

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Steelworkers call for solidarity at Wheeling-Pitt

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 61 NO. 8 FEBRUARY 24, 1997

Joblessness hits record high in Germany

BY CARL-ERIK ISACSSON

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — The number of jobless workers in Germany soared by more than 500,000 in January, to 4.66 million. The big-business press around the world made the point that unemployment is now at its highest level since Adolf Hitler came to power in 1933. As a percentage, unemployment rose to 12.2 percent, up from 10.8 percent in December 1996. In western Germany joblessness rose from 9.6 percent to 10.6 percent, while in eastern Germany the figure jumped from 15.9 percent to 18.7 percent.

While German officials tried to blame the new unemployment figures on cold weather, Continued on Page 7

'Militant' announces sales, fund campaigns

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS AND ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

Socialist workers, members of the Young Socialists, and other readers of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* have launched a three-week campaign to increase the long-term readership of these periodicals. The sub renewal effort precedes a drive in March and April to win hundreds of new readers to the socialist publications and raise over \$100,000 from workers, farmers, and young people who appreciate them and want to help sustain them financially. Reaching out this way to young rebels and working people interested in the *Militant's* factual presentation and scientific analysis of world politics will also help recruit new members to the Continued on Page 5

Protests force ouster of president in Ecuador

Nationwide strike by 2 million demands halt to austerity

BY HILDA CUZCO

Protests against sharp austerity measures exploded in Ecuador in early February, forcing the ouster of President Abdalá Bucaram. Two million people mobilized in a 48-hour nationwide strike called by the *Frente Patriótico* (Patriotic Front), a coalition of labor unions, students, women's groups, community, and human rights organizations. Indigenous groups under the Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador (CONAIE) also joined the protest by blocking roads connecting major Andean provinces. Commercial and industrial organizations, and the chambers of commerce participated as well.

In the wake of the two-day strike, Ecuador's Congress dismissed Bucaram February 6 by a vote 44 to 34, declaring him mentally incapable of governing. For a couple of days Vice President Rosalía Arteaga, initially backed by the military, and Fabián Alarcón, head of Congress, jockeyed for the post of president. Bucaram holed himself up in the presidential palace, declaring the legislature's action illegal. Troops clashed with several thousand demonstrators who tried to get near the palace February 7. One teenager was killed and others were injured.

After some debate, the National Congress voted February 11 to appoint Alarcón as interim president until new elections in August 1998, and Arteaga acceded. Meanwhile, unable to hold the support of the military, the ousted president left for the coastal



Massive rally in Quito (above) was part of nationwide mobilization February 5. Inset: Indigenous people demonstrate in Riobamba, capital of Chimborazo province.

city of Guayaquil, where he was previously mayor, and announced a tour through several Latin American countries to denounce the new regime as "a civil dictatorship."

Bucaram, founder of the Ecuadorian Roldosista Party (PRE), took office last August after a campaign in which he demagogically pledged to fight "corruption" and the ruling "oligarchy." Calling himself *El*

Loco, or the Crazy One, Bucaram campaigned with public performances as a singer, dancer, and comedian. He promised to build 200,000 housing units with a 75 percent subsidy during his administration. His rival, Jaime Nebot of the Social Christian Party, made a similar vow.

The president, however, soon began Continued on Page 12

Auto strike firm at Johnson Controls

BY JOHN SARGE

PLYMOUTH, Michigan — A strike by 500 workers at two Johnson Controls Inc. (JCI) seat factories led Ford to close down all or part of three auto assembly plants on February 7, idling 6,800 members of the United Auto Workers (UAW). The struck plants supply seats for two popular Ford trucks built at the Michigan Truck Plant (MTP), and the Lorain and Avon Lake as-

sembly plants outside of Cleveland.

The 300 striking workers here and 200 in Oberlin, Ohio, are demanding an initial contract. The workers joined the UAW last summer during national contract negotiations between the UAW and the Big Three (General Motors, Ford and Chrysler).

When the workers set up picket lines

January 28, Ford announced that they would not accept seats built by managers and scabs after the company moved to rapidly replace the striking workers. Hundreds of auto workers and other unionists had joined the picket lines at both plants the first morning of the strike. Ford moved to avoid conflicts Continued on Page 14

Pilots may strike at American

BY JANET POST

MIAMI — As we go to press, pilots at American Airlines are less than two days away from a possible strike, at 12:01 a.m. February 15. The Allied Pilots Association [APA], representing the 9,300 pilots at American, has warned for the last several weeks that pilots would "leave their cockpits and strike" at the end of the 30-day "cooling-off period," if no agreement is reached. Federally mediated contract talks are expected to continue in Washington, D.C., until that time.

On February 12 U.S. president William Clinton declared he was following the developments at American "very closely," and ordered his administration to study the potential economic disruptions of a strike. This is a potential prelude to acting under the Labor Railway Act to bar a work stoppage.

American is the second largest airline in the United States, carrying more than 200,000 passengers a day — 20 percent of domestic air travelers — and employing 90,000 workers.

On February 11, American Airlines chairman Robert Crandall referred to the possible strike as "the coming unpleasantness." He

said that in this period "labor unions have absolute power," and claimed the pilots' demands would make the company unprofitable.

The main issues for the APA members are job security and wages. One central issue is whether APA pilots will fly 67 new jets ordered for American Eagle, the commuter affiliate of American. The airline, like all the other major carriers, plans to fly hundreds of these jets as commuter flights — with lower pay and worse working conditions — in the future. Jay Thomas, deputy coordinator for Miami strike operations, told the *Militant*, "If they outsource the pilots' jobs, then mechanics and flight attendants won't be needed either. It means less wages and benefits, and jobs will be lost."

Rick Walker, a ramp worker at American and member of the Transport Workers Union in Miami, said, "Several of my co-workers support the efforts of the pilots and understand why it is not in our interests to allow the company to divide us."

Janet Post is a member of the International Association of Machinists at Local 368 at United Airlines in Miami.

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What is the social wage and why is it under attack? — page 8



Rebels take ground in Zaire

Antigovernment rebels in eastern Zaire have taken substantial ground in recent weeks. According to government officials and relief workers, the forces fighting to overthrow the regime of Mobutu Sese Seko now have a strong foothold in four of the country's 11 provinces and are poised to attack the major cities of Kisangani and Lubumbashi. The rebels are reportedly supported by the governments of Rwanda, Uganda, and Burundi, along Zaire's eastern border.

News reports indicate the morale of government troops, who are paid as little as \$1 per month, is waning. Some 300 foreign mercenaries who recently arrived in Kisangani have not been faring too well either. A *New York Times* report cited "one person close to the presidential entourage" stating, "The Belgian officers say that the Serbian soldiers just want to give up on this. Their men are getting sick in this climate, they don't speak the right language, and they have never been in a war like this." Several of the mercenaries have already been killed, and others have complained of being paid with counterfeit currency. Mobutu, who has ruled Zaire with Paris's backing since 1965, returned from France February 7, where he was being treated for cancer.

Plane crash raises debate over Israeli occupation of S. Lebanon

Two Israeli military helicopters collided en route to Lebanon February 4, killing all 73 soldiers on board. The crash has stirred debate in Israel over Tel Aviv's continued military occupation in Southern Lebanon. Israeli officials claimed the soldiers were simply being rotated. But Hassan Nasrallah, secretary-general of Hezbollah, an organization fighting against the Israeli forces in Lebanon, said, "There is no doubt that the Israelis were planning an aggressive action against the resistance and Hezbollah."

Meanwhile, Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu authorized the release of all female Palestinian prisoners held in Israeli jails February 7. This was supposed to have happened in 1995 under accords between Tel Aviv and the Palestine Liberation Organization. But authorities had refused to



Palestinians demonstrate in Gaza demanding release of their sons held in Israeli jails. Tel Aviv announced it would free 25 female prisoners. Some 5,000 Palestinians remain in prison.

free four women accused of killing Israelis. Other female prisoners had rejected release in solidarity with the four. About 25 of the 5,000 Palestinians incarcerated in Israel are women.

Washington, Tokyo debate trade

Conflict between Washington and Tokyo over the auto trade is heating up again. General Motors, Ford, and Chrysler, together with officials of the United Auto Workers, issued a statement February 6 describing the depreciation of the Japanese currency in relation to the dollar as "a serious problem."

The statement asserted, "The yen's continuing fall is translating into more sales for Japanese manufacturers at the expense of U.S. automakers and their American workers." The yen reached a four-year low against the dollar February 7. It has dropped 38 percent since last May, making Japanese imports cheaper in the United States.

The Big Three U.S. automakers complain that their share of the U.S. market fell 3.7 points in January, to 71.1 percent, while the sales of Japanese car companies rose a comparable amount. U.S. trade representative Charlene Barshefsky declared that Tokyo wasn't living up to an agreement intended to boost U.S. auto parts sales in Japan.

Corsicans fight Paris's rule

The Corsican National Liberation Front Historic Wing, which calls for separation of Corsica from France, claimed responsibility for setting off 58 bombs February 2. Reuters said the group intended to "show that it has not been crushed in a crackdown by the French police." The bombs damaged the post office, tax offices, and other symbols of French rule. No one was injured by the blasts. Three leaders of the group had been detained by French authorities in the weeks prior to the incident.

Colombian gov't facing crisis

Colombian coffee growers have threatened to go on strike if they do not receive higher prices for the current harvest. The mere announcement of the possibility sent coffee prices to the highest point this year. Colombia is the world's second-largest coffee producer after Brazil. The coffee industry there suffered blows from the dock workers already on strike. Meanwhile, guerrillas from the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia overran the Las Delicias military base on the Ecuador border and took 70 soldiers captive, demanding a pullout of government troops from a southern outpost.

The economic crisis in the South American country and the antidemocratic measures of the government have caused much criticism for Colombian president Ernesto Samper. The Colombian Congress recently

granted broad powers to a regulatory commission to take television news programs off the air on the basis of their content. Many journalists say the move is intended to shut off programs that have investigated suspected ties between traffickers and prominent politicians, including Samper.

State workers strike in Honduras

Tens of thousands of government workers walked off the job February 7 demanding higher wages. Strikers took over many government buildings, occupying some and putting padlocks on the doors at others. The National Association of Public Employees, with a membership of 100,000, is demanding an average 50 percent wage increase; the government says it will only give 13 percent. The average salary for government workers is currently \$80 per month, and two-thirds of the population of 6 million are officially living in poverty.

The strike is a challenge to the austerity drive of President Carlos Reina. Since 1994 his administration has eliminated many subsidies for basic necessities, including food, electricity, water, and telephone service. Prices have shot up as much as 20-fold.

Paltry safeguards for poultry

The Clinton administration issued new food safety regulations that allow poultry producers to check just 10 birds for fecal materials twice per eight-hour shift. Agriculture Secretary Dan Glickman deemed the new rules a "strengthening" of his department's so-called zero-tolerance policy, which says that soiled birds are "not allowed to enter" chilling tanks as they could contaminate other birds with fecal bacteria. "We've got plants producing 67,000 birds per shift, and they are going to sample only 20 birds per shift," national food inspection chairperson David Carney told the *Wall Street Journal*. "It sounds to me like this zero-tolerance rule is a big smoke screen."

Benefits for unwed partners stir debate in San Francisco

The city of San Francisco has implemented an ordinance that mandates all businesses that have contracts with the government to provide health benefits for unmarried partners. This ordinance has been the topic of much debate in that city. United Airlines threatened not to sign a 25-year contract with the city, if forced to comply with the measure.

Mayor William Brown, portrayed as a hard-line supporter of the ordinance in the bourgeois press, initially even refused the Roman Catholic Church an exemption, rejecting grounds that personal religious belief was reason enough to deny benefits. Over the first week of February, though, Brown retreated and now says that amending the ordinance to allow employers more flexibility is not "out of the realm" of possibility.

— BRIAN TAYLOR
AND NAOMI CRAINE

THE MILITANT

Workers, farmers fight austerity

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The Militant

Vol. 61/No. 8

Closing news date: February 13, 1996

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Published weekly except for one week in December and biweekly from mid-June to mid-August by the Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Telephone: (212) 243-6392; Fax (212) 924-6040.

The Militant can be reached via CompuServe at: 73311.2720 or via Peacenet at: themilitant

Internet: 73311.2720@compuserve.com or: themilitant@igc.apc.org

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

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

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

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

Latin America, Caribbean: for one-year sub-

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

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

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Ottawa attacks the Cuban revolution, but complains about Helms-Burton law

BY MICHEL PRAIRIE

MONTREAL — On January 21-22, Canada's foreign affairs minister, Lloyd Axworthy, made a highly publicized trip to Cuba. This was the highest ranking visit to Cuba by a representative of the Canadian government since the trip made in 1976 by then Prime Minister Pierre Trudeau. While in Cuba, Axworthy met twice with president Fidel Castro and signed a joint statement on "human-rights issues" with Foreign Affairs minister Roberto Robaina.

Axworthy's trip was made in a context of sharpening tensions between Ottawa and Washington over the misnamed U.S. Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996, also known as the Helms-Burton law. At the same time, it signaled that despite its denunciations of aspects of Washington's legislation, Ottawa was bending to its pressures — adding its voice to those of U.S. imperialism's rivals in Europe, who recently joined its so-called "human rights" slanders against the Cuban revolution.

The Helms-Burton law was adopted by the U.S. government in March 1996. It tightened Washington's decades-long embargo against the Cuban revolution. And it deepened a trade drive by Washington against its imperialist allies — who are also its rivals — in Europe and Canada.

The legislation allows U.S. citizens, whose property was taken over by Cuban workers and farmers in years 1959-61 of the socialist revolution, to sue non-U.S. companies currently doing business in Cuba. It also allows Washington to bar officers and families of non-U.S. companies doing business in Cuba from entering U.S. territory.

Ottawa has sharply opposed these aspects of Helms-Burton as a violation of Canada's sovereignty and of its right to do business with whoever it wants. This includes the recent exclusion from the United States of top officials and their families at the Canadian-owned Sheritt International, which operates a state-owned nickel mine jointly with Cuba.

For the last few years, in the General Assembly of the United Nations, the Canadian government voted in favor of an annual resolution submitted by the Cuban government, condemning the U.S. embargo against Cuba. But it repeatedly made clear that its opposition was limited to the "extraterritorial" measures added to the embargo by the U.S. government in recent years. Ottawa never denounced the embargo.

Following the adoption of the Helms-Burton Act, Ottawa adopted counter-legislation that went into effect on January 1 of this year. This law rejects any rulings by U.S. courts made in the framework of Helms-Burton and allows Canadian citizens to initiate counter-suits in Canadian courts



Picket line in Montreal protests U.S. embargo against Cuba last March. The Canadian government shares Washington's hatred for the Cuban revolution, but objects to "extraterritorial" aspects of Helms-Burton law.

for monetary loss caused by the U.S. law. Ottawa also joined a challenge to Helms-Burton by the European Union before the World Trade Organization and has threatened to directly challenge the U.S. legislation under the North American Free Trade Agreement.

Cuba has investments from 30-40 Canadian companies and an annual trade volume between the two countries of about CAN\$500 million (US\$370 million).

White House criticizes Axworthy

Initially, the White House sharply criticized Axworthy's trip to Cuba. "It doesn't make sense to reward a dictator in our hemisphere who is completely behind the times. You reward him by sending your foreign minister down to visit, by having visits as usual, by trading. And we think that's wrong," said U.S. State Department spokesperson Nicholas Burns on January 21. The *Toronto Globe and Mail*, one of Canada's main dailies, expressed a similar position in an editorial published January 23.

To stress Ottawa's stance on Helms-Burton, Axworthy made a demonstrative visit to Sheritt International mining operations in Moa Bay, in addition to meeting with Castro and Robaina.

But his trip was used just as much as a political bludgeon against the Cuban government over the so-called human rights question. This in itself is not a new stance by Ottawa toward the Cuban revolutionary government. While Canada's rulers didn't join the U.S. embargo and maintained dip-

lomatic relationships with Havana after the revolution, they never hid their deep class hostility for the workers' and farmers' government, established by the Cuban toilers and their effort to build a society based on human needs, not capitalist profits. But the added emphasis on the "human rights" question during Axworthy's visit marked a shift in Ottawa's tactics for dealing with the Cuban revolution. Most media report on the trip referred to Cuba as a dictatorship.

This question was played up in reports on the final joint statement by Axworthy and Robaina. It contains agreements to hold seminars and reciprocal visits involving judges, legislators, academics, and other professionals and visits to exchange experiences between both countries to "strengthen within [Cuba's] National Assembly of People's Power a citizens' complaint commission."

A Radio Havana broadcast reported, "The Cuban Foreign Ministry has said that to interpret inclusion of the issue of human rights in a broad and diverse joint declaration with Canada as implying the existence of problems in this context on the island is a blatant exaggeration."

Ottawa also tried to use the trip to Cuba to score some points against the Quebecois independence fight by leaking aspects of the meetings between Castro and Axworthy. According to the Canadian press, Castro was reported as saying, "It is essential for Cuba and for all countries that Canada remains strong and united because of the constructive role it plays in the world."

Speaking from Paris, Canadian prime minister Jean Chrétien reiterated Ottawa's long-held view that the U.S. embargo is ineffective in bringing capitalism back to Cuba. "They're just making it possible for Castro to stay in power, because he has an excuse, he can blame the Americans," said Chrétien. "Let them normalize the situation between Cuba and the United States and I don't think Mr. Castro will have it easier."

Commenting on the final agreement signed in Cuba, he added the next day, "The accord we signed yesterday with Cuba means that there will be a mediator at the National Assembly and a dialogue on human rights between Canada and Cuba."

A further point for Washington

Canada's heightened focus on the so-called human rights issue was not missed by the White House. "My reaction is I'm gratified that the Canadians, along with the Europeans, are now talking more to the Cubans about human rights and democratic reforms," declared U.S. president William Clinton. Burns had been even more direct, saying that Axworthy's trip was evidence that Canada was falling in line with the European Union (EU) on Cuba.

Both Clinton and Burns were referring to a December 2 resolution by the EU saying that its members would not expand economic aid to Cuba without "improvement" in human rights and political freedoms.

The EU adopted its anti-Cuba statement after the White House had indicated that some action like this would be necessary for the U.S. president to renew a six-month waiver suspending the section of Helms-Burton allowing suits against foreign companies doing business in Cuba. Clinton renewed the waiver on January 3.

The same kind of pressures explains the shift around Axworthy's trip to Cuba, not some new concerns by Ottawa about "democracy" and "human rights." Two weeks before Axworthy's visit to Cuba, a delegation including Jean Chrétien, a number of provincial prime ministers, and several hundred business persons from Canada visited south Korea in the very middle of a strike by tens of thousands of workers against antilabor laws adopted secretly by the Seoul government. Chrétien explained that he could understand the south Korean regime as "we too have trade unions in Canada."

As a junior imperialist power, the Canadian government has made crystal clear that it has the same objective as Washington in Cuba — to bring back capitalist rule. This is what they mean by "democracy" and a "market economy." But Canada's rulers have tactical differences with Washington about the embargo and, moreover, they had taken advantage of it to do some extra business, free from U.S. competition.

Faced with Washington's Helms-Burton law, however, the attraction of some marginal business with Cuba is sharply reduced for many Canadian bosses. According to the *Globe and Mail*, the annual trade exchange between Canada and Cuba is about half of the trading done in a single day between Canada and the United States.

Activists plan tours for Cuban diplomats

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

HOUSTON, Texas — About 60 people attended the semiannual meeting of the National Network on Cuba here February 1-2. The Network is a coalition of national and local groups organizing activities to oppose U.S. policy toward Cuba.

The meeting was hosted by the Cuba Coalition of Houston. It was preceded by a two-day tour of the area by Félix Wilson and Johana Tablada, first and third secretaries of the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C. The Houston coalition hosted the tour. Wilson and Tablada addressed a number of public meetings, including one of 200 students, most of them Black, at Jones High School.

They also gave several interviews to the media, resulting in at least one article in the *Houston Chronicle*, the city's only daily paper. The Cuba Coalition had helped organize a tour of Texas for Dagoberto Rodríguez, also a first secretary at the Cuban Interests Section, in November.

Participants at the February 1-2 meeting decided to urge NNOC affiliates to help organize tours for representatives of the Cuban Interests Section across the United States this year.

"These tours can help counter the economic war that the United States govern-

ment has intensified against Cuba," said Andrés Gómez, one of the four national co-chairs of the Network. "They can also serve to initiate discussions among college students, activists, workers, and the broader public about the annexationist Helms-Burton law and win more people to actively opposing it." Gómez was referring to the misnamed Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, which President William Clinton signed March 12, 1996. The aggressive use of the legislation by Washington has exacerbated economic difficulties the Cuban people face.

The Network meeting also discussed other projects NNOC affiliates are organizing. They include the next Friendship caravan of humanitarian aid to Cuba, sponsored by Pastors for Peace, scheduled for May 4-25. The group, which has organized six previous caravans, recently relocated its offices to Chicago from Minneapolis.

A number of other groups are organizing contingents to Cuba this year that will coincide with the 14th World Festival of Youth and Students, scheduled for the Caribbean island July 28-August 5. The NNOC is a sponsor of the U.S. Organizing Committee for the World Youth Festival, which is coordinating the U.S. delegation to the international youth conference.

In addition, the Venceremos Brigade is organizing its next contingent to Cuba July 20 - August 6. Participants on that trip will attend the festival during their second week on the island. The Detroit-based U.S.-Cuba Labor Exchange is planning a delegation for an international trade union conference, scheduled for Havana August 6-8. Participants on this trip can go earlier and attend the youth event as well.

Participants at the Houston meeting elected new co-chairs for the Network. Three of the four previous chairpeople were re-elected — Andrés Gómez of the Antonio Maceo Brigade, a Miami-based organization of Cubans who support the Cuban revolution; Ignacio Meneses of the U.S./Cuba Labor Exchange; and Marilyn McKenna, a leader of the Chicago Cuba Coalition. Bob Guild of the New Jersey Network on Cuba was elected the fourth cochair.

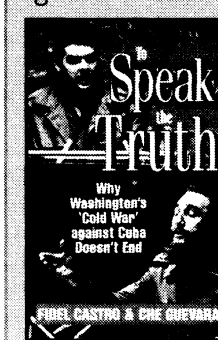
Leslie Cagan, who had served as NNOC cochair for more than five years, left her responsibilities in the Network to concentrate on other activities. The Cuba Information Project, which Cagan headed, closed its offices on January 31. She is now helping to coordinate the U.S. Organizing Committee for the World Youth Festival.

The next meeting of the Network is scheduled for the fall of this year.

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SWP fights for campaign rights

BY GREG McCARTAN

NEW YORK — For the past 25 years the Socialist Workers Party has waged a fight to function in politics free from harassment by government and right-wing organizations and individuals. As part of this battle, the SWP has established its right to not disclose to the government the names of contributors to the party's election campaign committees.

A Federal Elections Commission ruling exempting the party from reporting the names of contributors, as well as recipients of payments, expired at the end of 1996. Constitutional law attorney Michael Krinsky has filed a request to the FEC to extend the ruling for another eight years.

Krinsky is a senior partner in the firm Rabinowitz, Boudin, Standard, Krinsky, and Lieberman. Attorney Michael Ludwig assisted in preparing the submission.

The request contains extensive legal, constitutional, and factual evidence as to why contributors to SWP election campaigns need to be protected against disclosure of names to the government.

The SWP has been running candidates for public office since 1938 and has fielded a candidate for U.S. president in every election since 1948. The party fields candidates in local, state, and federal elections across the country. In 1996 SWP candidates were on the ballot in 11 states and ran as write-in candidates in 10 more.

At the heart of the SWP's submission is documentation of 72 incidents since 1990 of harassment and intimidation against party candidates, socialist campaign supporters, and offices of the party's election campaign. These include 17 incidents of threats, arrests, and violence by the police; 3 interrogations or attempts to victimize party supporters by government agencies; 24 physical attacks and threats by right-wing individuals against campaign supporters; 12 attacks on party offices and campaign headquarters; and 10 incidents of threats, denial of employment, or discrimination against socialists by company personnel.

A request to extend the exemption was filed with the FEC at the end of October. A week later, lawyers for the commission asked for further documentation backing the party's claim that the exemption was still needed. Additional material was submitted in early January. This includes another 49 incidents, plus extensive documentation on the threat to civil liberties posed in southern Florida by right-wing organizations to known defenders of the Cuban revolution. The FEC has until the end of February to respond to the SWP's filing.

Documentation of the 72 incidents has been compiled by socialists and campaign supporters as they happened over the past six years. The material includes articles from local newspapers, declarations of individuals who witnessed the events, copies of police charges or arrest reports, in-

surance claims, and copies of threatening letters, leaflets, or other material.

Every incident reported was a result of the party and its supporters carrying out constitutionally protected activity among working people and youth, such as distributing the *Militant* newspaper, explaining the party's political perspectives to fellow unionists on the job, handing out campaign flyers on the street or at strikes and protests actions, collecting signatures to place candidates on the ballot, or operating public offices of the party and election campaigns. In a brief filed along with the documentary evidence, attorney Michael Krinsky argues that the "foregoing, under the Commission's own prior rulings and binding Supreme Court precedent, is more than sufficient to compel the requested exemptions."

"We also demonstrate through declarations submitted herewith the continuing impact of the long history of federal animus to the SWP and its supporters" — a reference to the more than four-decades of spying, harassment, and disruption campaign carried out by the federal government against the SWP and other opponents of government policy.

Krinsky also points to rulings since 1990 by the Iowa and Washington State election boards upholding privacy of names of contributors. This is evidence, the submission to the FEC explains, that other government bodies in recent years have recognized the potential for disclosure to lead to violations of the right to privacy and freedom of association.

Response to 1971 disclosure act

The federal government adopted the Federal Election Campaign Act in 1971. It requires candidates and campaign committees to file frequent and detailed reports identifying contributors of more than \$200, as well as those who were paid for printing, rent, and other services. Reports are required to list the name, address, and occupation of the contributor, as well as the amount contributed. These reports are open to the public, making them a convenient "enemies list" for right-wing groups, private spy agencies, employers, and local, state, and federal government agencies.

From the outset, the SWP refused to turn over names on grounds that doing so would lead to the victimization of campaign supporters by government and private sources. Such disclosure of names is a violation of the constitutionally protected right to freedom of association and privacy, the party explained. A suit filed on behalf of the Socialist Workers 1974 National Campaign Committee challenged the constitutionality of the act and cited surveillance and harassment of those associated with the SWP by the FBI and other government agencies.

In a 1976 ruling in *Buckley v. Valeo*, the Supreme Court recognized that the requirements of the Federal Election Campaign Act as applied to minor parties and independent candidates may be unconstitutional because of the danger of significant infringement on First Amendment rights. The court recognized that for particular parties "the threat to the exercise of First Amendment rights is so serious and the state interest so insubstantial that the Act's requirements cannot be constitutionally applied."

After a five-year public campaign, the SWP won a federal court ruling supporting this claim in 1979. The ruling stated that the socialists had demonstrated a "reasonable probability that the compelled disclosure of names of their members, contributors, and recipients of expenditures will subject them to threats, harassment, or reprisals from either government officials or private parties."

The FEC signed a consent decree that required the Socialist Workers campaign committees to keep records of contributors and file reports with the elections commission, but without identifying contributors.

This decision paved the way for winning parallel exemptions from state disclosure laws and made it possible for other socialist and working-class parties to win similar exemptions. The U.S. Supreme Court ruled in 1982 that the Communist Party neither had to disclose names or keep lists of names of their contributors.



Militant/Carole Lesnick

Young Socialists member Walter López petitions to get an SWP candidate on the ballot for mayor in Los Angeles in January.

A 1982 ruling in *Brown v. Socialist Workers '74 Campaign Committee* granted the SWP an exemption from state disclosure requirements in Ohio. The record of the government disruption operation against the party, it stated, indicates that "hostility to the SWP is ingrained and likely to continue." The court decided that the view that the exemption pertained solely to the names of contributors was "unduly narrow" and extended the exemption to the names of recipients of payments from campaign committees as well. When the FEC reporting exemption was renewed in 1985 for a four-year period, this aspect of the *Brown* ruling was extended to the national level.

Victory against FBI disruption

A year after the 1985 extension the SWP scored a historic victory against government spying. In 1986 Judge Thomas Griesa ruled in favor of the SWP in a lawsuit finding that the FBI had engaged in a decades-long pattern of activity that violated the constitutional rights of the SWP and Young Socialist Alliance, their members, and supporters.

The victories of the battles for civil rights, against the U.S. war in Vietnam, and for women's rights in the 1950s, '60s, and early '70s made it possible for the socialists to wage a political battle and legal fight against the long-standing government Counterintelligence program, known as Cointelpro.

Throughout the course of the suit, government lawyers argued that FBI operations were legally justified because of the SWP's Marxist views and communist activities. This was rejected by the court. The decision states that without the right to conduct their affairs in private, the freedom of association of those whose views are opposed by the government is violated.

Writing about the case, noted constitutional lawyer Leonard Boudin, who represented the SWP and YSA, said that "for the first time, a court has thoroughly examined the FBI's intrusions into the political system of our nation and, in unmistakable language, has condemned the FBI activity as 'patently unconstitutional' and without 'statutory or regulatory authority.' The decision," wrote Boudin, "stands as a vindication of the First and Fourth Amendment rights," not only of the SWP and the YSA, but of "all political organizations and activists in this country to be free of government spying and harassment."

In 1990 the SWP filed a request with the Federal Elections Commission for a ruling extending the 1985 court decision exempting it from reporting requirements. It placed the findings of the 1986 federal court decision at the center of the request and included numerous incidents of harassment and intimidation against the socialists since 1985.

The FEC issued a favorable ruling that did not dispute any of the party's claims or reasons for not disclosing names. The FEC wrote that given the "recent events cited, along with the history of governmental harassment, indicate that there is reasonable probability that compelled disclosure.... will subject [the socialists] to threats, harassment, or reprisals from governmental or private sources."

'Federal animus remains relevant'

In the filing the request to renew the exemption in October, Krinsky resubmitted to the FEC the court record of a decade-long political fight, writing that "the past history of the federal activities against the SWP remains relevant.... given its long duration, extraordinary intensity, and gross illegality."

Documentation supporting this fact includes reports by campaign supporters of numerous cases where individuals declined to sign socialist election petitions, subscribe to the socialist newsweekly the *Militant*, or have their name on a mailing list because of fear of government reprisal.

"It is hardly surprising," Krinsky writes, "that the history of FBI disruption, warrantless burglaries, warrantless wiretaps, informant penetration, and the like still intimidates and still hampers the ability of the SWP to solicit contributions and to engage in educational and political activities."

The harassment incidents cited in the submission gives a view of the extent of the work party members, candidates, and supporters carry out across the country, from union strikes and picket lines, actions in defense of abortion rights, speaking out against the U.S.-led war against Iraq in 1990-91, and distributing socialist literature as broadly as possible.

Included are cases of police arresting or harassing candidates and campaign supporters who were distributing flyers or collecting signatures to place candidates on the ballot in New York, New Jersey, Texas, Illinois, and Florida. Charges in all these cases against the socialists were dropped after vigorous protest campaigns defending democratic rights.

Right-wing threats from the Ku Klux Klan were sent to party offices in North Carolina and Pennsylvania during this time, and the Birmingham office of the socialist campaign was spray painted with a swastika and the slogan "White Power." When socialists in Des Moines, Iowa, organized a public forum on abortion rights, a leader of Operation Rescue organized a picket line, took photographs of participants in the forum, and took down license plate numbers of cars parked around the bookstore.

Socialists active in defense of the Cuban revolution have been targeted by rightists as well. An SWP campaign table in New Jersey was attacked by right-wing Cubans, and threats, attacks, and attempts to intimidate the socialists in Miami are documented in the submission.

For one and a half years, Milton Chee, an aircraft sheet metal worker at Alameda Naval Air Station Depot and a candidate for public office endorsed by the SWP, was subjected to a Hatch Act investigation for allegedly violating provisions concerning federal employees seeking elective office in a partisan election. Chee mounted a defense effort and the government eventually decided not to seek disciplinary action.

Another incident was that of Priscilla Schenk, a member of the United Auto Workers union and a worker at Emco Industries in Des Moines. Schenk regularly sold the *Militant* and had distributed statements to her co-workers opposing the U.S. assault on Iraq. She was subsequently interrogated at work, as was another union member, by two men, one an agent of the Iowa Bureau of Criminal Investigation and the other a Secret Service agent. She was questioned about her political views and activities.

The FEC is required to respond soon to the SWP's request. Messages encouraging the FEC to extend the exemption should be sent to the Federal Election Commission in Washington, D.C. Contributions earmarked for this fight can be sent to Socialist Workers National Campaign Committee, P.O. Box 2652, New York, N.Y. 10009.

Greg McCartan is the SWP National Campaign Director.

From Pathfinder

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Nelson Blackstock

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SELL THE BOOKS WORKERS OF THE WORLD NEED

Join the campaign to sell Pathfinder books and pamphlets

'Militant' launches renewal drive

Continued from front page communist movement. The renewal campaign began February 8 and will last through February 28. Its aim is to win at least 250 Militant readers to renew their subscriptions and 125 subscribers to Perspectiva Mundial—the Militant's sister publication in Spanish—to sign up again. The Militant will publish a weekly chart to track the progress of this effort. During the month of February, distributors of the Militant and Perspectiva Mundial are also going the extra mile to increase sales of single copies—at street corners, door-to-door in working-class communities, on the job, at factory gates, on picket lines, and at a wide variety of political and social events. Consistent and higher sales of single copies now will pave the way for a sustained and successful subscription drive beginning next month. "Our distributors should rethink their weekly bundles now and consider increasing them," said Militant editor Naomi Craine in an interview. "Experience shows that among those who buy and read a few issues of the paper we are likely to find many new and long-term readers." Militant readers who are interested in ordering their own bundles can do so by contacting the paper's business office. A special target of the renewal and subscription campaigns is rebel-minded youth who are open to socialist ideas. Six young fighters in Spokane, Washington, who now distribute the Militant every week, formed a chapter of the Young Socialists there during the last circulation drive. They and other YS members plan to use the subscription campaign to reach dozens more youth and invite them to attend the national convention of the Young Socialists, scheduled for March 28-30 in Atlanta (see ad on page 6). The renewal campaign presents an opportunity to follow up on initial contacts with

subscribers, find out questions they may have on political issues discussed in the Militant or elsewhere, and urge them to write letters for the Discussion With Our Readers column. Those who have been subscribing for a while, as well as readers who bought introductory subscriptions recently, are being asked to re-up. All renewals count toward the goal. In the United States, quotas adopted by Socialist Workers Party and YS members who work in factories, mills, and mines and are members of eight industrial unions add up to nearly half the international goal for subscription renewals. "This is a very positive sign," Craine said, "indicating that more long-term readers of the communist press can be won among industrial workers." Those who renew their subscriptions or buy them for the first time may also be interested in purchasing Pathfinder books and pamphlets and joining the Pathfinder Readers Club, which provides regular discounts to fans of Pathfinder books. Many of these workers will also be eager to contribute to the Militant Fund. Socialists who are members of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union adopted a goal at their recent national gathering in Des Moines, Iowa, to raise such contributions from fellow workers in meat packing plants. The Militant Fund drive will run for nine weeks, from February 22 to April 26. Its goal is to raise funds to sustain the publication of the Militant and Perspectiva Mundial. This fundraising campaign is a financial pillar of a working-class paper, which gets no funding from advertising, foundations, or other bourgeois institutions. Its only income comes from sales of single copies and subscriptions—not enough to cover ex-

penses—and contributions from workers. Militant supporters in several cities are getting ready to launch the fund with public meetings at the beginning of the drive. Twin Cities and Chicago have set the pace so far by planning fundraising events on February 21 and February 22, respectively. Craine will speak in Chicago on "Defend Social Security!" YS leader Brock Satter will give a talk in St. Paul, Minnesota, on "Black Liberation and Socialism," and supporters in Auckland, New Zealand will also launch the drive the same weekend. "We urge all our readers to join us in these campaigns," Craine concluded. "We also ask that distributors send the Militant sales stories and pictures of sales activities every week, as well as fund events. These reports are necessary to paint a real picture of the response we get from working people and will reinforce the campaigning spirit over the next three months."

To join in the sales and fund drives, order your own Militant bundle, or take your own goal, contact one of the distributors listed on Page 12, or the Militant at 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 243-6392.

Meeting protests attack on bookshop in London

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN LONDON—"It's important to defend a bookshop like this," said Pat Reynolds of the Irish in Britain Representation Group. "It provides an opening for working class people to get access to socialist and other political literature." Reynolds was addressing 35 people who had gathered to protest an attack on the London Pathfinder bookshop two weeks earlier. Three right-wing thugs had used an empty paint can to smash the shop's plate glass window, aiming at a display of the book Before the Dawn, the autobiography of Sinn Fein leader Gerry Adams. The attackers ran off before volunteers staffing the shop could apprehend them. Earlier that day, 2,000 people had rallied in London to commemorate the 25th anniversary of Bloody Sunday in Ireland, when British troops gunned down unarmed civilians peacefully demonstrating on the streets of Derry in Northern Ireland. The anniversary has attracted wide media attention here. "Orders for the Bloody Sunday massacre came from Whitehall," Reynolds said. "British policy in Ireland has consistently combined propaganda and censorship," he added. "They fight to stop the truth coming out, as they did in the Gulf War." As he chronicled numerous examples, Reynolds blasted the closure of the Green Ink, a bookshop in London that for 10 years has specialized in promoting Irish political and cultural books. Green Ink has recently had its local authority funding withdrawn. Also on the platform of the protest meeting was Carmel Bedford of the international anticensorship organization Article 19. That group has campaigned in defense of Salman Rushdie, an author whose book Satanic Verses remains the target of anti-free speech attacks. For eight years Rushdie has lived under a death threat by the Iranian authorities. "Political leaders don't need ideas and have no ideas. Ideas come from the grass roots," Bedford said, emphasizing that it is ordinary people that need access to books.

"They should be able to get them free from intimidation." Tony Hunt, speaking for the Communist League, recounted that working people in the vicinity of the shop had condemned the attack. "We went door-to-door in the local area, as part of the Communist League's election campaign," he said. "Some people told us that they didn't agree with the books in the shop, but they strongly believed in the right to purchase books free from intimidation. Others said they liked the books on sale and told of their visits to the shop. Immigrant workers from Africa spoke of their experiences—under the legacy of British colonial rule—of the attack on freedom of speech in their countries of origin. Only one person expressed any sympathy with the perpetrators of the attack." Local member of parliament Simon Hughes of the Liberal Democrats sent a message to the meeting, condemning the attack on the bookshop as "unacceptable." Other MPs to send messages to the meeting included Labour's Kate Hoey, MP for the adjoining constituency, Tony Benn and Jeremy Corbyn. The Amer Rafiq defense campaign in Manchester, which is defending an Asian youth who was the victim of police brutality, sent solidarity greetings, as did the Troops Out Movement, which campaigns for the withdrawal of British troops from Ireland. Two bookshops also sent messages of support: Index Bookcentre, in London, which has been the victim of legal action for stocking a journal, Searchlight, that exposes the activities of fascist and other rightist organizations; and Mushroom Bookshop, in Nottingham, which itself was the target of a physical attack by fascists. "Like you, we reopened as quickly as possible, and continued to stock the same kinds of books as before," wrote the Mushroom staff. "No paint can, rock, or any other weapon will stop Pathfinder from publishing and selling the books working people and youth need," said Pathfinder business manager,

Sara Lobman. "Our answer to the rightist thugs is that we're currently involved in one of the most ambitious publishing programs in Pathfinder's history."

Titles sold through Pathfinder bookstores						
January Totals			Previous Months			
Countries/Cities	Goal	Sold	% Sold	Dec.	Nov.	Oct.
AUSTRALIA	36	63	175%	136%	111%	103%
SWEDEN	55	38	69%	110%	90%	0%
FRANCE	25	5	20%	84%	104%	
CANADA						
Toronto	80	181	226%	118%	78%	128%
Vancouver	41	63	154%	34%	128%	106%
Montreal	80	49	61%	54%	89%	89%
CANADA Total	201	293	146%	78%	91%	109%
NEW ZEALAND						
Christchurch	28	38	136%	28%	63%	56%
Auckland	56	56	100%	91%	79%	70%
NZ Total	84	94	112%	68%	73%	65%
UNITED STATES						
San Francisco	95	231	243%	63%	194%	145%
Peoria	27	35	130%	58%	120%	44%
Detroit	70	86	123%	50%	91%	116%
Miami	41	48	117%	62%	382%	178%
Atlanta	48	56	117%	115%	194%	140%
Birmingham	50	53	106%	30%	58%	68%
Chicago	77	79	103%	108%	197%	97%
Boston	65	65	100%	111%	72%	100%
Philadelphia	50	44	88%	18%	84%	104%
Washington, D.C.	64	54	84%	106%	303%	105%
Seattle	80	67	84%	30%	101%	116%
Los Angeles	120	97	81%	73%	133%	126%
Pittsburgh	63	45	71%	49%	43%	87%
Cleveland	50	33	66%	44%	28%	100%
Morgantown	32	18	56%	25%	22%	106%
Newark	171	87	51%	17%	26%	32%
Salt Lake City	40	20	50%	70%	35%	48%
New York	245	110	45%	41%	25%	76%
Twin Cities	104	43	41%	46%	82%	60%
Houston	65	22	34%	42%	109%	138%
Des Moines	45	14	31%	31%	0%	31%
Greensboro	77	17	22%	70%	39%	26%
U.S. Total	1679	1324	74%	48%	90%	86%
Goal/Should be	1800	1800	100%	100%	100%	100%
UNITED KINGDOM						
Manchester	78	36	46%	13%	63%	58%
London *	170	0	0%	46%	72%	100%
UK Total	248	36	15%	35%	70%	87%
GREECE	13	6	46%	54%	100%	0%
*No new report						

RENEWAL GOALS		
Militant • Perspectiva Mundial		
	Militant Goal	PM Goal
UNITED STATES		
Atlanta	5	3
Birmingham, AL	15	1
Boston	8	3
Chicago	10	25
Cleveland	6	2
Des Moines	5	5
Detroit	12	3
Greensboro, NC	10	15
Houston	6	3
Los Angeles	25	10
Miami	9	6
Morgantown, WV	8	1
New York	25	15
Newark, NJ	15	10
Peoria, IL	5	1
Philadelphia	10	3
Pittsburgh	8	
Salt Lake City	5	2
San Francisco	11	5
Seattle	10	3
Twin Cities, MN	15	3
Washington, DC	6	3
Total U.S.	223	119
AUSTRALIA	4	
CANADA		
Toronto	7	2
Montreal	4	2
Vancouver	5	1
NEW ZEALAND		
Auckland	3	
Christchurch	1	
N.Z. Total	4	0
SWEDEN	5	8
International totals	252	132
IN THE UNIONS		
IAM	28	2
OCAW	20	
UAW	30	5
UFCW	2	2
UMWA	5	
UNITE	10	2
USWA	28	
TOTAL	123	11

IN THE UNIONS						
Unions	January		Previous Months			
	Goal	Sales	Total	Dec.	Nov.	Oct.
AUSTRALIA						
AMWU	4	2	50%	125	150	0%
CANADA						
IAM	8	9	113	125	50%	0%
USWA	12	3	25%	163	100	75%
CAW	6	1	17%	17%	33%	67%
Total	18	13	72%	79%	43%	0%
UNITED STATES						
UAW	50	47	94%	38%	0%	23%
UNITE	26	18	69%	42%	42%	35%
UMWA	3	2	67%	0%	20%	80%
IAM	59	23	39%	32%	48%	87%
USWA	46	10	22%	26%	15%	30%
UFCW	6	1	17%	33%	50%	83%
OCAW	44	7	16%	25%	16%	17%
UTU	94	14	15%	12%	22%	23%
U.S. Total	328	122	37%	26%	23%	29%
UNITED KINGDOM						
AEEU	10	0	0%	40%	40%	0%
RMT	10	5	50%	0%	0%	50%
TGWU*	7	0	0%	0%	29%	0%
Total U.K.	27	5	19%	15%	22%	0%
Goal	400	400	100	100		
* No new report						
IAM — International Association of Machinists; OCAW — Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers; UAW — United Auto Workers; UFCW — United Food and Commercial Workers; UMWA — United Mine Workers of America; UNITE — Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees; USWA — United Steelworkers of America; UTU — United Transportation Union.						

Join fights, sell 'Militant,' build YS convention

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) 644-0051. Compuserve: 105162,605

BY MEG NOVAK

ST. PAUL, Minnesota — Members of the Young Socialists National Committee met here February 8-9 to discuss the tasks ahead of the revolutionary socialist youth organization and the organization and building of the upcoming YS convention.

Young Socialists leader Jack Willey gave the main report at the meeting. He described the recent strike wave in south Korea, as well as the upsurge in protests by working people in the Balkan workers states against the devastating social conditions they face. The protests in Yugoslavia, Albania, and Bulgaria make clear the problems imperialism faces in its attempts to restore capitalism in that part of the world. These events provide openings for Young Socialists members to go out and talk politics with young fighters who are looking for revolutionary answers. "The struggles we see happening around the world today are just a dress rehearsal for the much larger fights to come," he explained.

Willey also pointed to the attacks on social entitlements that the ruling class in the United States is waging right now, and the attacks on democratic rights that come hand in hand with the inroads being made against the social wage. "This is the epoch in which we are building a revolutionary socialist youth organization," he stated. Recent developments in the auto industry show the class tensions brewing, he noted. Just months after negotiating "landmark" contracts with the United Auto Workers, the

big auto bosses find themselves facing outbreaks of resistance, from the three-day walkout by General Motors workers in Moraine, Ohio, last month to the strike by parts workers at Johnson Controls that forced Ford to halt production at some assembly plants.

In this context National Committee members mapped out a plan for the next six weeks leading up to the second national convention of the revolutionary socialist youth organization, to be held in Atlanta at the end of March.

The 'Young Socialists Organizer'

A draft of the "Young Socialists Organizer" was placed in front of the National Committee for discussion and ratification. This will be the central document used in pre-convention discussion in YS chapters leading up to convention.

The document explains the organizational structures the Young Socialists are working to implement, including holding weekly chapter meetings and electing leadership bodies, called executive committees, or in smaller chapters, organizers, to lead the political work of the chapter. Several National Committee members spoke to the centrality of weekly chapter meetings to organize the Young Socialists' work. Brock Satter from Newark, New Jersey, put it simply: "Unless our chapter meets on a weekly basis, we don't have a chapter."

The Young Socialists Organizer will be published and made available to all Young Socialists members on February 12, opening the pre-convention discussion period. The YS National Executive Committee will produce a discussion bulletin, open for all YS members to submit written material to for about six weeks prior to the convention. All YSers will receive the discussion bulletin. The chapter discussions on the YS Organizer and the written bulletin will be the



Militant/Carole Lesnick

Demonstration against the anti-affirmative action measure Prop. 209 near Los Angeles in November. The YS is reaching out to fighters involved in actions like these.

basis for vote and election of delegates.

The National Committee discussed the fact that the upcoming international campaign by supporters of the *Militant* newspaper to go out to college campuses, working-class communities, and factory plant gates in an effort to win new readers, is a way of bringing young people to the convention. Joining in the subscription drive will be a step toward implementing the decision adopted at the last NC meeting to make propaganda — talking socialism — the axis of the Young Socialists' political work. Chapters from around the country are discussing and taking on goals of how many new readers they can win through out the drive.

In Athens, Georgia, YS members are discussing the best way to reach out to workers at a poultry processing plant near the campus where the chapter is based. The YS chapter in Spokane, Washington, receives a weekly bundle of the *Militant* to sell at factory plant gates and political events in their area. These were pointed to as examples of what Young Socialists chapters can do to maximize participation in the subscription drive.

Diana Newberry related how four young people came into the Pathfinder bookstore in Morgantown, West Virginia, one night after a concert to see if they could get a consignment of books to sell in the area where they live. "They said, 'We think that people really need to read these kind of books, they need to know about these ideas,'" she reported.

Getting out into the streets and selling the socialist press is the most effective way to recruit to the Young Socialists and build the upcoming convention in Atlanta. Education within the chapters has to become a priority during these kind of campaigns, so the YS members will be best equipped to go out and discuss socialist ideas with young fighters they meet.

YS speaking tours

Giving the Young Socialists a public face by speaking in the name of the organization was also projected as one of the main ways the convention will be built. The NC adopted a plan for YS leaders to travel around the country, working with chapters to set up speaking engagements at different colleges and high schools. These tours will also have an international side. Joshua Carroll, a leader from the YS in Washington D.C., will be touring Sweden and Iceland February 11-25.

Some chapters have already begun to organize for YS members to speak on campuses in their local areas. Last week, a member of the Twin Cities chapter spoke at Robbinsdale Armstrong High School. As a result of that speaking engagement and work of YS members who went, three students from Robbinsdale attended the Militant Labor Forum February 8, and are discussing organizing a group for students interested in socialism at their high school.

The Twin Cities chapter will be a part of "The Battle of the Parties" at the University of Minnesota on February 18. Verónica Poses, a leader of the YS from the Twin Cities chapter, said, "Usually it's just the College Republicans and the Young Demo-

crats who do this, but this year we fought to be included in the debate. This shows the possibilities that exist today for us to give the Young Socialists a public face." Brock Satter was also invited by the Africana Student Cultural Center at the University of Minnesota to speak at a February 25 forum entitled "Liberation in the 21st Century." The chapter here is also organizing to go to Ashland, Wisconsin, where the YS has been invited by a campus organization to speak about the Cuban revolution and the need for a revolutionary socialist youth organization today.

Members of the National Executive Committee will be going to California and Texas in February, and will be working in conjunction with the national leadership of the Young Socialists in Canada to do tours on the East Coast and Appalachian coal mining region in March, in an effort to reach out as broadly as possible to young people interested in coming to the convention.

As well as tours that are organized nationally, local chapters will be working up until the convention — and afterward — to go on regional teams in their areas to college campuses and high schools to speak on political issues, build the convention, and participate in the *Militant* subscription drive. Chapters will be using the Young Socialist column to report on these trips.

YS members are involved in a range of other political activities over the next couple months. Young Socialists will be attending a conference in Washington, D.C., February 15 organized by the National Coalition of Afrikan Tri-State Students (CATS), a group of young people that have started an organization to fight against police brutality. Also in February, YS members will be going to the regional educational conferences in Vancouver and Montreal to work with the YS chapters there on bringing people to the convention in Atlanta.

In April, YS members will be among the youth participating in a Young Feminist Summit sponsored by the National Organization for Women this April in Washington, D.C. The meeting here discussed the opportunities to work in local NOW chapters and with college-based organizations to go to this event.

All of these activities will be part of building toward the convention of the Socialist Workers Party this June in Oberlin, Ohio.

NC members discussed the Young Socialists' work in defense of the Cuban revolution, and participation in the 14th annual World Festival of Youth and Students in Havana this July as a part of that. Willey explained, "The center of our work in defense of the Cuban revolution is propaganda and recruitment." Participants at the meeting spoke about opportunities in their areas to speak in defense of the Cuban revolution, such as the speaking engagement in Ashland, and the opportunities to build the festival by working with people in local Cuba coalitions.

The National Committee also began an initial discussion on a Young Socialist fund drive that will be launched at the convention, as well as the best way to raise money to make sure that every YS member and contact can participate in the March convention.

COME
TO THE

Young Socialists Second National Convention

March 28 - 30 ❖ Atlanta, Georgia

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- Stop the attacks on affirmative action
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Washington, Seoul wield food weapon against north Korea

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

On February 3, the Korean Central News Agency announced that repeated flood damage in north Korea has brought grain supplies in that nation two thirds below the level necessary for food, seed, and animal fodder. As a result, Pyongyang has made an appeal for international aid through the United Nations World Food Program.

Washington and Seoul have so far obstructed such aid, arguing that they would consider some assistance if Pyongyang joined "peace talks" that would include representatives from north and south Korea, the United States, and China. The U.S. government maintains 37,000 troops and heavy weaponry in south Korea along the "demilitarized" zone that has divided the Korean peninsula since the 1950-53 Korean War.

The February 3 statement by the Spokesman for the Flood Damage Measure Committee of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) said, "The DPRK has in recent years been repeatedly hit by unprecedented natural disasters, which greatly damaged agriculture and other sectors of the national economy and caused temporary food problem.

"The nation's annual demand for grain is about 7.84 million tons, of which 4.82 million tons is needed as food. Last year's flood damage made the grain output drop to 2.502 million tons in unhulled state, the amount being far less than expected."

The crisis is affecting most of the nation's 24 million people, as the government was forced a few months ago to cut food rations to one fourth of what they were earlier, according to a report in the February 4 *Washington Post*.

Douglas Cootts, director of the North American office of the UN's World Food Program, said the UN agency will respond to the DPRK request by issuing a formal

appeal for only 100,000 metric tons of food aid, a small fraction of the 2.3 million tons the north Korean government says is needed.

"Experts say the small size of the appeal relative to the need reflected the difficulty of persuading key donors like the United States and South Korea to give anything at all," stated a recent report by Reuter news agency.

U.S. State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns declared this tiny amount of aid is intended to meet "the immediate needs of targeted groups and they have targeted young children." He also asserted north Korea would have to buy grains on the commercial market to make up for the remaining shortfall.

An article in the February 6 *Washington Post* quoted an unnamed diplomat in Seoul saying, "The consensus of South Korean officials is that the United States is too soft on North Korea.... North Korea has not changed at all, and if the United States gives food aid... it may not be helpful in improving inter-Korean relations."

The use of food as a weapon has become a normal feature of the policy of Washington toward the DPRK and of the U.S.-backed regime in south Korea. In December of 1995, following the first set of floods in north Korea, Seoul discontinued sending rice until Pyongyang changes its "attitude" toward Seoul. The *Wall Street Journal* commented at the time that "rice must be tied to demands for policy changes in N. Korea."

The February 3 DPRK statement said, "The south Korean authorities have intentionally obstructed international assistance to the DPRK from the beginning. South Korea's 'national unification board' recently spread groundless rumors that the DPRK produced 3.69 million tons of grain last year, or 6.9 percent higher than the previous year." South Korean authorities also point to the



U.S. and s. Korean troops stage mock invasion of north Korea in Seoul last October

500,000 tons of annual food aid that north Korea receives from China until the year 2000, the DPRK said, in order to give the impression that food shortages are "likely to be eased to some extent. In this way, the south Korean authorities intend to spoil the atmosphere of international food supply."

Last spring, Washington and Tokyo announced they would provide no food aid to north Korea until the government in Pyongyang joined talks that would include Seoul. Even those among U.S. ruling circles today who are calling for more aid for north Korea have joined the imperialist chorus for bringing the DPRK government to its knees and overthrowing the workers state in the north of the Korean peninsula. "The downfall of the N. Korean regime is fervently to be wished for," said an editorial in the February 9 *Washington Post*, "but using famine to bring that about is more than risky."

Washington, though, seems bent to push precisely along this line. It has recently made it clear that earlier private assurances to DPRK officials concerning a barter agreement with the Minneapolis-based Cargill that would result in immediate food shipments is off and north Korea will now have

to pay up front before any grains are shipped.

The February 6 *Washington Post* reported U.S. diplomats have been unable to persuade north Korean representatives to attend a joint U.S.-south Korean briefing on Washington's blueprint for a future "peace treaty" to end the formal state of war that still exists on the Korean peninsula.

DPRK ambassador to the United Nations Kim Hyong U told CNN February 5 that a U.S. decision to provide food aid must occur simultaneously with the briefing, not afterward. He also stated Washington had previously promised the two actions would be simultaneous, and then reneged.

"The United States never promised a specific amount of food aid to the North Koreans as an inducement to come to the table and have a briefing," responded Burns.

In January, the Clinton administration issued a license to Cargill, Inc., to do business in north Korea. The license allows Cargill to send large shipments of grain in return for some bartered payment. DPRK officials say in recent talks U.S. diplomats gave the impression grain shipments could be sent up front.

The February 4 *Washington Post* quoted an unnamed U.S. official saying, "We are perplexed by this; we were clear about the Cargill deal.... They want free grain. Cargill is in business; they don't work that way."

The history of the Korean peninsula in the second half of this century has been shaped by the U.S.-led military war carried out against the Korean people from 1950-53. U.S. forces leveled much of the country through massive bombing, especially in the north. They destroyed whole neighborhoods deemed "enemy" outposts, obliterated most of Korea's industrial infrastructure, and systematically bombed dikes to destroy crops and cause flooding. At the same time, they suppressed popular uprisings in the southern region that took the shape of general strikes and mass demonstrations. Nearly four years of slaughter left 2 million Koreans dead and 3 million wounded. Ever since the armistice agreements signed in 1953, Washington has maintained thousands of troops and heavy weaponry in the south. The food weapon is among the latest used to put

Continued on Page 14

Unemployment grows in Germany

Continued from front page

Labor Department chief Bernhard Jagoda acknowledged this was only a partial explanation in an interview with the German daily *Die Welt*. Roughly half the rise in joblessness is in construction, where one-third of the workforce is currently unemployed. Jagoda estimated that unemployment would average 4.2 million for 1997.

An article in the February 7 *New York Times* stated that the jobless figures are "also a symptom of the steps German companies are taking to slim down in hope of regaining competitiveness. Industrial giants like Daimler-Benz and Hoechst have aggressively cut costs."

A week before the January unemployment figures were published, German finance minister Theodore Waigel revised his prognosis for the budget deficit as a percentage of the gross domestic product from 2.5 percent in 1997 to 2.9 percent, setting it fairly close to the 3 percent limit allowed for Bonn to qualify for the European Monetary Union (EMU). Waigel assured that Germany will meet the criteria, which Bonn has been demanding other European governments fulfill in order to be voted into the EMU next year. The common currency is supposed to be implemented in 1999.

Jörg Kramer, at Merrill Lynch in Frankfurt, commented that with the new unemployment figures, "The risk that Germany will not meet the 3 percent criteria has remarkably increased." Bonn's budget will increase by an estimated 4-5 billion marks for every one point rise in the unemployment rate.

German Chancellor Helmut Kohl met with Romano Prodi, the Italian prime minister, on February 7, the day after the unemployment figures were published. After that meeting Kohl admitted Germany might fail to meet the criteria in the Maastricht treaty for the EMU if measures to tackle its high unemployment are unsuccessful. Kohl said he was hopeful that a number of measures his government is taking, such as the abolition of the wealth tax and plans for further

tax and pension "reforms," would have an "enormous" impact on the investment climate. Kohl also reiterated Bonn's stated goal of halving unemployment by the year 2000. The meeting with Prodi, and Kohl's statements afterward, highlight Germany's economic difficulties. Bonn earlier treated Rome as a pariah to be kept at arm's length from the EMU.

One column in the February 8 *Financial Times* of London estimated that with soaring unemployment, this year's budget deficit in Germany will be 3.3 percent. "To be confident of hitting the Maastricht treaty's 3 per cent target," the *Financial Times* argues, "a half percentage point tightening of fiscal policy might be needed. But that could increase the jobless total. Alternatively Germany could resort to the accounting fiddles other European countries have employed to

massage down their reported deficit. But by abandoning the high ground Germany would lose its ability to insist on other countries playing it by the book."

Instead, Kohl should persuade the other European governments to "postpone the project for more than a token period," the British paper said, in order to "give more time to free up Europe's sclerotic labour markets."

In an interview published in the *International Herald Tribune* January 20, German Bundesbank chief Hans Tietmeyer blamed political leaders in Germany and Europe for having "linked urgently needed but painful public-spending cuts, labor-market deregulation and welfare state reforms with the Maastricht treaty on economic and monetary union." He said "politicians

Continued on Page 14

Belgrade formally concedes elections

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

After three months of non-stop marches and rallies, the parliament of Serbia acted on President Slobodan Milosevic's instructions and passed a law February 11 conceding victory to the opposition coalition Zajedno in municipal elections in 14 of the republic's 19 largest cities, including the capital Belgrade. The vote was 128-0 with two abstentions in favor of reversing the regime's annulment of the November 17 municipal election results.

Buoyed by the victory, students, striking teachers, and others continued their daily protests to press other demands. On the afternoon of February 12, tens of thousands of teachers, who have walked out of 1,800 schools across Serbia, surrounded the Serbian parliament to demand back wages and salary increases. At about the same time, 20,000 university students marched in Belgrade on their 82nd daily protest to demand the ouster of the college's pro-

Milosevic rector.

On February 11, U.S. Assistant Secretary of State John Shattuck announced he will go on an official visit to Belgrade soon. This registered a policy shift for the Clinton administration, which a month earlier had publicly ruled out high-level contacts with government officials in Serbia.

Next day, NATO troops in Bosnia, now numbering 35,400, stepped up patrols in the city of Mostar, seizing some weapons from residents. The move came after Croatian government forces, which control half of this city, expelled about 200 Muslims from their homes and then fired on them, killing one man and wounding 20 others.

Albania anti-government revolt spreads

Meanwhile, the rebellion against the pro-capitalist regime of Democratic Party chief Sali Berisha has continued to spread in Albania. On February 11, about 40,000 angry demonstrators filled the streets of the south-

ern port city of Vlora to mourn the first victims of government repression and press other demands. Many chanted, "We will take revenge!", "Berisha killed him," and "Down with dictatorship."

Two people were killed and 81 wounded a day earlier, when the police attacked thousands who took to the streets to protest another bankruptcy of a "pyramid scheme" based in the town and demand the government cover their losses. Over 500,000 Albanians were lured by exorbitant interest rates to deposit their savings in these fraudulent investment funds, promoted by state television, in search of income higher than average wages of \$75 per month.

On February 12, government forces blocked the streets of Tirana and penned opposition leaders in their offices, to prevent protests from spreading in the country's capital. Fearing the increasingly militant revolt, however, authorities dropped plans to declare a state of emergency in Vlora.

What is a social wage, why is it attacked?

(Second in a series)

BY MEGAN ARNEY

What is exactly included in Social Security and the other entitlements that President William Clinton and the U.S. Congress are so determined to cut? Why does the *Militant* keep describing these programs as a social wage? What is an entitlement, and what does "means testing" refer to? Those are some of the questions this article will address.

The first article in this series described how the 1935 Social Security Act was won as a product of big class battles — strikes, unemployed marches, and other actions — as working people in their millions demanded some measure of social relief from the devastation of the world economic depression. Between the late 19th century and the period following World War II, workers in other advanced capitalist countries around the world won similar kinds of programs — always through struggle — that protected working people to some degree from the ravages of the capitalist system.

The Social Security Act of 1935 provided minimal pensions for most retired wage and salaried workers in the private sector over the age of 65. At the same time the law established a joint federal-state system of unemployment insurance. It was passed under the administration of Franklin Roosevelt as a small concession in hopes of stemming a rising working-class movement. It's worth noting that at the time the average life expectancy was lower than the retirement age; most workers were never supposed to actually collect.

The 1935 law provided retirement benefits only to retired workers themselves. In 1939, before any benefits had actually been paid out, the first of many extensions of the initial measure was won by providing benefits to workers' survivors and dependents. Later extensions in the 1950s included benefits to state and local government employees, members of the armed forces, some farmworkers, domestic workers, and the self-employed.

Today Social Security covers about 95 percent of workers in the United States — some 141 million — and pays benefits to about 45 million people. This program is supposedly funded by deductions from workers' paychecks and payments from employers to what is now the Social Security Administration and the Health Care Financing Administration. For most workers retirement benefits are based on average indexed earnings over a maximum of 35 years. Partial benefits can be claimed for women at age 62, and both men and women can collect full benefits at the age of 65.

Unemployment and workers' comp

Unemployment insurance was also part of the Social Security Act. This was one of the main demands by many of the 18 million jobless in the 1930s. Unemployment insurance is cash relief against loss of pay when a worker loses his or her job. The program covers more than 85 percent of the entire work force. Payments, based on wages earned, differ from state to state, but in general they amount to only about half the worker's previous salary.

Unlike Social Security, unemployment benefits may be denied, if a worker "quits a job without good cause or is fired because of misconduct." A worker can be denied unemployment if they are involved in a labor dispute that has brought about a work stoppage or if he or she refuses a "suitable" job without "good cause."

One example of this is the current strike of 4,500 steelworkers in Ohio, West Virginia, and Pennsylvania against Wheeling-Pittsburgh Corp. The company campaigned against the strikers' claim to unemployment benefits, and the courts sided with the boss in all three states.

Work-injury or workers' compensation is the oldest type of social security measure. It provides workers or their dependents compensation for injury, disease, or death occurring in the course of employment. This includes hospital and other medical payments, and compensation for loss of income. It is an important victory for the working class. During the 19th century U.S. employers — based on traditional English law — claimed that the hazards of a particular job were a risk that the worker assumed when

he or she went to work. The "fellow servant" rule, which held that an employee could not sue an employer for negligence if the injury was caused by a co-worker, supported this. This law was smashed in 1908 after a series of major strikes, when Washington was forced to pass a National Employers' Liability Act for railroad workers. The first workers' compensation law in the United States was approved in 1911. Today, all 50 states have workers' compensation statutes.

Cash assistance programs

Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Emergency Assistance (EA), General Assistance (GA), and Supplemental Security Income (SSI), are the major cash assistance programs. AFDC, EA, and GA are what the term "welfare" usually refers to. AFDC, the largest of these programs, provided payments for poor families with children.

AFDC was ended as a federal entitlement in the Welfare Reform Act signed by Clinton last August. Aid to Dependent Children (ADC), the forerunner to AFDC, was included in the Social Security Act of 1935. The president recently bragged about the 15 percent drop in the welfare rolls since his election in 1992. Some 2.25 million people have stopped receiving welfare payments over the last four years.

Today, a large proportion of those living below the official poverty line are women and children. In 1991, the poverty rate for the entire U.S. population was 14.2 percent, but one in five children under 18 years of age lived in poverty. Six million of these children are considered "extremely poor," meaning they live on less than half the poverty level. During one recent recession the AFDC rolls expanded by 24 percent. In 1992, more than 4.6 million families received AFDC assistance. Monthly payments averaged \$390, or \$4,680 per year — well below the government standard poverty line of \$11,280 for a family of three.

GA is provided by 32 states by state and local governments. As an entitlement from the federal government, the local governments receive "block grants" to distribute in a means-tested way. Payments are low and last for short periods. The form of payment ranges from cash to groceries and shelter. During 1990, an average 1.2 million people per month received GA benefits.

In addition to the aforementioned programs, the public assistance system includes public and subsidized housing; Medicaid; food stamps; school lunches; an earned-income tax credit for low-income workers with a child; the Supplemental Food Programs for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC); the Low-Income Energy Assistance program, and other social services.

What about means testing?

Means testing has been widely used in the existing welfare programs as part of humiliating and demoralizing low-paid workers who depend on relief. It is enforced by bureaucrats and snoopers staffing these programs who pry into every aspect of a person's life, including through home visits. They arrogantly inquire how you spend your money, who you live with, and whether you decide or not to have a child.

Social Security is an entitlement that is not means-tested. Anyone over the age of 65 is eligible. This is an important conquest because it means it is a social right for all human beings. The most class-conscious workers have historically opposed means testing. In the 1930s for example, demands against the abusive and degrading means testing for relief were part of the fight by the unemployed.

Means testing — when one part of the population is subjected to proving their "need" — weakens working-class solidarity. It undermines the idea of social rights and reinforces competition between workers for jobs. Furthermore, once means testing is established it is easier for the ruling class to expand it, making it harder to qualify for social benefits.

Welfare and SSI are means-tested programs. They are entitlements in the sense that anyone below a certain income level is eligible. They are among the first social gains to come under attack by the rulers, as an attempt to lay the groundwork to go af-



Extensions of the social wage were won in the midst of the civil rights movement. Above, a meeting demanding an end the Jim Crow segregated housing.

ter the larger portion of the social wage codified in Social Security.

Struggles win extension of benefits

In his book, *Labor's Giant Step: The first twenty years of the CIO: 1936-55*, Art Preis explained that "Strikes, next to social revolutions, are the most overt expression of the class struggle. From 1936 through 1955, during the 20 years of the CIO's independent existence, there was a staggering total of 78,798 strikes in the United States, involving 42,366,000 strikers."

A huge 116-day national steel strike took place in 1959. These hard-fought working-class battles forced the bosses and Washington to concede extending the initial gains registered in the Social Security Act.

In 1957, a national Disability Insurance program was established providing cash payments to workers over 50 years of age who had been totally and permanently disabled. The age limit was lifted in 1960. More than 4 million disabled workers under 65 and 1.6 million dependents — including more than a million children — receive Social Security Disability Insurance. The average monthly payment runs between \$660 for one person and \$1,100 for four.

Today, the principle programs are Old-Age, Survivors, and Disability Insurance (OASDI) and Medicare, which includes Supplemental Medical Insurance.

Introduced in 1965 in the midst of the struggles of the civil rights movement, Medicare provides medical benefits for those over 65. Medicaid was established the same year, providing means-tested medical benefits for those with extremely low incomes, including children, their caretakers, the elderly, and the disabled.

In 1974, the Social Security Administration was forced to establish the federal Supplemental Security Income (SSI) program, a means-tested cash program for those who have a disability. It was one of the two major cash assistance programs, along with AFDC. In 1992, there were 6.5 million recipients of SSI, with a monthly federal payment of \$422 for one person and \$633 for two.

Today, while SSI has not been dismantled, the ruling class — with Clinton as their pointman — is trying to slash it. On February 6, the Clinton administration issued rules that it said would end disability payments for 135,000 children — 14 percent of all children who now receive them under this program. Additionally, \$51 billion was cut from SSI under the Welfare Reform law, mostly affecting documented immigrants.

In 1972, U.S. Congress passed a law that pegged Social Security and other benefits to a cost of living index, automatically increasing payments under these programs to make up for general cost of living rises.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) is the basis for annual increases in Social Security payments, as well as adjustments in alimony and child support payments, federal pensions, food stamps, the poverty line, and the pay raises in many union contracts.

The recent plans floated by capitalist politicians to lower the CPI would have a direct affect on the working class. For example, Social Security and Social Security disability payments increased in January based on

a 2.9 percent increase in the CPI from last year. The average monthly payment went up \$21, to \$745. If the CPI were lowered one point, as some in the ruling class now push for, these payments would decrease to \$737.

What is a social wage?

Winning these social gains as entitlements was a historic gain of the working class that reinforced human solidarity and undercut the dog-eat-dog competition imposed on workers by capitalism.

According to Webster's dictionary, an entitlement is: 1) the state or condition of being entitled to something; 2) a right to benefits specified, especially by law or contract; 3) a government program providing benefits to members of a specified group, also funds supporting or distributed by such a program. Entitlements are not "the dole," "handouts," or "charity." They are the socialized part of workers' wages — universal social rights for a class.

Workers and working farmers produce all value through hard work, applying their labor power to the wealth of nature.

Along with wages received directly from an employer, the social wage is one part of the value workers produce — that is the portion of value workers create through their labor that the working class receives. The remaining portion is surplus value, or profit, which the boss pockets.

In the pamphlet *Value, Price and Profit*, Karl Marx explained that a boss buys a worker's ability to work, and then a worker toils for, say, eight hours a day, for a wage. Marx writes that, "over and above the hours required to replace his wages, [for example two hours] or the value of his labor power, he will, therefore, have to work six other hours, which I shall call hours of surplus labor, which surplus labor will realize itself in a surplus value and a surplus produce." At the end of a workday, a worker has added new value to the commodity he labored on.

"This given value," Marx continues, "determined by the time of his labor, is the only fund from which both he [the worker] and the capitalist have to draw their respective shares and dividends, the only value to be divided into wages and profits.... Since the capitalist and the workman have only to divide this limited value, that is, the value measured by the total labor of the working man, the most the one gets the less will the other get, and vice versa."

The proportion of this division registers the social relations between bosses and workers established through the class struggle.

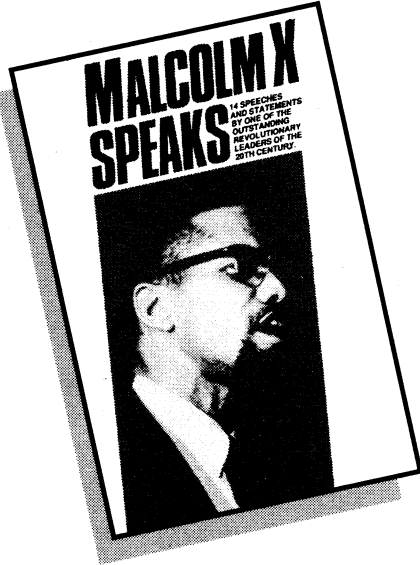
When workers won Social Security as an entitlement in 1935, the bosses as a class lost part of their surplus value to the workers as a class. Since the mid-1970s, the capitalists' average profit rates have been declining. In response, big business and its political representatives in Washington and state and local legislatures are pushing to take a greater portion of the value produced by workers' labor for their class, to fatten their thinning profit rates. That's the driving force behind both the employers' assault on workers' wages and working conditions, and the government offensive against social entitlements.

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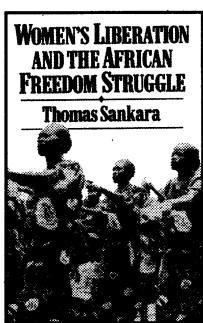
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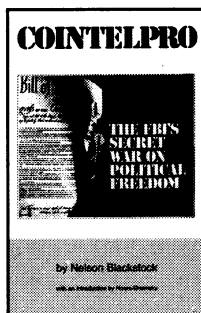
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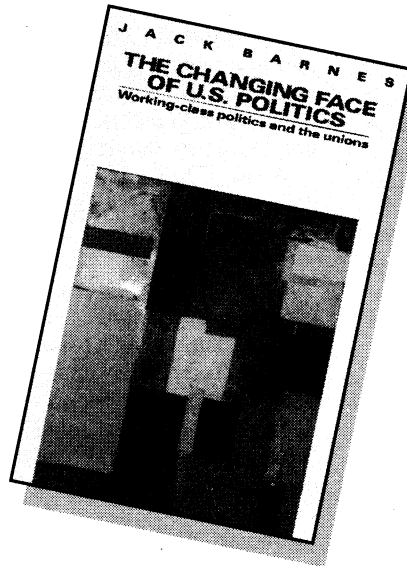
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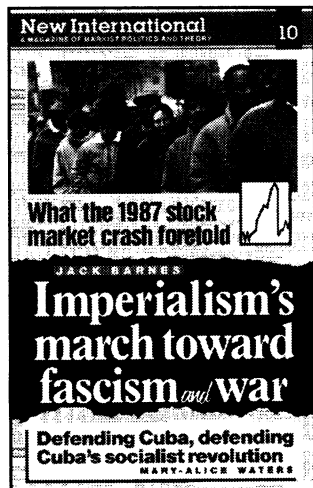
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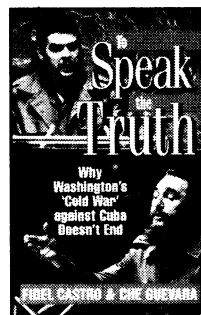
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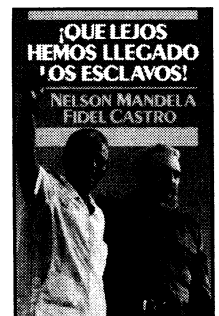
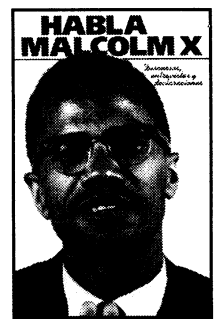
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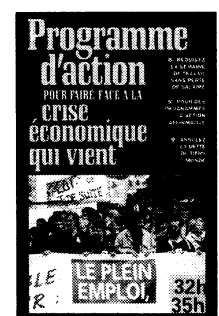
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Amtrak admits track needed repair before N.J. derailment

BY LINDA MARCUS
AND RUTH ROBINETT

NEWARK, New Jersey — In a front-page article February 5, the *Newark Star Ledger* exposed Amtrak management's culpability in the Nov. 23, 1996, six-car derailment in Seacacus, New Jersey that injured 34 passengers. For 10 months Amtrak management ignored a series of warnings from union workers and their foremen that a rail connector at Portal Bridge was cracked and unsafe. At the time of the wreck, company, union, and federal investigative officials agreed that a broken connecting plate on the 88-year-old swing bridge was at fault. The rails separate to allow the bridge to open for river traffic. The connecting plate realigns and locks the rails once the bridge is closed.

A crack in the rail connector was first reported in January 1996, but it wasn't until April that repairs were ordered for the widening cracks. Jack Nemeth, a welder with 33 years experience in bridge repair, reported to his foreman in a post-accident statement "that welding just one side of the crack was wrong, was dangerous and would not hold," according to the *Star Ledger*.

Nemeth's foreman, Jim Clark, who is in charge of Portal Bridge repairs and maintenance, and his supervisor Kenneth Hudson, supervisor of structures, agreed the defective connectors needed to be replaced. On June 20 Hudson informed his supervisor that

unless repairs were properly made "we risk failure of mechanical and structural components of the bridge." The new connectors arrived by early September, but management decided to wait until spring 1997 to install them, when a bridge overhaul was scheduled.

By August 29, the cracks in the connectors had widened and welder Nemeth was again instructed to repair them. He welded the crack a second time, and again reported that the welds would not hold.

Alison Conway-Smith, an Amtrak vice president and chief engineer, confirmed the chronology of events but refuted that the problem was ever a safety or money issue. She reported that a number of union workers and management employees face disciplinary charges, up to dismissal.

Workers interviewed for this article took issue with Conway-Smith's statement. Conductor Tom McLean noted, "Since Amtrak is over-managed and is financially strapped because of it, sometimes safety is not first, money is."

Dorian Baskerville, a conductor who works the Northeast Corridor and crosses Portal Bridge twice daily agreed. "It's a travesty for passengers and employees when money is the main concern, not safety."

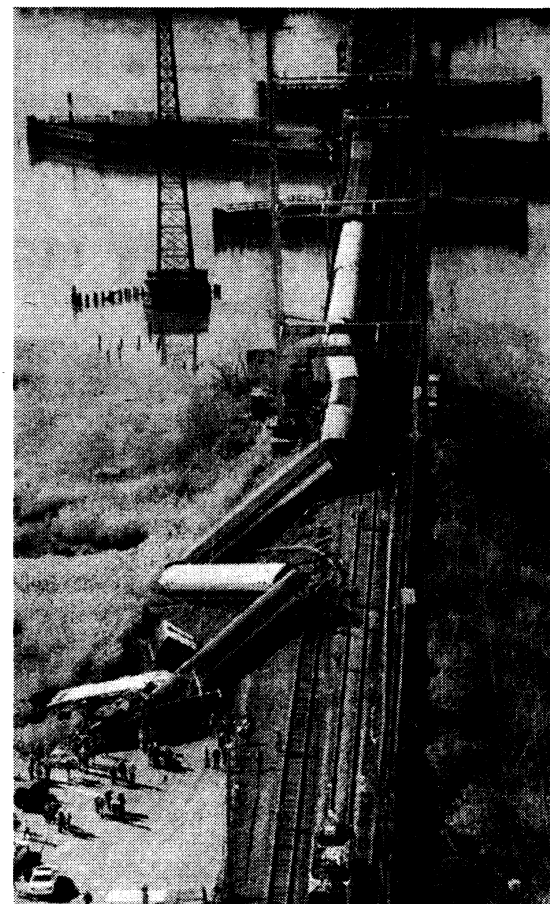
Denise Daniels, a coach cleaner, told the *Militant*, "I see a demise in Amtrak as we know it because of shoddy work ethics, lack of safety, and constant disregard for the

workers and people who use Amtrak. I feel morale is very down, because, like the welder who conscientiously tried to do a good job and said it wouldn't hold, they ignore what workers say. Amtrak is not interested in doing it the right way, but the quickest way to save money. This creates an atmosphere of shoddy work ethics."

"Why couldn't it be fixed before?" asked Art Dowd, a 26-year-old conductor. "If you or me made the decision to let it go we would be fired. Especially since it was an old bridge, they should have used better technology to solve the problem. But they didn't because of money. Top management should listen to the foreman on the job whose workers knew what to do. If management is not going to act on a supervisor's decision, what are they there for?"

Since the November accident, Amtrak has installed secondary sensors that would have prevented the derailment. These sensors have been in existence and recommended by the National Transportation Safety Board for nearly 20 years. Amtrak spokesman Richard Remington said that they were trying to determine why Amtrak had not installed the sensors earlier.

Meanwhile, the *Star Ledger* reported a



Derailment on Portal Bridge in November 1996

bolt on another part of the rail on the Portal Bridge came loose January 27, preventing the bridge from opening for 45 minutes. Conway-Smith insisted that no one was endangered by this latest problem.

Linda Marcus and Ruth Robinett are members of UTU Local 1370 at Amtrak.

Trains keep running after mudslide near Seattle

BY CHRIS RAYSON

SEATTLE — A massive mudslide, rushing down a steep cliff, slammed into a moving Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) freight train January 15, knocking five railcars with twelve cargo containers off the track in Woodway, Washington, north of Seattle. The engineer suffered a back injury.

A second, smaller slide on the morning of January 16 hit the same area where crews were working to clear and repair the track.

The slide was over 300 yards wide, covered about 200 feet of track, and extended 900 feet into the water. At some points on the single track the mud and hill debris measured 40 feet high. Seven containers from the five railcars were pushed into Puget Sound and five more containers were buried in debris near the tracks.

Shortly after 10:30 p.m., the crew of the 35-car train, powered by three locomotives, rounded a curve and slammed into the start of the slide at 35 miles per hour. The first two units were severely damaged, with mud as high as the nose of the cab.

The full force of the slide that carried the cars into the sound hit the train behind the locomotives and the first car, only 200 feet from the crew. The train included cars containing hazardous materials, but none of these were hit. Shortly before the slide, an Amtrak passenger train had passed through the same area.

This accident was the second BNSF derailment in Snohomish County in two weeks to be reported in the media. It highlighted the dangerous conditions affecting rail transportation in the Pacific Northwest in the

wake of massive snow and rain in the last month.

An earlier derailment occurred on January 1 near Cathcart, an area in Snohomish County east of Everett, Washington, that includes farms and nearby residences.

While no one was hurt, "area residents were briefly evacuated from their homes because of fears that ethanol would be spilled from one of the overturned container units," according to the January 2 *Seattle Times*. The article continued, "None of the liquid spilled."

A January 17 article in the *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* headlined "Slide-wise, danger remains real as soggy slopes are still unstable," points to the real potential for more landslides in the crisis conditions generated by the storms. The trigger that sets off the

unstable hillside could be another storm, a spring thaw melting snow accumulations in nearby mountains, or the vibration of a heavy freight train.

The landslide danger is far from over in other areas as well. According to the January 17 *Post-Intelligencer*, Tim Walsh, a geologist with the state Department of Natural Resources, warned city of Seattle officials on January 15 — the day of the derailment in Woodway — that "a portion of the bluff" just north of Carkeek Park "was so unstable that just the vibrations of a train could trigger a major landslide." Burlington Northern Santa Fe's main line goes through Carkeek Park, located in Seattle.

"The bottom line is we'll not run trains until it's safe," BNSF spokesman Gus Melonas assured the media at the scene of the derailment in Woodway. Despite these assurances, BNSF freight trains were soon moving through the area. Track conditions are treacherous.

Meanwhile, Amtrak canceled its passenger service between Seattle and Vancouver, British Columbia, after the January 15 derailment. Seattle passengers bound for Chicago are being bused to Spokane, Washington, to board the train there. Amtrak reservations confirmed January 31 that passenger service through this unstable area has not yet resumed.

Chris Rayson is a switchman with the Burlington Northern Santa Fe in Seattle and a member of the United Transportation Union.

New Zealand hearings highlight rail deaths

BY HELEN DEE

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Two recent hearings have highlighted the increasingly unsafe conditions facing workers employed by the New Zealand rail corporation, Tranz Rail. Established under state ownership, the entire rail system was sold to the U.S. corporation Wisconsin Central in 1992.

Prior to privatization, there had been a massive restructuring and job-slashing process, which by the end of 1992 had reduced the workforce to 5,400, down from 21,600 ten years earlier. Job cuts continued under the new owners.

In November 1996, in a criminal case brought by the Department of Labour, Judge P. J. Evans found Tranz Rail guilty of failing to take all practicable steps to ensure the safety of an employee. The case related to the May 1995 death of rail worker John Neha in a shunting accident. Attempting a maneuver to stop a runaway wagon at the Gracefield yard in Wellington, Neha slipped underneath the train he was riding and was killed.

Shunting traditionally requires three people, the engine driver (who has limited visibility), the shunter (who rides on the wagons as the engine driver's eyes) and the second shunter (who is on the ground as a backup). Tranz Rail had cut the second shunter in March 1995 to save labor costs.

Neha, who had been a train driver for 17 years, was retraining for the position of lone rail operator. In the past, shunters required up to five years of training. Neha had six weeks at the time of his death.

At the hearing, Judge Evans likened

Tranz Rail's decision to remove the second shunter to "removing the wicket keeper" in a cricket game. It was, he said, a business decision. He fined Tranz Rail NZ\$30,000 (US\$20,550).

Inexperience was also a contributing factor in the June 1996 death of Blair Thomas at the Westfield depot in Auckland, according to the Transport Accident Investigation Commission.

Thomas was riding on the front of a locomotive when he signaled to the driver to stop. The driver braked immediately and

Thomas was flung off the train and crushed.

Both men had been hired as temporary handymen six months before the accident. They attended a three-week "service assistant" course three months later, learning how to drive and direct trains in the rail yard. They had not had formal supervision since.

Ross Wilson, secretary of the Railway and Maritime Workers Union, said the men had not been adequately trained, and that low staffing levels meant rail employees were often doing duties beyond their level of experience.

Abortion clinic is attacked again in Tulsa

BY ABBY TILSNER

ATLANTA — The Reproductive Services clinic in Tulsa, Oklahoma, was attacked again February 2, for the third time since the start of the year. In the latest incident, several shots were fired at electronic monitoring gear at 3:30 p.m. The facility was closed at the time. Two bombs had exploded at the abortion clinic January 19, and it was hit with Molotov cocktails January 1. On February 6 federal police in Tulsa arrested a 15-year-old youth who they allege carried out all three attacks.

Meanwhile in Atlanta, Christine Stadler, a spokesperson for the owner of the Sandy Springs Office Building, stated the Northside Family Planning Services Clinic has decided not to reopen in the building. That clinic was hit by two bombs one hour apart on Jan. 16. The second bomb injured

seven people. Another location for the clinic has not been disclosed.

The local news media continues to expound the theory that the bombing was the act of a terrorist aimed at killing the rescue workers and reporters and also looking for media attention. The *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* claims this was the first "two-bomb attack reported on U.S. soil, though the use of back-to-back bombs is a familiar tactic in Northern Ireland and the Middle East."

The second bomb was detonated by a timing device while the first was probably detonated by a fuse, which would have meant the bomber was at the site during the explosion. The second bomb also carried 3-inch concrete nails and 15-20 sticks of dynamite aimed at injuring those in the area.

No one has been arrested for the clinics bombing in Atlanta. The increased police

presence at the clinics in Georgia in the days after the bombings has been reduced to early morning patrols and drive-bys while the physicians are at the clinics.

The clinics are increasing their own defense, like at the Feminist Women's Health Center in Atlanta, which now only allows those who have appointments into the clinics. According to a representative of Georgia Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League (GARRAL), there has been an increase in the number of volunteers for escorting at abortion clinics since the spate of bombings in the last month. Volunteers are organized by the Atlanta Pro-Choice Coalition (APAC).

GARRAL is focusing its efforts on lobbying against legislation for abortion waiting periods and against legislation banning so-called "partial birth" abortions.

Steelworkers call for strike solidarity

BY TONY DUTROW

PITTSBURGH — On January 28, 3,500 strikers and their spouses attended a special "Strike Update" informational meeting at the Wheeling, West Virginia, Civic Center. The steelworkers met on the 120th day of the strike against Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel, surpassing the length of the 119-day steel strike in 1959.

Strikers in their vast majority vowed to continue their determined resistance to win back a guaranteed pension plan lost following the bankruptcy and 89-day strike in 1985.

The significance of this strike is being debated from Wall St. to the streets and city halls of the mill towns along the Ohio river valley. That debate spilled over into the civic center, where a question-and-answer session went on for two and a half hours. It was the first such meeting to bring workers together from all eight locals since the strike began October 1.

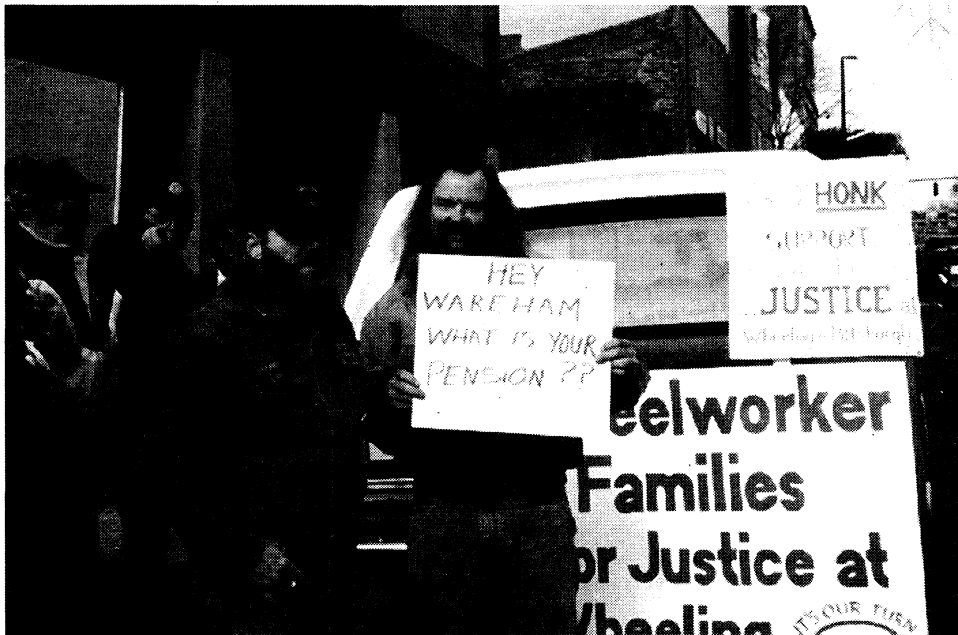
Ten days before the meeting, negotiations overseen by federal mediators broke off after just three days when the company, once again, walked out, refusing to budge or discuss a fully guaranteed pension. The USWA had proposed a combination of the company's proposal and the union pension plan that is currently in place in all the other unionized integrated steel mills.

Continuing the company's antiunion media campaign, Ron LaBow, chairman of Wheeling-Pitt's parent company WHX, told the January 27 *Wheeling News-Register*, "We're going to have to look at each part of the company. If we can't reach an agreement in nine or 10 months, we may have to do something unfortunate." Along with threatening to close down mills, he urged strikers to demand a secret ballot vote on his company's last offer.

In a humorous answer to LaBow's attempt to deny workers their right to decide when to vote on their contracts, strikers printed up a sample "ballot" that simply had inside "USWA Solidarity."

The USWA international convened a Basic Steel Conference in Cleveland January 30, the day after members from all eight mills met. "The presidents of local unions representing 150,000 workers in the steel industry pledged at the meeting to raise \$1 per member each week for the Wheeling-Pitt employees" reported the January 31 *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, which covered the press conference that announced a nationwide effort to back the strike. One of the projections at the meeting was plant gate collections throughout the industry to benefit the strikers. The first collection date is set for February 13. The meeting also voted to contribute \$1 million directly to an economic hardship fund.

The USWA international executive board



Wheeling-Pitt steelworkers rally November 13. USWA has called for broader support.

announced that the AFL-CIO will also participate in the effort. The board "also pledged to send bus caravans of steelworkers to back up the strikers on the picket lines" at the mills in Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia the article said.

Strikers stop truck from crossing line

Relentless propaganda has failed to produce the desired results for the company, as workers demonstrated on February 4 at the Yorkville, Ohio, mill. In 20 minutes, according to pickets, Local 1223 mobilized 150 strikers to stop Wheeling-Pitt bosses from taking a truck load of spare compressor parts from out of the Yorkville tin plate mill.

The *Martin's Ferry Times Leader* cited the boss who drove the truck through the gate as saying that "as he began to drive the vehicle from the plant ground he saw several individuals with baseball bats." At the same time the boss said there were not "actual acts of violence" committed by the steelworkers. The Jefferson County Sheriff called to the scene of the disciplined and effective action filed no charges.

Morale was high as the elated strikers learned later in the day that Wheeling-Pitt bosses made a decision "not to remove the compressor parts in order not to inflame the situation further."

Solidarity from supporters in the working-class communities that surround the mills has kept coming in, though many small business have felt a financial pinch from the strike and some have cut back in their generous donations to the steelworkers.

The Mingo Junction Village mayor John Corrigan said, "its getting very ugly around here." His city budget is totally reliant upon

the wage tax from the mill, the city's only major employer. So far the Mingo Junction has lost \$536,800 in operating money for municipal services. The administration has laid off some city workers and is using some part-time labor.

Strikers would welcome more solidarity

On a visit to the Follansbee coke plant gate the weekend after the meeting and announcement by the USWA Basic Steel Conference to step-up solidarity, I asked two of the strikers what they thought. All of us huddled around the well-crafted improvised oil barrel stoves — a necessity throughout most of the lengthy struggle.

George Oughten, who has 41 years with Wheeling-Pitt and works in the hot mill, said he was a little skeptical, but hoped the solidarity now being sought nationally will help. "Everything we ever got, we made them give it to us," he said. "Back then, the reason we got it was they were making enough of a profit to tack it on to the price. Now they can't do that as easily because of the competition. Oughten said he was concerned for other strikers, facing hardships they never planned for before the walkout. "We need real solidarity now. We need you beside us, not in back of us," he said.

Mike Sloss, a coke oven worker with 19 years at the company, said he's solidly for the strike. In addition to doing his regular picket duty, he keeps the gate stocked with wood to burn for heat. His father, who also worked in the mill, has a small sawmill. "He gives us edging off the boards," Sloss explained. "I show up with my truck, once or twice a week. They all know my truck now." "Our local is setting up a gate collection

committee and we're going to help as the women's committee," Gloria Jones explained, a member of the Local 1223 women's committee. "We're taking orders now for Local 1223 hats as a fund-raiser, but the hats will also identify us as we go out on the gate collections," she said. Jones also explained the women's committee is organizing a March 15 St. Patrick's Day Dance. Everyone is invited, she said, and all steelworkers get a discount.

Strikers debate threats to close mills

Many strikers and others are debating out the assertions made by LaBow and echoed by Wall St. that "Wheeling-Pitt Steel Corp. Wouldn't Be Missed," as one headline screamed out on the front page of the *Wheeling News-Register* January 30.

American Metal Market, an industry newspaper, interviewed LaBow, who said "he has no incentive to bring the striking workers back, and that his cash reserves actually had grown since the strike started."

WHX and Wheeling-Pitt Steel's strategy has been to sit the strike out. Spin-off companies from Wheeling-Pitt, such as the non-union Unimast plants of Wheeling Corrugating, the huge Wheeling-Nisshin galvanizing mill, and Ohio Coatings, which does similar work to the Yorkville mill, continue to process and finish steel. This, combined with stockpiling before the strike and secret arrangements with other mills to finish their coils and cover their orders, has allowed them to weather the impact of the strike.

The February 5 *American Metal Market* reported that a week-long shut down for repairs will have an impact on orders that Weirton's Steel has picked up from the strike. "Their [Weirton's] order book has been pretty strong.... They have received some business from Wheeling-Pitt," the article said, quoting a metals analyst from First Boston of New York. The analyst, Tom Abrams, who for local consumption in the regional press said the strike has had no impact, here says, "I think everyone thought that by now the Wheeling-Pitt strike would be over."

In May 1996, James Wareham, CEO of Wheeling-Pitt, gloated over their better profitability as imports declined over 1995. "We're full [profitable and at peak capacity]. Imports have dried up a lot, which is one of the underlying factors [for the strong demand]," Wareham said in an interview with the *Post-Gazette* at that time.

Last month Wall St. announced a big jump in imports, however. "Imports surged in the second half of 1996.... Production outages as some U.S. steel companies and a prolonged strike at WHX Corp.'s Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel unit cut the supply of domestic steel," reported a Bloomberg News release carried in the January 22 *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*.

Local papers quoted an analyst from J.P. Morgan and Co. chiming in with LaBow's statements describing strikers as "sacrificial lambs" and "pawns" in the USWA's pension battle. LaBow's plan calls for investing the pension contributions into 10-year U.S. treasury bonds, a move that certainly will benefit Morgan, which is leading the charge to shift pension investments from "overvalued" stocks to bonds, and no doubt stands to gain from such a plan.

Meanwhile, as WHX officials are accusing the USWA of forcing it into bankruptcy if it adopts a guaranteed pension plan, the Associated Press reported February 9 that WHX had reached a tentative agreement with Bethlehem Steel to purchase the Sparrow's Point BethShip steelyard for an undisclosed price.

Tony Dutrow is a member of USWA Local 1557.

Dairy farmers protest low milk prices

BY TOM FISKE AND JANICE BLAIR

Westby, Wisconsin — On January 22 dairy farmers across the country — including Wisconsin, New York, Missouri, Texas, California, and New Mexico — dumped one day's production of milk or donated it to charity in order to protest low dairy prices. The protest was called by Darin Von Ruden, a dairy farmer from Westby.

Von Ruden said that the milk dumping was a way of drawing public attention. "We're getting less for our milk today than we did in the early 1980's. The only way we can get the attention of milk processors is to take the product away from them." Von Ruden estimated that 3,000 dairy farmers in Wisconsin and 9,000 - 10,000 nationwide participated in the protest. Clint van Fleet, a Sulphur Springs, Texas, dairyman and president of the 250-member Texas Milk Producers Association, said 250,000-500,000 gallons of milk were dumped in that state.

The price dairy farmers receive for their milk is based on the basic formula price set by the U.S. government. Currently, the basic price is \$11.34 per hundredweight (approximately 12 gallons). This is down from the \$15.37 basic price set in September, 1996. The falling prices lowered income for dairy farmers by an estimated \$350 million in the last quarter of 1996 and dropped farm milk prices below the cost of production for

most small and mid-size dairy farms in Minnesota and Wisconsin.

Nationally, the number of dairy farms declined by 5.3 percent since 1995. Because of the falling milk prices, many working dairy farmers are forced to sell their land. Many others are forced to depend, primarily, on a full-time job in order to hold on to the farm. John Rohl, one farmer who participated in the protest, explained that his son was starting a job. "There's plenty of work for him here, but I can't afford to pay him. Even with him working a job, I don't know if I will be able to hand the farm down to him."

The price of fluid milk is heavily influenced by the price of cheese, which is set by the National Cheese Exchange (NCE) in Green Bay, Wisconsin. The NCE is open only 30 minutes each week and the volume of trade is less than 1 percent of the volume of cheese bought and sold in the country. Monopolies dominate the NCE and are able to manipulate dairy prices. Many farmers think that one monopoly, Kraft, was able to force the price of milk down by buying cheese shares from other sources and then selling those shares on the NCE at a loss, thus forcing down the price of cheese.

The organizer of the January 22 protest, Von Ruden, is calling for another protest day on February 27-28. Again he is calling for farmers to withhold a day's production of milk from the market. Von Ruden is a leader

of the Upper Midwest Milk Producers Association.

In West Central Wisconsin members of the association have been speaking to churches and snowmobile clubs for support to their fight. "We have been getting lots of support," stated Jean Rohl, another dairy farmer. "Many of these people are former farmers or related to a farmer."

Jean Rohl thought the January 22 protest was very important. "Every time someone rises up, it helps us hang on longer. The public learns about our fight.... At some time we're going to have to fight for our farms."

Tom Fiske is a member of IAM Local 1037 in Eden Prairie, Minnesota.

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ALABAMA

Birmingham

The Fight for Black Freedom: Issues for Today's Young Fighters. Speaker: John Hawkins, Socialist Workers Party National Committee and member, United Mine Workers Local 2368. Fri., Feb. 21, 7:30 p.m. 111 21st St. South. Donation: \$4. Tel: (205) 323-3079.

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Malcolm X. A video showing. Sat., Feb. 22, 7:30 p.m. Buffet, 6 p.m. 2546 W. Pico Blvd. Donation: \$4. Buffet: \$4. Tel: (213) 380-9460.

FLORIDA

Miami

The Legacy of Malcolm X. Program includes video showing and discussion. Fri., Feb. 21, 7:30 p.m. 137 N.E. 54th St. Donation: \$4. Translation into Spanish and English. Tel: (305) 756-1020.

ILLINOIS

Chicago

Defend Social Security! Why Clinton and Congress are Determined to Cut It. Why Working People Must Fight to Defend It! Militant Fund Rally. Speaker: Naomi Craine, editor of the *Militant*. Sat., Feb. 22, 7:30 p.m. Dinner 6

p.m. 1223 N. Milwaukee (Corner of Ashland and Division). Donation: \$4. Tel: (773) 342-1780.

Peoria

Defend Social Security! Why Clinton and Congress are Determined to Cut It. Why Working People Must Fight to Defend It! Speaker: Naomi Craine, editor of the *Militant*. Sun., Feb. 23, 3 p.m. Buffet 1:30 p.m. Donation: \$5.

Defend Abortion Rights! Stop the Clinic Bombings! Speaker: Charlene Adamson, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., March 1, 7 p.m. Donation: \$4.

Both events held at 915 N. Western. Tel: (309) 676-2472.

MICHIGAN

Detroit

Malcolm X: His Revolutionary Heritage. Fri., Feb. 21, 7:30 p.m. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.

Black Women and Their Fight for Equality. Speaker: Willie Reid, Socialist Workers Party, and member, United Auto Workers union. Fri., Feb. 28, 7:30 p.m.

Both events held at 7414 Woodward Ave. Donation: \$4. Tel: (313) 875-0100.

MINNESOTA

St. Paul

Black Liberation and Socialism: Prospects for

Freedom in the 21st Century. A Militant Fund rally. Speaker: Brock Satter, Young Socialists. Fri., Feb. 21, 7:30 p.m. 2490 University Ave. Donation: \$4. (612) 644-6325.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Defend Social Security! Speaker: Megan Arney, *Militant* staff writer, author of current series "Social Security: a product of labor battles." Fri., Feb. 21, 7:30 p.m.

Twenty-five Years After 'Bloody Sunday': British Troops Out of Ireland, Irish Political Prisoners Out of Jail! Speaker: Mary Nell Bockman, Socialist Workers Party, just returned from Derry commemoration of 'Bloody Sunday,' Representative of Irish Northern Aid. Fri., Feb. 28, 7:30 p.m.

Both events held at 87A Halsey St. (1 block west of Broad, 2 blocks north of Raymond). Donation: \$4. Tel: (201) 643-3341.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

The Civil Rights Movement: From World War II to Today. Fri., Feb. 21, 7:30 p.m.

How Cuba Uprooted Racism. Fri., Feb. 28, 7:30 p.m.

Both events held at 1906 South St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (215) 546-8218.

Pittsburgh

Celebration of Mumia Abu-Jamal's New Book 'Death Blossoms' Speakers: Chris Zimmerman, Plough Publishing House; and Gabriele Gottlieb, University of Pittsburgh chapter to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal. Sat. Feb. 22, 7:30 p.m. 1103 E. Carson St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (412) 381-9785.

UTAH

Salt Lake City

The Legacy of Malcolm X. Video showing and discussion. Fri., Feb. 21, 7:30 p.m.

History of the Civil Rights Movement. Panel discussion and excerpts from the award-winning video *Eyes on the Prize*. Fri., Feb. 28, 7:30 p.m. Both events held at 209 East 300 South. Donation: \$4. Tel: (801) 355-1124.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

Video-showing and Public Meeting: The Revolutionary Legacy of Malcolm X. Fri., Feb. 21, 7:30 p.m. 1405 E. Madison. Donation: \$4. Tel: (206) 323-1755.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

Militant Fund Rally. Event to help finance the working-class press. Sat., Feb. 22, 7 p.m. La Gonda Arcade, 203 Karangahape Road. Tel: (9) 379-3075.

Protests force ouster of president in Ecuador

Continued from front page

pushing for deep austerity measures. Last December, he announced a package prepared by Domingo Cavallo, former finance minister of Argentina, who was hired by Bucaram as his financial adviser. In 1991, Cavallo introduced harsh economic reforms in Argentina cutting social programs drastically in order to achieve economic growth to satisfy foreign investors. The proposed plan in Ecuador included establishing a convertible currency and a program of sharp cuts in government spending.

Wall Street has demanded restriction in government subsidies in order to meet the international debt payment. Ecuador's foreign debt stands at \$14 billion, and the regime needed an accord with the International Monetary Fund to renegotiate its payments, which are \$200 million in arrears.

Bucaram's drastic package included devaluing the national currency, the sucre, by 1,000 percent, and fixing it at the exchange rate of 4 sucres to the dollar. This was welcomed by the financiers. "It would give the framework for long-term discipline," Dan Peirce, the "chief emerging-markets strategist" at BostonBank, told the *Wall Street Journal*, though at a cost of higher unemployment and other hardships for workers.

Bucaram said his plan was needed to bring down the inflation rate, which was 25 percent in 1996, and to increase economic growth. At the same time, he raised taxes for cigarettes and liquor from 15 and 20 percent respectively to 300 percent. The president claimed his program would produce a "new Ecuador," to end a "grave crisis, recession, and widespread corruption."

As part of implementing the austerity program, Bucaram imposed sharp price increases—up to 600 percent—for electricity, cooking gas, and phone services. This ignited a series of protests by workers and students that began January 8 in the capital Quito, and in the cities Cuenca and Guayaquil. Over the next month the mobilizations grew and spread throughout the country, reaching their high point February 5 with the participation of 2 million people—out of a population of 12 million—demanding the resignation of Bucaram and a halt in the austerity drive.

CONAIE also joined the national strike against Bucaram regime. During the February 5 mobilization, indigenous groups

blocked highways connecting provinces to the north and south of Ecuador. The affected provinces included Pichincha, Imbabura, Cotopaxi, Tungurahua, Chimborazo, Bolívar, Carchi and Sucumbíos. The Cuenca-Loja highways were blocked with trees and trenches. In other areas, protesters blocked the roads with other objects.

Indigenous people comprise 45 percent of the Ecuadorian population, and have a history of struggles. In June 1994, CONAIE led a fight against the Agrarian Development Law adopted during the regime of Sixto Durán Ballén. This law, which eliminated communal lands in favor of the big landowners.

Blatant corruption and nepotism

The blatant corruption and nepotism of the Bucaram administration, at a time when the president was demanding harsh austerity, added fuel to the protests. During his earlier tenure as mayor of Guayaquil in 1984-85, Bucaram himself faced extortion charges and fled to Panama. A court par-

doned Bucaram in 1990, and he returned to Ecuador.

During his six months as president, Bucaram assigned many family members and friends to cabinet posts. His brother Adolfo became Minister of Social Welfare. A close associate, Alfredo Adum, served as Minister of Energy and Mines. Adum, who reportedly made a fortune out of importing merchandise from Panama's Free Trade Zone, was put in charge of privatizing the state-run petroleum industry. Reports that Bucaram's 19-year-old son, Jacobo, garnered millions of dollars from a post in customs also sparked outrage. Bucaram's sister Elsa, also a former mayor of Guayaquil, is now living in Panama, where she fled before resigning in 1991 facing charges of stealing millions.

As the tide shifted against Bucaram, the U.S. ambassador to Ecuador, Leslie Alexander, made a speech January 29 in which he said the governmental corruption was hampering the implementation of economic measures. "Ecuador is gaining a repu-

tation for pervasive corruption," said the ambassador. Citing an example, he went on, "A \$12,000 bribe was demanded of a businessman to get an \$8,000 container out of customs. News of this sort of mad extortion, which defies even the usual sordid conventions of corruption, reaches international corporations very quickly." U.S. State Department officials said that this observation "played no role" in their decision not to back the president when the Congress voted him out of office.

Since the restoration of civilian government in 1979 under Jaime Roldós, Bucaram's brother-in-law, successive governments had faced a total of 19 national strikes before the latest actions, demanding better wages and against cuts in social entitlements, according to *El Universo*, a Guayaquil daily.

An article in the February 11 *Wall Street Journal* expressed concern that paying off Ecuador's foreign debt "without further popular protests" will now present a "challenge to the country's financial managers."

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'Experience preferred...' — Army Secretary West says he can't explain how Sgt. Maj. Gene McKinney got appointed to the panel probing sexual harassment in the army. Last June, Sgt. Maj. Brenda



Harry Ring

Hofter filed a sexual harassment charge against him. Under ensuing pressure, she took early retirement.

Tsk — *Time* Pentagon correspondent Mark Thompson says the McKinney episode couldn't come

at a worse time for the Army brass, which is now taking its budget to Congress. Bleats Thompson: "It doesn't allow you to talk about your new tanks if you have to talk about this sergeant major."

Crackdown — They're going to do a safety check at four nuclear research labs in New Mexico operated for the government by Lockheed Martin Corp. A supervisor admitted that he and two others covered up the December shutdown of a reactor that was running over its safety limit. The three supervisors have been demoted and suspended for a week without pay.

Confess carefully — The British government has a bill in Parliament to expand police powers, including

bugging practices. Cops would have the right to secretly install surveillance equipment in church confessionals. Brushing aside a Catholic church protest, a government spokesman said it was unlikely there would be any exceptions. "We are keen not to create any loopholes," he declared.

The can-do system — Germany's jobless rate swelled to 12.2 percent in January. In east Germany, the figure was 18.6 percent. An official said the numbers show "a clear worsening" of the unemployment situation and could be explained only be partially by the cold weather.

A murderous system — "Up to two million British children are suffering ill health and stunted growth

because of malnutrition.... Poverty on a scale not seen since the Thirties is blamed for the return of rickets, anemia and tuberculosis...." — *The Observer* of London, citing a School Milk Campaign report scoring government cutbacks on school meals.

...meanwhile — A survey of National Health Service hospitals in Britain found that in a three-month period more than 400 critically ill children had been turned away from intensive care units for lack of beds and nurses.

Poetic insight — The 19th Century German poet Heinrich Heine described a visit to Paris banker James Rothschild: "... as I was making my way to Herr von Rothschild,

a servant in livery carried his chamber pot across the corridor and a stock market speculator who was passing at the same time removed his hat respectfully before the mighty utensil.... I noted the name of this devout person and I am convinced that, in the course of time, he will become a millionaire."

Sold — At the grand opening of the San Francisco Coffin Outlet, Mayor Willie Brown scoffed at a \$5,000 deluxe casket, suggesting a cheap pine box is sufficient. One coffin salesman felt he could easily change the mayor's mind. He'd tell him: "You're wearing a \$2,500 suit and a \$300 shirt and a \$400 pair of shoes, and you're going to get buried in a box?"

Roosevelt as a 'friend of labor' is just a myth

Below we print an excerpt from *Labor's Giant Step — The First Twenty Years of the CIO: 1936-55* about Franklin Roosevelt, president of the United States from 1933-45. To this day he is held up by liberals, Stalinists, and the labor officialdom as a "friend of the working class." This selection from the chapter "New Deal" — Myth and Fact" gives the true picture of

BOOK OF THE WEEK

what the Roosevelt administration represented. It is copyright © 1964 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted with permission. Subheadings are by the Militant.

BY ART PREIS

Roosevelt's big election campaign pitch was "government saving." He said in his nomination acceptance speech of July 2, 1932: "For three long years I have been going up and down this country preaching that Government — federal, state and local — costs are too much...I propose to you, my friends, and through you, that Government of all kinds, big and little, be made solvent and that the example be set by the President of the United States and his cabinet."

As for unemployment relief, he explained that "primary responsibility for relief rests with localities, now, as ever" — that is, with bankrupt local communities. He wound up with the oft-quoted declaration: "I pledge you, I pledge myself, to a new deal for the American people."

After Roosevelt's death in 1945, his Secretary of Labor Frances Perkins, in her naively revealing *The Roosevelt I Knew*, spilled the beans about the "New Deal." She wrote that when Roosevelt took office in March 1933, "the New Deal was not a plan with form or content. It was a happy phrase he had coined during the campaign, and its value was psychological. It made people feel better...."

This "happy phrase" concealed the real purpose of the medicine in Roosevelt's prescription. He was intent on saving dying

American capitalism and he was ready to use all means to that end.

His first major official act after he took office on March 4, 1933, was to save the big banks and big depositors at the expense of the small banks and small depositors. His bank moratorium on withdrawal of deposits and other emergency bank measures consolidated the big banks while thousands of the small ones never opened again or paid back only a fraction of deposits....

The picture of Roosevelt as a "friend of labor" giving the people concessions out of the tenderness of his heart — this portrait painted by both the conservative trade union officialdom and the Stalinists — is completely false. Roosevelt was a clever, adroit politician who carefully gauged popular sentiment. His slightest concession to the workers was given grudgingly out of fear of the masses and to prevent their moving left....

Paltry relief for the unemployed

The labor leaders and liberals who have built up the popular myth about Roosevelt's "humanitarianism" and "love for the little man," rest their case mainly on two claims: (1) that he "gave relief and jobs to the unemployed"; (2) that he "gave labor the right to organize."

Let us examine his aid to the unemployed. Speaking of the annual average of more than 12 million unemployed during Roosevelt's first term, his relief administrator and intimate colleague Harry L. Hopkins boasted in his book, *Spending to Save*, published in 1936, that "in the last three and a half years we have spent almost six billion dollars in helping these families maintain themselves." The average annual expenditure for the unemployed ran about \$1-1/2 billion, while the total yearly cost of government was a little more than \$7 billion. When it came to war, however, Roosevelt was to spend \$79 billion in 1943, \$95 billion in 1944 and more than \$100 billion in 1945.

The Emergency Relief Act of 1933 granted only \$500 million to the states to continue the starvation doles previously given some of the unemployed. By 1935, Roosevelt was to declare his intention to "get out of this business of relief" and to abandon three-quarters of the unemployed to the tender mercies of local relief agencies without funds.

Roosevelt's works program never provided jobs for more than 25% of the jobless. His first such program, the Civil Works Administration started in November 1933, lasted only three months. It paid \$15 a week, with minimum wages of 40 cents an hour in the South, 45 cents in the Midwest and 60 cents in the Northeast. The Federal Emergency Relief Administration program, which got under way in the summer of 1934, began to fold up in the spring of 1935. It employed an average of fewer than 2,000,000 workers, at a wage of \$12 a week.

The peak of the work relief program was reached under the Works Progress Administration (WPA). This paid the "prevailing wage rates" of the local communities — as low as \$19 a month in the South and \$40 a month in the North for common labor....

Throughout the entire first two terms of the Roosevelt administration, there were continuous unemployed demonstrations, relief works strikes and riots. The highest relief, the most relief jobs and the biggest wages were in direct proportion to the number of unemployed struggles....

Roosevelt's program for the unemployed seemed generous only by comparison with

Hoover's. But in terms of even minimum subsistence standards it was, as the Unemployed League put it, "not enough to live on and just too much to die on."

The main prop of the Roosevelt myth is that he gave American labor "the right to organize." This claim is based on Section 7(a) inserted into Roosevelt's chief piece of early "stabilization" legislation, the National Industrial Recovery Act, known as NRA, enacted in June 1933. Actually, the right to organize had been fully sanctioned in the Norris-LaGuardia Anti-Injunction Act of 1932, adopted in Hoover's administration.

To be sure, labor already had that right to organize — whenever it exercised the right and fought to maintain it. If there were no such right, how could the AFL have existed at all? In fact, 14 years earlier the AFL had organized more than four million workers. Had the workers not been ready and eager for organization, Section 7(a), affirming their right to organize and bargain collectively and to pick their own union representatives free from employer interference, would have had no effect in any sense.

The facts are that the workers were already on the move when Roosevelt took office and Section 7(a) was a reluctant response to labor pressure. The same upsurge of protest against conditions that had swept Roosevelt into office was also expressed at the start of 1933 in the biggest strike wave since the early twenties. These strikes



Picket against unemployment in front of WPA office in Minneapolis, 1939.

were especially significant because many occurred in unorganized, company-dominated basic industries, particularly auto.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

25 CENTS THE MILITANT

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

February 25, 1972

The U.S. supposedly observed a 24-hour "cease-fire" during the Vietnamese Tet new-year celebration Feb. 14. Here's how:

For four days up until the hour of the "cease-fire," U.S. bombers conducted the heaviest attacks against South Vietnam since June 1968. During the 24-hour "cease-fire" period the bombing continued against Laos. The hour the "cease-fire" ended, the bombers returned to South Vietnam. The Pentagon has indicated that this massive bombing campaign will be continued at least until President Nixon arrives in Peking.

It is hard to get a precise picture of the extent of the renewed heavy bombing. According to Associated Press correspondent George Esper, figures released by the U.S. military headquarters in Saigon indicated "that Navy and Air Force fighter-bombers flew 176 strikes in South Vietnam during the 24 hours before dawn. B-52 heavy bombers added another 27 missions, the most flown since June, 1968."

"This brought the total since Wednesday [Feb. 9] to 766 strikes, and informants said more raids between dawn and dusk today pushed the total past 800." (*New York Post*, Feb. 14, 1972.)

New York Times correspondent Craig R. Whitney, present at the same military briefing, stated in the Feb. 15 *Times* that "The number of air strikes is the highest that the command has reported since it began keeping such statistics in June, 1968. During the height of the enemy's 1968 Tet offensive, B-52 missions flown inside South Vietnam

were far fewer every day...." In other words, Nixon's renewed bombing of South Vietnam could be the heaviest in the history of the war.

THE MILITANT

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

February 22, 1947

In Nashville, Tennessee, some 2,500 white and Negro workers, representing every union affiliation from all parts of the state, united in a mass march on the state capitol building to fight against a threatened open shop bill and other anti-labor laws.

Never before has Nashville or any other state capitol of the labor-hating, Jim-Crow, Southern Bourbons witnessed such a scene.

A four-block-long column of AFL, CIO and Railroad Brotherhood members, with white and Negro workers standing shoulder to shoulder, marched four abreast behind one big banner that read: "Opposed to the Open Shop."

From the backward South, with its tradition of anti-unionism and racial bigotry, has come a demonstration of labor militancy and solidarity that points the way for labor nationally. Tennessee workers have shown in action the way to combat the anti-labor offensive of Big Business and its Congress.

The deep significance of the march in Nashville must certainly alarm the cruel Southern ruling class of rich industrialists and landowners. It is evidence that their Jim-Crow system for dividing the workers is crumbling. It is a sign that a new progressive force is emerging right inside the citadel of American reaction, the South. That force is the awakening Southern working class.

Labor's Giant Step

THE FIRST TWENTY YEARS OF THE CIO: 1936-55

Art Preis

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Food relief to n. Korea now!

Working people should demand that Washington, Tokyo, and Seoul stop using food as a weapon to starve the Korean people into submission, and instead send massive aid — with no strings attached — to north Korea now. Natural disasters have for two years in a row ruined that nation's vital crops. The moves being taken by these capitalist powers to block any serious international assistance are an extension of the nearly half-century campaign to isolate Pyongyang and overturn that workers state.

In the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s, following the second world imperialist slaughter, a series of anticolonial struggles erupted in Korea, China, Vietnam, and later Cuba. Following Tokyo's surrender to Washington in 1945, the Japanese rulers relinquished their control over Korea. Working people began setting up "people's committees" that, together with other anticolonial forces, called for workers' and peasants' rights.

A government was formed with close ties to these organizations. It planned to carry out massive land reform, institute broad nationalizations, and expand democratic rights.

Washington landed troops into southern Korea just two days after this government was formed, aiming to crush it. The U.S. imperialists informed Tokyo they would accept its surrender just south of the 38 parallel. The Moscow regime headed by Joseph Stalin accepted Tokyo's surrender in the northern portion of Korea, agreeing to the national division of the peninsula as laid out by Uncle Sam. Korean workers, peasants, and youth, however, refused to hand over their right to self-determination. And so in 1950 Washington, at the orders of Harry Truman, launched a military assault on Korea. Bombers, tanks, and napalm leveled Pyongyang, wiping out the infrastructure

and killing an estimated 4 million people.

Volunteers from the victorious Chinese revolution came to Korea's aid by the hundreds of thousands. Unable to conquer the Korean fighters, Washington established the 38th parallel as the dividing line and constructed a wall, aimed at isolating workers and peasants in the north and south from each other.

From that point on Washington has sought to overturn the workers state in the north and break the solidarity felt between toilers in the forcibly divided nation. Together with the south Korean regime, U.S. forces regularly carry out military exercises feigning combat with Pyongyang, as well as other intentional provocations. To this day 37,000 U.S. troops sit along the dividing line to enforce the partition of Korea.

Now, when working people face the onset of a possible famine, the imperialist powers would have them starve in an attempt to force concessions from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

Yet on neither side of the 38th parallel have the Korean toilers been broken. The sentiment against the Seoul government and for unification remains, as could be seen when tens of thousands of south Korean workers struck earlier this year shouting, "Down with Kim Young-Sam!" It can be seen in the annual marches along Unification Road when Koreans from the north and south attempt to meet, despite Seoul's prohibitions, and in the militant struggles by youth demanding a single, united country.

Along with exposing this example of imperialism's brutal nature, working people and youth the world over should demand of the capitalist rulers:

Unconditional food relief to north Korea now!
U.S. troops out of Korea!

Support strikers in Greece

The labor movement around the world should throw its support behind workers and farmers in Greece who have been waging militant strikes and demonstrations since last November to resist draconian austerity measures of the capitalist regime there.

The imperialist rulers of the countries belonging to the European Union — including Greek capitalists — have embarked on a massive austerity drive to force down wages and slash social entitlements of working people. Social programs won through bloody battles are on the chopping block, under the guise of meeting the criteria for joining the European Monetary Union by cutting budget deficits. The various capitalist classes in Europe must carry out such a perspective in order to best compete with Washington — the number one European power economically and militarily — and also among themselves.

Athens has set itself a particularly formidable, and most likely unrealizable, task: bringing its budget deficit down from 7.6 percent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to 3 percent by the year 2000, and slashing inflation now at 8.5 percent — three times higher than the EU average.

Greek imperialism made its appearance relatively late in history. Thus it was relegated to a role as a smaller and weaker junior imperialist power. Despite its voracious appetite, it faces greater pressures due to its weakness.

In order to overcome an almost two-decade long decline in their profit rates, the capitalist rulers in Greece seek to expand their reach into the Balkans and the Middle East region. Their aggressive policies against the Yugoslav republic of Macedonia, Albania, Cyprus, and Turkey since the opening of this decade are part of this expansionism. Athens has allied itself with Belgrade and Moscow in the hopes of gaining enough of a piece of the Balkan pie to reverse its declining fortunes.

Greek imperialism faces formidable obstacles in this endeavor. First, its bigger imperialist competitors — like Washington, Paris, Bonn, London, and Rome — also are seeking a piece of the same pie and enjoy economic and military superiority. Second, the recent strikes and demonstrations throughout workers states in Balkans do not bode well for the growing Greek investments there and underscore how little imperialism has accomplished in the region. Third, the toilers in Greece itself are not will-

ing to be shafted as a meek herd of sheep.

Athens has embarked on a more than \$10 billion program in new armaments to confront Ankara and boost its military might in the Balkans. Greece is one of NATO countries with troops in Yugoslavia. Recent events in Bulgaria and Albania give Greek capitalists nightmares. Greece is the fifth largest foreign investor in Bulgaria.

Greek imperialism's crumbling illusions in the Balkans force the employers and the government there to go after working people in that country harder and faster in order to shore up sagging profit rates. The PASOK government's austerity program seeks to accomplish just that. Targeted for cuts are social security pensions, national health system, public education, financial benefits for families with many children, subsidies for farmers which help make up for some of the imbalance between prices and the cost of production, and wages and benefits such as extra pay for Sunday and night work.

Workers and exploited farmers are not taking these attacks lying down, though. Farmers in Thessaly have taken the lead through a series of mass protests. Sailors pensioners, and teachers have also taken to the streets.

Working people world wide have everything to gain in a victory for the embattled working farmers and striking workers in Greece. The farmers' demands to guarantee a living income and for a moratorium on debt payments are just. The teachers' demands for higher spending on education and cost-of-living raises should be supported. Greek workers have joined millions of their brothers and sisters in France, Germany, and elsewhere who have been battling cuts in the social wage. Demands for equal rights for immigrants can also help build working-class solidarity.

The workings of capitalism are bringing ruin and war for working people of the region. Through the battles unfolding in Greece today, a fighting alliance of workers and farmers can begin to be cemented and revolutionary leadership can emerge, which can be tested in battle and eventually lead the toilers to take political power out of the hands of capitalist exploiters. Such a workers' and farmers government would extend its hand of solidarity to working people throughout the Balkans and end the expansionist plans of Greek imperialism and its more powerful allies in the region once and for all.

Food weapon aimed at n. Korea

Continued from Page 7
pressure on north Korea.

In a statement of solidarity sent to the people of north Korea February 12, the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party said, "As Washington, Tokyo, and Seoul have once again stepped up their threats and provocations against your country, our party reaffirms our solidarity with the Korean people's struggle for reunification and national sovereignty.

"We condemn the campaign by the regime in south Korea and its masters in the United States and Japan to use the 'food weapon' to extract concessions from the Democratic People's Republic of Korea and to stall on implementation of agreements Washington signed with the

DPRK in recent years....

"We join with the hundreds of thousands of workers and students who waged heroic strikes and demonstrations at the beginning of the year against Seoul's new antilabor law, many of whom pressed for ending the forced division of Korea as part of their demands.... The new wave of labor resistance to the bosses' offensive in south Korea provoked several actions of solidarity in the United States — from picket lines to public forums. It is among the fighters who joined these actions... as well as striking steelworkers and auto workers in the United States, and other working people resisting imperialist domination and capitalist exploitation around the world, that the Korean people will find allies."

Germany

Continued from Page 7

should stress that such reforms are necessary regardless of a single currency in Europe to become more competitive in a rapidly changing world economy."

The interview with Tietmeyer was part of a series of interviews with the heads of the central banks that are at the heart of Europe's single currency project. The others were Wim Duisenberg, the head of the Dutch Central Bank, and Jean Claude Trichet, governor of the Bank of France. All three "underscored the threat of record unemployment to society and the need to find practical solutions independent of the Maastricht process," *International Herald Tribune* correspondent Alan Friedman wrote.

Tietmeyer stated that rigid labor laws, collective wage negotiations, small gradations in wages compared to the United States, and high direct taxes instead of indirect taxes were at the heart of the economic problems in Europe. The *Herald Tribune* reported, "The idea of high wages for everyone and resistance to a more steeply varied wage scale, he [Tietmeyer] noted, 'has deep roots, even to the French Revolution.' But the cost of keeping wages high even for unskilled workers in Europe 'means that some unskilled people are not getting an opportunity to get a job.'"

Monetary union, he said, "is no panacea" for Europe's ills. But if the launch of the single currency is accompanied by "structural reforms," then "I think there is a chance of having a more stable relationship with the dollar and the yen," the Bundesbank chief said. Tietmeyer also favored a future European central bank "independent of and free of political influence," the *Herald Tribune* stated. This is at odds with Paris.

Meanwhile, Kohl's government is in increasing disarray over the tax and pension reforms. Labor Minister Norbert Blum and Finance Minister Waigel are publicly quarreling over Blum's proposed changes in the pension system. Blum is proposing reducing benefits and raising new money through an increase of the value-added tax. Waigel's scheme is instead to start taxing some pension benefits. The Free Democrats, a junior partner in the ruling coalition, are opposed to the tax increases. The government is unpopular because of the unemployment crises and the austerity measures it has implemented since last spring, including attempts to cut sick leave payments and pensions.

Kohl's authority in the Christian Democratic Party, uncontested for the last 15 years, is now challenged by younger leaders in his own party, such as Christian Wulff in Lower Saxony, who has called for a cabinet reshuffle and Waigel's replacement.

Labor resistance to the austerity measures, which broke out in the form of strikes and demonstrations last fall, is still there. The printers union recently held warning strikes, for instance, and signed a contract for its 210,000 members on February 6 that includes 100 percent sick leave payments.

Carl-Erik Isacson member of the metalworkers union in Södertälje, Sweden.

Auto parts strike

Continued from front page

with union members in the assembly plants.

Union officials reported to members of UAW Local 900, which represents the 4,000 workers at MTP, that negotiations had broken off with JCI the same day that Ford announced the plant shutdowns because the parts supplier refused to even offer the same pay and benefits they pay in an unorganized plant in Taylor, Michigan.

With the shut down of production at its own plants and the breakdown of negotiations, the auto giant moved to find a different way to get seats. Pickets report that at about 2 p.m. February 9, with the help of a large contingent of cops, 12 trucks loaded with seat-making machines rolled out of the plant.

Workers were called back to work at MTP on the morning of February 12 to resume building trucks without seats. The *Wall Street Journal* reported that JCI moved the equipment to a unionized plant in Kentucky organized by the United Steelworkers of America. Parts will be made there and shipped to JCI's major competitor in auto seat manufacturing, Lear, and to Ford's Chesterfield, Michigan, trim plant for assembly. The workers at most Lear plants and at the Ford location are members of the UAW. Some workers at the Chesterfield plant were asked to go on a seven-day-a-week schedule, working 12-hour shifts, even before press reports on Ford's plans. The UAW has not released a statement on its response to these latest moves to weaken the strike by JCI workers.

The picket lines are firm and continue to draw solidarity. Other workers visit the lines. Just hours after the trucks rolled out small groups of UAW Local 900 members stopped by after their union meeting. Students at Oberlin College organized a strike support meeting on February 11 that drew about 40 students.

On the first day back at MTP, the a big topic of discussion was what Ford's moves mean for the strike at JCI and what should unionists in the plant do to support their brothers and sisters on the picket lines.

John Sarge is a member of UAW Local 900 at MTP. Kibwe Diarra, a UAW member in Cleveland, contributed to the article.

Steelworkers keep up fight in Ontario

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 short items to this column as a

The last solidarity action, which drew 60-70 people was on Jan. 13, 1997. Welcoming the support, striker Sam Singh, commented, "It will help us to stop the scabs and shut them down so they will negotiate. The bigger the picket lines the

ant pharmaceutical company. Eric Arnold, a young Black worker, was called a "stupid nigger" by a supervisor last summer, and began the process of filing complaints with the company and the state. John D'Orazio, who is white, has been harassed including receiving death threats, for corroborating Eric's account. Dwayne Ross, who was fired from his job at Shering-Plough because of racism, also marched. Six workers in all have filed racial discrimination complaints against the company with the state Division on Civil Rights.

One worker who joined the march was Leon Pearson, who works at D&E Foods in Elizabeth. He told the *Militant*, "I came out to support these guys because I was terminated from my job unfairly myself. We have to stand up and fight these racial attacks." On December 23, a noose was found in the maintenance area in Shering-Plough's Kenilworth plant with the handwritten words "Monkey Craft Bungee Jump."

The company claimed in November that it does not tolerate racism, investigates all reported incidents, and punishes violators. But, explained John D'Orazio, when the company made that claim, it only



Militant/Ali Yousefi

Solidarity rally on Oct. 25, 1996, for S. A. Armstrong steelworkers on strike. "Until this fire is out we will not surrender," said a young worker on the picket line.

ON THE PICKET LINE

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.

SCARBOROUGH, Ontario — Striking Steelworkers at S.A. Armstrong, a pumping equipment manufacturer, intend to keep up their fight and save their union. Some 76 members of United Steelworkers of America Local 6971 have been on strike there since the last week of April, 1996.

This is one of the first industrial fights in Ontario where the bosses have attempted to bust the union since provincial premiere Michael Harris passed labor laws that allow companies to hire replacement workers/scabs during a strike. That's why it's important that working people stand up in solidarity with the strikers and help them go back to their jobs with their heads up high. So far not even a single unionist has crossed the picket line.

Solidarity actions have taken place in support of the strikers, but there hasn't been a massive mobilization that could shut down the plant, bring the employer to the negotiating table, and stop its union-busting policies. The largest mobilizations were of a few hundred in October.

better." He noted that the company's "pick and choose offer" of selecting who can return to work after the strike means "if you shout too much on the picket line or stop the scabs they put a red mark under your name."

"Until this fire is out we will not surrender," said Greg, a 28-year-old steelworker who has spent more time on the picket line than his actual employment at S.A. Armstrong. Pointing to a fellow striker named George Lion, who has six months before retirement and has worked at the plant for 32 years, Greg said, "His name should be in the hall of fame. He is such a fighter."

Lion related, "Once at the beginning of the strike I asked Charles Armstrong, the owner, 'Why are you doing this to us,' and he told me to go in and work. I said 'No way, I'm not leaving my brothers behind and cross the picket line.'" That is the average attitude and fighting spirit of the strikers.

Pharmaceutical workers protest racist attacks

ELIZABETH, New Jersey — Two workers at Shering-Plough Corp. and one former worker led over a dozen supporters in a spirited march through the streets of Elizabeth and Union, New Jersey, January 20 as part of ongoing protests against racist attacks at the gi-

opened the floodgates to dozens more complaints. "Close to 50 workers [out of a workforce of 3,000] called the hot line we set up: Black, white, and 90 percent women," said Salaam Ismail, an activist who is supporting the workers' fight.

Although the company did fire the foreman who insulted Eric Arnold, other mostly middle level management have also been responsible for racist statements and actions. "We're not in this to make a million dollars," D'Orazio said. "We want to straighten this out for others." Besides settlements on the civil rights cases, the workers are demanding a task force be created to set up guidelines and deal with complaints.

The workers have been making their protests public, reaching out for support by holding press con-

ferences, and holding signs in front of the plant protesting the company's racism. They launched a boycott of Shering-Plough products on February 5, when their demands were not met. Shering-Plough produces the antihistamine Claritin and Intron A, which is a treatment for malignant melanoma and hepatitis C, among other products. For the year 1996, their earnings rose 37 percent to \$1.21 billion, compared to \$886 million in 1995. Shering Plough employs some 20,000 workers worldwide.

Ali Yousefi, member of USWA Local 5338 in Toronto, and Martha Ressler, member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees in Perth Amboy, New Jersey, contributed to this column.

LETTERS

Mexico I

Reading your article on the Mexican "bailout" fostering the economic crisis which covered the southern states of Guerrero, Oaxaca, and Chiapas. The *Militant* has covered extensively the economic pressures put on Mexico, but I would like more coverage of the militarization of these states and the rest of the country being done with U.S. support. On my last visit to Mexico I was impressed by the increased presence of military, police, and immigration officials in all the states that I visited. The military now controls three major airports. An incident that caught my attention when taking the bus from one state to another, I had to go through metal detectors and officers checking my luggage, something that wasn't seen before. The government claims that these measures are taken to reduce crime and drug trafficking.

Alex Jiménez
Tucson, Arizona

Mexico II

If possible, would you add 5 copies of *Militant* issue #6 to Tucson's regular bundle this week. Issue #6 has the important article on the bailout of Mexico and the editorial on canceling Mexico's foreign debt. We have sold all we have.

Tucson will join 31 other cities in a national protest February 14 against U.S. aid to the militarization of Mexico. We would like to have this issue of the *Militant* for that event, as no one else is picking up on the connection of the pressures to continue to pay interest to the foreign debt and the militarization.

Betsy McDonald
Tucson, Arizona



Ebonics debate

The "deplorable conditions" the article describes in Oakland schools I would formulate as being caused by "the intensified national oppression of Blacks as a result of the deepening capitalist crisis." The article's formulation devoid of the term oppressed national minority, beclouds the article's relevant points and inadequately portrays the dynamics of Black struggle (or lack of it and reason for same), for starters. Yes, Ebonics' usefulness in addressing the deplorable conditions in Oakland or anywhere else pales drastically in comparison to the slashed, already inadequate funding for urban Black working class schools creating the "deplorable conditions" — although Black children are negatively stereotyped by the thousands every day for their use of Black English. You say, "we must oppose any discrimination against

Black youth...." It's time!

Ebonics, which most linguists agree is a dialect of English, coined in the early 1970's, originated out of the 1960's Black power movement, by educators, intellectuals and their adherents influenced Black nationalism. Ebonics, Africentrism, cries for more Black businesses, for buy Black campaigns, for more Black elected politicians, and for more Black private independent schools get their play in all Black classes under intensified Black national oppression. The presence of powerless Black elected and administrative officialdom in charge in Oakland, demonstrates the dead-end strategy of buying into dependent electoral capitalist politics as a means to challenge Black national oppression put forth by the three petty-bourgeois political trends in the Black community represented by Louis Farrakhan, Jesse Jackson and the NAACP. Rather than orga-

nize mass based local and national independent political movements to put forth demands for adequate resources and community control, affirmative action, jobs for all and the like, they join in the debate. They have done their jobs by helping to elect Clinton and the local elected Black Oakland officials.

True, "revolutionary leaders who have risen from the ranks of the oppressed have never talked down to their fellow fighters or adapted their speech to sound like jargon or slang." However, all of them valued their fellow fighters, many who were illiterate or talked slang, to fight for free education among other things — ask the revolutionary fighters who helped kick the U.S. out of Cuba and the valiant comrades who helped to bring down apartheid. The revolution that will be made in the U.S. will have a few too!

Ken Morgan
Baltimore, Maryland

The facts about Ford

In the January-February 1997 issue of the *Mosaic*, the glossy company magazine distributed to all the employees at Ford Electronics where I work, plant manager Ronald Frisbee tries to allay the well-

founded fear of many coworkers about the possible loss of jobs with the introduction of Ford's new "lean and flexible" worldwide production system (FPS).

Frisbee says "we should not look at these productivity improvements as eliminating jobs. Exactly the opposite will happen." Frisbee goes on to quote from Henry Ford's 1926 book *Today and Tomorrow*. Ford wrote: "We know that these improvements will lessen costs and therefore widen markets and make more jobs at higher wages." Frisbee concludes, "...we need to continue to adopt this philosophy from 1926. Our future depends on it!"

Six years after Ford wrote these words, according to the February 10, 1997, *Militant*, over 3,000 laid off Ford workers in Detroit demonstrated for jobs in March 1932 during the Great Depression. Four were killed by cops and Ford security guards. The same issue of the *Militant* reports that on January 23, 1997 hundreds of Ford workers marched on company offices in London, England to protest the threatened layoffs of 1,300 workers at a Ford factory near Liverpool.

This shows you can't get the facts we need from brain-numbing company propaganda. But we can get them from the *Militant*.

John Steele
Toronto, Ontario

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.

Greece: teachers, sailors, working farmers rebel against austerity

BY BOBBIS MISAILIDES
AND GEORGES MEGRABIAN

ATHENS, Greece — For an entire month thousands of public employees and other workers have participated in strikes and almost daily rallies and demonstrations at the center of Athens, the capital of Greece. February 9 also marked the 14th day of nationwide farm protests.

Workers and farmers are resisting draconian austerity measures that the capitalist government of the social democratic Panhellenic Socialist Movement (PASOK), headed by Prime Minister Constantinos Simítis, is trying to impose through the 1997 budget. The measures include cuts in social services, a wage freeze, and cuts in hiring throughout the public sector.

In the face of the government's unyielding stance, high school teachers decided on February 5 to continue indefinitely their nationwide strike. The walkout entered its fourth week. Two days earlier, teachers at elementary schools joined the strike, shutting classrooms across the country. Nearly 75 percent of teachers across the country are now on strike.

The teachers are demanding increases in the monthly salary of new hires, ranging from 50,000 to 75,000 drs (260 drachmas = US\$1), and pay raises according to seniority. The strikers are also demanding jobs for the thousands of unemployed teachers, lowering the number of students to 25 per class room, and raising national spending for public education to 15 percent of the national budget.

The strike was called by the Federation of Elementary School Teachers (ELME) and the Federation of Secondary School Teachers (OLME). It has the active support of the Panhellenic Union of Unemployed Teachers (PEAE).

On February 5 teachers participated in one of their biggest demonstrations in the last 15 years. They were joined by many of their students who marched in solidarity. The protesters marched to the prime minister's office to present their demands.

Hundreds of cops attacked the demonstrators and arrested two of the striking unionists. Among the most popular slogans protesters chanted was, "No more mockery! The strike can't be broken with 15,000 drs." The teachers were referring to the last offer for a salary raise by the government, which would mean a substantial decline in real wages due to high inflation.

The 11-day seamen's strike

Three weeks earlier, thousands of merchant marine sailors participated in their longest strike in decades. The militant walkout started January 12 and lasted 11 days. Sailors managed to hold ships tied up in Piraeus, Patra, and other major ports across the country by organizing sit-ins inside the vessels. The Panhellenic Seamen's Federation (PNO), which called the strike, has 30,000 members.

Central to the sailors' demands were social security pensions equivalent to 80 percent of wages and demands for tax breaks.

The Greek merchant marine fleet is among the largest in the world with 3,246 vessels. Of them, only 1,766 fly the Greek flag. Many of the workers are from the Philippines, Pakistan, and other countries. These workers have the worst jobs, are paid lower wages, and don't receive health or other benefits. The PNO leadership has done nothing to organize the immigrant seamen or fight for any of the rights of the foreign-born workers. Instead, it blames them for the mass layoffs by the ship owners and over the years has fought to protect "Greek jobs." This demand of the PNO leadership undercut labor solidarity during the strike.

As in other strikes and protests, the government responded by using its arsenal of antilabor laws and a massive police force



More than 6,000 farmers (inset) were joined by striking teachers, construction workers, and others in a protest rally against government austerity in the town of Microthebes, central Greece, February 9. Above, a few days earlier, farmers drive tractors through river in Thessaly to evade police and set up roadblocks on highway.

to break the strike. About 3,000 cops surrounded the port of Piraeus on the night of January 20. Piraeus is the largest port of Greece and was the center of the nationwide strike. While the cops were assaulting the workers, Minister of Merchant Marine Stávros Soumákis ordered the sailors to end their strike in two hours.

The sailors stood firm waging pitched battles with the cops. By 3:00 a.m. the next day they successfully repelled the police efforts to break their walkout. The ship owners cut off electricity and food served to the strikers on many boats. The employers also took the sailors' union to the court. On January 22, the court declared the strike illegal and announced that if the walkout continued 14 PNO leaders would face fines and jail sentences.

Under these pressures, a majority of the PNO Executive Committee decided to accept the government's last offer. The vote was 9-6 in favor of ending the strike. During the debate in the PNO executive, around 300 sailors gathered outside the union headquarters and chanted slogans supporting the continuation of the strike. They reflected the determination of many seamen.

The government agreed to collaborate with the ship owners and the PNO leadership in the hiring process to "protect Greek jobs." For this year, pensions will be paid at 58 percent of wages, and sailors will also receive tax breaks of 4-6 percent.

Working farmers battle the police

In the middle of this labor unrest, Thessaly cotton farmers relaunched their mass mobilizations for two weeks. Convoys of thousands of tractors began moving toward different points of the main north-south national highway February 4. Their stated aim was to shut down traffic between Athens and the northern city of Thessaloníki, the country's second largest city. In December, the farmers closed the country's major highways with roadblocks for 25 days. They took down their blockades prior to the Christmas holidays and gave the government a notice that they would be back.

The farmers are demanding higher prices for their products to cover costs and guarantee them a living income; a three-year moratorium on interest payments on their debts, and decrease in the interest rates for new loans; cuts in fuel and power costs for cultivation; lower value added taxes (VAT); and compensation of up to 90,000 drs per

strema (1/4 acres) of land to cover damages to their crops.

A public prosecutor issued a ban at the beginning of February on the "concerted movement of agricultural vehicles on the national road," thus in one stroke of the pen making the protest movement's tactic illegal and giving the government the legal cover to assault the mobilizations.

The PASOK regime mobilized 6,000 cops to prevent the farmers from carrying out their protests. According to the February 5 *Athens News*, a cat and mouse game ensued for hours between the organized farm movement and the vast police forces. "Farmers used CB radios and dummy convoys to keep the pursuing police on their toes. At one point tractors turned the tables and blocked a police van convoy from reaching one intersection."

"By nightfall some 2,000 tractors lined up at Drougos, a village south of Larissa, on the old national road. The Thessaly farmers appeared determined to set up their base there, setting up tarpaulin shacks, lighting fires and breaking out the *tsipouro*, the local spirit, to face the cold outside."

Ethnikós Kírix (National Tribune), a Greek-language conservative daily published in New York, described in detail some of the battles these farmers waged with the police on their way. The 2,000 tractors were preceded by 500 private cars. "When they reached the village of New Monastíri," the paper said in its February 7 issue, "they met a police roadblock. Seeing the tractors, the police tried to place three police cars across the highway to prevent the farmers from going through."

"The farm convoy stopped 50 meters in front of the police cars and dozens of farmers got out of their tractors and cars. They threw themselves on the police vehicles, literally lifting them in the air, with the police officers inside, and placing them on the side of the road. In a climate of general enthusiasm, the tractors went through and continued on their way to Fársala."

Over the next days the farmers' "guerrilla" actions continued as tractors crossed fields and rivers to out maneuver the vast police force arrayed against them. Repeated short closures of the road continued into the weekend.

On February 7, thousands of police, surrounded 1,500 tractors the farmers had left on the Athens-Thessaloníki national highway and, in the presence of public prosecutors, deflated all the tires and arrested the

small farmers guard present.

The government then announced it may confiscate all vehicles involved in these actions. Most farmers had left for nearby villages the night before due to exceptionally bitter cold. Two days later the farmers discovered that many of their tractor tires were not just deflated, but slashed, lights and windows were broken, and some engines were damaged by mixing sugar with fuel. Farm leaders said those affected will file suits for compensation by the government. Nine government ministers were dispatched to the countryside in a government propaganda campaign to slander and demobilize the movement.

Government wages war on farmers

Despite all the threats by the government, the farm movement in Thessaly was gaining steam in the days leading up to the latest flare-up. During a visit to the region on February 1, *Militant* reporters witnessed 40 to 50 tractors assembling at each of the villages in the Thessaly plains that we traveled through.

The well organized and determined farmers succeeded in cutting the national highway at three locations for one hour each and then retreated. Farm leader Yiatutis Patakis is quoted in the February 5 *Athens News* stating, "We are in control — we can block the roads any time we want."

The government took a tough line refusing to negotiate on any of the farmers' demands unless they suspended their street protests. The Simítis administration has used extensive red baiting in an attempt to cut across sympathy for the farmers' plight.

The January 27 daily *Nea* reported that Agriculture Minister Stéfanos Tzoumákis stated that the protesting farmers are being manipulated by the Communist Party of Greece (KKE) and the opposition conservative party New Democracy.

Tzoumákis told the January 28 *Athens News*, "What we are saying is that the time has come to do what needs to be done to make Greek agriculture viable. Some, mainly the KKE, say there is a directive from the European Union to reduce the agricultural population of our country. But everyone from Marx to Friedman will tell you that agricultural production can not survive with plots of land less than 10 stremas [2.5 acres]. Do you know how many such farms we have in Greece? Four hundred thousand."

The government has made clear that it intends to use its policies, and the normal workings of capitalism — debt slavery and the gap between prices and cost of production most working farmers face — to drive tens of thousands of small farmers off the land.

In a visit to the agricultural town of Karditsa in the cotton region of Thessaly, this point became clear to *Militant* reporters. The towns people milling in the streets and cafes, or strolling the squares and alleys, were in their big majority middle aged or older people or children. Few young adults could be seen anywhere, as many have had to leave for jobs in the big urban centers such as Athens.

The outcome of the struggle is not determined yet, however. On February 7, about 2,000 construction workers marched toward the Greek parliament in the center of Athens in solidarity with the farmers. They clashed with the police who prevented them from approaching parliament. Striking teachers, construction workers, small businessmen and others joined more than 6,000 farmers at a rally in the central square of Microthebes, Thessaly, February 9. There, farm leaders announced they were suspending their strike and attempted roadblocks to see if the government would negotiate with them. They set early March as the deadline for reinitiation of the struggle if talks fail.