would not support Gingrich's reelection as Speaker and echoed Safire's comments, indicating other Republicans may follow his lead.

Nearly 30 House Republicans have indicated they are not committed to electing Gingrich as Speaker. Twenty defections can cost the Georgia Congressman the top spot in the House.

At the same time, many Republican leaders went on the TV talk show circuit to demonstrate their support for Gingrich. The two Republicans on the House investigative subcommittee issued letters outlining their backing for his re-election.

Republicans face a dilemma since the House of Representatives is supposed to elect a Speaker January 7, but the ethics committee may not issue a report with its findings and possible recommendation for a sanction until January 21.

Nervousness among owners of capital

The scandal-mongering among capitalist politicians, which has focused on Gingrich for the moment, reflects the difficulties the U.S. rulers face in trying to reverse declining profit rates for big business that face stiffer competition from rivals in Europe, Asia, and Canada.

The more than 100-point drop in the Dow Jones industrial average as 1996 came to a close pointed to this lack of confidence among capitalist investors.

Tensions sharpen in Mideast



As we go to press, tensions sharpened in the West Bank over the continued Israeli occupation of the city of Hebron and the refusal of Tel Aviv to abide by previous agreements and withdraw its troops from the city. Under the accords between Tel Aviv and the Palestine Liberation Organization, Israeli forces were supposed to have been withdrawn from the Palestinian city last March, but the Israeli regime continues to stall. On January 1 an Israeli soldier, Noam Friedman, opened gunfire in a crowded marketplace (above), wounding six Palestinians. He said his intent was to block any withdrawal from Hebron. Israeli officials immediately began painting a picture of Friedman as mentally ill. Yasir Abed Rabbo, the Palestinian minister of information, replied, "If these claims that the settler is psychologically ill, which is something that is repeated every time there is a criminal act against Palestinians, are true, why do they insist on arming these psychological patients?"

Gingrich had been the foremost proponent of the Contract With America and the so-called Republican revolution that aimed to push through sweeping assaults on social entitlements. Last year, the Republican leadership had to bury major parts of that program.

Instead, the approach of the Clinton administration won bipartisan backing. The Democratic White House succeeded in gutting welfare and passing a series of other antilabor and antidemocratic measures. Since his reelection to the presidency, Clinton has led in preparing new social cuts.

Both parties of big business are now getting their ducks in a row to launch the next wave of the employers assault on labor. Since November, the big-business media and most capitalist politicians have been campaigning on various schemes to cut federal retirement benefits, privatize Social Security, and cut Medicare, which provides health coverage for the elderly and disabled.

While there's bipartisan agreement on this fundamental course, tactical differences over the pace and extent of the assault remain, which is what the Gingrich controversy is all about. That's why Rep. Forbes accused Gingrich of going "underground" over the last year because of the ethics charges. "We need leadership that will not be cowering, contrite or hiding from the media so we can aggressively pursue a balanced budget and tax reform," he said.

Corruption and moral decay are endemic to all capitalist regimes. But during a period of steady economic decline, such "revelations" become a permanent feature of bourgeois politics.

Simultaneously with the dispute over Gingrich's future, new charges of financial misconduct by government officials connected to the Clinton administration have emerged. In the latest case, the Democratic National Committee announced it had returned \$640,000 in possibly improper funds raised for the president's legal defense by Yah Lin Trie. A businessman

who has worked with Clinton for years, Trie was appointed to the commission on trade with Asia weeks after delivering the funds.

Adding to the administration woes, White House counsel John Quinn announced he was quitting in mid-December. Quinn is the fourth counsel in as many years to leave the administration. He said the reason was purely financial; his \$125,000 annual salary was too tight.

Paris probes for labor concessions

Continued from back page
formation "bringing together all those who are '100 percent left-wing,'" with a particular appeal to the CP. As part of that process the LCR has begun discussing its own "organizational transformation" and changing its name.

Fascists organize in unions

Meanwhile, the fascist National Front Party has been buoyed by its strong gains in recent local elections. Feeding on the discontent with the government and the economic crisis, and in response to the labor upsurge, the National Front has adopted a more anticapitalist rhetoric.

Denouncing "the bourgeois elite [that] prostitutes itself to Mammon," National Front leader Jean-Marie Le Pen advocates "a third road" that is "neither socialism nor capitalism." The December 18 issue of *Présent*, a pro-National Front paper, outlines a perspective of aggressive intervention in the trade union movement. The fascist outfit has already been organizing in the police and prison guard "unions," as well as the transportation and other labor unions.

The article called for National Front supporters to join unions where possible or form separate ones, as well as to sell its literature outside factory gates such as Thomson. The Front denounces the traditional union leadership and makes demagogic calls for "trade union freedom" and the defense of "French workers" against the evils of "world free trade-ism."

Meanwhile, protests against the National Front's anti-immigrant and antilabor politics have continued. A December 9 march against the National Front in the southern city of Grenoble drew 20,000 people. Two days earlier, 2,000 protesters, many of whom were youth of oppressed nationalities, marched against the fascists in Dijon.

Available from Pathfinder

THE Teamsters SERIES Lessons from the labor battles of the 1930s

BY FARRELL DOBBS

Teamster Bureaucracy

How the rank-and-file Teamsters leadership organized to oppose World War II, racism, and government efforts—backed by the international officialdom of the AFL, the CIO, and the Teamsters—to gag class-struggle-minded workers. \$18.95

Teamster Politics

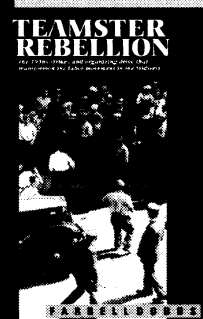
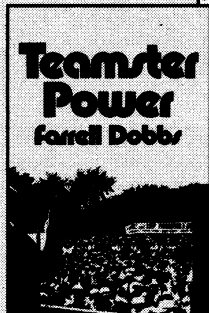
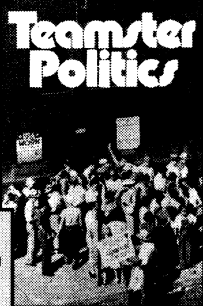
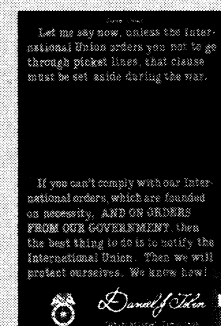
How rank-and-file Teamsters led the fight against antiunion frame-ups and assaults by fascist goons; the battle for jobs for all; and efforts to advance independent labor political action. \$17.95

Teamster Power

The growth and consolidation of the Teamsters union in Minneapolis and its class-struggle leadership, and the 11-state over-the-road organizing campaign that brought union power for the first time to many areas of the Midwest. \$17.95

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The 1934 strikes that built an industrial union and a fighting social movement in Minneapolis, recounted by a central leader of that battle. The first in a four-volume series on the Teamster-led strikes and organizing drives in the Midwest that helped pave the way for the CIO and pointed a road toward independent labor political action. \$16.95



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Discussions with workers in Havana

Ernie Mailhot, a garment worker and member of Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees Local 694B in Miami, was in Havana, Cuba, reporting for the *Militant* Nov. 29 - Dec. 3, 1996. Below are a few of his observations from the trip.

BY ERNIE MAILHOT

HAVANA — I called Lucio González on my first night in Havana. "Hi," I said, "You don't know me but I'm a coworker of a good friend of yours from Miami. She told me I should stop by and see you while I'm here in Havana."

From the moment I entered his small house González had a huge grin on his face that never left him. He's a musician in his 50s who is out of work and on a disability

REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

pension. He asked about my coworker, who he stays in contact with, and showed me the radio/cassette player she had sent him money to buy.

González gets 181 pesos a month on his disability pension, which he explained doesn't take him far. "Through the ration book we get the basics," he said, "rice, beans, a few eggs — not many, sugar, a few cigarettes and so on. I haven't had cooking oil since August though."

He thought of leaving Cuba when his friend did in 1980, he said, but couldn't do it. "We're poor here," he stated, "but things are getting better. After the fall of the Soviets we had no bread, nothing. We got by, but it was very hard. Now the lights stay on and we get more food."

González said he'd like to visit the United States sometime and see his friend and his son, who also lives in Miami. "Maybe I'd go for two months but I'd never want to stay there," he said.

My fellow worker from the garment shop in Miami had also suggested I stop by the telephone company where she used to work, on the corner of Aguila and Dragones in Havana. The massive front entrance to the building was just like I remembered it from a picture taken soon after the victory of the revolution. In that picture several armed women and men stood in front of the door with rifles in hand. They were on guard duty just after the revolutionary government had nationalized the telephone company.

I talked with Iris Cárdenas, a young worker there, and Nancy Borbones, who had worked at the phone company with my coworker.

I told Cárdenas that my fellow worker in Miami said her job at the phone company was the best she's ever had. "There are many things, like the child-care center on the fourth floor, that she remembers fondly," I said.

Cárdenas told me the child-care center in the building had been closed a few years ago, but all the workers have child-care centers in their local neighborhoods. (The cost of child care depends on how much income a family has. Forty pesos a month is the highest amount paid, and many pay 20 pesos or less, including meals.) Cárdenas was surprised when I told her that in the United States there is little affordable child care for workers.

Cárdenas said she was the head of the information department at the phone company. At 27, she is also a leader of the Union of Young Communists and, even though the usual age for membership in the Communist Party of Cuba is 30, she has been taken into party membership because of her leadership role.

With the special period, which is how Cubans refer to the economic crisis precipitated by the collapse of favorable trade relations with the Soviet Union, "some of the workers at the phone company had to be let go but no one was left without means," she said. "After a layoff people receive most of their pay as well as aid in getting another

job."

Borbones arrived and was very excited that her ex-coworker had sent me. "How is she?" she asked. I told Borbones that her friend was fine but that she missed her old job.

"We work in the garment industry," I told her, "which is among the lowest paid industries." Our pay of \$200 a week struck the Cuban workers as a significant amount of money. But when I explained the average rent in Miami for a small apartment is over \$500 a month they began to get a clearer view.

Cárdenas told me workers at the phone company had been part of discussions in the union on efficiency. "We have a high consciousness here and good work conditions. We have little absenteeism."

Before leaving the phone company building, Cárdenas asked me, "Isn't it hard in Miami, politically?"

"I like it," I said. "There are a lot of changes there, like everywhere else, including among Cuban-Americans, especially the younger ones. They are much more open to the truth about Cuba than in the recent past. And there are many like Nancy's friend — my coworker."

I stopped near the Spanish embassy. In Miami, some of the papers had talked about demonstrations at the embassy and one Spanish-language radio station said there were 5,000 people there demanding to be let into the embassy where they thought they could get passage out of Cuba. This supposedly happened after the Spanish government announced it would open its doors to so-called Cuban dissidents.

There was a very loose ring of police surrounding the area. A few metal barricades, smaller and less sturdy than the ones I'm used to at demonstrations in the United States, partially blocked streets leading to the embassy. I talked with a few people standing by their bicycles on one of the corners, and explained what the media in Miami was saying.

A good laugh came from the bicyclers. "Nothing went on here," one of them said. "Some people interpreted what the Spanish ambassador, or whoever he was, had said as meaning that they could go the embassy to get a visa out. There might have been 30 people who came here. Ask anybody from around here and they'll tell you the same."

I asked a number of people about this in the five days I was in Cuba and they did tell me the same thing.

I asked directions from Jesús Benítez and Santos Pons near the University of Havana.

Greek farmers suspend roadblocks

BY BOBBIS MISAILIDES

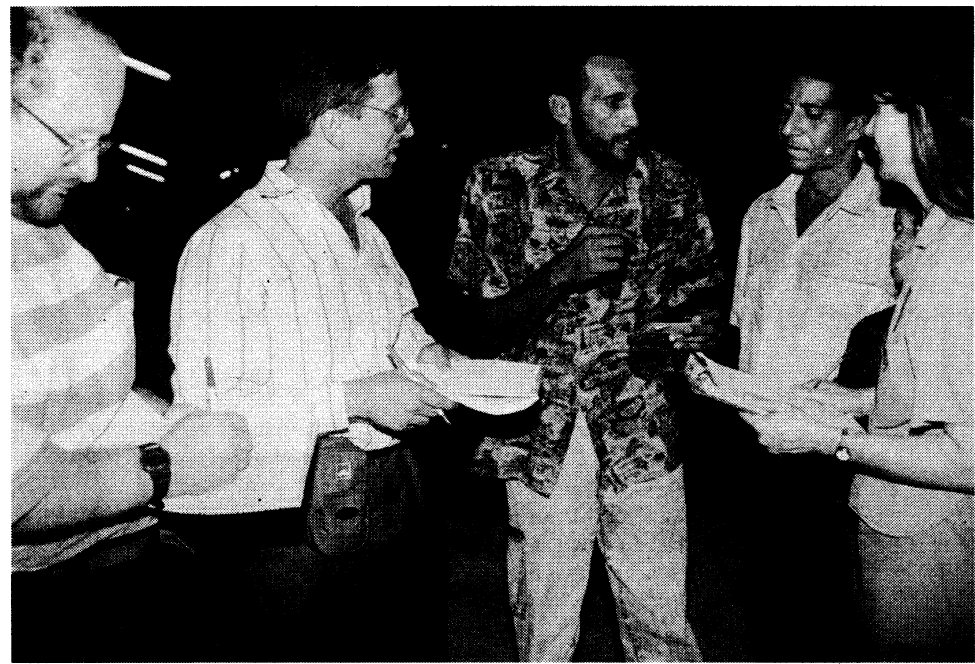
ATHENS, Greece — Under pressure from the government and big business, and with relatively little support from the trade union officialdom, the leadership of farm organizations in northern and central Greece called off the road blockades and other mobilizations of working farmers just before Christmas.

For nearly a month, farmers had maintained a virtual shutdown of the country's main transportation arteries. They are demanding higher prices for their products to guarantee them a living income, cheaper fuel, rescheduling of \$1.3 billion in debts to banks and other financial institutions, and lower value added taxes (VAT) on farm equipment.

On December 22, representatives of the coordinating committees of struggle in the provinces of Thessaly and Thrace announced that the roadblocks would be lifted prior to the Christmas holidays.

A statement from the groups said the action was taken "in order to not turn against us public opinion that has supported us for 25 days." Days earlier, the coordinating committees of northern Greece had announced a suspension of the mobilizations in that part of the country.

The social democratic government of



Militant/Argiris Malapanis
Havana rail worker Arturo Iznaga (center) talks with unionists from United States in April 1996. "Here transportation functions for the workers," he explained to *Militant* correspondent Ernie Mailhot during a recent visit.

Pons, 75, was one of the few Afro-Cuban doctors in the early years of the revolution, having become one in 1961. A strong supporter of the revolution he went to Santiago de Cuba to help train Afro-Cubans and others there to be doctors. His father had been a sugar cane cutter.

I asked Benítez and Pons if they knew about the hurricane relief aid that had been collected in Miami, some of it by right-wing opponents of the Cuban revolution, such as Brothers to the Rescue. Did they know that some of the aid had been rejected by Cuban authorities?

"Everyone knows that aid came from Miami and we appreciated that," said Pons. "[Cuba president] Fidel [Castro] even talked about it. People did ask why all the aid wasn't accepted, but when it was explained that there were messages against the revolution [packed along with the aid], everyone understood."

I also visited Arturo Iznaga, a Havana rail worker. A few months back he had met Seth Galinsky, a Miami rail worker, and invited him up on his train to show him the operation.

I mentioned to Iznaga that transportation in the capitalist world — by air, rail, ferry, etc. — is becoming more and more dangerous and that working conditions are also deteriorating in these industries. I told him about the last train trip I had gone on and how at certain points the train slowed to a crawl because of the poor conditions of the tracks.

"Actually, we do the same thing here because we don't have the materials to repair some of the tracks," said Iznaga. "Our rail problems are not so much on the main lines but on the secondary ones. We have few derailments but we do have some. Of course,

right now we also have less trains due to the special period. But we have very strict labor laws and safety regulations. Here transportation functions for the workers."

"Many of the locomotives we have are from Canada and right now most of them are out of service," said Iznaga. "And they weren't new when we got them. The Canadians helped repair seven or eight of them and then they left. We also have Russian locomotives and a few from other countries. The Russian ones are really broken. They send us parts but don't help us repair them."

Transportation in general is difficult today, he continued. "Buses are down to 40 percent of what they were before the special period. We have a lot of problems. We're an underdeveloped country but we also have confidence in our system. Compared to others we're way ahead. I was in Angola during the war where I worked in troop and cargo transport. I saw conditions there, including those of children, in bad shape."

This led to a discussion on Angola. Iznaga's wife, Mirtha, said that Cuba had given a lot for Angola and indicated there had been little in return.

Thousands of Cubans died in Angola fighting the invading South African apartheid army. After more than a decade of war, the South African military was soundly defeated with the decisive help of Cuban volunteer military personnel.

Arturo Iznaga had thought a lot about this subject and had some firm opinions. "A lot of people didn't understand. We helped Nicaragua, Mozambique, Chile, Ethiopia, Tanzania, Peru, Vietnam. Che [Guevara] died outside of Cuba and outside of his country," he said.

"Solidarity costs," Iznaga continued, "but solidarity is reciprocal. I don't know when but I have confidence. This is key to our morale."

were at the center of the struggle.

Thousands of workers, including garment and textile, construction, shipyard, and airline workers, participated in the farm protest in their respective union contingents. Dozens of college and high school students also took part. The most popular chant was, "Farmers, workers, students: one fist!"

Leaders of farm coordinating committees told demonstrators that their aim was to press the Simítis regime to open negotiations on their demands.

The day before the march, government spokesperson Dimítrios Réppas said that the prime minister "will not hold a dialogue with the farmers as long as they have the roads blocked." The government welcomed the suspension of the blockades two days later.

At a meeting with representatives of the protesting farmers on December 23, Simítis reiterated his position that the government will not retreat from its austerity budget or agree to support farmers' declining income through subsidies.

Responding to the prospect of new mobilizations in January, the prime minister said, "There are no victors or defeated."

Representatives of the coordinating committees of Thessaly and northern Greece said they will organize further actions in January if their demands are not met.

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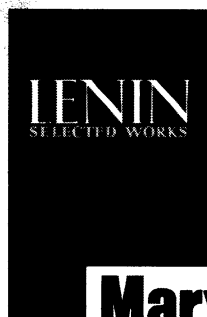
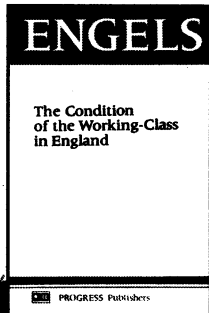
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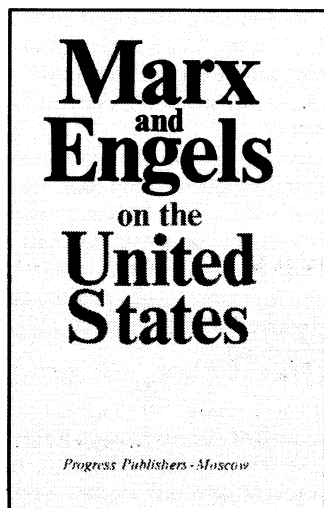
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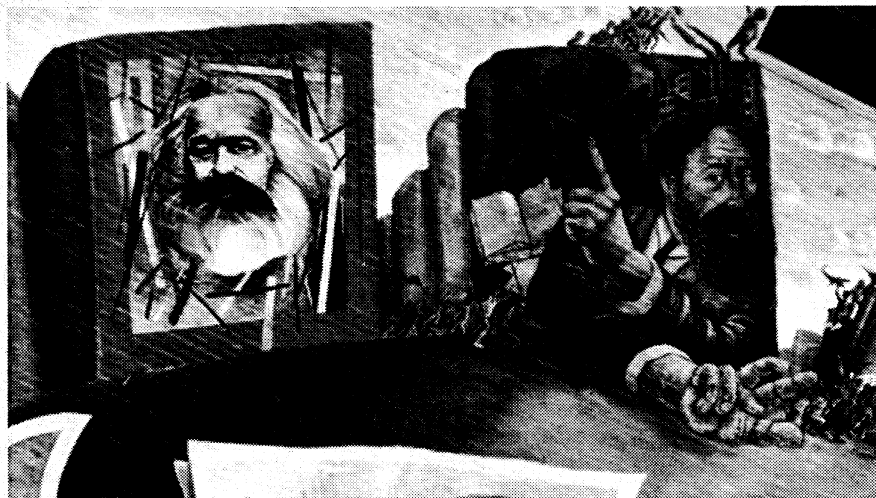
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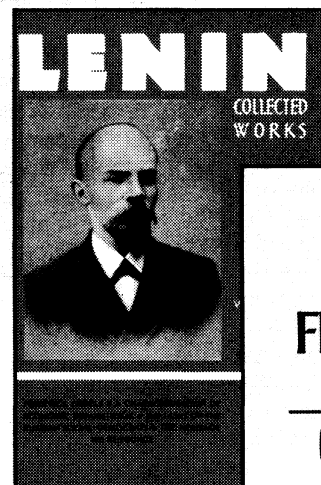
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'Ebonics' plan stirs debate in Oakland

BY JIM ALTENBERG

OAKLAND, California — At its December 18 meeting, the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) Board of Education unanimously voted to "recognize[s] the existence and the cultural and historic bases of West and Niger-Congo African Language Systems... as the predominately primary language of African-American students." African Language Systems, or Ebonics, are "genetically-based and not a dialect of English," the resolution stated. The resolution states that bilingual education programs, similar to those used for students whose first language is Chinese or Spanish, are needed for Black youth. It calls for such programs to be devised, funds to be secured, teachers to be trained and their pay upgraded to that of bilingual education teachers.

Following passage of the "Ebonics" resolution the OUSD directed school administrators to devise instructional programs for Black students "in their primary language for the combined purposes of maintaining the legitimacy and richness of such language... and to facilitate their acquisition and mastery of English language skills."

The school board's action immediately opened a nationwide debate about racism, language, affirmative action, and bilingual education, and the role of public education itself. For many Oakland students, the whole debate appears somewhat ridiculous. "We are like lab rats," McClymonds High senior Shawn Kemp told the *Oakland Tribune*. "At a white school, you don't see them talking about white English. Do I seem like I'm speaking another language?"

"I'm Black, I speak English. What they're trying to say is we don't talk proper English," said Oakland Technical High School sophomore Aaron Andrews to the *New York Times*. "If you got a brain in your head, you can talk any way you want to."

Self-appointed spokespeople for "standard English" have loudly advanced their claim that there is nothing legitimate about the language used by Blacks. The *New York Times* editorially dismissed "inner-city speech" as "colorful in its place." The editors warn that by "validating habits of speech" they term "urban slang," the new policy "will actually stigmatize African-American children."

Resolution stirs much debate

Jesse Jackson sharply attacked the resolution. "While we are fighting in California trying to extend affirmative action... in Oakland some madness has erupted over making slang talk a second language. You don't have to go to school to learn to talk garbage," he said in a December 21 statement. Jackson has since reversed himself, and plans to meet with school district officials soon. Noted poet Maya Angelou and Oakland based writer Ishmael Reed also challenged the school district's moves.

California Superintendent of Instruction Delaine Eastin told the *San Francisco Examiner*, "I do believe that it is a mistake to convey to kids that there is an appropriate time for this language." Eastin also explained her view that immigrants should become assimilated, and should not be concerned that their children lose their culture.

Stanley Diamond, of the California English Campaign argued, "This black English waste assures these innocent kids of a per-

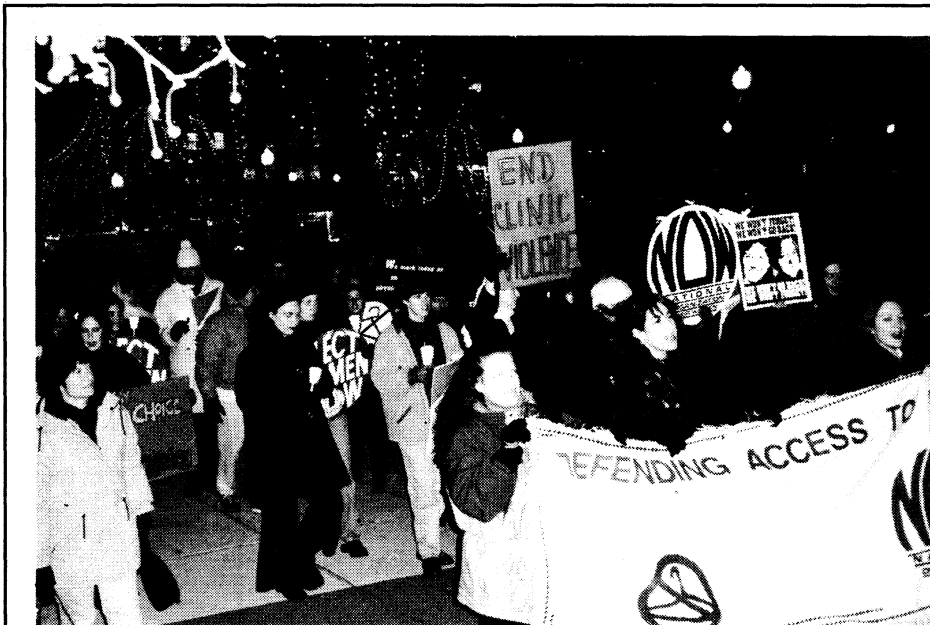
manent niche on that bottom rung."

University of California Regent Ward Connerly, who has led the drive against affirmative action in California included the recently passed Proposition 209, agreed, saying, "[T]hese are not kids who came from Africa last year or last generation even. These are kids who have had every opportunity to acclimate themselves to American society, and they have gotten themselves into this trap of speaking this language — this slang, really — that people can't understand. Now we're going to legitimize it."

Meanwhile, Oakland National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) president Shannon Reeves expressed his worry that the school district's "Ebonics" policy will damage the city's reputation, discouraging business investment in Oakland, if the schools do not teach standard English to Black youth.

Confronted by this debate, the OUSD hired a public relations consultant, Darolyn Davis, who the school district previously employed to promote its anti-labor stance during the 1996 Oakland teachers' strike. Davis and school superintendent Carolyn Gettridge have appeared in the local press almost daily since the resolution was adopted attempting to fend off criticism of the school district's policies. School district officials have retreated from early claims that "Ebonics" is genetically based. They have also backed away from organizing instruction in "Ebonics" as a language. "The district is not teaching Ebonics," said Gettridge. "[It] is not replacing the teaching of standard American English with any other language." School officials now explain that their aim all along has been to more effectively teach what they call standard English to Black youth. They point to their Standard English Proficiency program, which has been used throughout California for many years, and call for its expansion.

School officials also deny that money for "Ebonics" programs would come from existing bilingual education funds. The Clinton administration announced that no federal money would be available to fund classroom instruction for "Ebonics." "Elevating black English to the status of a language is not the way to raise standards of achievement in our schools," said Clinton's secretary of educa-



Militant/Les Slater

A December 30 pro-choice march and rally in downtown Boston drew 200 demonstrators. Called by the National Organization for Women and endorsed by nearly a dozen organizations and prominent individuals, the action commemorated the murder of two women's health clinic workers by antiabortion terrorist John Salvi. Young students and other activists chanted "Our bodies, our lives, our right to decide!" and "They say no choice, we say pro-choice!" as they marched from the Boston Common to the State Capitol. Several women's rights activists spoke on the stairs of the Capitol.

tion, Richard Riley.

The "Ebonics" debate has been seized on by those who attack bilingual education itself, to fuel resentment against those who receive the meager funds for these programs. NAACP president Reeves told the *San Francisco Chronicle*, "African Americans have expressed growing concern on the impact bilingual education has had on regular classroom instruction." Reeves charged that educators were reluctant to express their feelings on this issue, because they do not want to be seen pitting one ethnic group against another. But, he said, "I believe the route [Oakland educators] chose was, 'If you can't beat 'em, join 'em.'" Reeves announced that hearings on the issue of Black English will be held in Oakland.

Dismal conditions for Blacks in schools

The debate on "Ebonics" comes in the context of the utter failure of the Oakland Public Schools to provide a decent education for Black students. The school district's own figures dramatically highlight the crisis in the Oakland schools. While Blacks make up 53 percent of Oakland students, they make up 71 percent of special education students and 80 percent of all students

who were suspended from school last year. The average grade point of Blacks in the Oakland school district was 1.8 on a 4 point scale, compared to an average for all students of 2.4. Black students make up only 37 percent of the participants in special programs for gifted students, and 19 percent of Black high school seniors did not graduate.

Oakland teachers waged a six-week strike last spring demanding an end to a five-year wage freeze and reduction in the overcrowded classes. Minimal cuts in class size were won. Additional funds obtained from the state government this fall to further reduce class size included nothing for new classrooms.

Today teachers hold class in hallways, auditorium stages, closets and lunchroom corners. Schools lack everything from soap and toilet paper to textbooks and chalk. At some schools, even the playground equipment has been condemned as unsafe.

Since the teachers' strike, however, there has been no fight nor public campaign of any sort to improve conditions in the Oakland schools.

Jim Altenberg is a member of the Oil, Chemical & Atomic Workers union.

Texaco, Shell workers fight discrimination

BY JERRY FREIWIRTH

HOUSTON — A threatened boycott of Texaco was called off December 18 after the oil company promised increased hiring of oppressed nationalities and women, and greater purchases from businesses owned by these groups. The discrimination fight at Texaco is one of several in the oil industry.

Democratic Party politician Jesse Jackson, Joseph Lowry, president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference, and National Association for the Advancement of Colored People President Kweisi Mfume held a Washington, D.C. news conference to announce the withdrawal of the boycott threat. "There is now a sufficiently comprehensive and workable plan to call off the consumer boycott," said Jackson.

In November, a disgruntled company executive made public tapes of a meeting of top Texaco executives. That meeting, which was punctuated by remarks about "niggers" and "black jelly beans," planned a cover-up of evidence concerning Texaco's racist practices in the face of an antidiscrimination lawsuit by Texaco employees.

In the wake of the ensuing national uproar, Texaco settled the antidiscrimination suit for \$176 million, including a \$115 million payment to about 1,400 salaried Black employees. The oil giant also agreed to submit its hiring and promotion practices to a court-monitored task force empowered to set hiring quotas.

Texaco announced in mid-December it expects to increase its total "minority" employment from 23 percent of its 19,554 employees to 29 percent by the year 2000. According to company officials, employment of Blacks will rise from 9 to 13 percent and the number of women employees will grow from 32 percent to 35 percent.

The suit by Black middle-managers at

Texaco was one of a number of such suits against oil companies in recent years. Shell Oil Company, the U.S. division of Royal Dutch/Shell, has been a particular target because of its poor record on affirmative action.

According to a November 16 report in the *Houston Chronicle*, only 18.2 percent of Shell's work force is composed of "minorities," the second lowest percentage among all major oil companies in the U.S. Even these figures may be inflated, however. The same article quoted the chief executive officer of Phillips Petroleum pointing to a Norwegian heading one of the company's business units as an example of diversity.

Three Black managers at Shell headquarters in Houston filed a suit similar to that at Texaco early last year. They charged that Black salaried employees were regularly passed over for promotions and higher paying jobs. Only two Blacks have ever been appointed to executive ranks in Shell's retail marketing division, the suit alleges, and all but two of Shell's top managers are white. No one from an oppressed nationality, they state, has ever been offered a stint at Royal Dutch/Shell international headquarters in London, considered a requirement for top advancement in the company. A similar suit was filed by African-American managers in northern California last year.

An antidiscrimination suit brought by blue collar employees who are Black at the Shell refinery and chemical complex in Deer Park, Texas, just outside Houston, was settled two years ago with a relatively meager cash award for the workers. The settlement did not include any meaningful agreement by Shell to upgrade its affirmative action policies.

Blacks and Mexican-American workers were excluded for many years from produc-

tion jobs at Shell and other plants in this huge petrochemical center. The company was forced to end these "Jim Crow" practices only after Black workers in the area, inspired by the gains being won during the civil rights movement, organized and fought for affirmative action on the job.

The lawsuit at Deer Park maintained that Shell discriminated in hiring, firing, and promotional practices. The charge of hiring discrimination was thrown out by the courts because the plaintiffs were unable to afford the costs involved in mounting a massive survey of all possible Blacks who applied to Shell in the last few decades.

Evidence of Shell's discriminatory practices in hiring is not hard to come by. On the walls of the training center hang pictures of every training class hired in the last few decades. Even a cursory look at these photographs confirms that Shell has hired an ever decreasing number of Blacks in the last 10 years.

Inside the Deer Park refinery a vigorous discussion has taken place among members of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union (OCAW), which organizes production workers there. The claim by some workers that discrimination no longer exists has been dealt a blow by the Texaco revelations. But there is still a wide range of opinions on the value of discrimination lawsuits. Some workers point to the Texaco events to bolster their support for affirmative action, while others discount its impact.

Everyone, though, has enjoyed the current joke making the rounds: "Why, Shell isn't at all like Texaco. They wouldn't allow a tape recorder in the board room."

Jerry Freiwirth is an operator at the Shell Deer Park refinery and is a member of OCAW Local 4-367.

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Texas factory blast kills eight, injures two

BY LEA SHERMAN

CYPRESS, Texas — A massive explosion ripped through the Wyman-Gordon Metal Forging plant here, leaving eight workers dead and two others injured shortly before midnight on December 22.

Killed in the blast were four maintenance workers, each with 29 to 30 years seniority in the plant, and four new hires, all under 30 years of age. Two of the deceased workers had been hired only two weeks earlier.

Another young worker with only two weeks in the plant was injured and released from the hospital, while a maintenance supervisor was more seriously injured with severe damage to his right eye, hearing loss, and cuts and bruises all over his body.

The blast was so powerful that it blew body parts over 100 yards outside the building, shredded corrugated steel and punched a 40- by 50-foot hole in the factory roof.

Wyman-Gordon is a forging and machining plant just outside of Houston that manufactures metal parts for aircraft jet engines and other industrial uses. It employs over 500 production workers who are members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) Local 15.

The explosion occurred as a ten-person crew was performing maintenance on 90-foot-high tanks that contain compressed nitrogen gas at extremely high pressure. The gas powers a 35-ton press that forges heavy-wall, seamless metal pipe used in power and chemical plants. There had been evidence of a leak in the pressurized tanks and this was why maintenance was being done.

The crew was removing the 2-inch-thick bolts on the lid — a 3-foot-wide, 8-inch-thick steel disk — when the 5,000 pounds per square inch of pressure blew off the lid and tore the crew apart. The two survivors were off to the side. The eight workers killed were directly over the tank.

Debate over cause of the blast

A public debate has broken out in the media and among factory workers and plant management about the cause of the blast.

Within a day of the explosion, Wyman-Gordon management began publicly touting its supposed good safety performance.

A newscaster for Channel 11 evening news reported the night after the explosion, "Attorneys for Wyman-Gordon say the plant has an unblemished safety record."

The local media has worked hand-in-glove with the company to make the case that the blast was caused by worker error. Without any proof, a Channel 2 TV news report two days after the blast maintained, "the cause appears to be human error."

The December 25 *Houston Chronicle* quoted a second-shift worker, who asked to be anonymous, saying that key gauges had been overlooked. "We just assumed (the pressure) was all let out," the worker reportedly said. "We just overlooked it." In the same article, Les Schroeder, a top IAM official, confirmed that the worker was part of the evening crew and then stated, "They've been doing it for years and years. They knew what they were doing. I wouldn't know why they wouldn't bleed one valve off."

Even as the company was using every avenue to campaign in its interest and blame the workers for their own deaths, its own supervisor, Santiago Galindo, injured in the blast, pointed toward mechanical failure in the December 26 *Chronicle*. "The gauges were reading zero," he said, "which indicated that the tanks were safe to open. That's the first thing we checked."

The next day the same paper ran another article where the anonymous worker retracted his story and agreed with Galindo, explaining, "I was upset. I didn't mean to say it that way.... I may have been distraught."

Facts on company safety record

A week after the explosion, a five-person Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) team still had not determined whether a mechanical failure or human error caused the blast.

Reporters have begun asking whether the company had a "lock-out, tag-out" procedure in place, which is a minimal requirement for any work on pressurized equipment. Wyman-Gordon officials would neither confirm nor deny the existence of these safety procedures pending investigation.

Wyman-Gordon was assessed a \$1 million fine by OSHA in 1993 for a total of

149 violations at its plant at North Grafton, Massachusetts. Since 1972, OSHA investigated five fatal accidents at Wyman-Gordon plants with the last reported death in 1993, at a plant in Northfield, New Hampshire.

In discussions, union members who knew and worked with those killed could not believe they would do anything to put themselves or their fellow workers in danger. "There was over 100 years of experience between them," said one machinist who asked not to be named.

Others thought human error may have caused the explosion.

The plant has been on a very heavy production schedule with increased contracts. While overtime is voluntary, many workers, particularly new employees on probation, have been working seven days a week, 12 hours a day. The maintenance department is understaffed. With increased production and aging equipment in the plant, workers who repair and service the equipment were told they were needed to work through the holidays.

Production workers were scheduled to return to work on January 2, starting with a company briefing.

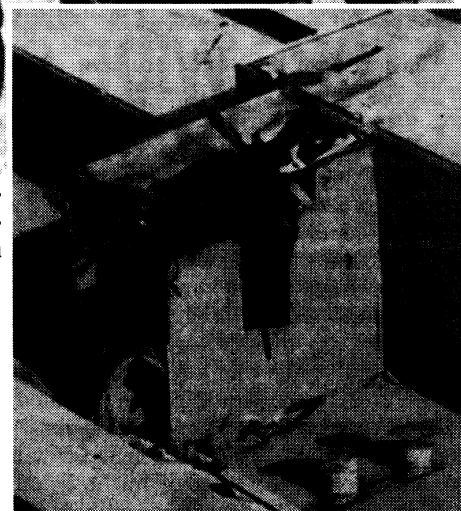
This will be particularly difficult for the nearly 60 workers who will start work third shift at 10 p.m., January 1. The explosion occurred in the same building as the machine shop, inspection, and sonic departments. Many of these workers ran into the area to help and saw body parts of their co-workers



Three people (above) stand outside Wyman-Gordon Forging Company where eight workers died in an explosion that left a huge hole in the roof of the building (right).

everywhere. The father of one of the newly hired workers, who was killed, was on the shift.

Lea Sherman works the third shift at Wyman-Gordon and is a member of IAM Local 15.



Thousands rally with steelworkers

Continued from front page

to work. The pension is the main thing in the way, other things we can take up when we get back to work," Lewis, a member of USWA Local 1190, said. "The company claims we're not capable of sticking together, this is our answer: We're here today, aren't we?"

Unionists turn out from across region

The rally drew steelworkers from throughout the region. Several busloads came from Cleveland, organized by USWA District 1.

Butch Murto, a steelworker from WCI Steel in Warren, Ohio, said they brought two busloads of members from Local 1375, which won a guaranteed pension plan following a long strike in 1995. "We've taken up a bucket collection already, and donated \$5,000 to the strike," he added with pride.

As unionists filed in the arena from the buses, others caravanned in cars, vans and pick-ups, quickly filling the gravel parking lot. A pick-up truck full of 100 frozen Christmas turkeys pulled up. The turkeys were donated by workers at the Whirlpool Appliance factory near Finley, Ohio. Those workers recently lost a union recognition election, according to volunteers unloading the truck.

Melissa Saunders, 25, explained why she came. "My dad worked all his life for this company [Wheeling-Pitt]. With all the concessions they had to make in the bankruptcy, it's only fair that he should be able to retire in comfort," she said.

Jack West, a water filtration worker for the city of Steubenville for 17 years, and a member of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees, explained the sentiment of many workers in the surrounding communities. "We're all from the same area, and in the last negotiations they [the city] tried to take everything we had," he said. "They don't want to give us anything, they don't want to be fair. It would hurt us too, if they [the steelworkers] would lose. The city would start cutting back right away."

"We need all the union support we can get. Solidarity, sticking together, this is the only way we're going to beat the companies and the U.S. government" said John White, a member of Wheeling-Pitt's Yorkville Local 1223. White explained that this rally is a big step forward. He's been active in reaching out for solidarity for the strike. He and his wife were able to speak to International Association of Machinists Local 1976 members at Pittsburgh International Airport and urge them to support the strike and attend the rally.

The union's chief negotiator, James Bowen, chaired the rally. He pointed to the outpouring of contributions from the area.

Members of USWA Local 5668 at Ravenswood Aluminum Corp. attended the rally. They've collected \$7,000 at the plant for the strike. A member of the women's committee said her group raised \$1,200. Local 5668 battled Ravenswood Aluminum through 27 months of a lock-out that began in November 1990.

Bowen also pointed to members of the Independent Steelworkers Union at nearby Wierton Steel who pitched in to support the strike. That union, which is not affiliated with the USWA, is in the midst of negotiations.

"Members of United Mine Workers of America District 6 have delivered thousands and thousands of dollars in donations, and helped collect Christmas gifts for the strikers' children," Bowen said. Several UMW-organized mines are clustered around the mill towns along the Ohio Valley.

Speakers and guests on the platform included all eight Wheeling-Pitt local presidents, USWA international president George Becker, and district USWA officials. Also speaking were the Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia State AFL-CIO presidents. The featured speaker at the rally was Richard Trumka, AFL-CIO secretary-treasurer, and former president of the UMW.

Cutthroat competition in steel industry

Several speakers at the rally echoed the theme that the chief problem facing Wheeling-Pitt workers is that the bosses are calling the shots "out of their offices in New York City," referring to WHX Corp., the parent company of Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel. In a similar vein, others referred to the fact that WHX president Ron LaBow resides in New York City.

While the steel industry is operating near full capacity at an upturn in the business cycle, intense price competition between integrated steel producers is driving down the rate of return on their steel.

Wheeling-Pitt jumped into the breach, coming out of its 1985 bankruptcy with a significant cost advantage over its competitors. Today it enjoys a much lower cost of producing the steel because it doesn't have to pay into a guaranteed pension plan that offers retirement after 30 years on the job.

Two events that took place the week before the rally illustrate the intention of the Wheeling-Pitt bosses to take a long strike if necessary to hold back that type of pension plan, now in place at all other unionized integrated steel mills.

The Wheeling *Intelligencer* reported December 18 on abruptly ended talks held in Pittsburgh between the USWA chief negotiator and Daniel Keaton for Wheeling-Pitt management under the auspices of Joe Pinto, a federal mediator. The session ended

in a little over an hour.

"There was a frank discussion of the issues, but regrettably, the USWA International did not move at all from the position they have held regarding pensions since early September," Keaton said in a press release.

"It's amazing to have a company saying they have a principle in not granting a DB [defined benefit pension plan]," USWA negotiator Bowen was quoted as saying in the article. "They told this union that if they acquired Teledyne they would give us a DB." Wheeling-Pitt failed in its attempt to acquire Teledyne Inc., following negotiations that began in April. "That clearly denotes that the principle is money," Bowen said.

On the same day the mediator came to Pittsburgh, the *Wheeling News Register* interviewed Joe Matello a Wheeling-Pitt worker with 33 years at the Mingo Junction mill. He circulated petitions signed by 1,100 Wheeling-Pitt workers calling for the international union to negotiate with the company. No negotiations had occurred since well before the October 1 strike deadline. "Call it [the pension plan] anything you want to as long as its guaranteed," Matello was quoted as saying in the December 17 interview.

The *Charleston Gazette* December 19 quoted from the vaguely worded petitions that call for "an improvement in our pension plan." Other parts of the wording echo the company media blitz that saturated the regional media for six weeks, falsely asserting that the union has been unwilling to negotiate.

Following the swift conclusion of the talks put together by the mediator, it is clear the company continues to refuse to discuss a guaranteed pension plan with the union.

When asked why the talks failed, Elizabeth Phillips, public relations director of the Federal Mediation Service in Washington, D.C., ducked the issue to protect the company. "Our mission statement is to promote sound and stable labor-management relations" and has no authority over negotiations. As for the mediator, Pinto, "He's a third-party neutral," she said.

Meanwhile, the West Virginia Department of Employment held hearings December 17 on whether to grant unemployment benefits for the 629 Wheeling-Pitt strikers who live in that state. A decision is expected in two weeks. Ohio workers were denied jobless benefits in November; they are appealing that ruling.

Tony Dutrow is a member of USWA Local 1557 in Pittsburgh. David Sandor, a USWA member, and Mary Zinns, a member of the Aluminum, Brick and Glassworkers union, from Morgantown, West Virginia, contributed to this article.

Stalinist regime in Belgrade can't defuse protests

Continued from front page
town in central Serbia, about 2,000 turned out for the pro-Milosevic action December 21. At the same time, the opposition rallied 25,000 in the same city, some of whom lobbed eggs and firecrackers at the pro-government protesters, despite police cordons separating the crowds.

The regime then began using its mobilizations to provoke opponents into confrontations. On December 24, at least 50,000 government backers, many bused in from rural areas, faced off with a much larger crowd of over 200,000 opposition protesters in Belgrade. The ruling Socialist Party asked its supporters to gather at the center of the city, the same spot where the opposition had been organizing daily demonstrations.

Clashes with the police erupted, when nearly 10,000 opposition demonstrators split from the main body of their march and moved onto the cordon of armed police officers. The police hurled tear gas and clubbed protesters. In the ensuing melee a 39-year-old man, Predrag Starcevic, an unemployed tourist guide, was beaten and died of his wounds hours later. Another few dozen people were injured.

The next day, the Interior Ministry issued a statement saying that any obstruction of traffic in Belgrade would not be tolerated. "The streets are for the use of all citizens," the statement said. "The police in Serbia will not tolerate the blockade of traffic in the future and warn the organizers of the demonstrations that they must exercise their right to peaceful demonstrations in keeping with the regulations."

Despite the effective ban on street actions, opposition marches continued, although their size got smaller the last week of December. In many cases, the police pushed demonstrators onto sidewalks and blocked off access to the main square in downtown Belgrade. But authorities refrained from any widespread crackdown. Zajedno was not prevented from holding daily rallies in other squares, its leaders were not arrested as they said they feared, and students were allowed to hold their own daily marches as before.

Meanwhile, the Milosevic government came under pressure from its allies in the Yugoslav republic of Montenegro. Prime Minister Milo Djukanovic threatened to begin conducting his own foreign policy and introduce separate currency for Montenegro if Belgrade did not stop printing money to bolster support for Milosevic, feeding inflation already at 100 percent annually. Belgrade has reportedly printed thousands of new dinars to mute discontent that has fueled anti-government sentiment.

Nearly one third of the population in Serbia — three million people — live in poverty, half the republic's factories are closed, unemployment is hovering at 50 percent, and the government owes months of back wages to many workers and soldiers. The economic crisis, rooted in the decades-old bureaucratic methods of planning and management by the petty bourgeois castes in power throughout Yugoslavia, has been exacerbated by the earlier U.S.-initiated sanctions on Serbia and Montenegro.

Milosevic cranks up propaganda

On December 27, a delegation from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), headed by the former prime minister of Spain Felipe González, issued a statement saying the opposition did win elections in at least 13 Serbian cities, and called on Belgrade to respect the results. Milosevic had invited the OSCE, which supervised elections held in September in Bosnia under NATO's boot, to visit Serbia and assess the conduct of the November municipal elections.

Serbian foreign minister Milan Milutinovic responded by describing González's findings as "balanced" and "constructive," but questioned whether the OSCE delegation got to the bottom of the controversy in a visit that lasted less than 24 hours. The OSCE commission said that Milosevic's Socialist Party won a majority in the November ballot, but that Zajedno won in nine of the 14 municipalities of Belgrade, as well as 13 other cities.

The Milosevic government seized on a factual error in the González report, that the opposition in fact has claimed a majority in eight, not nine, Belgrade districts, to question its objectivity. The government pointed out the OSCE recommendations were not

binding and said the controversy is an "internal affair." Around the same time, a court in Nis, Serbia's second largest city, ordered new elections in 17 of the city's districts that were disputed in the poll.

In addition to granting this concession, the government in Belgrade cranked up its propaganda. State TV showed protesters holding U.S. and German flags, while an announcer said the protests are being run by U.S. and German agents seeking to subvert the republic. "The big powers do not want a strong Serbia," Milosevic declared at a rally of his supporters. "That is why they are attempting to destabilize the country through the creation of a fifth column."

The government-controlled media did not show an earlier incident when opposition demonstrators burned a U.S. flag while their march passed the U.S. embassy in Belgrade; or a student who marched December 25 to demand the reinstatement of the election results with a placard reading, "We don't want foreign flags." The 19-year-old student, Djordje Ristic, had taken the sign from a participant in a Socialist Party rally. "We are a democratic gathering, so even their posters are welcome," he said.

The main leaders of the opposition, Vuk Draskovic of the Serbian Renewal Movement and Zoran Djindjic of the Democratic Party, have more openly identified with Washington and other imperialist powers in the last few weeks. As a result, Milosevic has had limited success in appealing to the anti-imperialist sentiments among wide sections of the working class in Serbia.

While neither Zajedno's rallies, nor the separate student marches, have run out of steam, opposition leaders have difficulty rallying the working class on their side and admit limits in pressing their cause. The composition of Zajedno mobilizations in Belgrade remains weighed toward professionals, small business people, and other middle-class layers. "I have no illusion that street demonstrations alone will be sufficient to get rid of Milosevic," said Djindjic at the end of December. "We cannot think that the government will fail within one month, or even two or three months."

As Dusan Vasiljevic, a 23-year-old political science student, put it in a recent protest, "Right now, we just want the law to be obeyed and the election results reinstated.... We don't ask for Milosevic's resignation."

Washington, which at the start of the protest movement refrained from condemning Milosevic, has now taken a more aggressive stance against Belgrade and began

courting opposition leaders. "We have warned the Serbian government that violence against the protesters will have serious consequences and will inevitably lead to Serbia's further isolation," said U.S. acting secretary of state Strobe Talbott December 24. The U.S. government has threatened new sanctions against Belgrade.

Intervention by imperialist powers

Washington leads a NATO force of 60,000 troops occupying Bosnia, with detachments in Croatia and Macedonia. Bonn recently deployed its first combat troops in Bosnia. But the imperialist powers continue to face difficulties in their quest to replace the Milosevic regime with one more subservient to capitalist interests and eventually reestablish capitalism throughout Yugoslavia.

When the U.S.-run radio Voice of America began broadcasting programs into Yugoslavia from the Belgrade radio station B-92, which Milosevic closed briefly, the government allowed the station to resume operations within two days and upgraded its temporary license to a 10-year permit.

An op-ed column in the December 20 *New York Times* by *Financial Times* correspondent Laura Silber was headlined "Serbia has no Vaclav Havel." The article, which urged Washington to back Zajedno leaders more openly, complained that it is difficult for the opposition in Yugoslavia to be united by a pro-capitalist politician like the former president of Czechoslovakia who replaced the Stalinist regime there in 1989.

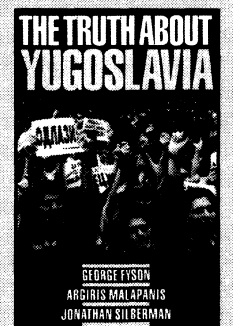
A news analysis story in the December

31 *Washington Post* made a similar point, saying one of the reasons Milosevic is not about to lose his grip on power in the short run is the fact that a revolution brought down capitalism in Yugoslavia in the 1940s, unlike other countries in Eastern Europe.

"The distinction dates largely to the days following World War II," the article said. "In contrast to the rest of Eastern Europe, which was freed from Nazi rule by the Soviet army, Yugoslavia largely liberated itself, and Tito's Communist partisans found themselves in a privileged position at the end of the war. Alone among the East European Communist parties, they refused to passively take orders from Stalin and were expelled from the Moscow-led international Communist movement in 1948."

For further reading from Pathfinder

The Truth about Yugoslavia: Why Working People Should Oppose Intervention



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The Cuban Revolution in the World Today. Speaker: Kari Sachs, Socialist Workers Party and member of United Steelworkers of America. Fri., Jan. 10, 7:30 p.m. 111 21st St. South. Tel: (205) 323-3079.

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The Guatemala Peace Accords: Will Basic Change be Won? Speaker: Barry Fatland, Socialist Workers Party; Lucía Muñoz, Centro Guatemalteco de Apoyo, recently returned from Guatemala; Lazaro Estrada, Guatemalan activist. Fri., Jan. 10, 7:30 p.m. 2546 W. Pico Blvd. Donation: \$4. Tel: (213) 380-9460.

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What's Behind the Crises in Peru? Fri., Jan. 10, 7:30 p.m. 2490 University Ave. Donation: \$4. Tel: (612) 644-6325.

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Sexual Abuse in the U.S. Military: Where Does It Come from? How Can Working People Fight It? Speakers: Sandy Powers, former airwoman in U.S. Air Force, Chair, NOW-NJ Lesbian Rights Task Force; Susan Anmuth, Socialist Workers Party, member of United Auto Workers. Fri., Jan. 10, 7:30 p.m. 87A Halsey St. (1 block west of Broad). Donation: \$4. Tel: (201) 643-3341.

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But not to worry — An ad for how-to-invest books: "Panic Profits: How to Make Money When the Market Takes a Dive"; "Surviving



Harry Ring

the Coming Mutual Fund Crisis"; "Bulletproof Your Financial Future: How to save your financial life no matter how bad the economy gets."

An omen — McDonald's opened an outlet in Minsk, capital

of Belarus, the 100th country in its global chain. A gala opening drew thousands to the area. Riot cops, accustomed to breaking up anti-regime protests, promptly waded into the crowds, clubs swinging. Describing it as "a public relations fiasco," the December 26 *London Times* reported, "McDonald's had touted the event as a watershed in its global expansion and hinted that the opening... was a sign of stability in the world."

Fiddling by Nero — One Wall Street company held its Xmas bash at a posh club atop the World Trade Center. The tab for flowers alone was \$40,000. Explained the floral designer, "It wasn't so much about

the flowers.... This year it's all about being elegant."

Stripping away oppressive taboo — Commenting on the rash of pre-holiday layoffs, John Challenger, a big-time "outplacement" exec, explained, "What you're seeing is that the traditional holiday taboo that said you don't lay people off... during the holidays really is being whittled away."

As deranged as he's scummy? — "You can't be bored with greatness. It's better to be honestly arrogant than falsely humble." — Albert Dunlap, the job-cutting specialist who's proud to be known as "Chainsaw Al."

History lesson — Prompted by British plans to buy a floating prison from New York, the *London Times* recalled the similar ships that came into wide use in England in 1775. "Men, women, and children as young as seven were crammed... in stinking holds which compared with the worst of the slave trade ships.... The prisoners who festered beneath their decks were controlled by bored and sadistic officers. The hulks were also a magnet for every form of disease and sickness, and death was rampant."

Read-it-and-retch dep't — In Vietnam, the *People's Police* paper featured a photo of the winner of a national beauty contest for women

jailers. According to Reuters, the Hanoi regime "prides itself on the beauty of its women and contests are held regularly for occupations ranging from street cleaners to market hawkers."

Keep thin — Acting on an obscure 1940 rule, New York cops are handing out \$50 fines to subway riders who they say are taking up more than one seat. Like, a college student got a ticket while riding in a car that had but one other passenger. The other guy got a ticket too.

Suggestion box — How about busting the folks who run the New York subway system and, during rush hours, stuff in 10 passengers for every seat?

Why do communists use democratic centralism?

Below we reprint excerpts from *The Structure and Organizational Principles of the Party*, which the Young Socialists recently decided to include in its educational program. The booklet is based on three talks given in 1970 by Farrell Dobbs, then the national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party. The excerpt below, from

BOOK OF THE WEEK

the first talk, gives a basic explanation of the principle of democratic centralism and describes why the SWP is organized along different lines than Stalinist and social-democratic parties. The booklet, as part of Pathfinder's Education for Socialists series, also reviews the evolution of the party structure over more than 30 years and includes the "Resolution on the Organizational Principles of the Party" adopted in 1953. It is copyright © Pathfinder Press, and is reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY FARRELL DOBBS

The Socialist Workers Party's structure and its organizational principles derive from the party's political outlook. We perceive an objective trend towards deepening social crisis and sharpening class conflict. That is our political point of departure. As that process continues to unfold it will make imperative a revolutionary solution of the basic social problems afflicting the peoples of this country and of the world....

The SWP's central aim is set forth in our program of abolishing capitalism and reorganizing the United States on a socialist basis. We recognize that in this endeavor, we are up against the most powerful and ruthless ruling class in the history of the world. From that, it follows that the revolutionary party must be constructed as a cohesive and disciplined combat organization. That is why the Socialist Workers Party has sought to base itself on the tested and proven Leninist rules of organization.

These can be summed up in the concept of democratic centralism. Defined in a broad generalization, democratic centralism constitutes an interrelated process of democracy in deciding party policy, and centralized action in carrying it out.

While we're stating the basic aspects, let us turn to a second generalization that follows, concerning attacks on democratic centralism. Such attacks stem primarily from

false definitions of democracy. Despite the claims of windbags, democracy does not imply endless talk; nor is it a license for undisciplined organizational conduct, as factional hooligans will try to tell you. Democracy is basically a method of reaching a decision. It requires that first all viewpoints be heard in debating a question, then a vote is taken, and then the time has come for action. That is where centralism takes over. Centralism is based on the democratic principle of majority rule. It stems from the concept of making a decision by majority vote. Basically, it is a method of exercising the right of the majority to see that its decision is carried out.

Democratic principle of majority rule

Under democratic centralist procedures, after a decision has been made in a dispute, those in the minority are bound by the party decision reached by majority vote. All party members are required to help carry out the party decision. Authority becomes centralized through the official party bodies, and the party confronts the outside world with a single policy, that of the majority. A dissident minority is not asked to give up its views. It must simply await an appropriate time to raise the disputed issues inside the party again. And comrades in a minority are given an unqualified opportunity to serve the party in every respect in the party's daily life.

In determining the interplay of democracy and centralism on a working basis, the party, as a whole, has rights based on the principle of majority rule. The party as a whole determines the form and limits of internal discussion in the organization at each juncture. This is done in order to ensure that party work is not disrupted and disorganized. Official bodies in the party may organize a discussion at any time, and in whatever form the situation requires....

The party's first resolution on the organizational question, undertaking to codify its principles, was adopted by the founding convention of the Socialist Workers Party in 1938. That convention culminated ten years' party building work. The effort had begun initially through the Trotskyist cadres that were expelled from the Communist Party in 1928. These cadres were reinforced during the radicalization of the 1930's through individual recruitment of worker and student militants. The first major new acquisition, in bloc, came in 1934 through the fusion of the Trotskyist organization (then known as the Communist League of America) with the American Workers Party, a body of militant young workers and students who were moving in the same basic political direction, but who had had a separate organizational form.

These two movements fused in 1934 to form what was then known as the Workers Party. Then, in the spring of 1936, this fused movement entered the Socialist Party for the purpose of getting into direct contact with the Socialist Party's left wing, which was in many respects the counterpart of the radicalizing young militants that had gathered around the American Workers Party at an earlier period. This leftwing formation, now comprised of the previous leftwing SP militants and the Trotskyists who had entered the Socialist Party, was expelled from that organization in 1937. These, in brief, were the forces that came together at the beginning of 1938, constituting the founding cadres of the SWP.

Stalinism and social democracy

The 1938 organizational resolution adopted at the founding convention had a dual purpose. One aim was to set down the party's organizational concepts in line with the revolutionary principles embodied in the program of the founding convention. The second aim was to cement the fusion with the leftwing splitoff from the Socialist Party by clarifying the Leninist views on party organization. In this respect, Leninist principles were counterposed to both Stalinist and social-democratic organizational methods.

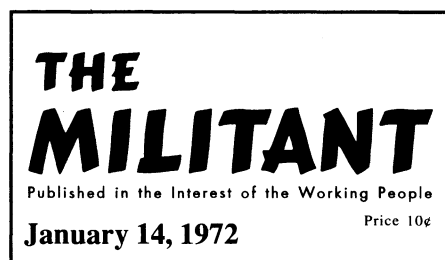
The founding cadres of Trotskyism had their own firsthand experience with Stalinism in the process of being thrown out of the Communist Party. When the Stalin-Trotsky split developed, you did not have to declare for Trotsky as against Stalin

to be thrown out. All you had to do was stand up and ask why Trotsky was thrown out in Russia and you were expelled from the Communist Party in this country. But you didn't have to do even that. If some other member of the party got thrown out on the grounds that he or she was a Trotskyist, and you took the floor to ask why he or she was thrown out, you, too, were out.... The resolution adopted in 1938 carefully provided that there be no traces of these procedures in our party.

Our other experience was with the bureaucratic hacks in the Socialist Party. They pretended to practice political all-inclusiveness.... As the Socialist Party formally projected it, all who considered themselves socialists should get together in one party, with equal rights for all. It turned out, however, that some inside the party were more equal than others. At a convention of the Socialist Party, they would allow discussion from the floor, members could come as delegates from their branches and get up and pop off as they wished. It might seem that everything was decided democratically. But it was not so at all. All the time the self-perpetuating leadership of top bureaucratic hacks were making horse trades and deals with one another behind the scenes to settle policy, to decide who would remain in office, who would get this post, who would get that post. It was a fake and a fraud....

[The 1938 resolution] declared the SWP inclusive only in the sense that the party accepts into its ranks those who accept its program; admission is denied to those who reject its program — politics first, politics only, being the criteria.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



NEWARK — Strong opposition has been raised to the Nov. 30 decision of the Newark school board to display the flag of Black liberation alongside the U.S. flag in every classroom of schools with a Black majority. With a school population that is 80 percent Black, this decision in Newark applies to all but two or three schools. And implementation would require the purchase of over 2,000 red, black and green flags.

The *New York Times* ran a front-page story on the event in its Dec. 2 issue. The following day, a *Times* editorial called the decision "an unacceptable and intolerable intrusion of political symbolism into the education system." Further on, the *Times* claimed, "Its sanction by educational authorities is as subversive as the outrageous display of the Confederate flag in some recalcitrant Southern school districts."

New Jersey legislators immediately went into action by considering a hastily-drawn bill outlawing the display of any other flag but the stars and stripes in school buildings. The bill has yet to become law.

These views, however, run quite contrary to sentiment in the Black community.

"The flag stands for determination, it stands for liberation," Derrell Fennel, president of the student body at Arts High School, told this reporter. She and other

students were surprised that the flag had provoked so much heat. As they related it, the motion on displaying the flag was a spontaneous gesture. It came in the wake of a gathering of close to 400 students at the Nov. 30 board meeting and the submission to the board of a 12-page set of demands — entitled "Education for Liberation" — by the Newark Student Federation, a city-wide organization.



January 11, 1947

NEW YORK, Jan. 3 — The first steps in a community action to block wholesale evictions in mid-winter of 2,234 Harlem families were taken by more than 400 indignant tenants at a mass meeting called tonight in the threatened area by the Harlem Branch of the Socialist Workers Party. Scores were turned away from the Universal Church of Christ, 44 W. 115 St., after the hall was filled to capacity.

The meeting protested the action of the New York City Housing Authority, ordering the tenants to move from their homes on three square blocks between 112 and 115 Streets east of Lenox Ave. by Feb. 20, in order to clear the site for the Stephen Foster housing project. The projected apartments will accommodate only about half the number of families now living in the area.

The Lenox Fifth Avenue Tenants League, organized at the mass meeting, unanimously adopted a resolution and program of action to halt the evictions until adequate housing is provided for all the present tenants.

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Solidarity with Korean workers

Capitalists from are smarting, from Seoul to New York and Tokyo, from the explosive fight by hundreds of thousands of workers in south Korea who launched a general strike to protest antilabor laws rammed through the National Assembly. The struggle against these laws, which are aimed at stunting the power of unions and cutting down working peoples' democratic space, is one that working people around the world can and should identify with.

Like their brethren elsewhere, the rulers in south Korea are going directly after the rights and living conditions of the working class to try to reverse the decline in their profits. They claimed the need for more "flexibility" to lay off workers and ban unions in order to compete with rival bloodsuckers.

In response, Seoul got a taste of the power of the working class. When the workers moved into action, shutting major sectors of production, the economy was jolted, and many stock investors jumped ship. This is a glimpse of what is to come as working people internationally say "enough" to austerity measures.

The rulers fear the growing class consciousness of the working class and its allies. That is why the rulers cut away at the democratic foundations workers have won and use to defend their interests. That is also why the south Korean bourgeoisie pushed to implement laws that juice its political police, who have a history of killing and jailing working-class fighters, while at the same time banning unions, and opening the road for government-led binding arbitration. And that is why they sent full riot gear cops in armored vehicles to confront the strikers' demonstrations. Those workers are capitalism's gravediggers.

The irreconcilable conflict between the bosses and workers in the south is also marked by the half-century struggle of the Korean people to unify their country. The strike has won solidarity from south Korean students, some of whom joined in the demonstrations. University students have been among the most outspoken proponents for a reunified Korea.

In addition to the home-grown bourgeoisie and their armed forces, working people in Korea confront the reality that the Seoul regime is backed up by 37,000 U.S. troops. Washington has maintained and reinforced the division of the Korean peninsula for more than 40 years, since their failure to crush the workers state in the north in the Korean War.

Workers and all democratic-minded fighters the world over should back the Korean workers' demands for a repeal of the regime's antilabor laws. In addition, the labor movement should demand Washington get its boot off the neck of the Korean people, and demand all imperialist troops get out of Korea now.

Support strike at Wheeling-Pitt

After three months on the picket line, it's clear that the workers on strike at Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel are in for a long, hard battle, one that needs the solidarity of other workers and class-struggle minded fighters.

The bosses at Wheeling-Pitt won an edge over their competitors in 1985 when they used the cover of bankruptcy proceedings as a pretext to end the guaranteed pension benefits workers in the industry had won over years of struggles. They are determined not to give in to the union demands. In fact they need to push for much deeper concessions if they are to boost their profit rates and stay ahead of their rivals. There will be no limit to the bosses' offensive against labor, except that which workers, organized together, fight to impose.

The outcome of this battle is also significant because it comes at a time when Democrats and Republicans are pushing a whole-scale assault on federal retirement pensions workers shed their blood to win in the labor struggles of the 1930s. Holding the ground against one company's assault on pension benefits can only aid the larger battle to defend Social Security and Medicare.

The capitalists' representatives in government are clearly on the company's side. Ohio state officials, for instance, denied unemployment compensation to the strikers in that state; West Virginia officials are about to rule on whether to provide benefits there.

The turnout at a December 22 support rally in Steubenville, Ohio, shows a glimpse of what's possible in organizing solidarity. Steelworkers and other unionists from throughout the area came, many bringing donations collected at their plant gates and union meetings. They included workers like those at WCI Steel and Ravenswood Aluminum Corp. who have been through labor battles of their own in the last several years, and bring those class-struggle experiences with them.

Much broader support is needed. Strike backers can organize collections of funds and material aid. You can visit the picket lines at the eight struck mills in the Ohio Valley, and bring others from your factory, farm, or school as well. You can invite striking steelworkers to address your union local, community meeting, or classroom to tell the truth about their fight and counter company propaganda.

We also urge our readers, as they join in , to bring the *Militant*, *New International* and *Pathfinder* books to the picket lines, to make available the experiences and lessons of workers' struggles around the world to these fighters standing up to the steel barons.

What's behind Belgrade protests?

Reader Nicholas Brand asks several questions regarding recent events in Yugoslavia. He refers to an editorial in the December 14 *People's Weekly World*, the weekly newspaper that reflects the views of the U.S. Communist Party (CPUSA).

That editorial, which focused on condemning

working-class policies of the Bonapartist regime of Tito — was the main culprit for the slaughter in Yugoslavia and fully responsible for continuing to unravel the lasting gains working people made through the 1945 Yugoslav revolution.

Are most demonstrators "right-wing extremists?" Clearly not.

Some among the protesters do carry U.S. and German flags and embrace the reactionary

DISCUSSION WITH OUR READERS

Washington's push to expand NATO by taking into membership Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic, said, "The European NATO members are junior partners, taking their orders from the Pentagon. Take the current NATO deployment in the Balkans. There NATO, like a cop on the beat, is issuing ultimatums to President Slobodan Milosevic of Yugoslavia while right-wing extremists stage provocative demonstrations to destabilize his united front/socialist government which won a clear majority in recent elections."

The CPUSA has consistently echoed the rationalizations of the Stalinist regime of Slobodan Milosevic in Serbia, which the U.S. Stalinists support 100 percent. Back in 1992, the *People's Weekly World* ran articles arguing that Muslims in Bosnia are for the most part privileged heirs of the landlord class that ruled the region during the days of the Ottoman empire in an attempt to justify the carnage and the "ethnic cleansing" the Milosevic regime initiated in Yugoslavia. The CPUSA also supported the division of Bosnia into cantons — that is "autonomous" regions supposedly divided along national lines — as a way to stop the war. This proposal, put forward by the rival bureaucratic regimes in Serbia and Croatia, was part of their thinly veiled attempt to grab land and economic resources in Bosnia to support the bourgeois way of life of the castes they represent. It made it easier for Washington and Bonn to deepen their imperialist intervention into the Yugoslav workers state, impose the Dayton accord that partitioned Bosnia, and send NATO troops to occupy that Yugoslav republic.

As an aside, it's interesting to note that the *Weekly World* has run only one small news article on developments in Yugoslavia since the protests against the Milosevic regime erupted November 18. The Stalinist school of falsification has always displayed great contempt for the facts.

Who are the leaders of the opposition coalition?

Now let's take up several of Brand's questions.

Who leads the anti-Milosevic demonstrations? The main leaders of Zajedno, the opposition coalition, are certainly no friends of the working class. Vuk Draskovic and his Serbian Renewal movement have supported the return of the monarchy and ran a paramilitary unit during Belgrade's 1991 war against Croatia that did its own "ethnic cleansing" on the side of pro-Belgrade Serbs. Draskovic, a former official of the League of Yugoslav Communists that ruled Yugoslavia until it broke up in 1990, has been an ardent advocate of "Serbian nationalism" of the Milosevic brand. He is now trying to paint a more democratic facade by pointing to his opposition to some of the atrocities in Bosnia by Belgrade backers. He is also a supporter of the Dayton accord and of the imperialist "war crimes" tribunal in the Hague handing out indictments in Bosnia.

Zoran Djindjic of the Democratic Party, often described in the bourgeois press as a "German-educated philosopher," has been a pro-capitalist intellectual since the 1970s. In 1974 he was arrested and sentenced to several months in jail by the regime of Josip Tito for trying to form a student union independent of the control of the Yugoslav CP. During the war in Bosnia, he visited and lent his support to chauvinist pro-Belgrade Serbs in that Yugoslav republic and backed "ethnic cleansing." Like Draskovic, he also supports the Dayton accord. In recent months he has been advocating openly pro-imperialist policies and the return of capitalism in Yugoslavia.

Sociologist Vesna Pesic of the Civic Alliance is one of the junior partners in Zajedno. Espousing liberal pro-capitalist views, Pesic has consistently opposed Belgrade's nationalism and took part in the antiwar actions of 1991-92.

Washington, Bonn, and other capitalist powers are on the lookout for finding someone among opposition who could replace Milosevic and head a more openly pro-imperialist regime; just like the regimes of Vaclav Havel in Czechoslovakia or Lech Walesa in Poland that came to power in Eastern Europe after 1989, replacing the previous Stalinist governments. The imperialist powers may eventually succeed in this quest in Serbia, but they do face difficulties in finding another Havel, as the bourgeois press readily admits.

We shouldn't forget, however, that the Milosevic administration — following the tradition and anti-

views of Draskovic and Djindjic. Thousands would also rather see the capitalist profit system return to Yugoslavia. Some workers also espouse such views. Just like when Milosevic, Tudjman, and company organized along nationalist lines to justify grabbing territory and resources for personal gain they did find some support among layers of the population in each republic. Because of decades of Stalinist misleadership, the class consciousness of workers and farmers has been eroded. Many misidentify democracy with capitalism.

Students, workers stand up for democratic rights

But thousands of students, other young people, and many workers have come out into the streets for one simple reason: Regardless of their views on Milosevic or the opposition, they cannot tolerate declaring an election invalid just because the government did not like the fact that the opposition won a larger minority of city halls in the municipal ballot. Discontent over the government's economic and social policies — which continue to exacerbate the economic catastrophe facing working people in Serbia — also fuels the protests, as well as strikes and other labor actions that took place earlier in 1996.

The Zajedno coalition cannot rally the working class in Serbia into a general strike or other mass action that would bring down the regime, as the *Militant* has reported. Belgrade plays on the fact that hundreds of thousands of working people in Yugoslavia are opposed to imperialist intervention — whether in the form of German tanks and military advisers first sent by Bonn to Zagreb, or the subsequent sanctions slapped on Serbia and Montenegro by the United Nations, or the U.S.-led NATO occupation of Bosnia. This anti-imperialist consciousness among wide layers of working people is one of the lasting gains of the 1945 revolution.

But it's also a fraud to refer to the Milosevic regime, as the *Weekly World* cynically does, as a "united front/socialist government." The so-called united front is mainly composed of Milosevic's Socialist Party and the United Left, run by his wife. A junior partner, the tiny New Democracy party, is made up mainly of small businessmen who still see their interests tied to the regime. The rightist Serbian Radical Party has also backed the Milosevic "socialist government" in parliament.

The imperialist powers are surely working hard to try to take advantage of situation. No one knows how many agents the CIA or other imperialist institutions have deployed among the demonstrators. One can assume many — just like the FBI and other police agencies have done and continue to do at most significant social protests in the United States and other countries.

Resistance to the Stalinist and anti-working-class policies of Belgrade, however, as well as against Tudjman's antidemocratic measures in Croatia, are among the best counters to imperialist intervention under current conditions. This resistance shows that the working class in Yugoslavia is alive and has not been completely demoralized and atomized, as the bourgeois media constantly claims. And the Yugoslav workers state is not about to be picked up piece by piece and brought back into the capitalist system of exploitation — despite the bureaucratic degeneration of the 1945 revolution and the recent war.

The tanks, artillery, and ground troops of NATO are aimed against workers and students in the streets in Nis, Kragujevac, Belgrade, Zagreb, Sarajevo, and other Yugoslav cities who resisted the "ethnic cleansing" and the slaughter against tremendous odds and are not ready to be governed dictatorially by any bureaucrats — of the Stalinist or other variety. Washington, Bonn, London, and Paris will try to use their military might to overthrow the workers state in Yugoslavia, possibly using force and violence against many of the very same people they are demagogically praising for protesting in the streets today.

For this reason, the best help workers in the United States and other imperialist countries can give to our brothers and sisters in Yugoslavia — the best way to counter any "right-wing extremists" or imperialist agents among the protesters — is to demand that NATO and all imperialist troops get out of Yugoslavia now.

Working people in Yugoslavia will eventually take care of their need to put in power a government that represents their interests — just like they proved they are capable of doing through their accomplishments during the 1945 Yugoslav revolution.

— ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

Ohio hospital workers strike

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

quoted Trudy Kapper, vice president for community relations for Summa Health System, stating, "We have an offer on the table and this is the contract we would like [the strikers] to agree to."

pose a concessionary wage package similar to what workers at Safeway were forced to accept last summer. At the time, Safeway, another supermarket chain, threatened to close its distribution warehouse in Landover and move to another state if workers did not accept its demands.

Giant wants to impose a similar freeze on truck drivers' wages for the next five years. The company has argued in full-page ads taken out in major area newspapers that it must have parity, as it claims to always have had, with the contract in effect at Safeway.

The strikers have been picketing some of the Giant stores and are discussing expanding the walkout to companies hired to supply Giant during the strike.

"I saw the strikers and I didn't want to cross the picket line," stated shopper Pat Victor, 37, of Stafford, Virginia. "When people cross the picket line, it gives management more power. It takes a lot for somebody to go on strike."

Officials of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Locals 27 and 400 say they are considering whether to encourage local members to honor the Teamster picket lines. Some 20,000 UFCW members are employed at jobs inside Giant stores. As of Christmas, the UFCW international had not sanctioned honoring the truckers' picket lines.

Sun Oil announces layoffs in Pennsylvania

MARCUS HOOK, Pennsylvania — On December 4, Sun Oil Co., the second largest independent U.S. refiner, announced a "competitive improvement plan" that would lay off 235 employees at its Marcus Hook refinery. The proposed layoffs come on top of cuts at the company's Point Breeze refinery and threats to close that facility if profitability doesn't improve by mid-1997.

The layoffs would affect operators hired as far back as 1985, and encompass more than a third of the unionized employees. The Marcus Hook refinery has a total hourly workforce of 672, represented by Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 8-901. So far all the proposed



Alvin Freeman, an employee of Crown Central Petroleum for 29 years, speaks at an union rally in Baltimore, Maryland, in mid-December. The action, held outside Crown Corporate Headquarters in Baltimore, was sponsored by the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers to fight the owner's lockout of union members. The OCAW launched a boycott of the company to press its demands.

cuts are among the unionized workforce.

"The current staffing is out of line with industry standards," said Sun spokesperson Bud Davis. "Secondly, we've just completed a modernization and upgrading of the major units at the refinery and incorporated a number of technological advances and we have simplified the operations."

John Rossi, the refinery manager, said the cuts would not affect output. In a meeting with employees, Rossi said the company needs more supervisors and more discipline. In a letter of intent handed to union officials before the meeting, the company delineated that the "competitive improvement plan" included the elimination of the chief operator job classification.

The Marcus Hook refinery has a chief operator on each of its units who is responsible for the running of the unit, writing permits, and overall decision making about the unit's functioning. During the 1996 contract negotiations, the company attempted to eliminate this classification, but was unsuccessful. Sun is demanding other work rule concessions regarding permit writing, running maintenance, and other practices.

Union members have responded with outrage to the proposed layoffs. "We've got to fight. This is just the start," said Bob McGurk, a

maintenance worker at the refinery. "They'll do more."

Many expressed concern over the safety of the refinery with such a reduced work force.

At an impromptu rally held at the main gate of the refinery on December 18, union officials and over 200 union members protested the company proposals. "They want one supervisor for every 3.8 operators and one supervisor for every 2.7 maintenance workers," said OCAW international representative Art Wilson.

The Sun refinery is located across the street from the former BP refinery, now owned by TOSCO Corp., the no. 1 independent refiner in the United States. Sun is attempting to drive through some of the same work rule changes that TOSCO carried out when it forced OCAW 8-234 to accept a concession contract under threat of closing the facility. After a ten-month lock out, the company hired back whoever it wanted, disregarding seniority.

Mike Fitzsimmons, member of United Auto Workers Local 420 in Cleveland; Brian Williams, member of United Steelworkers of America Local 2609 in Sparrows Point, Maryland; and Kathy Mickells and Connie Allen, members of OCAW Local 8-901 at the Marcus Hook Sun Oil refinery in Pennsylvania, contributed to this column.

ON THE PICKET LINE

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

AKRON, Ohio — Five hundred striking hospital workers and their supporters rallied in front of Akron City Hospital December 14 to protest Summa Health System's union-busting tactics. Among the supporters were auto workers, truck drivers, carpenters, members of the Million Man March, Inc., and friends and neighbors of the hospital workers.

The crowd sang and chanted, "No union; no peace!" and "684!"

Members of Local 684 of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees walked out of the hospital and set up picket shacks and burn barrels on November 8. The union represents 480 workers in non-professional jobs, ranging from medical nursing aides to dietary and maintenance workers.

According to Larry Stump, one of the strike coordinators, Summa insisted on the "sole, exclusive, non-reviewable right to reassign work sites and shifts." He also said the company wants to use part-time workers and nonunion subcontractors to do work performed by union members.

Summa Health System operates Akron City Hospital and St. Thomas Hospital in Akron. There is no union representing workers at St. Thomas. The last contract with Local 684 at Akron City expired in November 1995.

The Akron *Beacon Journal*

Carolyn Wilcher, a 44-year-old pharmacy technician with 25 years at the hospital, described her experience with the extra security guards hired by Summa to patrol the picket lines. "They come up to us at night and shine flashlights and video cameras in our faces and use abusive language to try to intimidate us," she said. "Some of them walk around with rottweilers. Most of us on strike are women, so I asked my husband to join me on the line."

"Summa is about profits, not patient care," said Pat Austin, a 39-year-old housekeeping worker. "They're buying other hospitals and they want to keep the union out. It's cheaper to get rid of us. I'm confident the union can win a contract. That's why I'm here."

Grocery workers strike in Maryland

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Three hundred and twenty members of Teamsters Local 639, based in Landover and Jessup, Maryland, struck Giant Food Inc. December 15 to win a new contract. The striking drivers deliver goods from the company's warehouse and production facilities to the 174 stores in the Giant chain.

Shortly after the strike began thousands of Teamster members employed at Giant's baking and processing center and warehouses in Landover and Jessup agreed not to cross the truckers' picket line. Giant then shut down these operations December 18 for the duration of the strike, idling an additional 2,200 workers.

At the heart of the dispute is union opposition to company plans to outsource deliveries. Giant insists on hiring nonunion drivers to deliver food shipments to some of its stores.

The company also wants to im-

LETTERS

What's up in Yugoslavia?

The recent demonstrations in Belgrade are difficult to understand from a Marxist perspective.

Many of the demonstrators, according to the *People's Weekly World* (the Communist Party USA paper) are "right wing extremists [staging] provocative demonstrations to destabilize" a so-called "united front/socialist government."

But how many of the protesters are right-wing extremists?

I do know that demonstrators have been filmed carrying the U.S. flag, which represents, in my opinion, the exploitation and oppression of working people, racism, sexism, and imperialist war.

On the other hand, the government of President Milosevic, a Stalinist hack, is certainly not a socialist government, as the CPUSA claims.

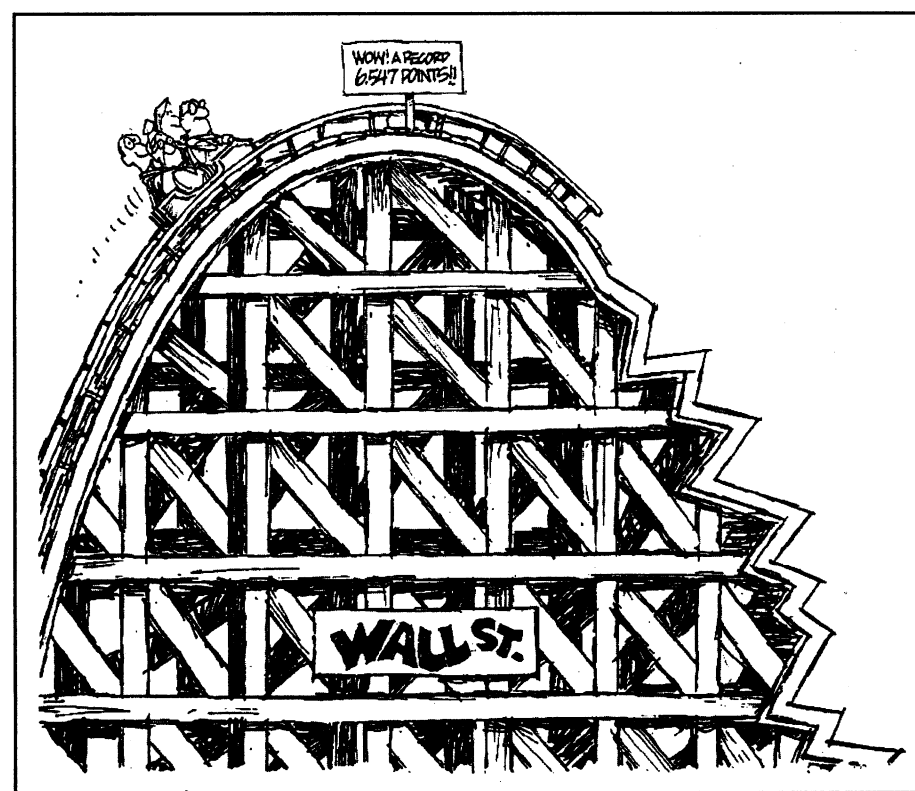
And where is the CIA? How many of the marchers work for them? It is surely no coincidence that the U.S. has placed itself on the side of the demonstrators.

So just what in the hell is going on?

Nicholas Brand
Loretto, Pennsylvania

'Peace' in Guatemala

The living standards of the majority of Guatemalans, if you can



call that living, have been driven down by regimes that throughout history have been led by the military and sponsored by the wealthy who control the economy — capitalist groups like UNARGO and CACIF, among others.

Throughout 36 years of war the hardest hit have always been the

peasants, students, workers, and indigenous peoples, who are the ham in the bosses' sandwich. Their conditions of life are worse today than when the war began, and they won't be resolved by the signing of the peace accord, even if all the heads of state and Mother Teresa herself are present.

cially in 1978-83, when entire villages were massacred.

No society can live in peace with such pain, mourning, and attempts to ignore the past. Neither the government nor the URNG has the moral right to decide whether to pardon or not; this right belongs exclusively to the people.

Those who used to claim to be class enemies are now converging. On December 29 they will sit at the same table — from the lion king to the buzzard king — to jointly manage the affairs of the bourgeoisie.

The URNG [Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity], like the current government, is trying with smoke and mirrors to win the support of the civilian population, as if the people had historical amnesia.

They are trying to deny them the truth and prevent justice from being administered for the crimes committed by the army against the civilian population, especially

For those of us involved in revolutionary movements around the world, this "peace accord" in Guatemala does not represent a victory or a defeat. It confirms once again the lack of leadership in Latin America and the fact that Stalinism is rapidly weakening.

These peace accords are a mockery of our comrades who were mowed down in the streets, on the battlefield, of those who were imprisoned and tortured, of those who were condemned to live in exile, of all those who shouted the truth in the face of the enemy.

But the people of Guatemala will resist and organize themselves. And after the signing of the peace accord, "more than one worker, student, or peasant will return home and nostalgically contemplate the image tacked on the wall: a bearded youth in the mountains holding a rifle."

Leonel Cabrera
Atlanta, Georgia

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.

Paris probes for labor concessions

French rulers fear social explosions as capitalist crisis deepens polarization

BY MARTIN KOPPEL

French president Jacques Chirac went on national television December 12 to bewail the dilemma his government is facing. "We are a profoundly conservative country" resistant to the changes necessary to shrink the social entitlements that have been a fact of life in France for decades, Chirac stated.

He singled out striking truck drivers for "taking the French hostage." After 12 days of blocking highways and paralyzing parts of the country, the workers had won retirement at age 55 and other demands, dealing a blow to the government's antilabor policies.

The president came to the defense of his prime minister, Alain Juppé, who has spearheaded a severe program of economic austerity. This program is "unpopular but necessary," Chirac asserted. He complained that workers in France "always look to the state for a solution," and have resisted these changes. "We can't live forever with a system of organization and management... that's 20 or 30 years old," he declared.

To capitalists in France, faced with declining profit rates and intensified competition from their rivals in Washington, London, and Bonn, the social gains working people won over the past half century are indeed a problem. These include social security and retirement pensions, state-funded health care, rent subsidies, five weeks annual vacation for many workers, and government subsidies for a range of other social needs.

These gains were the product of giant class battles. Three times this century — 1936, 1945-47, and 1968 — working people in France carried out massive upsurges that opened the possibility of taking political power from the ruling capitalist families. While the Stalinist and social democratic misleadership in the labor movement blocked a socialist revolution each time, the bourgeoisie was forced to grant substantial concessions to win social peace.

Today, however, France is in its deepest economic crisis since the end of World War II. On December 16 the French government agency INSEE projected that unemployment, now at a post-war record of 12.6 percent, will rise to 13 percent by mid-1997. At least 3.5 million workers are jobless. Meanwhile, wages continue to stagnate. This cyclical downturn in the business cycle occurs in a period of long-term depression caused by falling rates of profit. Growth rates in France have decreased year after year, reaching a low of 1.3 percent in 1996.

Single currency as pretext for austerity

To reverse this crisis and gain an edge over their international rivals, the French rulers are pushing to slash social spending and drive down the value of labor power. They are justifying this austerity drive under the banner of creating a single European currency. In his television appearance Chirac argued that only a European currency could allow French business to compete with U.S. and Asian corporations. "We need a means to struggle against American hegemony," he stated. "There is a problem of the dollar. The only way is to be strong, to have a common currency. There is no other way."

Paris appears unlikely to meet the criteria for membership in the projected European Monetary Union (EMU) by the Jan. 1, 1999, deadline. In fact, each passing month brings evidence that a single European currency is further away than ever, with conflicts sharpening among and within the imperialist bourgeoisies.

Tensions have flared up between Paris and Bonn, most recently over a proposed European Central Bank. The French government has called for an international "stability council" as a counterbalance to a German-dominated bank. Bonn, the strongest economic power in the region, demands the new financial institution be free from control by an "outside" political body.



French truckers' November victory gave other workers confidence to fight austerity

Meanwhile, the Chirac administration has repeatedly butted heads with the U.S. government in the international arena. Paris resisted Washington's campaign to replace United Nations secretary general Boutros Boutros-Ghali and unsuccessfully demanded that a European (preferably French) officer head NATO's southern command in Naples. It has clashed with Washington over imperialist intervention in central Africa, the Mideast, and Yugoslavia, with each power seeking to press its interests at the expense of the other.

French rulers fear social explosion

At the same time, the French rulers, concerned that the government's attacks on social gains may lead to a social explosion, are beset by internal differences.

Speaking for some in the French ruling class, former president Valéry Giscard d'Estaing has argued for a devaluation of the franc against the dollar to make French industry more competitive on the world market. He says this would spur growth and reduce unemployment.

Such a move would be a departure from Paris's *franc fort* (strong franc) policy of pegging its currency to the German mark. Supporters of Chirac's policies opposed Giscard's proposal, saying it would delay needed austerity measures, torpedo the European currency, and leave Central Europe in Bonn's domain, icing out French capital.

Chirac's government has been seriously weakened by its inability to push through its austerity package. That plan, announced by Juppé in November 1995, aimed to make drastic cuts in social security, extend by two and a half years the retirement age for public employees, and privatize sectors of the nationalized rail, gas, electricity, and telephone companies, which would result in thousands of layoffs.

This sweeping assault on social conquests sparked a huge nationwide strike wave in November and December 1995, led by rail and transit workers. The government was forced to back off from some of the harshest aspects of the Juppé plan.

Over the past year, however, the government has continued its probes. Workers have responded each time with resistance. On October 17, two million workers struck against the austerity measures; the government was forced to withdraw a wage freeze the day before.

Truckers' victory inspires other actions

The November victory of the truckers strike inspired a series of smaller labor actions around the country. Bus drivers in Rouen, Toulouse, and Dunkirk struck for a shorter workweek.

The General Labor Confederation (CGT), the main labor federation, organized a 24-hour transportation stoppage with similar

demands in major cities throughout France, except Paris.

Thousands of striking stage actors and other performing artists marched through Paris December 19 to protest cutbacks in unemployment insurance. Airline workers, railroad engineers, teachers, journalists, and doctors have staged strikes in recent weeks.

All these have been defensive struggles against government attacks and for relief from the effects of the economic crisis. The Rouen bus strike, for example, won a pledge to hire 80 drivers. The workweek was shortened from 38 to 34 hours, with 37 hours' pay the first year and 36 the second.

The government's drive to sell off state-owned industries hit a pothole December 4 when it halted the planned sale of Thomson SA, the defense and consumer electronics giant. Some 20,000 Thomson workers demonstrated November 20 against the sale in front of the National Assembly, among other protests. Union officials, however, channeled protests against the privatization into chauvinist opposition to selling the company to Daewoo, a South Korean company.

An assault on democratic rights has accompanied the drive against workers' social wage. In the name of fighting "terrorism" the Chirac government has relaunched its *Vigipirate* operation, taking advantage of a December 3 subway bombing for which no one has taken responsibility.

Some 1,800 heavily armed soldiers have joined cops in patrolling cities around the country. Soldiers and police routinely interrogate brown- and black-skinned youth and workers in railroad and subway stations. In 1995, security forces carried out nearly 2 million ID checks and deported several thousand immigrants.

In this atmosphere, the French parliament passed an anti-immigrant bill proposed by

Interior Minister Jean-Louis Debré. The law would restrict the right of immigrants to renew their residence cards, authorize workplace raids, and permit the detention of individuals for 48 hours without recourse to a judge, among other things.

SP seeks to win next elections

Profiting from the unpopularity of the Chirac-Juppé government, which has hit record lows in opinion polls, opposition parties are getting wind in their sails. The Socialist Party, France's main bourgeois workers party, seeks to win control of the National Assembly in the 1998 elections and form the next government.

At the party's December 14-15 convention, SP leader Lionel Jospin proposed a course of "realism from the left." He supported Chirac on the European currency but advocated a "European social contract" to cushion the effects. Jospin said he favored "not a brutal and sharp wage increase but gradually increasing [workers'] share of the national income." The SP — which dominates the French Democratic Confederation of Labor (CFDT), the second-largest union federation — called for a 35-hour workweek with no cut in pay, and the creation of 700,000 jobs for youth.

The French Communist Party held its convention December 18-22. CP leader Robert Hue presented a statesmanlike image to position the party to win a junior role in a future coalition government with the Socialist Party. He called for replacing "class struggle" with "citizens' participation." Another theme of the Stalinist convention was the "transformation" (*mutation*) of the party itself, dropping any vestige of a "Third International"-type party in favor of a party "of a new kind." This is part of the CP's moves toward a more openly social democratic organization.

Hue took a critical stance toward the single European currency, arguing for how best to defend "French" interests against U.S. and German domination. He proposed a national referendum on the issue.

The CP's "national communist" perspective was also apparent in its position in the immigration debate. While opposing the new bill's restrictions on "legal" immigrants, CP leader Patrick Braouezec, deputy mayor of the St.-Denis district of Paris, called for "more effective means to combat illegal immigration."

Echoing the CP, the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR) published its stance on the EMU in an article in the December 12 issue of the weekly *Rouge*, titled "For a referendum on the single currency!" It called for "a struggle against Maastricht," referring to the 1991 treaty that was the beginning of the EMU process.

At its November 8-11 convention, the LCR issued a call to the CP, SP, and other left-wing parties to form "a fighting unity of the left." It also proposed a new political

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Leon Trotsky
On France



Further reading from Pathfinder

A mass revolutionary upsurge engulfed France in the mid-1930s in response to the ravages of a world capitalist depression. Trotsky exposed the class-collaborationist "People's Front" policy of the Stalinist and social democratic misleaders in the workers movement. He argued that while organizing broad mobilizations against the fascists, workers and peasants needed to mount a struggle to take political power. \$21.⁹⁵

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