

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Report on January 1-3 SWP
National Committee meeting

— PAGES 8-9

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Join Black farmers fighting discrimination!

Expose gov't campaign to push farmers to quit struggle

Build March 2 demonstration!

The Clinton administration is on the offensive, supported by the capitalist media, to get Black farmers to quit their struggle against discrimination by the U.S. Depart-

EDITORIAL

ment of Agriculture and to end their three-year class-action suit against the USDA. Capitalist newspapers across the country are carrying stories presenting the January 5 consent decree signed by lawyers for the government and for Black farmers as the end of the fight around the suit. They are hoping to convince people that the fight is over by presenting what they want to be true as

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Proposed U.S. government settlement is attempt to sweep aside Black farmers' fight for justice. Above, rally in front of USDA in Washington, D.C., April 23, 1997.

Black farmers: reject consent decree in lawsuit

BY STU SINGER

WASHINGTON, D.C. — "The government, the lawyers, and most of the news media are saying the fight of the Black farmers is settled," said Eddie Slaughter, a Georgia farmer and paper mill worker who is the vice president of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association (BFAA).

"But the consent decree does not mean it is settled. Black farmers reject it. It is a sell-out. Nobody thinks it's fair. We are going to organize news conferences calling on people to reject the consent decree and come to Washington for a protest rally and to attend the hearing on March 2," Slaughter added.

The consent decree "will close the book on this shameful period at USDA [U.S. Department of Agriculture] when Blacks were excluded from programs all other farmers enjoyed," Alexander Pires, the lead attorney for the farmers, said in a news release. But no Black farmer the *Militant* has spoken to thinks the terms of the consent decree "close the book" on racist discrimination by the USDA.

"They should lose their jobs," 32-year-old Black farmer Sam Jackson from Bennettsville, South Carolina, said about the county agriculture agents directly responsible for the discrimination. "They dogged

me and degraded me."

This is one of the most frequently heard complaints about the consent decree signed by lawyers for Black farmers suing the government and lawyers for the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It was tentatively approved by U.S. District Court Judge Paul Friedman on January 5. A final settlement is supposed to come following a "fairness hearing" in federal court in Washington on March 2.

Many Black farmers are mobilizing to try to influence that hearing. "Come to Washington March 2 to support Black farmers in

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Indiana poultry workers strike Tyson

BY PATTIE THOMPSON
AND HELEN MEYERS

CORYDON, Indiana — More than 300 members of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 227 are on strike against Tyson Foods, the largest poultry producer in the United States. Corydon is located about 30 miles northwest of Louis-

ville, Kentucky. This plant processes live chickens for store-ready packages.

After four months of negotiations and three extensions, workers rejected the company's contract proposal in December. The company was demanding concessions in wages, benefits, and work rules, and wanted to gut union contract protections.

About 150 workers set up the picket line January 3.

Ken Carthy, who has worked in the plant for the last two years, said, "They are trying to push us back 20 years. And then they don't want to talk to us." There have been no negotiations since the walkout.

The union fact sheet lists 21 takeaways in the company's contract. The line workers' average wage of \$7.68 per hour would be frozen during the three-year contract. The wage progression, under which it currently takes 450 days to reach full rate, would be extended to three years. Two paid breaks would be eliminated, forcing workers to work 27 minutes longer for the same pay. Employee costs for health insurance would be increased by 60 percent, with no cap on future increases.

The company also rejected the union's food safety concerns, including the right of employees to refuse to process contaminated product or meat that had fallen on the plant floor or showed signs of disease.

Charlotte Matlock is one of five members of her household working at Tyson. Two other members of her family had been fired just one month before the strike began. She pointed out that most new hires don't make it through the 45-day probation. "The blood and gut contents get all over you. It's hard

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Brazil devaluation threatens wider crisis

BY NAOMI CRAINE

The head of the Central Bank of Brazil, Gustavo Franco, resigned January 13. His successor, Francisco Lopes, immediately devalued the Brazilian currency, the *real*, by nearly 8 percent against the U.S. dollar. The São Paulo stock exchange dropped 10 percent within minutes, and the Dow Jones Industrial Average in New York fell 250 points in half an hour, though it regained half of that by the day's end. Other stock markets sank across Europe and Latin America.

Washington and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) have been trying to stave off a devaluation of the real through a \$41.5 billion "rescue package" cobbled together last November. The loans and "loan guarantees" from the U.S. government, some 20 other governments, and the IMF are also aimed at ensuring the Brazilian government can continue making debt payments to Wall Street and other imperialist creditors.

The package, made up mostly of short-term loans at premium interest rates, is simi-

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Rulers worry impeachment trial is out of control

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

The impeachment trial of William Clinton opened January 7 with conservatives in the Senate stepping up the pressure to remove him from the Oval Office. At the same time, a layer of bourgeois politicians and pundits are expressing nervousness that the impeachment crisis is on the verge of spinning out of control, which could further deepen the instability of the world capitalist system.

"First Mr. Clinton demeaned the Presidency with his reckless affair..., and now the House Republicans have matched him with a reckless bill of impeachment over something that doesn't come close to a high crime against the Constitution," *New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman wrote January 8. "They both need to be stopped before they do any more damage to our sacred institutions. And that's why I favor censure.... I favor censure not because it's the most just and moral way to bring this case to a close, but because it's the fastest," he continued. "Now I pray only for damage control. When there is no one to root for, all you can root for is 'The End.'"

The House Republican "managers" who will prosecute the case against Clinton say they want testimony from witnesses including former White House employee Monica Lewinsky and possibly several other women who claim Clinton made sexual advances toward them. Clinton's affair with Lewinsky and his failed attempts to cover it up triggered the yearlong scandal.

The issue of witnesses has not been resolved as Democrats say the 60,000 pages of evidence is sufficient to make a judgment on Clinton. "We know the facts," said Democratic Sen. Thomas Daschle.

"The notion of holding a trial with wit-

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U.S. planes are firing on Iraq almost daily

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

The Clinton administration is carrying out a course of daily provocations, military threats, and frequent air strikes on Iraq. Unable to crush the Iraqi people despite an eight-year economic blockade punctuated by military attacks, including four nights of bombing in December, the U.S. rulers have become more isolated in their bellicose actions, and also more dangerous.

Two U.S. F-15E fighter jets patrolling the northern "no-fly" zone Washington

enforces fired on what they said was an antiaircraft installation January 11. Almost simultaneously, an F-16 jet launched a missile at another Iraqi air defense facility near Mosul, the fifth and sixth such attack in two weeks. The next two days U.S. jets fired more missiles at sites in the same region, Pentagon officials said.

Defense Department spokesman Col. Richard Bridges claimed the January 11 bombings were acts of "self-defense" be-

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Tel Aviv razes homes in Lebanon

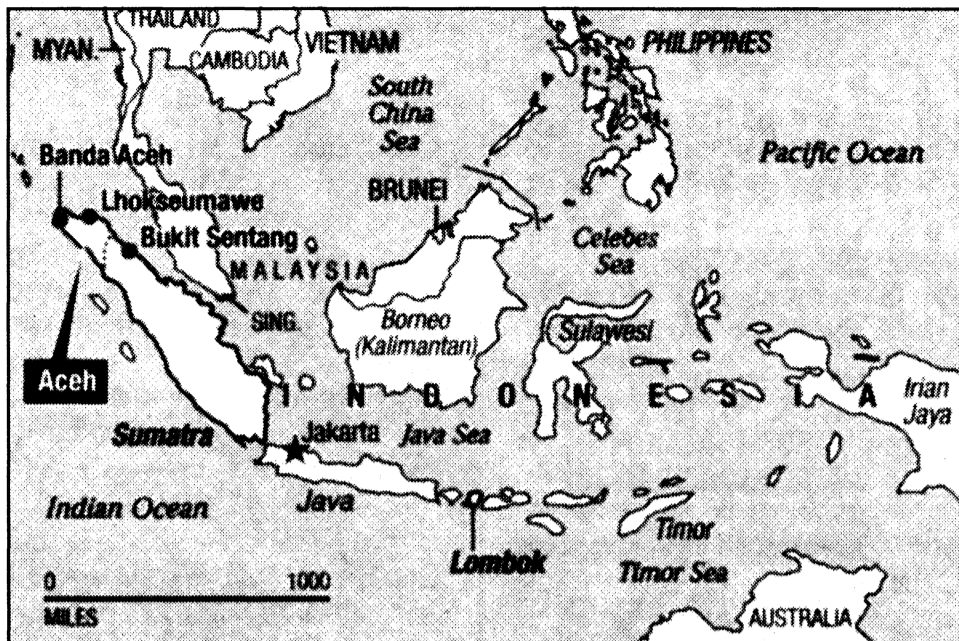
In Tel Aviv's latest trampling of Lebanese sovereignty, Israeli troops demolished 14 houses in Arnoun, Lebanon, January 7. The Israeli government claims the houses were bulldozed because they were allegedly used to attack Israeli occupational troops. This was the second such attack in less than two weeks. Arnoun is just under two miles away from the border zone Tel Aviv forcibly maintains inside Lebanese territory. Lebanese officials and Hezbollah, an armed group fighting to kick 4,000 Israeli troops and Zionist-backed South Lebanon Army militia out of Lebanon, denounced the Israeli aggression.

Meanwhile, in the West Bank hundreds of Palestinians marched through Hebron January 7 to protest a three-day military siege and curfew by the Israeli government. The action came a day after Israeli troops shot and killed a mentally handicap Palestinian who was reportedly carrying a toy gun. Tel Aviv instituted the crackdown January 4 on the unsubstantiated claim the shoot-up of a van that day was the work of Palestinian independence fighters.

Miners strike in Romania

Thousands of miners in Romania, on the fifth day of their strike for higher wages, marched through the town of Petrosani January 8 in an act of solidarity with coal miners there who face massive layoffs. The government announced the day before the closing of 37 so-called unprofitable mines. Petrosani, 160 miles southwest of the capital city, Bucharest, contains Jiu Valley, the country's biggest coalfield used to fuel electricity production. Since the Romanian government began shutting down mines in 1997, more than half the Jiu Valley miners have been laid off, leaving about 21,000 working. Unemployment there stands at more than 26 percent — double the national average.

Radu Vasile and Rady Berceanu, the prime minister and industry minister respectively, have refused to visit the Jiu Valley. They claim they are willing to hold talks with the miners, but refuse to meet with mine leader Miron Cozma, who participated in the 1990 labor battles in Bucharest against government "reforms."



Map of Indonesia. The military there has organized a campaign to crush the independence movement in the Aceh province of 3.6 million people.

Indonesian cops kill nine in raids on Aceh independence group

Indonesian soldiers raided several villages January 3 in Aceh, the northern region of Sumantra island. When infuriated residents in Pusung responded by trying get the soldiers out, troops opened fire. In the Aceh town of Lhokseumawe, 132 people were arrested in the raids. At least nine people were killed and hundreds more were injured. The Indonesian government said the raids were in search of members of Free Aceh, a group fighting for independence.

Meanwhile, thousands of people participated in antigovernment protests in Karawang, Indonesia, January 8 after a rumor spread that cops harassed motorcycle taxi drivers. The sizable crowd attacked the police headquarters as well as other sites. Protests like the one in Karawang have been taking place there unrelentingly for more than a year against the effects of the deepening world capitalist economic crisis.

Brazil state halts debt payment...

Two days after taking office Itamar Franco, governor of Minas Gerais, Brazil,

declared a 90-day moratorium on more than \$13 billion in debt owed to the federal government. Minas Gerais is the third-wealthiest state in Brazil. In the six days following the January 6 announcement, stock values dropped 12.7 percent on the Brazilian exchange. Since last July there has been a \$40 billion flight of foreign investments out of Brazil under fears that that country would be unable to repay loans and impose austerity measures on working people there.

Meanwhile, Chase Manhattan Corp. announced it will buy the Brazilian bank Banco Patrimônio. This will give Chase capacities to organize mergers and acquisitions inside Brazil, as U.S. capitalists seek to profit from the economic crisis by buying up more of the country's patrimony.

...and auto workers defy sackings

Shortly before the end of 1998, Ford Motor Co. laid off some 3,000 auto workers — nearly half the workforce — from its Sao Bernardo, Brazil, factory. On January 5, the sacked workers went back into the plant along with those still working, and reported to their job sites demanding they be rehired. The workers have returned daily, playing cards and dominoes by the stopped assembly lines, and the company has not tried to halt them.

Workers at Volkswagen — the largest carmaker in Brazil — facing similar company assertions of low profits, took a 15 percent pay cut and shorter work day.

U.S. 'conspiracy' indictment widens in embassy bombings

A U.S. District Court in New York City indicted a 12th person on sweeping "conspiracy" charges stemming from the August 7 bombing of U.S. embassies in Kenya and Tanzania. Mamdouh Mahmud Salim was arrested in Germany three months ago on a U.S. warrant. He was taken to New York last

month where he is being held without bail. The charges against Salim could bring a sentence of life in prison without parole.

Salim is accused of conspiring with Osama bin Laden and others to murder U.S. citizens and use "weapons of mass destruction" to destroy U.S. military facilities. U.S. government officials and the capitalist media organized a similar anti-Arab smear campaign to railroad into prison those accused of bombing the World Trade Center.

Boeing bosses hit hard by rival Airbus

The European company Airbus Industrie struck a blow against its rival Boeing with a January 6 announcement of a \$1.3 billion deal with Boullion Aviation Services. Boullion, formerly run by Japanese capitalists, was acquired by Deutsche Bank and is now a German-owned leasing company based in Washington State, where Boeing's headquarters. Boullion, which until this deal had only purchased Boeing aircraft, will buy 30 single aisle airliners from Airbus. Boeing has complained about Airbus low pricing policies, which stung them last year when British Airways and Trans World Airlines — two former Boeing exclusives — bought 90 jets and wide-bodied planes from Airbus.

Meanwhile, Scandinavian Airlines System is contemplating seeking a multimillion dollar compensation package from Boeing because their aircraft deliveries are up to 10 weeks late.

N.Y. governor tries to end parole

New York governor George Pataki is pushing for state lawmakers to end parole for all prisoners convicted on felony charges. As part of this he proposes to dissolve the State Parole Board. Pataki's plan would urge the state Legislature to adopt "determinate sentencing," which would require an inmate to serve six-sevenths of their sentence. The governor's attack on the democratic rights includes calling for the state's DNA data bank to carry samples from everyone convicted of a crime, up from the 8 percent currently on file.

Dominican man dies in INS jail

Miguel Antonio Valoy-Núñez, a Dominican immigrant held in a Federal detention center in New York City while facing deportation, died January 4 from what most people on the scene say was lack of medical attention. At least three other detainees with Valoy-Núñez that night called their lawyers to complain that a man died because of poor medical attention. One immigrant said Valoy-Núñez was shivering and "coughing up black stuff" and no one came to help. The 40-year-old Dominican man was never seen by a doctor, but Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) cops claim Valoy-Núñez received adequate treatment from nurses and a doctor's assistant. More than 30 people detained by the INS refused breakfast and lunch the following day in protest.

— BRIAN TAYLOR

THE MILITANT

Support Black farmers' fight for land!

The settlement the U.S. Department of Agriculture is trying to foist on Black farmers is an attempt to sweep under the rug decades of racist discrimination. The 'Militant' tells the truth about the settlement and promotes the ongoing fight by Black farmers for their land and against discrimination. Don't miss a single issue!



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Washington steps up provocations over Iraq

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cause the planes were "illuminated" by Iraqi radar. Since its December 16-19 bombing campaign in Iraq made it impossible to keep using the United Nations "weapons inspectors" to foment provocations against Baghdad, Washington has turned to enforcing the "no-fly" zones — which were imposed over nearly two-thirds of Iraq by the UN Security Council at the U.S. government's insistence — to serve that purpose.

Meanwhile, a U.S. war department spokesman said Washington has placed some of its 15,300 troops in the Arab-Persian Gulf area on maximum alert and may call up its 24,000-strong reserves for new threats against Iraq. The U.S. military brass announced they were doubling the number of warplanes flying over the country daily from eight to 16. U.S. Gen. Anthony Zinni said Washington was beefing up its war machine in the Gulf, adding eight more F-16 fighter jets and four KC-130 aerial tankers. There are 182 jets already deployed in the region and London announced its aircraft carrier *Invincible* will be added to the imperialist armada as well.

The casual character of the latest bombings, which haven't even made the front page of the *New York Times*, reflects an attempt by the U.S. rulers to inure working people around the world to the use of their massive firepower. "It's a good day for bombing," Air Force Gen. David Deptula, the U.S. commander overseeing the region, blithely declared in an e-mail message after bombing Iraqi defense sites in the "no-fly" zone last December, the January 8 *Wall Street Journal* reported.

Washington more isolated

The Clinton administration's war on the Iraqi people has deepened divisions within the UN Security Council, while Baghdad has gained more sympathy from Arab peoples across the Middle East. Washington's pretense that its aim is to "bring peace" has been dealt a blow from the exposure in the capitalist media that the UN Special Commission "weapons inspection" teams were tools of U.S. spy agencies. To counter its growing isolation, U.S. secretary of state

Madeleine Albright announced plans to visit Saudi Arabia and Egypt later in January to shore up waning support for the draconian sanctions and future military actions against the Iraqi people.

"United States officials said today that American spies worked undercover on teams of United Nations arms inspectors," began an article in the January 7 *New York Times*. Three days later the *Times* editors acknowledged that Washington's snooping in Iraq "was coordinated with the U.N. weapons inspection program, which began after the Persian Gulf War in 1991." Last March a U.S. spy traveled to Baghdad to install eavesdropping equipment to listen in on radio and telephone communications of Iraqi government officials and military facilities. In August, after it became clear that the spying operations would not end, Baghdad prohibited the UN snoopers from conducting unannounced "inspections," and charged that the UN spies were deliberately working to maintain the draconian embargo and "to serve U.S. policy against Iraq."

"The United States often acts in a unilateral way," chided French prime minister Lionel Jospin, seeking to capitalize on Washington's political weakening. "I believe there is a need for France to assert itself more on the international scene," he continued, assuring that this was "not because of its power or wanting to teach anybody lessons, but because it has a different way of seeing a certain number international realities."

In an attempt to take the political initiative, Paris called for a "new system of continuous monitoring." The government is pushing to lift the oil embargo in hopes of French oil companies regaining prominent trade deals with Iraq, which sits on top of 10 percent of the Earth's oil reserves.

Reflecting the mounting pressures on Washington, London, the only other participant in the recent imperialist bombardment on Iraq, has also called for a new system that would avoid "creating a new crisis every three months." British prime minister Anthony Blair wrote in a January 12 open letter to the French newspaper *Libération*, "We are holding talks with France and other

Toronto meatpackers vote to reject contract and continue strike



BY KATY LEROUGETEL

TORONTO — More than 800 workers at Quality Meat Packers here, members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 743, continued their strike after a January 12 vote rejecting another company offer. They have been on strike since Dec. 7, 1998.

Of the 650 ballots cast, 368, or 58 percent, voted against going back to work under the conditions offered. These included maintaining a wage cut of up to Can\$6 (US\$3.90) an hour, only getting

overtime pay after 42 hours a week, and several onetime monetary inducements to return to work and not quit for the duration of 1999.

When the vote tally was announced, a cheer went up from the waiting crowd and strikers congratulated each other before heading out into the snow. Above strikers on the picket line in early December in Toronto.

Katy LeRougetel is a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 5338.

eminent members of the Security Council to find a formula allowing monitoring to resume in Iraq."

Wary that U.S. military aggression may one day be turned on them, the governments of the workers states in Russia and China are pressing for lifting the sanctions and removing chief UN spy Richard Butler. Moscow and Beijing's representatives to the UN Security Council said Butler lied in his report to UN secretary general Kofi Annan, which served as the pretext for Washington to launch the four-day pounding on Iraq.

"We believe that after all this Mr. Butler cannot remain in the post of chairman of the Special Commission," said Russian foreign ministry spokesman Vladimir Rakhmanin in Moscow.

Seeking to save face, Washington has now upped its claims of the military damage Baghdad suffered in the December "Operation Desert Fox" bombing. Gen. Henry Shelton, chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, asserted that between 600 and 1,600 of Iraq's Republican Guard soldiers were killed in the air raids, considerably more than the dozens reported by Iraqi officials.

Despite White House claims of "precision" attacks, the military operation destroyed some of Iraq's civilian infrastructure, according to a survey conducted by two UN agencies. On January 6 Unicef and the World Food Program announced the results from the damage wrought by Clinton's December 16-19 missile and bombing blitz. A water main in Baghdad was demolished, cutting off supply to about 300,000 people.

The missiles destroyed a warehouse containing 2,600 tons of rice, flattened an agricultural school, and damaged at least a dozen other schools and hospitals.

Tensions remain high between Baghdad and the other Arab regimes in the region, especially Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, which have served as bases for U.S. military operations. The Iraqi Parliament passed a resolution January 10 calling for both governments to pay reparations for damages caused by the imperialist air war.

S. Africa cops kill protester against Iraq bombing

BY T.J. FIGUEROA

CAPE TOWN, South Africa — On January 8 police opened fire with rubber bullets on demonstrators gathered here to protest the visit of British prime minister Anthony Blair and the December bombing of Iraq by U.S. and British forces.

Four days later Yusuf Jacobs, 22, died of injuries sustained from the police bullet that slammed into his temple. Four other protesters were wounded by police bullets. Two thousand people attended Jacobs's funeral January 12. Safety and Security Minister Sydney Mufamadi asked President Nelson Mandela to appoint a judicial inquest into Jacobs's death.

The Blair protest was organized People Against Gangsterism and Drugs (PAGAD), Muslims Against Illegitimate Leaders, and Muslims Against Global Oppression.

Between 50 and 100 people attended the picket outside the Castle of Good Hope, where Blair was pinning medals on British army officers stationed here. Police claim the action was "illegal," since no permit had been issued, and that they opened fire after the protesters refused to obey orders to disperse.

Apartheid-era police

The shootings generated a lot of anger among working people in Cape Town, but took no one by surprise since police racism and brutality are entrenched. The cops' actions highlight the fact that the police force is one of the arms of the state least disturbed since the 1994 nonracial, democratic elections that ended apartheid rule.

Deaths in police custody in the first three months of 1998 alone totaled 203. Figures for the entire year are not yet available.

An article in the Nov. 27, 1998, *Mail and Guardian* reported that the South African Police Service as a whole had 1,500 officers on its staff who were convicted of crimi-

nal offenses in the prior 17 months. Complaints laid against the cops from January 1997 to May 1998 included 7,263 charges of assault, 797 of attempted murder, 332 of murder, 61 of attempted rape, 149 of rape, 1,550 of theft, and many others.

The African National Congress (ANC) says the problems are worse in this province — the Western Cape — because the National Party, which ran the white regime for 46 years, controls the provincial government.

In the past three years there have been 420 pipe-bomb attacks in the Cape Town area. These have usually been presented as part of a war between drug-dealing gangs and vigilantes, but the involvement of police and other agents provocateurs anxious to destabilize the democratic government cannot be ruled out.

The ANC pointed out in early January that not one conviction had been made in any of these 420 attacks.

The ANC said all the leading investigators in the pipe-bomb cases were Afrikaner males, top positions were dominated by relics of the old order, and police found it difficult to stamp out gangs they had used in the past to fight anti-apartheid organizations. Eighty-three percent of senior police managers, 90 percent of middle managers, and 78 percent of junior managers in the province are white.

The police, along with the press, have launched a hue and cry over "urban terrorism" in the city, which in many cases has assumed a distinctly anti-Islamic odor.

Last August a bomb exploded in the Planet Hollywood restaurant in the Waterfront mall, a popular tourist spot. It made international headlines in the wake of U.S. missile strikes in Sudan and Afghanistan. The Waterfront bomb, police speculated, was in "retaliation" for the air raids, but no evidence of this has been produced.

Addressing a crowd of 15,000 at the ANC's 87th anniversary rally here in Athlone Stadium on January 9, ANC president Thabo Mbeki singled out the actions of PAGAD without naming it directly. He denounced self-appointed vigilantes, and further said that no one had the right to tell leaders of the ANC where they can and cannot speak. At the end of December PAGAD and others threatened to disrupt a speech at a mosque by provincial ANC chairperson Ebrahim Rasool. The talk was subsequently called off.

PAGAD's vigilante character

PAGAD and Muslims Against Illegitimate Leaders have harassed Rasool and his family, and denounced Justice Minister Dullah Omar and Water Affairs Minister Kader Asmal — both ANC leaders who are Muslim — as being "illegitimate." They say they will prevent such "illegitimate" leaders from public speaking. They present the ANC government as a toady of imperialism, and denounce it for actions such as making abortion legal.

PAGAD is the vigilante outfit that drew international attention in August 1996 when its members shot and burned Rashaad Staggie, who the group said was a drug dealer. It draws support from middle- and working-class Muslim residents of the Cape Flats. It says its mission is to clean up crime, and projects a radical, street character that has included armed demonstrations. Much of this stems from a section of its middle-class leadership, who were trained in the tradition of the Pan Africanist Congress, a split-off from the ANC.

A couple of years ago, it was common for PAGAD marches to draw up to 5,000 people. Recently, those numbers have dwindled as the group has upped its rhetoric and thuggery against the government and those Muslims who do not share its views.

New International

A MAGAZINE OF MARXIST POLITICS AND THEORY

In no. 7

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BY JACK BARNES

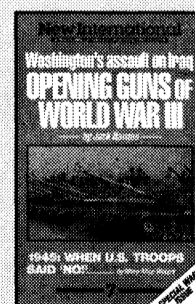
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Indiana poultry strike

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work, very repetitive, and the birds on the line fly by you so fast," she said.

About 20 people were staffing the picket line January 13 despite the rain. John "Stumpy" Willis, the chief union steward and member of the negotiating committee, said, "Less than 30 of the more than 300 hourly workers have crossed the picket line. Tyson has been bringing in temporary workers and using the supervisors and still is getting out about 58,000 chickens per day. They used to average 120-140,000 per day."

Community support has been strong. Signs scattered around the lot reflected visits by several other unionists and community organizations. "We never knew Tyson had so many enemies," said Alex Hernandez, the UFCW representative. He pointed to the squeeze Tyson has already forced on the farmers, hatchery workers, catchers, drivers, and feed mill workers as the reason.

Local outreach has also begun. Last week six strikers traveled to the Tyson stockholder meeting in Arkansas to distribute information on their strike.

Striker Debbie Berkheimer said, "I have been at the local food market explaining to customers that Tyson foremen make us pick up dirty or diseased chicken parts, tell us to wash them off and put them

back on the line."

Helen Nance, who has 31 years in the plant, said, "To support us just don't buy their chicken."

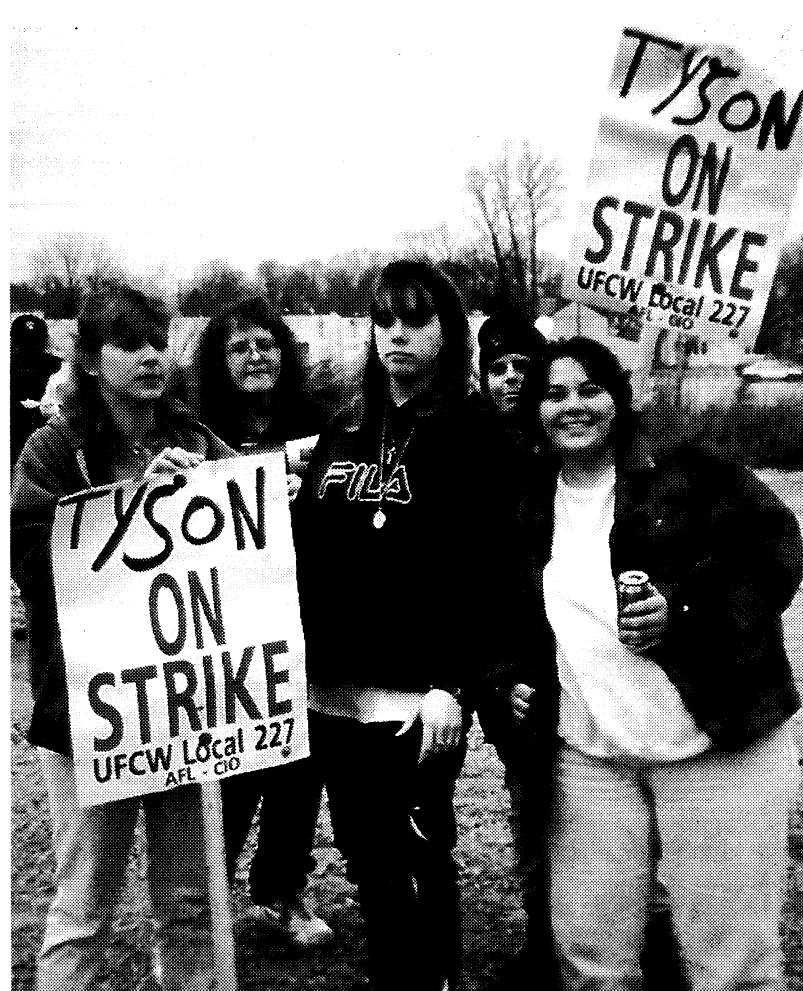
Picketing is done on a public road that leads to the plant. The strikers have put up a small trailer and a tent. They also are planning to open a "meeting and feed" hall just across the creek from the picket line. Workers are picketing 24 hours a day, 7 days per week. Bob Shaw, a maintenance worker, said the last strike at this plant was three years ago, against the previous owner, Hudson. It lasted three days. He says Tyson has no intention of letting this walkout end so quickly.

The local paper, the *Corydon Democrat*, reported, "Union officials for workers at Tyson are preparing for a strike that could last indefinitely."

Contracts at four other Tyson plants will expire later this year.

The local is asking for support. The union can be contacted at 1-800-443-5191, extension 115 and 123. Donations can be sent to the Strike Assistance Fund, c/o UFCW Local 227, 7902 Old Minors Lane, Louisville, KY 40219.

Pattie Thompson is a member of the International Association of Machinists. Helen Meyers is a member of the United Auto Workers.



Militant/Helen Meyers
United Food and Commercial Workers Local 227 members on strike against Tyson Foods poultry plant in Corydon, Indiana, January 13.

MSI workers win union contract after 22-month strike

BY KEVIN DWIRE
AND MARK SIMON

CLEVELAND — After 22 months on strike, workers at Magnetic Specialty, Inc. (MSI) in Marietta, Ohio, voted 52 to 2 on January 11 to approve their first contract with the company. The workers had joined the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) in 1995. "This is a tremendous victory for the union and workers everywhere," said Kathryn Ward, one of the strike committee co-chairs.

The workers voted to strike in early 1997, after the company refused to recognize the union and began firing union activists. The walkout began March 2, 1997. MSI has been running the plant with scabs since then.

In a registration of the determination expressed by many of the strikers over the course of the fight, MSI was forced to reinstate all 16 of the workers it fired during the strike. The agreement ratified by USWA members includes a \$1.30 per hour wage increase over the three-year contract, company contribution of 93 percent of the family health-care benefits, as well as paid holidays, vacation, sick days, and a pension plan.

The striking USWA members had maintained a picket line and trailer outside the

plant, and organized several solidarity marches and rallies involving thousands of workers from throughout the region, the most recent on Oct. 10, 1998. Marietta is located on the Ohio River in southeast Ohio.

Striker Rick Farley said that for him the high point of the struggle was "the way we stayed together and stayed on strike for 22 months, and all the support we received from other unions and people who helped get out the word on our fight."

More than \$200,000 was raised for the MSI strikers to supplement the USWA strike fund, from plant gate collections, contributions from local unions, and other supporters. The level of donations was great enough to allow the strike to make contributions to other labor struggles, such as the workers now on strike at Monarch Rubber in Spencer, West Virginia, and at Kaiser Aluminum in Newark, Ohio.

According to Ward, the USWA in Ohio

is encouraging contingents from USWA locals to be present when MSI workers return to work at 10:30 p.m. on January 17 and 6:30 a.m. on January 18, to congratulate fellow union members. There will also be a victory celebration on Saturday, January 23, at 12:30 p.m., at the Marietta Shrine Club (Fairgrounds) in Marietta.

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

Devaluation threatens broader crisis

Continued from front page

lar to the "bailouts" of the Mexican peso in 1995 and in several Asian countries over the last 18 months, except that it came prior to the devaluation. Those deals have in fact deepened the debt-slavery of the supposed beneficiaries, and accelerated the sell-off of the national patrimony of semicolonial countries to imperialist interests.

Days before the devaluation of the real, anticipating the possibilities for an imperialist buying spree, Chase Manhattan announced plans to buy a São Paulo investment bank that would allow the U.S. bank-

ing giant to arrange acquisitions of Brazilian companies.

Whatever "rescue" schemes Washington and other imperialist powers may now try to impose on Brazil will above all target working people, who already face rising unemployment, staggering interest rates, and government attempts to impose austerity measures.

What's happening to the toilers in Brazil now is not exceptional. It is just one variant of the future facing every country held in economic bondage to world finance capital. It is also further confirmation that within

the imperialist system none of the "emerging markets" will ever emerge into the ranks of the developed capitalist countries. The potential rebellion by working people to these realities of capitalism is the worst nightmare of the bankers and businessmen of Wall Street and beyond.

The capitalist rulers fear the spiraling economic crisis in Brazil will trigger a much broader crisis in Latin America. Brazil has the largest population — 165 million — and the largest economy of the countries in South America.

A financial collapse affecting Latin America would have a much greater impact on the U.S. economy than the crisis that has been devastating the semicolonial countries in Asia since July 1997. Some 20 percent of U.S. exports are to Latin America, about half of those to Mexico. Devaluations in other major countries in the region, particularly Mexico, would make these goods much more expensive and rapidly cut down this trade.

The economic situation in Mexico was looking less stable before the devaluation of the real. The annual inflation rate had risen to 18.7 percent by the end of 1998, up from less than 15 percent earlier in the year. Wages are not rising at the same pace, and the government just lifted price controls on tortillas, a main food staple. The Mexican peso, which lost 12 percent of its value against the U.S. dollar last year, fell another 3.6 percent to a historic low in the wake of the devaluation of the real.

The crisis in Brazil is likely to hit the economy of Argentina, Brazil's largest trading partner, particularly hard. The Buenos Aires stock market plunged more than 10 percent January 13, the steepest drop in Latin America. Argentine economic planning secretary Rogelio Frigerio vowed to defend the fixed exchange rate of one Argentine peso to the U.S. dollar, though this will mean soaring interest rates, a drop in exports, and a sharp rise in unemployment, which is already 12 percent.

Some 2,000 U.S. businesses operate directly in Brazil. Auto giants Ford and General Motors both have factories there, as do IBM, Coca Cola, and other major corporations. U.S. banks have some \$27 billion at stake. Brazil comprises about 45 percent of

Continued on Page 15

Special effort needed to raise capital for Pathfinder printshop

BY NAOMI CRAINE

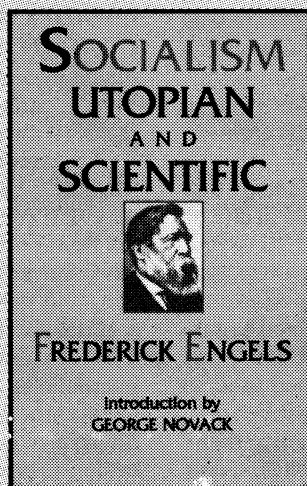
As this issue of the *Militant* goes to press, the pages of the pamphlet *Socialism: Scientific and Utopian* by Frederick Engels are being printed in Pathfinder's printshop. Orders for more than 800 copies for college classrooms had virtually wiped out Pathfinder's stock by December 22. Anticipating further classroom orders, Pathfinder asked the volunteers who are working to scan, proofread, and format, every Pathfinder book if they could move up the pamphlet on their list of priorities and complete it in two weeks. On January 6, the final version of the entire pamphlet — reformatted in larger, more readable type — was turned in to Pathfinder on CD-ROM ready to produce with the printshop's computer-to-plate system.

Workers in the printshop are using the newly installed Agfa Galileo system, which produces plates for the presses directly from computer files, to cut labor time, in the process transforming their methods of working together to produce the books and pamphlets vital to the political work of the communist movement and other vanguard workers and farmers.

Since October, socialist workers and their supporters have made an outstanding effort to raise the \$350,000 needed to purchase and install the Galileo. Contributions to the fund so far total \$310,408. It is now urgent to raise the remaining \$39,600 and collect \$100,000 in outstanding pledges, to make the final payments coming due on the machinery in January and February.

With completion of the \$350,000 within sight, the Capital Fund Committee, made up of workers across the country who are organizing to raise these funds, is turning its attention to raising the additional \$200,000 needed to maintain the printshop's capacity to keep putting out books and pamphlets and redeem the work of the more than 100 volunteers who are digitizing Pathfinder titles.

December registered a turning point in the production by these volunteers. Over the



Volunteers produced this pamphlet in digital form in two weeks so that Pathfinder can fill classroom orders.

previous six months they had averaged one title per month completed and turned over to Pathfinder with cover, text, and graphics in digital form. In December they completed five books and pamphlets — *Leon Trotsky Speaks*, the French- and Spanish-language editions of *Che Guevara and the Fight for Socialism Today*, *On the Jewish Question* by Leon Trotsky, and *By Any Means Necessary* by Malcolm X. A sixth book that was turned in on CD-ROM, *Women and the Cuban Revolution*, needed a small correction, which the volunteers did and re-

turned to Pathfinder January 12. The goal for January is to complete seven titles.

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

Miners buy 'Militant' and discuss Freeman coal strike

BY LAURA ANDERSON
AND ELI GREEN

KAYENTA, Arizona — We left Los Angeles January 5 and headed out to the Black Mesa coal mining complex here along with Manuel González, a Young Socialists member from Santa Cruz, California. This was the third trip by *Militant* supporters to this area since socialist workers decided to focus our energies on political work among coal miners, meatpackers, and garment workers (see article on page 8). The trip was a success in beginning the kind of consistent work needed to develop and maintain contacts with workers in this coal mining area.

The complex consists of two large mines, Black Mesa and Kayenta, located in the heart of the Navajo Nation, making them unique. Most of the workers are Navajo and the mines function under the jurisdiction of the tribal government. The private companies running the mines, have to agree to carry out affirmative action in hiring of Navajo miners, and institute reclamation of the land if they want to mine in the area.

The main headlines in the *Militant* issue we were selling were "U.S. hands off Iraq!" and "Illinois miners are stronger from strike." Drawing lessons from the strike of the United Mine Workers of America at Freeman United Coal was a major theme in our discussions.

We arrived at Black Mesa Complex at 6:30 a.m. on a brisk desert morning. We held up a sign that said, "Read the *Militant*" to encourage workers driving to and from work to stop. We sold outside the mine entrance for two hours and later returned for the second shift. The miners bought 15 copies of the *Militants* there. Many workers who did not stop acknowledged our presence with a friendly wave.

We also did an afternoon sale at the shopping center in Kayenta where we sold eight *Militants*. Some students at Dine College also bought a copy of the

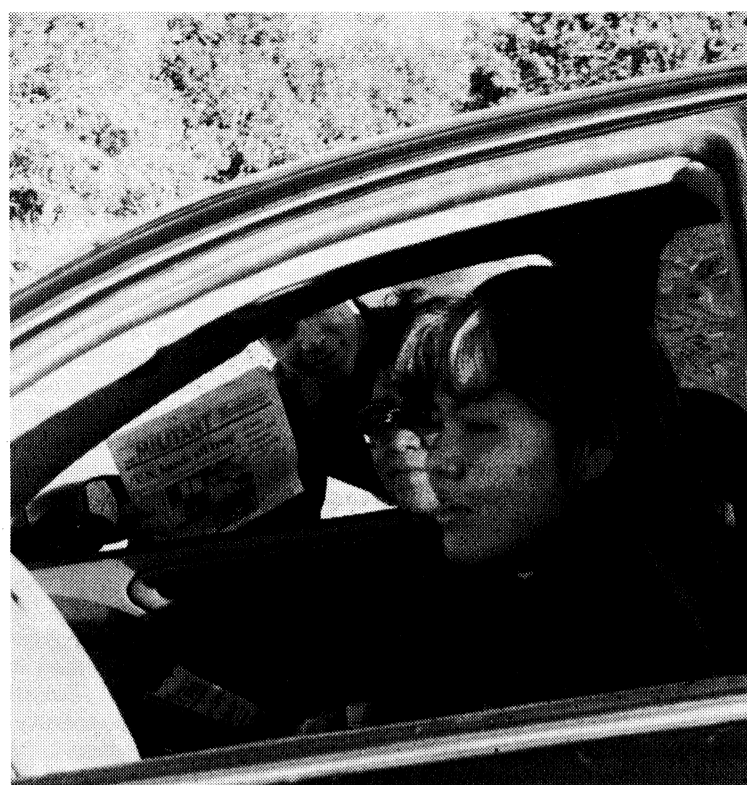
paper. They were happy to receive it and wanted to see if the school could buy a subscription.

Most workers noted that there had been some layoffs. They said there are about 750 workers at the Black Mesa mine, about 10-15 percent of whom are women. One worker noted that most of the women drive trucks at the mine, and said they were among the more recently hired workers.

The next day the team traveled to Gallup, New Mexico, visiting the University of New Mexico. Then we went to the main entrance of the McKinley Mine in Window Rock, Arizona, during the afternoon shift change. This is a vast complex of several surface coal mines. We sold four single copies of the *Militant* and two subscriptions to mine workers. There are 400 workers at the mine now, including about 100 hired over the last year. One worker said about 5 percent of the workers are women.

One of the workers who got a subscription pulled his truck to the side of the road and talked with the team for half an hour. He talked at length about the need to strengthen the union to help prepare for the new contract coming up in year 2000.

Militant supporters are organizing a two-week team in the coal fields of central and southern Illinois for the second half of January. The team will be based out of Springfield, and will concentrate on visiting mine portals, plant gates, and strike picket lines in the region, as well as some campuses. To volunteer, contact *Militant* supporters in Chicago at (773) 342-1780.



Militant photos: Laura Anderson

Top, Young Socialists member Manuel González selling the *Militant* to miners at portal of Kayenta-Black Mesa Complex in the Navajo Nation, Arizona. Above, part of the Kayenta surface mining operation.

— YOUNG SOCIALISTS AROUND THE WORLD —

Boston students join Abu-Jamal defense actions

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, 3284 23rd St., San Francisco, CA, 94110. Tel: (415) 824-1429. E-mail: 105162.605@compuserve.com

BY ELENA TATE

BOSTON — About 35 people came to a planning meeting of the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal in this area December 18, including a delegation of 11 students from Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School (CRLS).

A student group at CRLS, the Cambridge Peace and Justice Corps, had organized a film showing featuring the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal earlier in the week. Abu-Jamal is a prominent Black journalist and activist who was railroaded to death row on charges of killing a cop in 1981, and is fighting for a retrial. Some 60 students at the high school came to the video showing, which was followed by a discussion and announcement for the planning meeting.

Coming out of the meeting, an action was planned for January 7 to protest the swearing-in of Massachusetts' newly elected pro-death penalty governor, Paul Celluci.

On that day two actions took place, which drew 50 people each. The protests were against the death penalty and the terrible prison conditions in Massachusetts, in ad-

dition to demanding the release of Abu-Jamal and all political prisoners.

Other ideas discussed at the meeting were: a press conference by students at CRLS, translating materials about the case into Spanish and Creole, an action on Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, an all-day educational conference in February, and a protest of the *Boston Globe* newspaper for not giv-

ing fair coverage of Abu-Jamal's case and the actions demanding his release.

Some participants also suggested that people should join in protests against the U.S. bombing of Iraq and make the connection between the use of U.S. military might abroad and the use of the death penalty at home.

After the meeting CRLS student Daniel

Piper told the *Militant*, "These people are preparing to fight a war — against Mumia, against all people. This planning meeting was about getting ourselves together and fighting that war."

Elena Tate is a member of the Young Socialists and a student at Cambridge Rindge and Latin High School.

Gary Graham wins a stay of execution

BY LEA SHERMAN

HOUSTON — On January 10, just a day before his scheduled execution by lethal injection at the Walls unit of Huntsville prison, Gary Graham received a stay of execution from the 5th Circuit Court of Appeals. A three-judge panel issued the order, saying the execution is being stayed "so as to allow the court the time necessary to evaluate the issues presented in this complex case."

That evening jubilant family members and supporters gathered at the St. Peter Claver Catholic Church, where Anthony Freddie, a longtime leader of the Gary Graham Coalition for Justice, warmly thanked the more than 100 participants for their "tireless efforts." Freddie cautioned that "Gary's life is still on hold," and encouraged everyone to come out to the federal courthouse the next day for a picket line demanding a new trial to get out evidence that would exonerate Graham.

Graham, 35, was just 17 when he was prosecuted for capital murder in Harris County, Houston, in 1981. The Black youth was convicted and sent to death row at Huntsville prison on the testimony of only one witness, who claims to have seen him at the site of the shooting in the dimly lit parking lot of a grocery store. Six eyewitnesses said he was not the gunman, and five other people placed him far from the scene. There is no physical evidence linking him to the murder.

Despite the lack of evidence, there has been a pro-death penalty campaign to vilify Graham and send him to the execution chamber without a new trial. This is promoted by the district attorney's office and led by a so-called "victim's rights group" Justice for All, which was created in the early 1990s to combat Graham's defense fight. Diane Clements, president of Justice for All, called the effort to obtain a new trial for Graham a "scam." She told the *Houston Chronicle*, "He was

always guilty and he is guilty now." Clements and others point to the fact that Graham pled guilty to a string of robberies that happened around the time of the slaying to claim he's guilty in the grocery store shooting.

Less than a week before the scheduled execution, Graham told reporters, "I'm not going to walk out of my cell voluntarily, nor will I allow anybody to murder me in an execution chamber without a fight. I'm prepared to die for what I believe in." He then called on all his supporters to come to Huntsville for his execution and defend themselves "by any means necessary."

A couple of days later the media played up quotes from Quanell X, who said he would go to Huntsville armed. Quanell was also quoted as urging the Black community to vent their anger for Graham's death in the rich white area of River Oaks in Houston. Most of Graham's supporters did not agree with this, and pointed to how the media used such statements to violence-bait those opposed to the execution.

Prison officials responded saying that there would be a tie down team to "extract" Graham from his cell, as well as extra Texas Rangers, sheriff's deputies, local police, and prison officers at the prison.

Geraldine St. Julian, a teacher in Baytown, Texas, and longtime activist in the Gary Graham Coalition for Justice, vowed to keep up the fight until Graham gets the trial he deserves. She said, "We know Gary is innocent based on the evidence. If he has a fair hearing, we will have a trial to prove it. We had a victory today, but we are going to stay strong and continue with the picket line at the federal building on Monday and other activities until we have that trial."

Lea Sherman is a member of the International Association of Machinists.

Marchers protest police killing in Pittsburgh

BY CHRIS REMPLE

PITTSBURGH — Forty-five people braved subzero wind chill temperatures in a January 1 march at noon to protest the police killing of Deron Grimmitt. The marchers were led by Grimmitt's relatives and carried signs demanding "Justice for Deron Grimmitt!" and "No Police Repression!"

Grimmitt was shot in the side of his head by police officer Jeffrey Cooperstein while Grimmitt was allegedly fleeing police. The cops do not even claim that Grimmitt was armed at the time of his death.

Cooperstein is "widely believed to be the 'Blue Knight,' who has anonymously posted on the Internet scathing criticisms of McNeilly [the chief of police] and police

department policies," according to the Jan. 2, 1999, *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. In the past, the "Blue Knight" web page had posted names and pictures of leaders of the fight for justice for Jonny Gammage in an apparent attempt to intimidate them, according to Pete Shell, a leader of the Campus Coalition for Peace and Justice and a central figure in the Gammage fight.

The protesters marched several blocks to the Second District police station and picketed and rallied there for about 45 minutes. The march was organized by the Black Radical Congress (BRC). Sanjulo Ber, co-convenor of the BRC, addressed the rally stating, "No more Black killings, no more police murders. We're sick and tired of no justice."

He called for a community tribunal to investigate the killing and try the police officer who shot Grimmitt.

John Grimmitt, brother of the slain man, spoke briefly. He said, "This is bigger than any one of us. We all have to pull together to win justice. He thanked everyone for coming out.

Claire Cohen of the Citizens for Police Accountability told the crowd, "How many more have to die for justice to be done? We won't take it anymore, not one more killing."

Speaking to this reporter, Cynthia Grimmitt stated, "It doesn't stop with Deron. This fight will go on." John Grimmitt interjected, "Until we see justice has been done for him."

How the miners pushed back the bosses and government in 1977-78 coal strike

In 1977 the coal bosses' association provoked a showdown battle with the United Mine Workers of America. This was part of a broader offensive against labor launched by the employers in the United States in the wake of the 1974-75 world recession. What the coal operators got, however, was one of the most important labor battles in decades. Thousands of rank-and-file miners put their stamp on the fight and won the solidarity of millions of working people throughout the country. Below we print excerpts of *The 110-Day Coal Strike — its meaning for all working people*. This pamphlet, currently out of print, is based on articles reprinted from the *Militant*. It is copyright © 1978 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

BY NANCY COLE
AND ANDY ROSE

The 110-day coal strike was something new and different — more important than any other strike in a long time. Not just because it was big. And not just because it was long. It was different in what the bosses set out to accomplish, and different in how the miners and their allies responded.

The miners were hit with the most powerful union-busting assault any industrial union has faced in more than thirty years. And they blocked it.

They stood up to the corporations.

They stood up to the government.

They overruled their own union officials who caved in to the bosses' demands.

And despite a concerted effort to pit other working people against them, the miners won the solidarity of millions of workers across the country.

The confrontation in the coalfields became a social cause, raising issues that deeply affect every working person. Issues such as safety on the job, health care, pensions, union democracy, and the right to strike.

And the coal strike became a political battle, pitting courageous rank-and-file workers against the giant corporations that rule this country....

The confrontation came to a head when Carter ordered the miners back to work on company terms under Taft-Hartley. He threatened to fine or jail their union leaders, confiscate their union treasuries, and cut off food stamps for their families.

Yet the miners refused to bow down.

Carter was forced to retreat, and the coal companies quickly came up with a new contract offer that dropped most of their worst antiunion demands....

'Strike and be damned'

The coal strike was deliberately provoked by the mineowners in an open attempt to cripple or destroy the United Mine Workers of America. The big-business press freely admitted that.

The November 7, 1977, issue of *Barron's* gloated over what it saw as "the desperately weak position of the UMW." This Wall Street magazine said that "so far as the mine operators are concerned, this is finally the year to tell the union: 'Strike and be damned.'"

Negotiations were supposed to begin October 6, 1977, for a new contract to replace the one expiring December 6. But the Bituminous Coal Operators Association wasn't interested in negotiating. Instead its president, Joseph Brennan, delivered a tirade against "labor instability," "declining productivity," and "featherbedding practices."

The main obstacle standing between the coal industry and a future of unparalleled prosperity, Brennan declared, is "the tendency of UMW members, for one reason or another, to go on wildcat strikes...."

Brennan didn't mention, of course, that 1,500 miners have been killed on the job since 1969. Or that thousands more die each year from "black lung," an incurable disability caused by breathing coal dust. Brennan didn't mention that nearly all wildcat strikes are provoked by coal bosses violating mine safety laws or the union contract. No, Brennan had something else in mind.

With the big emphasis on coal in Carter's

energy plan, the giant corporations that own the industry had visions of turning their coal mines into gold mines of profit. The aim of the coal operators was a tremendous speedup of production regardless of the effect on miners' health and safety.

And so the BCOA laid down a set of demands to transform the role of the union.

The union must push for higher productivity, Brennan said.

The union must guarantee no strikes.

The union must crack down on "absenteeism."

In short, the coal operators insisted that the role of the union was not to defend its members but to discipline them.

If union negotiators didn't go along, Brennan threatened, "We will...see the decline and possible extinction of the United Mine Workers of America."

'Takeaway' offensive

The assault on the United Mine Workers was not an isolated or accidental event. It was a calculated escalation of a long-term antilabor offensive.

Under the headline, "Bigger Concessions From Unions Sought," this trend was bluntly described in the March 26 *New York Times*. The article began: "A new word is coming into the labor negotiator's vocabulary. It is 'giveback.'"

No mood for 'givebacks'

At the 1976 UMW convention in Cincinnati, 2,000 delegates — nearly all of them working miners — deliberated for days to come up with a detailed series of demands. These included the right to strike, full-time union health and safety committee members paid by the company, a six-hour workday, expanded health benefits to include full eye and dental care, equal pensions for all retired miners, and a substantial wage increase.

The miners were in no mood for "givebacks."

The December 6, 1977, contract deadline came and went. The coal operators still refused to engage in serious negotiations. And so 160,000 miners, honoring the UMW tradition of "no contract, no work," found themselves out on strike.

The operators were cocky at first.

Coal stockpiles are high, they said.

The UMW can shut down barely 50 percent of coal production, they said.

The union leadership is weak and the ranks are in a state of anarchy, they said.

With no strike benefits or medical coverage, the miners can't hold out for long, the coal operators assured themselves.

One month went by. The miners were still holding tough.

Police began to step up harassment of

• Automatic twenty-dollar-a-day fines for any miner who honored a picket line.

• Firing of any miner who has "picketed, threatened, coerced, fomented or otherwise been involved in the cause of an unauthorized work stoppage."

• Elimination of the UMW Health and Retirement Funds, to be replaced by commercial health insurance with miners paying up to \$700 a year for services that had been free to them for decades.

• Drastic curbs on the power of union safety committees, which under the 1974 contract had been authorized to pull miners out of an area of "imminent danger."

• Strict penalties for "absenteeism."

• Imposition of speedup "incentive pay" schemes and seven-day workweeks.

• Also included were a host of other union-crippling provisions that had never even been publicly discussed:

• Elimination of the cost-of-living escalator for wages.

• A thirty-day probation period for new miners, during which they would be deprived of many union rights.

• Cutting in half (from ninety days to forty-five) the much needed training period for new miners.

• Elimination of royalties paid to the union benefit funds on nonunion coal sometimes purchased by unionized companies, giving them a green light to step up this practice.

• Increasing from 1,000 to 1,450 the number of hours a miner must work in a year to qualify for pension credit — another measure to crack down on wildcats and "absenteeism."

• And, with a final twist of the knife, even the benefits paid to widows of UMW members were cut back.

When the news of these provisions reached the coalfields in early February, the union ranks exploded with outrage. Thousands of miners joined in meetings and rallies to discuss and protest the contract terms. Meetings of local union officials in district after district repudiated the settlement.

Hundreds of miners boarded buses to Washington to demonstrate February 10 at the national UMW headquarters, where the union bargaining council — composed of district presidents and members of the international executive board — was to vote on the agreement....

Fighting for our rights

The miners had won some rights in previous battles — such as free medical care — that set an example for other workers.

Worst of all from the bosses' point of view, the miners were fighting to defend these rights. And that example made it harder to take away the rights of others.

The incredibly high cost of decent medical care — or any medical care at all — is one of the biggest problems facing workers throughout the country. But through hard-fought strike battles in the 1940s, the UMW laid the basis for the most comprehensive health-benefits plan of any union.

Miners and their families received a medical card. It entitled them to free services at any clinic or hospital that was part of the system. No forms. No paperwork. No insurance company. No "deductibles."

All costs were paid from a UMW benefits fund, which was financed by payments from the coal companies based on the amount of coal mined and the number of hours worked. Not only the miners benefited. With the aid of the UMW fund, new clinics and hospitals were built throughout Appalachia. Health care for the entire region was transformed, since these facilities provided low-cost care to all.

From the beginning, however, the health-fund system suffered from one fundamental weakness — just like every other pension or health benefit that is limited to a single industry or union rather than provided for all by the government as a social responsibility — it tied the miners' benefits to the well-being of the companies.

When the industry was in decline, as it was throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, benefits were cut back. Thousands of miners, widows, and pensioners had their cards



Health and safety are central issues in miners' struggles against the coal bosses' drive for profits. Above, United Mine Workers contingent at 1981 Solidarity Day rally in Washington, D.C.

"For 30 years bargaining has focused on union demands: seniority rights, pay, pensions, layoff protection, time off and medical care. But in recent months," the *Times* continued, "the spark points in contract talks have been management demands for givebacks or 'takeaways' — the cancellation of some of labor's old gains." The *Times* went on to give examples of hard-line employer demands against the coal miners, aerospace workers, transit workers, construction workers, railroad workers, and even newspaper writers....

In forcing the United Mine Workers out on strike, the coal interests — including some of the biggest and most powerful corporations in the world — were making a calculated probe.

This was their first attempt in more than thirty years to break the power of an established industrial union.

They believed the UMW was a ready target. Its "unruliness," as the coal operators saw it, stemmed in large part from the measures of union democracy the miners had won when they ousted the corrupt regime of Tony Boyle in 1972 and elected a reform leadership. The miners union not only stood in the way of profits from the projected coal boom, but it also provided an undesirable model of rank-and-file insurgency for the members of other unions.

First among the democratic rights enjoyed by the UMW membership was rank-and-file contract ratification. Miners also had another "unruly" idea — they thought they should decide the bargaining demands.

UMWA pickets, while the news media played up lurid accounts of alleged violence by strikers. But they devoted little or no attention to the murderous violence of the coal companies. "We've got the best guns money can buy," boasted a scab operator in Indiana, pointing to his M-16 semiautomatic rifles and assorted handguns. "And we aim to use them."

On January 6 a company guard fired six bullets into Mack Lewis, a sixty-five-year-old retired miner, who had brought some coffee and encouragement to a UMW picket line near Ivel, Kentucky.

Five weeks went by. Then six. Stockpiles of coal were starting to look smaller.

With effective picketing and the sympathy of many unorganized miners, the UMW had shut down not half but more than two-thirds of the nation's coal production. Utilities in Ohio and Pennsylvania began to talk about an "emergency." Power cutbacks would soon be necessary, they declared.

Meanwhile, on February 3, another striker — thirty-three-year-old John Hull — was shot and killed by scabs at a mine near Petersburg, Indiana.

'Ball and chain' contract

On February 6, UMW President Arnold Miller and the BCOA announced agreement on a contract. Miller called it "the best agreement negotiated in any major industry in the past two years." It was the best — for the bosses. It gave in to every one of their demands:

taken away. The coal industry recovered during the 1960s and has been booming in the 1970s — ever since oil prices went up 400 percent and coal became a more attractive energy source again. But despite soaring profits for the industry, payments into the fund did not keep pace with the even steeper increase in health-care costs.

The companies, however, blamed the fund's financial crisis on wildcat strikes. In July 1977 — hoping to weaken the miners before the national strike — they engineered an unprecedented slash in the medical benefits. These couldn't be restored without "labor stability," the bosses claimed.

Then when negotiations opened, the coal operators set out to cut their costs even more by abolishing the UMWA fund and the free medical-card system altogether.

By turning health coverage over to private insurance companies and forcing miners to pay hundreds of dollars a year in "deductibles" for doctors' visits, prescriptions, and hospital care, the companies stood to pocket millions of dollars a year in extra profits.

And what about health care for people in the mining areas? Without the subsidies they got from the UMWA fund, seventy clinics and sixty-one hospitals would have to cut back services, according to the Appalachian Regional Commission. Many would have to close....

Job safety and right to strike

Every day that they go underground, miners know they may be crushed by falling rock, blown up by exploding methane gas or coal dust, suffocated by inadequate ventilation, or mangled by heavy machinery in the cramped mine shafts.

But for the profit-greedy operators, safe work practices are just an obstacle to production and profits.

Russ Stilwell, a rank-and-file miner from Local 1189 in Indiana, told an Indianapolis strike support meeting: "The only thing the coal operators promote in the mines is production. Production first, production second, and production third. And way down here at the end of the tail is safety. We're going to have safety or we're not going to mine coal."

But how can miners assure safety?

They know they can't rely on the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration (formerly the Mining Enforcement and Safety Administration). While some MSHA inspectors are honest and dedicated, many more cater to the companies' wishes.

And with ludicrously low fines — a lot of which are never collected — the federal enforcement system isn't set up to penalize mineowners to begin with....

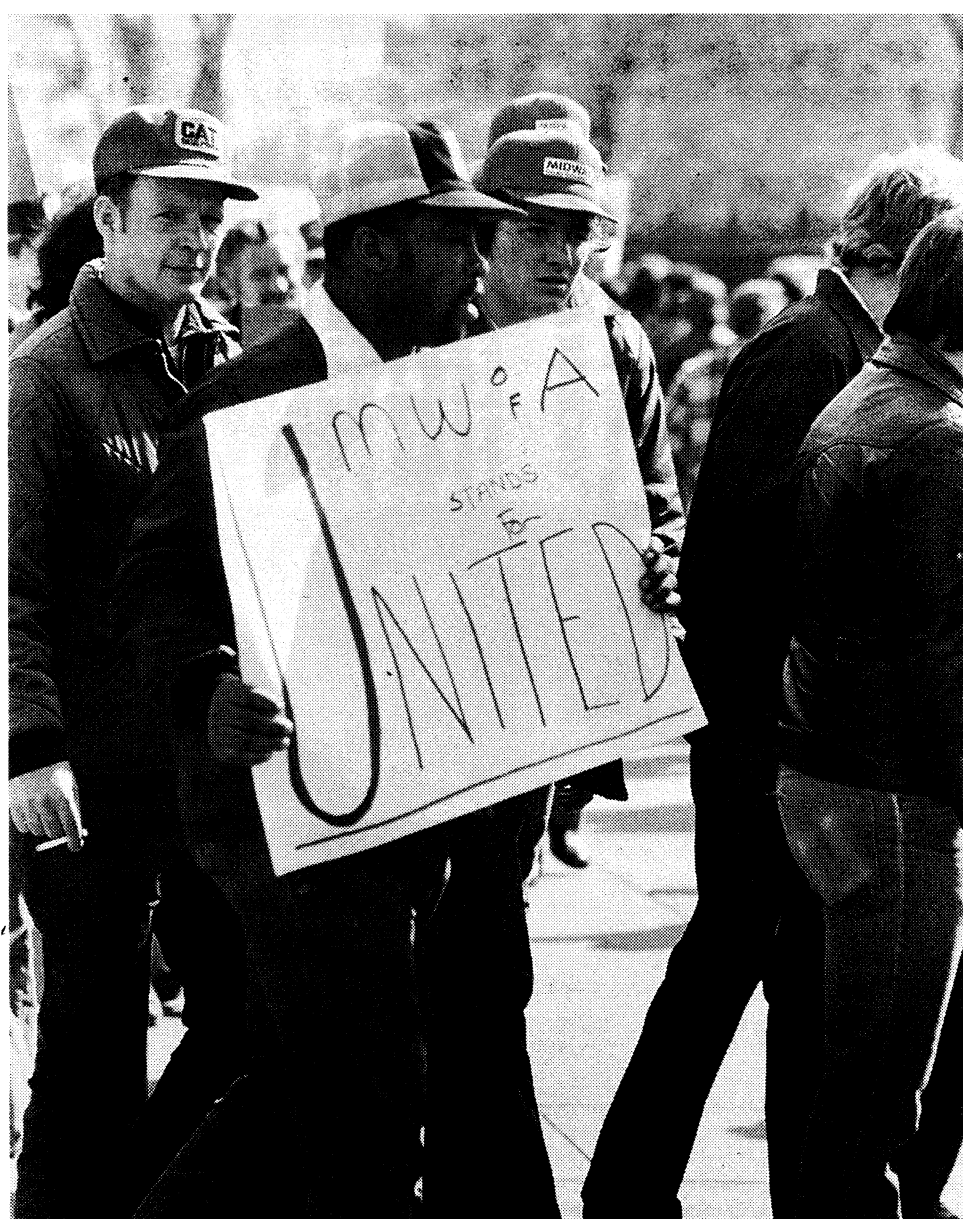
Steve Shapiro, president of UMWA Local 6025 in Bishop, West Virginia, explained during the strike why miners "have come to see the wildcat strike as the only means available to them to enforce their contractual job rights."...

The power of the miners

From the outset, the strategy of the coal operators relied on two main weapons. First, a divide-and-rule campaign to split the ranks of the miners and to pit other working people against them. Second, strikebreaking action by the government, which the employers control through the two-party system.

As soon as the union ranks hurled the February 6 contract back in the bosses' faces, the operators turned more openly to the government to crush the miners.

On February 11 President Carter proclaimed the state of Ohio to be suffering an "energy emergency." Three days later he declared that the strike "cannot be allowed to continue," and called for negotiations to be held at the White House. Carter threat-



Striking miners march in Washington opposing takeback contract, March 3, 1978.

ened to invoke Taft-Hartley and said he was readying federal force for "protection of life and property."...

On February 20 a separate contract was announced between the UMWA and the Pittsburgh & Midway Coal Company.

Now an elaborate and highly publicized display was begun of BCOA "opposition" to the P&M contract and of White House "pressure" on the operators to accept it as the basis for a national pact. This was calculated to give the false impression that the contract included big concessions to the miners, while also trying to restore Carter's tarnished image as a "neutral."

After a few days of this charade, Carter announced on February 24 a second national contract agreement. The terms were virtually identical to the P&M pact.

If this deal was not "approved without delay" by miners, Carter threatened to take "drastic and unsatisfactory legal action" to end the strike. He called on miners to support the contract as a way of showing "dedication to your country."

When miners saw the contract, however, they immediately recognized it as merely a rehash of the February 6 "ball and chain" agreement. The P&M miners signaled the general sentiment and blocked the splitting move by decisively rejecting their settlement. And when the votes on the national contract came in on March 5, miners had voted it down by a more than two-to-one margin.

The next day Carter announced he was ordering the miners back to work under Taft-Hartley. The terms of the injunction were sweeping. It prohibited all union officers and

staff from "continuing, encouraging, ordering, aiding, engaging, or taking part in" the strike. It banned any activity "interfering with or affecting the orderly continuance of work in the bituminous coal industry."

Violators would be fined or jailed, the government warned. Food stamps would be cut off for strikers, since their walkout was now "illegal."

Showdown

To drive home the threats, federal marshals hand-delivered copies of the order to every UMWA local president. The aim was to intimidate those who had provided much of the day-to-day leadership of the walkout.

Government officials announced that state troopers, the National Guard, the FBI, and even federal troops were ready to move against anyone who interfered with production or transportation of coal.

The predictions of mass layoffs in other industries became frantic. If the miners did not give in, three million workers would be jobless within weeks, the administration claimed. Provocative speculation about "violence" filled the news media.

It was a historic test of strength — all the power of corporate wealth and governmental might versus 160,000 determined workers. And the coal miners showed where the real power lies.

On March 13 — the first day the injunction was in effect — the companies admitted that fewer than 100 miners in the entire country showed up for work.

No one was jailed.

No one was fined.

No coal was mined.

And the government was powerless to enforce its order.

The very next day, the coal companies came up with a third offer. This one dropped all provisions for disciplining wildcat strikers. It dropped the attempt to limit the authority of union safety committees. It dropped the probation period for new miners, along with a series of other "givebacks" the operators had demanded in their earlier offers. The medical card was not restored, but the maximum yearly payment by any miner was lowered to \$200. Pensions were raised slightly but not equalized.

The utter defeat of the Taft-Hartley injunction was dramatized when — as the miners prepared to vote again — the federal judge who issued the order refused to renew it. Miners were "not paying attention to what I do anyhow," he admitted.

Voting on March 24, miners reluctantly approved the new offer by 57 to 43 percent. They hadn't won what they were fighting for, but they had blocked the coal operators' offensive and shattered the bosses' dreams for a housebroken work force.

Miners: solidarity won contract with no concessions at Reading Anthracite

BY CANDACE WAGNER AND PETER SEIDMAN

POTTSVILLE, Pennsylvania — In early 1998, the Reading Anthracite Coal Co. demanded that members of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) at their strip mine and breaker agree to a 12-hour-day, seven-day-a-week schedule, without overtime pay after eight hours' work or for week-ends. Members of UMWA Locals 1686 and 7891 voted down two such proposed contracts. Finally, in November, the company backed down and agreed to a contract that included no take backs, as well as small wage and benefit increases. This third offer was

approved by the union membership.

Workers at the afternoon shift change on December 30 were happy about pushing back the company demands. "Solidarity," declared one worker as he hurried for the bus into the pit. "We showed them that we would stick together."

Union participation in solidarity rallies with UMWA members on strike at Jeddo Coal in nearby Hazleton had sent a message to the Reading bosses, said John Downey, president of UMWA Local 1686, in a phone interview.

Miners coming off day shift stood around in the bitter cold to discuss with *Militant* correspondents the attacks facing anthracite miners today. They explained that until 1994 the UMWA bargained collectively for a common contract with all four major anthracite coal companies. They felt all the miners had been in a stronger position then.

Anthracite, which is harder and hotter burning than the more widely used bituminous coal, is concentrated in eastern Pennsylvania. At the turn of the century 140,000 workers mined the coal here. Now the number is below 1,000. The coal mined at Reading is shipped to Canada for paint manufacture.

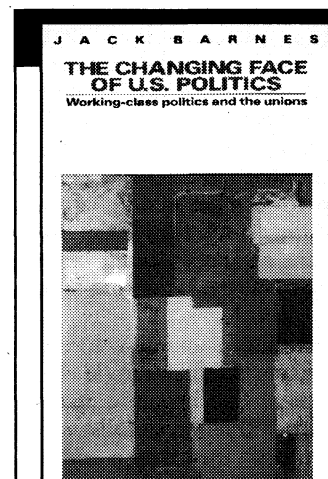
Downey, who is a working miner, said the new contract includes a wage increase of \$1.05 over its four-year duration, increased personal days, and an increase in the company contributions to retirement pensions. Referring to the 12-hour day demanded by the company, Downey said, "The men refused to work under conditions like that."

Downey described the hazardous conditions in the mine. Much of the equipment that digs out and hauls the coal is not sturdy enough for the poundage the company seeks to handle, he said, and serious injuries have occurred. Since the new contract was ratified, a 15-minute coffee break and safety check on one of the mining machines was eliminated. Now the workers on that equipment go eight hours without a break and preventive maintenance is not done.

In the last six months, management personnel have taken to watching the workers through binoculars from a trailer above the mine. Downey believes this is designed to justify further layoffs. One hundred miners now operate the mine, down from 300 several years ago.

Members of the UMWA have produced a T-shirt identifying with the "Molly Maguires," Irish immigrant miners who led a fight for decent wages and working conditions in the anthracite mines in the 1870s. Franklin Gowen, a coal magnate, accused the miners of being part of a secret Irish terrorist organization that he labeled the "Molly Maguires." He claimed that the miners' aim was the destruction of society or alternately, communism. Following frame-up trials, 19 miners were hung in Pottsville and a nearby town between 1877 and 1879. The T-shirt worn by some UMWA members today reads "The Molly's were Men."

Candace Wagner and Pete Seidman are members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees.



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Act with urgency to join forces with working-class vanguard in formation

SWP leadership discusses extending 'third campaign for turn to industry'

BY NAOMICRAINE
AND ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

NEW YORK — A new mass vanguard of the working class and its allies on the land is in formation in the United States. This is evident in groupings of workers and farmers who come forward in labor battles and fights over the crisis conditions in the rural areas, who have worked with each other over time, continue campaigning in the interests of the toilers after a particular battle is over, form links of solidarity among themselves and with other fighters, and begin to draw broader conclusions about capitalism.

What a proletarian party does today, through each of its branches and trade union factions, and what each member of its leading committees does, makes a difference in the outcome.

The urgency of acting on this reality in a timely and concrete way was at the center of the Socialist Workers Party expanded leadership meeting that took place here January 1-3. In addition to members of the SWP's National Committee, participants included members of the party's Trade Union Committee, a delegation chosen by the Young Socialists National Executive Committee, organizers of party branches, and leaders of Communist Leagues in other countries.

Meeting three months earlier, the National Committee had decided to launch a campaign to deepen the proletarianization of the party and rebuild concentrations of socialist workers in eight industrial unions, where socialists' functioning had become routinized during the previous years of retreat of the labor movement.

The numbers of socialist workers in the garment, meatpacking, and coal mining industries had particularly dwindled, while fractions in rail, steel, and the Machinists union grew to be more like job trusts of relatively privileged workers than combat units of a revolutionary party.

The campaign to reverse the cumulative and depoliticizing effects of this retreat, particularly by getting many more party members into garment, meatpacking, and mining, was the third such effort since the SWP's initial turn to industry was launched as a nationwide campaign in 1978. (A report on the October 3-5 National Committee meeting appeared in the Oct. 19, 1998, *Militant*.)



Militant/ Susan LaMont (top), Laura Anderson (right) Campaign to reverse effects on party of previous years of retreat of labor movement means getting jobs in and relating to struggles in meatpacking, garment, and coal mining. Above, catfish workers picket Freshwater Farms in Belzoni, Mississippi, protesting inhuman conditions, December 1998. Right, socialist worker Eli Green (at right) talks with a retired miner at the Black Mesa Complex near Kanyeta, Arizona (see article on page 5).

The January 1-3 meeting opened with a report by Joel Britton, a member of the SWP's Trade Union Committee, on steps leaders of several party branches and trade union factions had begun carrying out to advance and extend this third campaign for the turn to industry.

Radical organizational moves

This includes what may seem like radical organizational moves in response to the specific character of the resistance by vanguard layers of workers — taking jobs beyond the immediate areas of the cities where party branches are located today, and moving geographically in some cases to be able to collaborate more closely with workers who are in struggle.

A few days before the National Committee meeting, the Chicago branch decided that four of its members will move to central Illinois. This is an area where vanguard groups of workers have emerged from various labor battles in recent years, including the 98-day strike by 350 miners at the Freeman United Coal Co. that ended in December. A number of miners who went through



that fight are discussing the lessons of that strike battle and how to continue building solidarity with others.

A layer of United Auto Workers (UAW) members at Caterpillar Corp., organized as the Tactical Response Team or Blue Shirts, who came together through a seven-year contract fight, are also building solidarity with other labor struggles. For instance, they have been part of mobilizing support for a strike by 82 UAW members at Tazewell Machine Works in Pekin, Illinois, determined not to let these workers go down to defeat.

A letter by Rodney Garman, one of the Blue Shirts in East Peoria, Illinois, was published in the *Peoria Journal Star* last June under the title "Caterpillar wants to crush working people's aspirations" (see box below). A number of militant workers in the area look at this letter as their manifesto too, Britton pointed out.

The Chicago branch of the SWP as a whole, not just the four members who are moving, will be orienting more to mining in central and southern Illinois, to working with these groups of class-struggle campaigners, and to getting jobs in garment and meatpacking, both in the city and in the broader region.

Members of the Minneapolis-St. Paul branch are looking for work in the big packinghouses a couple hours' drive from the Twin Cities. Given the weight of these plants in the industry nationally, this is important in being able to build a national fraction of socialist workers in the meatpacking section of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) union. The 1985-86 strike by members of UFCW Local P-9 at the Hormel plant in Austin, Minnesota, marked a break in a several-year rout of the labor movement in the United States. It helped inspire a wave of strikes in other packinghouses, and encouraged paperworkers and others to begin to fight against concession demands from their bosses.

Responsibility toward fellow fighters

In the discussion at the meeting Joe

Swanson, a UAW member in Des Moines, Iowa, pointed to the responsibility of communists toward fellow fighters. He recalled the editorial the *Militant* published following the defeat of the 1985-86 Hormel strike. It frankly took up the challenge before the 850 meatpackers who were then locked out of the Austin plant of joining in support of other packinghouse battles and advancing the use of union power, as the road to winning the jobs back in Austin.

Swanson also pointed to the role the party can play in advancing the alliance of workers and farmers, saying three of his co-workers who are Black have said they would like to bring one of the Black farmers involved in the fight against the decades-long racist discrimination by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to speak in Iowa.

It was in the course of the battles in the

mid-1980s that the Socialist Workers Party decided to get some of its members into the UFCW. This fraction has been concentrated in the beef and pork sectors of the UFCW; the union also includes retail clerks, poultry workers, and many others. Socialist workers are also relating to and organizing solidarity with other struggles by UFCW members. These include the fight for justice by catfish workers at Freshwater Farms in Belzoni, Mississippi (see article in last week's *Militant*) and the strike by more than 300 poultry workers in Indiana (see article on front page).

One Young Socialists member is currently working in a poultry plant organized by the UFCW in Alabama. After a couple of months of arguing that "we're not focusing on poultry," the party branch in Birmingham, at the urging of the national trade union leadership, decided party members need to join her there.

While there are more party members in meatpacking and garment today than three months ago, the shifts until the eve of the SWP National Committee meeting had been mostly reforms of the existing fraction structures, not the revolutionary changes that are needed to end the old habits of retreat and rebuild trade union fractions as political units of a revolutionary party. The concentration of party members in rail and the airlines especially had been largely unaffected by the initial months of the third campaign for the turn to industry.

Rail workers in the Pittsburgh SWP are taking some initiatives to change this. They decided in late December that all of them will be part of the search for jobs in meatpacking, garment, and coal mining — a decision the party's National Committee concurred with.

It was a meeting of socialist workers in the United Transportation Union (UTU) in late September that first began to face the fact that the party's fraction in rail had become more like a job trust than a unit of a proletarian party. Without a perspective of building fractions in all eight of the unions where the party had decided to concentrate

'Caterpillar wants to crush working people's aspirations'

The following is a letter by Rodney Garman, a leader of the "Blue Shirts" at the Caterpillar plant in East Peoria, Illinois, published in the June 9, 1998, *Peoria Star Journal*.

OK, so you're not a Cat worker or an automaker. You're a trucker or a teacher or a secretary or a doctor or a nurse. Maybe you've never even seen the inside of a factory. So why should the battle just concluded at Caterpillar mean anything to you?

Workers throughout the Cat chain fought for six and a half years against a contract that Caterpillar and the UAW were trying to force down their throats. They struck twice against it, twice voted overwhelmingly to reject it, and worked since 1995 without a contract to resist it. Finally after repeated betrayals by the union (international and local) and after winning back the jobs of the illegally dis-

charged workers, on March 22 they voted to accept it. Why should the Cat struggle matter to you? Because the struggle at Caterpillar was a battle over the direction of our society. Cat's assault on its workers is part of the attack on all working people, whatever your job, wherever you live. Cat workers were fighting not just for themselves and their families, and for the generation of workers who are passing on and for the younger workers yet to be. Concessions demanded by Cat are designed to undercut the power of workers in the future.

Caterpillar's long-range strategy is one of the capitalist elite to crush working people's aspirations for a better world. The Cat struggle has shown that the whole system of elite power is the enemy.

Rodney Garman
East Peoria

its forces, "being in the UTU no longer becomes a political assignment but a job," Sam Manuel, who organizes the steering committee of socialist workers in that union, said at that meeting.

After essentially ignoring a strike by 59 anthracite miners at a mine in eastern Pennsylvania for several months, the Philadelphia branch decided that the only way they can build a proletarian branch of the party is to get involved in that fight, including building solidarity in their unions, and to relate to fights in other anthracite mines in the area.

Every branch of the party can and must be part of work in the coal fields as part of rebuilding a miners fraction, Britton said in his report.

As socialist workers and Young Socialists field more teams in coal mining areas — in the East, South, and West — their goal is not simply to reach out to miners and other working people and youth with the *Militant* and other political weapons. They are above all looking for hiring in the mines in order to help rebuild a fraction in the UMWA to go through experiences shoulder-to-shoulder with the miners. This work is carried out in a centralized and careful manner under the direction of the party's Coal Committee and the Trade Union Committee.

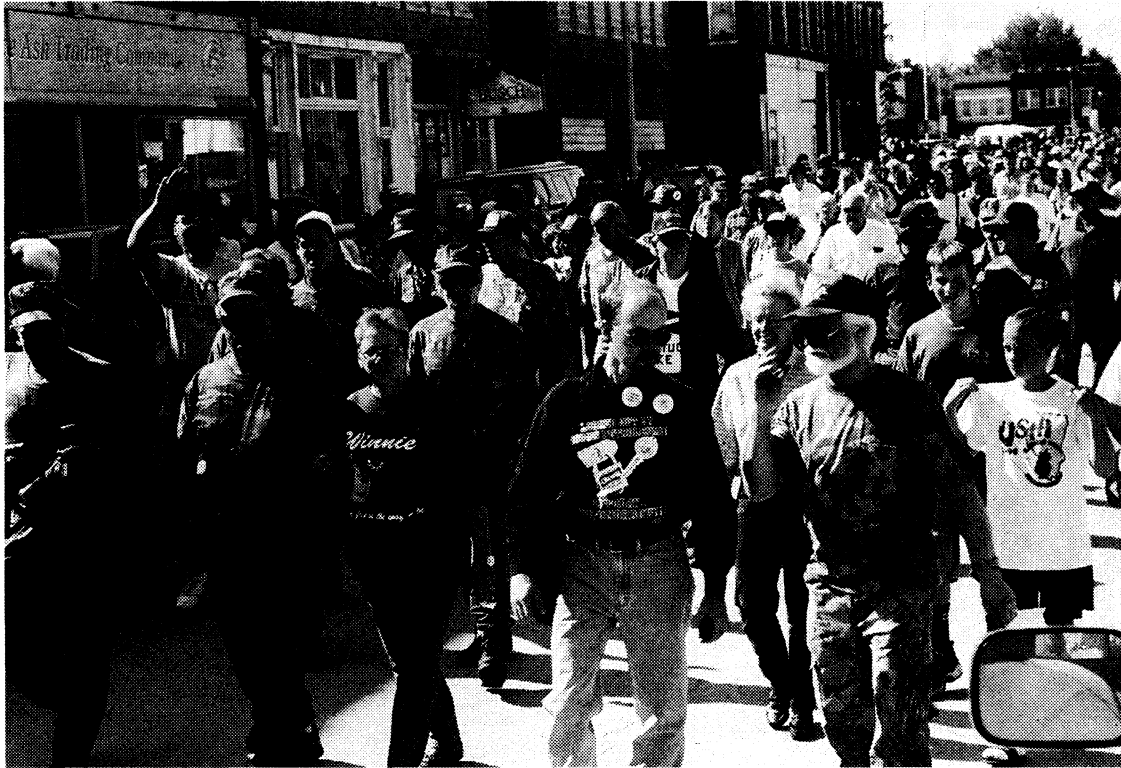
These are examples of the kind of steps needed by every branch and trade union fraction, Britton said, between now and the 40th SWP constitutional convention, which the National Committee called for April 1-4 in San Francisco.

It's by acting along these lines that the party can realize the goal of bringing five to 10 times the number of vanguard workers and farmers to the party convention as came to the December 4-6 Young Socialists convention. This goal was laid out by SWP national secretary Jack Barnes in his closing summary to the socialist conference that took place in Los Angeles together with the YS convention. (A report on the YS convention and party/youth conference appeared in the Dec. 28, 1998, *Militant*.)

Leading the Young Socialists

Carrying out the course described by Britton is the only way to help the Young Socialists recruit and take the next steps in becoming a nationwide communist organization, said Mary-Alice Waters in a report to the National Committee meeting titled, "The Party and Vanguard Workers: Leading the Young Socialists."

The YS convention, she noted, marked a political turning point in the third campaign



Militant/Jim Garrison

Nearly 350 miners and supporters rallied to back miners on strike at Freeman Coal in Virden, Illinois, October 11. Socialist workers have an obligation to act today as other vanguard fighters expect them to.

for the turn. It brought together nearly 100 revolutionary-minded youth — dozens of them not yet members of the Young Socialists — and a number of workers and farmers involved in struggles such as the Freeman miners strike in Illinois, the fight by Black farmers for their land and against government discrimination, and the lockout at Crown Central Petroleum in Texas.

It showed concretely what is already happening in the class struggle, and convinced a much bigger layer of party members that the branches and trade union fractions needed to make the necessary shifts in response to this sea change in working-class politics.

In a report to the YS convention on the "Young Socialists Manifesto," published in *New International* no. 11, Samantha Kern stressed that the YS is a youth organization with a proletarian orientation above all because of its relationship through the Socialist Workers Party to the broader working-class vanguard. That's what makes the YS different from other youth groups. The participation of Young Socialists in social protest activity has more weight than that of other youth because of this connection to the fighting vanguard of the working class.

Revolutionary-minded youth are drawn to the SWP today through their attraction to the working class. Likewise, workers who are joining in struggle are attracted to the revolutionary youth. And both need the party to come together, Waters said.

The YS convention had an impact both on youth and on the workers and farmers who came. Waters related that one young person who came from the San Francisco area commented that in listening to greetings and classes by workers and farmers involved in struggles, "I saw forces concretely that can change the world."

Workers there were also attracted by what they saw in the Young Socialists, such as the description by Ryan Lewis, a YS member who works in the party's printshop. Lewis, 23, described heading up crews on the web press that prints the *Militant*. In the craft structure of capitalist factories, this kind of position takes years or decades to qualify for. Another worker in the shop, Ryan Kelly, was elected to the new YS National Executive Committee, the first shop "graduate" to be released for that kind of assignment in recent years.

It took the party leadership working politically with the Young Socialists to get to that convention and conference. At the heart of the third campaign for the turn is for the party to do this in every area — not intervene in the YS organizationally, but work politically with every YS unit and young person coming around.

It means not ignoring the Young Socialists — like the example of party members who rationalized leaving a YS member to work alone in a poultry plant, because it's easier than working with them politically. It means the party's units and its individual leaders going out of their way to make sure that Young Socialists are always included and worked with as equals in teams to the coal fields, farming areas, and all mass work.

Anticipate and act with urgency

The Young Socialists convention and socialist conference gave a glimpse of the cells of class struggle cadre that are forming in the working class, in union struggles and other fights today, and of the initial fruits of the work of the communist movement with them.

During one of the discussion periods Eddie Slaughter, one of the leaders of the Black farmers' struggle, addressed David Yard, who was then on strike at Freeman United Coal. Slaughter suggested that some of the farmers fighting government discrimination should join the Freeman miners' picket lines in solidarity, and urged the miners to come to the next court hearing in their lawsuit.

Other workers such as Ron Martin, a member of the Boilermakers union in Birmingham, also joined in discussing how to strengthen solidarity with the miners.

It's impossible today for the rulers to close the political space and prevent groups of workers from getting to know each other, broadening their scope, and fighting for others. Farmers and workers find each other, especially where there's broader social and political issues involved. It raises the political level of the discussion when these workers and farmers come in contact with communist workers who are also part of their fights.

Small groupings of workers that are potential parties start to develop before any particular strike breaks out, and don't disappear afterward, Britton

noted in his report to the National Committee meeting. He quoted a passage from the Communist Manifesto, published in 1848, by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels. It explained that in battles with the employers, "Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time. The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever-expanding union of the workers."

At the YS convention and socialist conference, Jack Barnes had noted that the SWP must have the perspective not only of recruiting individual workers to the party but fusing the party with groups of vanguard workers that are being forged today. This can only happen over time, through working together.

In a period like this, a communist party has an obligation to do what vanguard fighters assume it is committed to do. Party branches and trade union fractions could have been working to build the kind of solidarity Eddie Slaughter described between Black farmers and the Freeman strikers from early in the strike, Barnes noted in the political report to the National Committee meeting. Helping to bring some Black farmers to the miners' picket lines could have had a weighty role in the outcome of that confrontation, particularly since the company had hired Vance "security" thugs during the strike, many of them Black.

If the party had acted during the entire 98 days of the Illinois miners strike as it did in the last three to four weeks of that battle, it could have helped the miners to come out of the fight even stronger than they did. Unless the party makes the changes necessary to turn this mode of functioning into a habit, it will become an organization that rationalizes a course leading to defeats of the working class and its allies.

The order of the day for the party's individual leaders, and for its branches and fractions, is to anticipate developments in politics and act with urgency to help organize solidarity with toilers confronting the enemy class, Barnes said in his report. Otherwise the party will increasingly drop behind the expanding proletarian vanguard in formation.

It was a couple of militant Black farmers and workers who led SWP members in Alabama and Georgia to reach out to striking catfish workers in the South. When the party catches up to workers like these, Barnes said, it will then be in a position to recruit such vanguard fighters. It will then be transformed into a party whose cadres have the self-confidence to lead in battle — which other militant workers will be able to see, appreciate, and act on.

Tom Leonard from Houston, a longtime leader of the party's trade union work, also spoke to the urgency of transforming the work of the party's branches and union fractions. "Hundreds of workers are acting as if what we've been saying about the world is true. We're recognizing now that these vanguard workers had broken out of the retreat before we had," he noted. "We have a political responsibility to join them."

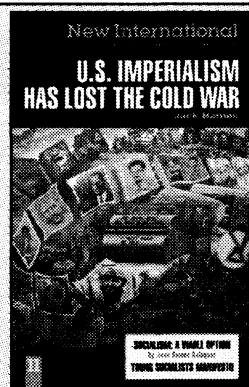
Reforms: product of revolution

Marching along this proletarian course necessitates strengthening the party's fractions in the Union of Needletrades Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) and the UFCW in every branch, and expanding the number of branches into the active effort to rebuild a fraction in the UMWA, Barnes said.

That is the road the party, together with the Young Socialists, must travel to successfully advance the third campaign for the turn to industry. Turning to building these three fractions today will strengthen the SWP as a party structured around eight industrial fractions with a proletarian — not a job-trust — character.

Shifting personnel among the party's

Continued on Page 12



New International ■ no. 11

U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War

Jack Barnes

Also:

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Ontario hotel workers strike for first contract

BY JOHN SARGE

CHATHAM, Ontario — A sign declaring "Hey Bradley, Lets Talk" adorns the top of an eight-foot-high mound of snow outside the Best Western, Wheels Inn, Resort and Conference Center here. The hotel is owned by the Bradley family. Signs with similar messages and others proclaiming "CAW on Strike" dot the snow walls along the road between picket lines at the three entrances to the hotel complex. Striking hotel workers are staffing these lines 24 hours a day, seven days a week, including during the worst snow storm in years.

On Nov. 25, 1998, 450 workers, many of them young, went on strike to win their first contract here. They are members of Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) Local 127. The amalgamated local represents workers at 21 work sites in the area, including the Navistar Truck Assembly Plant across the road from the hotel.

Jerry Willan, the strike chairman, explained the workers moved quickly once they decided they wanted a union. "We started to organize last February [1998]. In May we won certification with a 65 percent vote for the union. Only 13 people voted against strike action when we voted in October," Willan said. He also reported that only 13 union members have crossed the picket lines in the seven weeks since the strike began.

A leaflet the union produced explains, "Our main goal is to improve working conditions and end favouritism." The strike is currently focused on economics. Robert Jenner, national representative for the CAW, told the media an agreement was reached on noneconomic issues before Christmas. But on December 27 the picket line swelled after a meeting where strikers rejected an offer of a 60-cent raise over three years.

Strikers explain that wages at the hotel are terrible. One waitress on the picket line, who asked that her name not be used, said,

"After 20 years at the hotel I earn Can\$7 [Can\$1=US\$0.65]. I get tips if we have customers, but you can't live on it."

Andrew Binga, a bartender who has worked here seven years part-time while attending school, said, "I make \$7.20 an hour and don't get any benefits. If you're full-time you get some benefits, but not part-time workers."

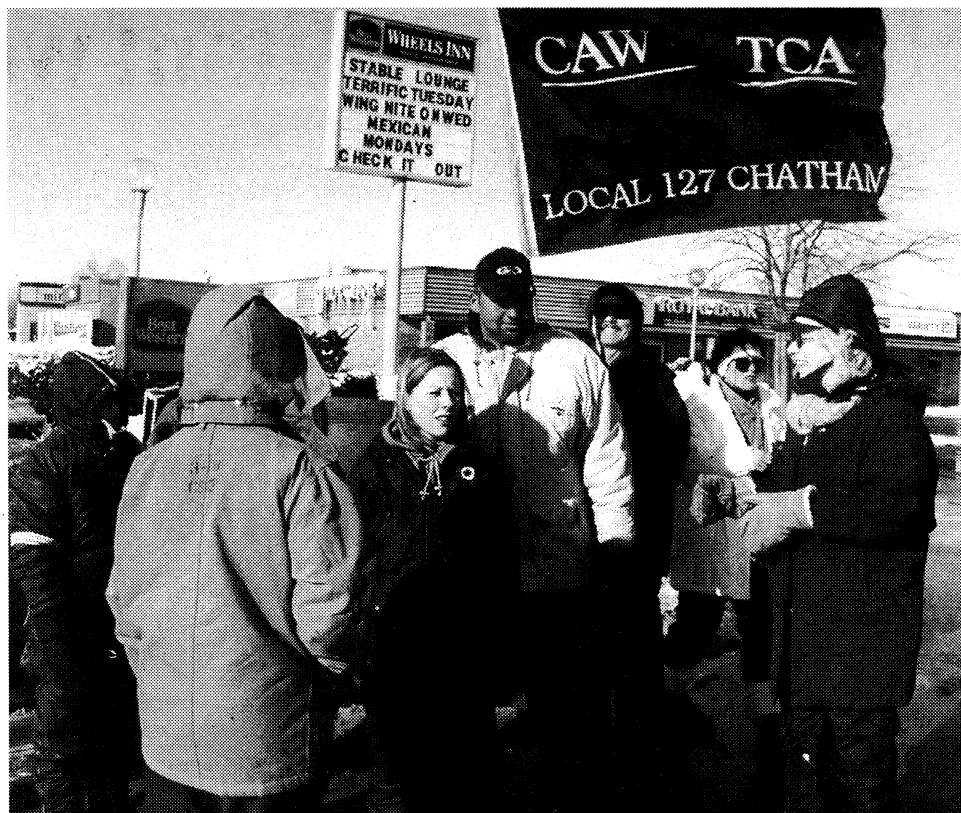
Jean Janssens, who was staffing the strike office, said, "after over five years in reservations I make \$8.60 an hour. It takes seven years to reach top pay of \$9.10 an hour." According to CAW Local 127 president Charlie Formosa, the minimum wage in Canada is \$6.85, or \$6.65 for students.

Strikers report active support for their strike in the area. CAW members from Navistar have joined the picket lines. Reservations worker Janssens said, "Every Christmas banquet scheduled from Chatham was canceled."

Willan added that United Parcel Service drivers were refusing to cross the picket lines.

The hotel bosses are paying scabs \$11 to do the jobs strikers did for \$7 or \$8. They have brought in private security cops to harass strikers. Nicole Demers, a striker staffing the Keil Drive entrance, described how the strikebreaking guards have gone so far as to "pour urine on our fire wood" at the gate. Management also sent out a letter days before Christmas offering a \$200 bonus to any full-time worker and \$100 to part-time workers who would cross the picket line for the two weeks around the holidays, even if they rejoined the strike in January. Strikers report that no one fell for the offer.

The local cops have also done their part to harass the strikers. Pickets report that 24 people have been arrested on the lines. Five were arrested December 30 when 75 strikers showed up at the main entrance. Those five are facing mischief charges and one 19-year-old man was charged with assaulting a



Militant/John Sarge

Striking hotel workers picket Wheels Inn, in Chatham, Ontario, January 10.

police officer. Janssens, the first striker to be arrested, described her experience. "I was struck by a car that was crossing the picket line." She went on, "I fell. The driver then drove over my foot. I was helped up, and a police officer asked if I wanted to go home. I replied, 'No!' Two police officers then picked me up and slammed me on the hood of the police car. They handcuffed me so tight that I have bruises on my hands. I was taken downtown, stripped searched, and thrown in a cell for one and a half hours." She was charged with "causing a disturbance for impeding traffic."

Unionists say the strike may last awhile because neither the hotel nor Best Western's international reservation system are informing people that the workers are on strike. Many of the guests at the resort, which is not far from Detroit, come from the United States as a winter escape.

Jerry Willan estimated that 75 percent of

the hotel's business comes from the United States, and if reservations aren't canceled early enough people end up paying for the rooms ordered, even if they honor the picket lines.

CAW Local 127 has begun outreach to others in the labor movement, Formosa said. United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 900 at the Ford complex in Wayne, Michigan, has begun publicizing the boycott of the hotel. The Detroit *Sunday Journal*, published by locked-out Detroit newspaper workers, is urging people to boycott the Wheels Inn.

Formosa also reported that a letter is going out to all CAW locals in Ontario urging them to come to Chatham on January 23 to show their support at a rally for the striking hotel workers.

John Sarge is a member of UAW Local 900. Marty Ressler and Bill Schmitt contributed to this article.

California protests against cop brutality continue

BY MARK FRIEDMAN AND OLLIE BIVINS

RIVERSIDE, California — The Black community here is continuing to press its fight for justice for Tyisha Miller, 19, who was killed by Riverside cops December 28 while in her car awaiting a tow truck and medical assistance. She was unconscious at the time. Relatives were at the scene attempting to assist her. The cops broke her win-

dow and fired 24 bullets into the car, 12 of which hit Miller. They claim they believed she was reaching for a gun.

The killing has touched a nerve among Black workers and youth here. At a January 4 rally at City Hall, Nadine Blackburn told the *Militant*, "My brother was being beaten by three cops. When I tried to intervene they threw me on the ground and kneed me, and I was pregnant. I went into early labor. I used

to think of the police as peace officers — but they consider themselves judge and jury." In 1996 two Riverside County sheriffs were found guilty of beating immigrant workers with batons, following an 80-mile chase of their pickup truck.

Five hundred people, predominantly residents of Riverside's Black community, attended a Justice for Tyisha Miller rally at the Life Church of God in Christ here January 7. Amidst widespread press reportage, Reverends Dewayne and Bernell Butler, cousins of Miller, demanded the cops be prosecuted.

Danny Bakewell, president of the Brotherhood Crusade in Los Angeles, said, "If a savage beast, like a mountain lion, was running around in the Black community, the cops would be more humane to it than they are to us." He and others demanded that the cops involved be taken off "paid vacation," put on trial, and sent to jail.

A statement representing 45 Black churches was read demanding release of the tapes of the 911 emergency call Miller's cousins made requesting help, as well as the names and records of the cops involved.

Seven members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) Local 2785 who work at Northwest Airlines in Los Angeles carpooled to the protest. They presented a statement of support to the family, which also called for the indictment and prosecution of the cops. They were filmed by Channel 7, and the next morning received cheers from their co-workers. Later they gave reports to ramp workers assembled in the breakroom.

The *Los Angeles Times*, *Riverside Press-Enterprise*, and Riverside cops and city officials have launched a countercampaign to undercut support for prosecuting the cops. They claim that Miller had alcohol and marijuana in her blood, and a gun in the car.

The FBI has opened an inquiry into the shooting that it says will determine whether a fuller investigation by the Justice department is warranted.

The funeral, attended by 800 people at the New Joy Baptist Church, became another protest against the police killing.

A nondenominational meeting and prayer

vigil was held at the Park Avenue Baptist Church January 11. Nearly 500 Riverside residents, Black, white, and Latino, attended. Among those attending were student government leaders and the director of the African Student Program from the University of California at Riverside. They are organizing a campus teach-in against police brutality.

Riverside ministers and community organizations announced that the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. Day parade will be a march for justice for Tyisha Miller.

Mark Friedman is a member of IAM Local 2785. Ollie Bivins is a member of United Auto Workers Local 148.

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St. Louis Machinists wage two-week strike

On December 19 members of International Association of Machinists (IAM) Local 1345 at Allied Gear and Machine, Inc., in St. Louis went out on strike over wages, retirement, and the increased cost of health benefits. We voted 47-21 in opposition to the company's offer of a 3 percent wage increase for each year of the three-year contract. Most of the wage increase would be lost through the increase in health insurance. After insurance and taxes, the raise would have amounted to about 6 cents.

As one of those locked out at Staley in Decatur, Illinois, in a four-year battle for a contract, I spoke at the union meeting where the vote was taken about the importance of that struggle for all working people. The majority of the guys wanted to make some changes, and since the owner talked about shutting the plant down, they felt they had nothing to lose, and they might as well go out.

I don't think the company or the union leadership expected us to strike. The company sent IAM members several letters urging us to go back to work. In one letter they stated how shocked they were that we'd strike, and was assured the union leadership would not recommend a strike.

But as the strike went on, certain factors dampened the morale; mainly the union's lack of organizing. Into the second week of the strike, the company low-

ered its offer. The new proposal was lowered to a 36-cent across-the-board increase each year of the contract. The company told the union leadership they would be bringing in scabs, and hire them on a permanent basis. Another meeting was called and the new proposals were voted in by 37-15.

Some people, including myself, were against the new proposal and wanted to continue to fight. But there was very little discussion at the union meeting. I don't think the union leadership wanted to lead a fight, and not enough leadership stepped forward. So the members voted to go back by 37-15.

For the short while on the picket line, we had some interesting discussions. Some of the guys I talked to felt they were worth more than the 3 percent increase offered. And they felt the time had come to take a stand.

Many discussions about the lessons of the strike are still taking place. Some felt it was a waste to even go out. Yet others, including myself, feel if we had just held out a little while longer, we could have gotten a better proposal. Hopefully, over the next three years of this contract, those who want to fight will increase, and we can learn from this experience.

Frankie Travis
IAM Local 1345
St. Louis, Missouri

How should militant workers describe AMFA?

BY ARLENE RUBENSTEIN
AND ERNIE MAILHOT

Letters from readers Edwin Fruit and Larry Johnston printed in the January 11 *Militant* concerning the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA) posed important questions for working-class fighters who seek to function effectively in the unions and be part of today's resistance.

Both raise the question: Is AMFA a

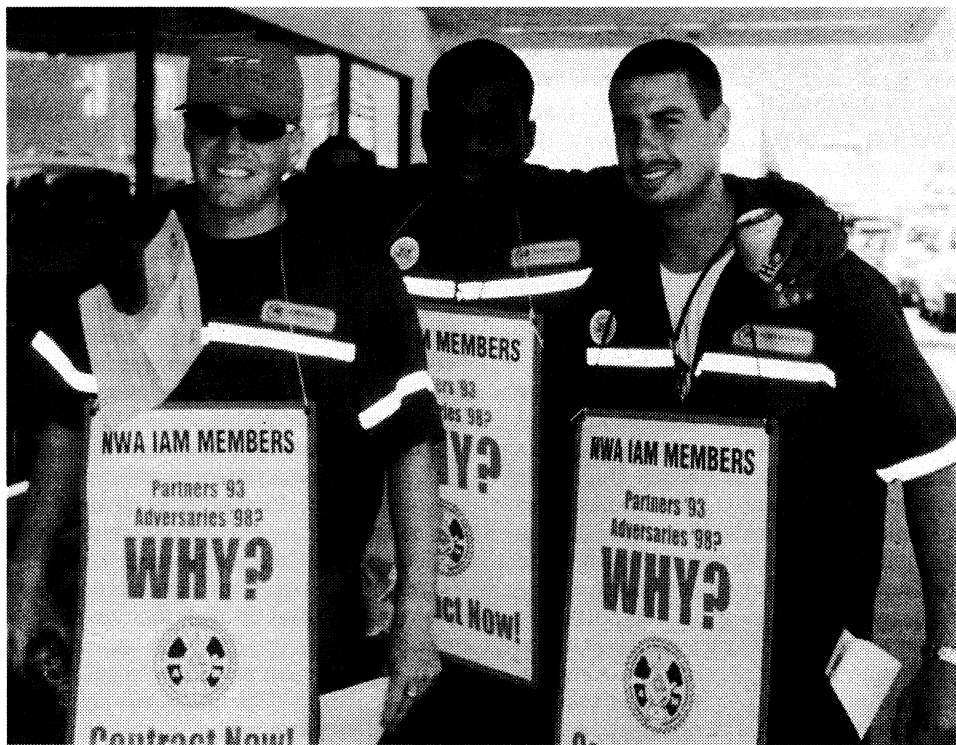
DISCUSSION WITH OUR READERS

union? They point to the *Militant's* characterization of AMFA as a company-minded union-busting outfit, referring to articles written as rank-and-file workers in the International Association of Machinists (IAM) were campaigning against AMFA in the union representation election at Northwest Airlines.

Our view is that the *Militant's* position on AMFA has been correct. When the *Militant* articles described AMFA as a "company-minded outfit," this did not refer to the ranks of IAM members at Northwest who felt a certain attraction to AMFA's positions or who felt repelled by the IAM officialdom's misleadership. It referred to AMFA's leadership and the program they promote. This small group, for 40 years, has made their reason for being trying to divide off unionized mechanics from other airline workers. Up to now they have only succeeded a handful of times.

AMFA did win the election at Northwest. When the National Mediation Board certifies the election, almost 9,500 workers at Northwest will become members of AMFA. Thus it will no longer be a tiny outfit outside the union ranks, but a union.

It's useful to think of the discussions rank-and-file union fighters so often have with



Above, IAM members on information picket in Los Angeles demand contract from Northwest, May 1998. Militant workers need to fight for unity of all airline workers.

our co-workers who speak of the union as if it were the officials. We always answer, "No, you and I are the union."

Wherever mechanics were part of a fight with other workers against the bosses, AMFA has usually won little support. For example AMFA met with limited success at Eastern Airlines, where mechanics refused to be bribed by airline boss and union-buster Frank Lorenzo's offer to cut them a separate deal. Instead of becoming part of the company's attempt to weaken the unions at Eastern, they joined and helped lead the fight of all the workers.

During the Eastern strike, AMFA official Vic Remeneski presented a different strategy. He told the *Atlanta Constitution* newspaper in 1990, "When you've got a product that is needed, you don't have to be militant." Later that year, AMFA succeeded in

splitting mechanics at the Trump Shuttle at LaGuardia Airport from the IAM, thus weakening the Eastern strike.

It's instructive to look at how some of the best fighters in the Eastern strike reacted to the AMFA victory at the Trump Shuttle. Even though AMFA did not support the strike, some AMFA members from the shuttle continued to picket at Eastern and were welcomed. Some strikers went out of their way to talk to as many AMFA members as they could, treating them as fellow union members, and urging them to raise strike support with other AMFA members and in AMFA meetings.

AMFA is currently trying to split mechanics away from other IAM workers at United, US Airways, TWA, and other carriers. The *Militant* will continue to campaign against AMFA. But where workers are represented

by AMFA the place for class-conscious workers is shoulder to shoulder with the membership.

Johnston also wrote, "In my observation AMFA's conduct is not notably different from real unions when they conduct raids against other unions." A similar criticism of articles in the *Militant* has been made by some AMFA supporters in Atlanta who argue that AMFA's perspective of cooperating with the company is no different from what the United Auto Workers (UAW) has been doing for years.

Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay, written in 1940 by Leon Trotsky, a central leader of the October 1917 Russian revolution, examines the challenges before the trade unions in the imperialist era. Trotsky notes a "degeneration of modern trade union organization throughout the world" in terms of their ability to defend workers' interests. He explains that "either the trade unions of our time will serve as secondary instruments of imperialist capital to subordinate and discipline the workers and to obstruct the revolution or, on the contrary, the unions will become tools of the revolutionary movement of the proletariat." This explanation of how badly the unions need to be transformed in order to be effective is even more relevant today.

It's true that the top labor officialdoms of the UAW, Teamsters, IAM, and AMFA have similarities in their positions. The reason IAM officials cannot effectively counter AMFA's craft union argument is because it is the logical conclusion of divisions among workers that the IAM tops have already agreed to. Examples include multitier wage setups, support for "quality circles," "Buy America" campaigns, and a variety of other "teamwork" programs that the bosses promote to try to convince us that we are a "family" — at GM, UPS, or Northwest Airlines. All these orientations have been serious blows to the IAM as an industrial union.

But the logical conclusion of the IAM bureaucracy's course does not make it the same as AMFA. The IAM, UAW, and other unions were forged in the heat of massive strikes in the 1930s in trucking, auto, steel, textile, and other industries that broke the hold of craft unions and formed industry-wide unions for the first time. They have a mass base in the working class. Despite the discontinuity between these struggles in the past and the present union leadership, industrial unions were built, and in large part remain intact. This puts workers in a stronger position to advance against their bosses.

AMFA, on the other hand, has no history of struggle and is not an industrial union. For most of its history it has had virtually no members. It has a history not of organizing workers, but trying to divide existing unions, even while they are involved in intensified struggle with the company. Workers who are in AMFA start off on a weaker basis to fight, saddled with a union whose tops have a policy that openly calls for working with the company to defend their members' prerogatives by selling out other workers who are "less skilled."

Unionists at Northwest face the same challenges as before the election — the as yet unsettled contract fight, winning back the jobs of workers who were fired in the course of the contract fight, and uniting workers in all job classifications to beat back company demands. Union members will need to build union solidarity with other social struggles as well. One good example is the Black farmers who have been waging a powerful fight to defend and regain their land.

Arlene Rubenstein is a cleaner at Northwest Airlines in Atlanta who will soon be a member of AMFA. Ernie Mailhot is a member of the IAM in Miami.

Clinton impeachment trial opens

Continued from front page

nesses banned is preposterous on its face," exclaimed an editorial in the *Wall Street Journal* January 12. The article demanded that the Senate "hold this President to account."

Sordid details of Clinton's sexual encounters with Lewinsky have already been presented in his testimony to a grand jury August 17 last year. On September 21 the three major broadcast networks and four cable TV stations publicly aired the entire four hours of the hearing. The next day newspapers across the country ran special supplements featuring excerpts of this testimony.

Video equipment will be available on the Senate floor to show portions of Clinton's grand jury testimony and an earlier disposition in the Paula Jones sexual harassment case. On January 12 Clinton sent \$850,000 to Jones to settle that lawsuit.

Meanwhile, Republicans have dropped their clamor for Clinton to postpone the January 19 State of the Union address until after the impeachment trial.

The *New York Times* editors demanded January 12 that Clinton be allowed to speak, saying he "has a right to demonstrate that the public does not want him removed from office." They suggested Clinton confess to his misdeeds in the speech, which "might well tilt the balance toward censure."

Ultrarightist politician Patrick Buchanan has seized on this scandal to press his "cultural war" with demagogic cries against the "corrupt elite" in Washington. "Monicagate is a battlefield in the war for the soul of America, a war that is religious and cultural in character, as well as political," he declared in a column last September.

The right-wing ideological offensive that's the motor force of the impeachment campaign against Clinton is opposed by the majority of working people.

This is reflected in comments by conservative columnist William Safire. In a column in the January 11 *New York Times*, Safire said a majority in the country remains "loyal" to Clinton despite the scandal that has surrounded his presidency. "Some don't want to deal with public unpleasantness.

Others don't want snoops prying into their own private lives," he wrote. "Add those to the hard-core liberals and minorities who see their man as a firewall against spreading lava from the right."

Another element behind this resistance to the impeachment drive is probably opposition to "the *Kulturkampf* [cultural war] with its weapons of messy personal destruction," Safire observed.

Liberal *New York Times* columnist Bob Herbert continued his attacks on conservative figures handling the impeachment trial in the Senate like Sen. Strom Thurmond and Chief Supreme Court Justice William Rehnquist. "The two of them were enemies of black Americans," wrote Herbert.

The racist ties of the two conservative politicians leading the impeachment charge against Clinton has recently surfaced in the bourgeois media. On January 13 the *Washington Post* reported that Rep. Robert Barr has addressed meetings of the Council of Conservative Citizens along with Senate majority leader Trent Lott. Lott, who has recently distanced himself from CCC, has maintained relations with the group in its 10 years of existence.

The organization was built by supporters of the now-defunct White Citizens Councils and John Birch Society. Its leaders call for promoting the "heritage" of the slavocracy with Confederate monuments and displays of the Confederate flag. They oppose Supreme Court rulings ordering desegregation of public facilities, call for tougher immigration control, and restoring "states' rights" — the battle cry of the slave-owning class in the U.S. Civil War.

"We are going to be a majority nonwhite nation in a couple of years," said Gordon Baum, chief executive officer of the Council of Conservative Citizens. "Is that a legitimate concern? Yes it is. We won't back away from that."

As early as the spring of 1989, the *Citizen's Informer* ran a picture of Lott with relatives, Frank Hodges and Arnie Watson, who are members of the Carroll County Citizens Council in Mississippi. The summer 1997 issue ran a picture of Lott meet-

ing at his office with CCC national officers. And William Lord, the Council's senior field coordinator, has twice served as Lott's campaign chairman in Carroll County.

This organization, built not only by supporters of the segregationist White Citizens Councils but also by backers of the John Birch society and activists in the presidential campaigns of then-Alabama governor George Wallace, has strong political ties to the Republican Party in the South as well as to the conservative wing of the southern Democratic Party.

The CCC raised thousands of dollars for the defense of a supporter, Byron De La Beckwith, who was convicted in 1994 of murdering civil rights leader Medgar Evers 31 years earlier.

The organization's ties to the Democratic Party are the strongest in Mississippi, where 34 legislators, most of them Democrats, are members of the Council of Conservative Citizens. Most politicians that belong to the group, however, are Republicans. The *Informer*, the organization's publication, regularly publishes a column Lott writes and distributes from his Senate office.

Meanwhile, Rep. Barr, one of the 13 "managers" who will prosecute Clinton, and the first member of the House of Representatives to demand the president's impeachment, was accused by pornographic magazine publisher Larry Flynt of encouraging one of his two ex-wives wife to have an abortion. Barr had switched from supporting a woman's right to choose abortion to opposing the right to choose during an unsuccessful campaign for the U.S. Senate in 1992.

Flynt ran an ad in the October 4 *Washington Post* offering up to \$1 million in exchange for evidence of illicit sexual relations, fueling the pornographic politics in the name of exposing hypocrisy among prominent politicians. Flynt charged Barr with committing adultery and lying about it during court proceedings to divorce his ex-wife. The *Hustler* magazine publisher said he paid Barr's ex-wife for an affidavit stating that she believed the congressman was having an affair.

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Vanguard of working class is expanding

Continued from Page 9

other five union fractions — in the rail, steel, oil and chemical, auto, and machinists unions — can slightly strengthen the party's organization in one or another area, but by itself is simply a reform that goes nowhere. Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin continually stressed that all reforms are byproducts of revolutionary action, Barnes noted.

Attempts at reform alone stifle and stop revolutionary activity. "In order to consolidate the achievements of the bourgeois-democratic revolution for the peoples of Russia, we were obliged to go farther; and we did go farther," Lenin said in 1921, speaking on the fourth anniversary of the October revolution. "We solved the problems of the bourgeois-democratic revolution in passing, as a 'by-product' of our main and genuinely proletarian-revolutionary, socialist activities."

There is no correct number for a national UFCW fraction, or fraction in UNITE. The task is to shift enough members into these fractions in every branch, so that revolutionary work in these unions becomes an integral part of the political life of the branches. The UNITE fraction should be among the largest of the party's eight fractions, given that there are garment shops spread throughout the country and textile plants in many areas.

In the revolutionary change needed in the party today, the best example so far is in Chicago, where the entire branch is becoming involved in carrying out this course, Barnes said. Four members of the branch are moving to central Illinois, where they will get jobs and carry out rounded political work, including being able to have regular collaboration with coal miners, Caterpillar workers, and others who are beginning to think and act to advance the interests of the proletariat.

The key thing in Chicago is generalizing the collective method of work and rounded political activity that the entire branch will be carrying out. The biggest effect is not on the four branch members who are moving, but on the Chicago branch as a whole, as work to build the garment, meatpacking, and coal fractions and to revolutionize the political work on the job in all unions come to dominate politics in the branch.

Bonapartism, liberalism, imperialist war

Underlying the party's efforts is the political assessment that the spreading crisis of capitalist overproduction — and the instability and struggles it breeds — will continue to unfold. And that the space for vanguard workers and farmers to meet and forge links of solidarity is not a temporary phenomenon.

The SWP's 1988 convention resolution, "What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold," pointed to the effects of this crisis in a section headed, "Cumulative consequences of falling average rate of profits." The following list of subheadings from this section gives an accurate picture of the world today: Intensified interimperialist competition; Overproduction and excess capacity; Declining capital investment in capacity-increasing plant and equipment; Speculative binge and debt explosion; U.S. bank and business failures; Devastation of semicolonial countries; Farm crisis in imperialist countries; Declining real wages and accelerating speedup; and Rising unemployment and growing relative surplus population. (This document is published in *New International* no. 10.)

The employing classes cannot reverse this crisis without first dealing much deeper blows to the working class at home and abroad, and without going to war with each other.

Greater rivalry among the imperialist powers marks the day. This was highlighted by the start of the euro — the attempt at a common currency of most of the European Union member countries — on January 1. After decades in which the dollar served as the unquestioned reserve currency of world capitalism, there is now the prospect of real competition between the dollar, the euro, and the Japanese yen.

The resulting instability of the world capitalist order is behind the decline in confidence in the leading personnel of the imperialist democracies among the rulers and among millions of working people.

The current crisis facing the administration of William Clinton is qualitatively deeper

than the Watergate crisis that led to impeachment proceedings and the resignation of then-president Richard Nixon, Barnes said. Forcing Nixon's resignation in 1974 was a bipartisan attempt to cap the damage that Washington suffered as a result of the defeat of U.S. imperialism in Vietnam and the rise of the Black struggle in the United States at that time. It prepared the later period marked by a retreat of the working class in the 1980s.

No one can predict now where the attempt to remove Clinton from office will lead to.

The impeachment campaign has been led largely by the ultraright, using as its major weapon the "cultural war." This is a term ultrarightist politician Patrick Buchanan popularized in the early 1990s. It describes an ideological offensive aimed at reversing affirmative action, the right of a woman to choose abortion, and other gains working people have won in struggle. The politics of resentment — targeting scapegoats in a time of economic and social crisis — is aimed at those whom middle-class layers and sections of working people can be convinced are the source of the problems they face, rather than capitalism.

The rise of Buchananism and of Bonapartist figures like the newly elected governor of Minnesota, Jesse Ventura, is not new in bourgeois politics. Sen. Joseph McCarthy in the late 1940s and early 1950s was the first example in the post-World War II period of a leader of an incipient fascist movement. But none of those previous figures arose in conditions of an economic and social crisis that was bound to get worse.

Figures like Buchanan and Ventura flourish in world depression-like conditions un-

der which the radical social demagoguery and aggressive economic nationalism are necessary to inspire a cadre that can enable a mass fascist movement to get organized and grow in the future.

The current impeachment assault by the ultraright comes in response to a shift to the left in bourgeois politics in most imperialist countries that has been unfolding for more than two years. It is an attempt to take back through the cultural war what the rulers have not succeeded in reconquering on the field of direct class conflict. It is an offensive from weakness, not strength. One indication of this is the overwhelming opposition among working people to the impeachment of Clinton, shown in most opinion polls, and the refusal of a large majority to be suckered into the trap of the politics of resentment.

The response by the liberals in the White House and Congress to the impeachment campaign has been to shift their proposals on social programs slightly to the right — floating once again proposals to cut Social Security — and accelerating Washington's march towards imperialist war. That's what the now casual and frequent bombings of Iraq by Washington, and the Clinton administration's proposal for the largest increase in the U.S. military budget in 15 years, show.

It is imperative for class-conscious workers not only to join other workers in opposing the rightist impeachment campaign, Barnes said. At the same time they must explain to other fighters why giving even an inch of political credence to liberalism simply means supporting the system that breeds racism, class exploitation, and war. The way to fight rightist forces is not by supporting Demo-

crats.

Under the current objective conditions, political space remains open in the working class for workers and farmers who sense the rottenness of the system, who react to the bankruptcy and corruption of the capitalist world order by seeking the moral high ground, fighting for human solidarity, to struggle and forge alliances.

The capitalist rulers cannot close down this space today. A day will come when a substantial layer in the ruling class will be ready to use more violent methods, turning to fascist forces to try to smash the working class. Between now and then there is time for vanguard workers to find each other, begin to work together, and gain in experience and confidence — time that must be redeemed.

Transforming Pathfinder production

Britton gave a couple of examples of the impact communist workers, and the lessons of earlier class-struggle experiences that they keep in print, can have.

Two of the miners who were on strike at Freeman read the article "The 50-year Domestic Contra Operation," by Larry Seigle, in the *New International* magazine that explains the origins of the Washington's political police apparatus, and the Pathfinder Press pamphlet *Workers Rights Versus the Secret Police*, also by Seigle. These were particularly helpful in deciding how to publicly protest the FBI harassment of one of the strikers and his family.

One of the miners also read a photocopy of *The 110-Day Coal Strike: Its Meaning for All Working People*, and then made a

Continued on Page 14

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

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40 Years of the Cuban Revolution: 40 Years of Struggle Against Imperialism. Speakers: April Holland, Young Socialists; Harry Ring, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Jan. 22, 7:30 p.m. 2546 W. Pico Blvd. (1 1/2 blocks west of Vermont.) Donation: \$5. Tel: (213) 380-9460.

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Celebrate 40 Years of the Cuban Revolution. Speakers: Paul Cornish, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Congress, 6th C.D., Young Socialists National Committee, and member of United Food and Commercial Workers; Ved Dookhun, Socialist Workers Party National Committee. Fri., Jan. 22, 7:30 p.m. 230 Auburn Ave. Donation: \$4. Tel: (404) 577-7976.

NEW YORK

Brooklyn

40 Years of the Cuban Revolution. Speaker: Martin Koppel, editor of *Perspectiva Mundial*. Koppel participated in a recent reporting trip to Cuba. Fri., Jan. 22, 7:30 p.m. 59 4th Ave. (Near Bergen.) (Near the Atlantic and Pacific subway stops.) Donation: \$4. Tel: (718) 399-7257.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Free Leonard Peltier! Speaker: Breeze Luetke-Stahlman, Leonard Peltier Defense Committee. Fri., Jan. 29, 7:30 p.m. 1930 18th St. NW. (Entrance on Florida Ave.) Donation: \$4. Tel: (202) 387-2185.

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New Openings for Working-Class Fighters: Reportback from the Young Socialists Convention. Speaker: Michael Tucker, Communist League. Fri., Jan. 22, 7 p.m. **U.S., NZ: Hands Off Iraq!** Panel of speakers. Fri., Jan. 29, 7 p.m. Both events to be held at 203 Karangahape Road. Donation: \$3. Tel: (9) 379-3075.

Christchurch

New Openings for Working-Class Fighters: Reportback from the Young Socialists Convention. Speaker: Michael Tucker, Communist League. Sat., Jan. 23, 7 p.m. 199 High St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (3) 365 6055.

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Let 'em eat gold — The *Wall Street Journal* reports that in Indonesia, when the December figures



Harry Ring

are in, the year's rate of inflation will be "a staggering 80 percent." However, the paper adds: "On a brighter note, the overall price data was helped by a drop in the price of

gold."

Jeez man, give us a break — For its Easter campaign, the Church of England is using a poster with a sketched likeness of the famed portrait of Che Guevara, with a crown of thorns rather than the beret. Meanwhile, Smirnoff is peddling a "hot and fiery" Che vodka. Maybe they sent a case to the Church's advertising department.

No Napoleon hat? — It was late for Xmas, but the guv of Minnesota expects his Jesse Ventura action doll will be on the market by spring.

("Most" of the profit will go to charity.) It depicts Ventura with a shaven head and bulging muscles straining the seams of his suit.

Think you took a hit? — Profits were flat at Disney last year, so top dog Michael Eisner had his \$10 million bonus chopped 49 percent. Fortunately, he accumulated a decent amount of stock options and waddled home with a record \$576 million.

Wonder what the U.S. figures are? — In England, Blacks are five times more likely than whites to be

stopped and searched, and six times more likely to be jailed.

The Big Wormy Apple — A block-by-block survey by American Civil Liberties Union volunteers found some 3,470 police surveillance cameras planted around New York City. Declared Police Commissioner Howard Safir: "You have no right to privacy in a public place."

P.S. — Commissioner Safir also favors taking DNA samples from everyone arrested in the city.

Didn't feed the parking meter? — "A concrete company's safety meeting was interrupted when one of the company's unattended trucks rolled 50 yards across a street, over an embankment and into the Hudson River" — News dispatch.

Still time to make a resolution — It's a worthy cause and a lot easier than, for instance, kicking the coffin-nail habit. Resolve to contribute clippings for this column. Send to Pathfinder Books, 2546 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA. 90006.

What are the characteristics of Bonapartism?

The following selection is from *Democracy and Revolution: From Ancient Greece to Modern Capitalism* by George Novack. The excerpts are taken from the chapter "Bonapartism, Military Dictatorship and Fascism." The book is copyright © 1971 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

BY GEORGE NOVACK

The movement to the right, away from the parliamentary regime, can assume diverse forms. These reactionary replacements range from Bonapartism through unconcealed military dictatorship to fascism. The latter is the most terroristic system of monopoly-capitalist domination.

Which of these methods of rule may be adopted depends upon the actual circumstances in the unfolding of the class struggle and the specific distribution of power among

BOOK OF THE WEEK

the contending forces. Parliamentary government, with its constitutional guarantees, democratically elected majorities, contesting factions and periodic party campaigns, becomes a liability to big capital when the middle classes are radicalized, the workers take the offensive and the country appears to be slipping out of its control....

[W]hen social tensions tighten to the breaking point, parliament is less and less able either to settle the disputes at the top or to act as a buffer between the power of property and the wrath of the masses. General disappointment with its performance plunges bourgeois parliamentarism together with its parties into a period of acute crisis. The resolutely reactionary forces in the ruling class thereupon conspire to get out of their bind by shunting parliament aside and going over to a more exclusive method of rule....

Bonapartism

The first step away from a decrepit parliamentarism is Bonapartism. This is a bureaucratic-military dictatorship born of a deep-going but incompletely resolved confrontation of openly antagonistic class forces.

Unlike the parliamentary order which bases itself upon a (presumably) democratically elected majority and its party representation, the main props of a Bonapartist type of regime are to be found in the police,

the army and the administrative apparatus.

Bonapartism carries to an extreme the concentration of power in the head of the state already discernible in the contemporary imperialist democracies. All important policy decisions are centralized in a single individual equipped with extraordinary emergency powers. He speaks and acts not as the servant of parliament, like the premier, but in his own right as "the man of destiny" who has been called upon to rescue the nation in its hour of mortal peril.

Whether the "man on horseback" usurps authority through extraparlimentary force or under a legal cover, he exercises it by decree. His regime need not immediately dismantle or wholly discard parliamentary institutions or parties; it renders them powerless. These may be permitted to survive, provided they play merely supernumerary and decorative roles. Whether they rubber-stamp or resist the mandates from on high, these prevail as the law of the land.

The dictator may pay a hypocritical homage to the tradition of popular consent by means of occasional plebiscites in which the people are asked to endorse some proposal desired by the government. But this purely formal consultation is usually carried out in an atmosphere of intimidation wherein the propagandists of the ruling clique predict the direst consequences unless the proposition is confirmed.

The Bonapartist regime makes a big show of total independence from special interests. Its head invariably claims to be above the brawling party factions which have misruled the nation and led it to the brink of ruin, from which he has providentially snatched it in time. He parades as the anointed custodian of the eternal values, the true spirit of the people who have been victimized by selfish warring cliques or threatened by alien and subversive mischief-makers.

Actually, the "man of iron" is mandated to defend the social interests of the magnates of capital by blunting the class conflicts which created the opportunity for his despotism. He can exact a heavy price from the property owners for performing these salutary services....

Since the French Revolution, that country has been the classic home of bourgeois Bonapartism. The "man on horseback" enters the scene, writes Trotsky, "in those moments of history when the sharp struggle of two camps raises the state power, so to speak, above the nation, and guarantees it, in appearance, a complete independence of classes—in reality, only the freedom necessary for a defense of the privileged."

Brief history of Bonapartes

The dictatorship of Napoleon the First fulfilled these requirements. The little Corsican concentrated supreme power in his hands by overthrowing the Directory through the coup d'état of the eighteenth of Brumaire (November 9), 1799, during the recession of the French Revolution. As first consul and emperor, he waged war and directed the affairs of state with a firm hand in his own name — and to the greater glory of the French bourgeoisie.

The legend of his triumphs helped make his far less talented nephew president and then emperor after the bourgeoisie had crushed the insurgent masses in the Revolution of 1848. Napoleon the Little outmaneuvered the representatives of the royalists, the bourgeois republicans and the democratic petty bourgeoisie at odds with one another, and overturned the constitutional republic with the aid of the army, police and state apparatus and the support of the reactionary countryside. The industrial bourgeoisie in particular saluted the coup of December 2, 1851, which dissolved the legislative National Assembly and sealed Napoleon's monopoly of executive power. The second Bonaparte wrested political power from the bourgeoisie only to protect them against the masses. Under the Second Empire, their economic affairs prospered exceedingly — until the top-heavy edifice collapsed in 1870 as the result of defeat in the Franco-Prussian War.

The role of a Bonapartist regime in the epoch of imperialism and the decline of capitalism is no different from that in the period of its rise. It intervenes to head off a potential state of civil war in a divided nation by referring all disputed issues to a supreme arbiter invested with exorbitant power. The master of destiny seeks to use his authority to reduce social tensions and stabilize class relations for the benefit of the threatened property owners....

The Achilles' heel of Bonapartism lies in its lack of a broad mass base. Since it

does not represent a significant social force, it is precariously poised and highly vulnerable to the shocks of setbacks at home or abroad. It provides a halfhearted solution to the crisis of the bourgeois order, because it does not carry through the civil war of big capital against the workers or the demolition of democracy to the very end. It can come to grief when the class antagonisms that it temporarily but not totally annuls flare up anew....

How fascism differs

Unlike other forms of antidemocratic rule, which represent differing degrees of bourgeois reaction, fascism spearheads a political counterrevolution. It thoroughly extirpates all institutions of both bourgeois and proletarian democracy and all independent forces. It binds the masses hand and foot, gags them, atomizes the working class and thrusts the nation into a totalitarian strait-jacket....

Fascism differs in one decisively important respect from other political expressions of reaction. It is a mass movement based upon the activity of a particular social force, the dispossessed and despairing petty bourgeoisie. Unlike Bonapartist and military dictatorships which are imposed from above, the fascist movement surges up from below. It has a plebeian composition, impetus and leadership.

Fascism attracts to its banner the most discontented elements from the battered and bruised intermediate layers of bourgeois society. Its following embraces shopkeepers, professionals, white-collar workers, small artisans and functionaries in the cities and towns, and small landholders in the countryside. It recruits its shock troops from the lumpen proletariat, the unemployed and the most demoralized and backward toilers. It can make strong appeals to jingoistic war veterans who feel out of place and unrewarded in civilian life, to misled youth and to alarmed pensioners beset by inflation and insecurity.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

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THE MILITANT
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEETLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE
January 25, 1974

In a major breakthrough for the socialist suit against Watergating, the U.S. government has admitted conducting a broad spy operation against the Socialist Workers Party dating back to 1945, and more recently, against the Young Socialist Alliance.

While conceding the truth of some of the charges against the Nixon gang, the U.S. attorney claims the spy actions are justified because the SWP and YSA are "subversive."

The government admissions were made public at a Jan. 10 news conference in New York by the Political Rights Defense Fund (PRDF). The PRDF is organizing publicity and fund raising for the suit against the government filed last July by the SWP and YSA.

The suit charges Nixon and other present and past federal officials with wiretapping, mail tampering, burglary, bombing, and other harassment against members and supporters of the SWP and YSA. Noted constitutional lawyer Leonard Boudin is representing the plaintiffs in the case.

The existence of the "SWP Disruption Program" was established by FBI documents obtained by NBC newsman Carl Stern last month. The documents described

COINTELPRO, a broad counterintelligence program that included the SWP disruption project.

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

January 24, 1949

The announcement of the Chiang Kai-shek dictatorship Jan. 19 that its government headquarters will be shifted from the capital of China at Nanking to the southern city of Canton sounds the death knell of Chiang's hated regime. Chiang himself is evidently preparing to move to the island of Formosa, his last hope now apparently being to save standing for himself as a local warlord. He will be fortunate if he escapes the fate of Mussolini.

Chiang's defeat at the hands of the Chinese people is also a major defeat for the foreign policy of American imperialism. Wall Street calculated on using this despotic regime as a puppet government to give preference to American investment over the needs of the Chinese people.

Washington considered Chiang as an ally in the projected war on the Soviet Union. For these reasons American imperialism gave this butcher full support in the civil war, sending him some \$2 billion worth of supplies and military aid.

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Democracy and Revolution

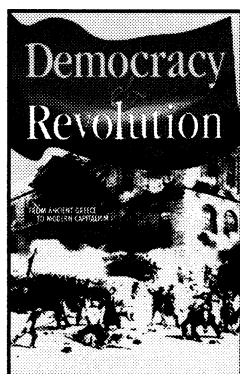
GEORGE NOVACK

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Join Black farmers' struggle

Continued from front page
the established fact.

But the struggle is far from a settled matter because hundreds of Black farmers don't accept the decree in its present form. They are fighting to make it closer to what Black farmers need and deserve. The stronger this fight, the greater will be the possibility of strengthening the decree and implementing the gains that are part of it. The federal judge who gave preliminary approval to the "settlement" has, in fact, set March 2 as the date for a fairness hearing where challenges to the decree on behalf of farmers can be presented.

All fighters for social justice and full equality for Blacks must now campaign with urgency to get the truth out about:

- The ongoing fight against decades-long USDA racist discrimination and its devastating effects on Black farm families;
- The fact there is no settlement yet; and
- That hundreds of farmers oppose the decree.

We urge all those who toil for a living to participate in meetings the attorneys for the Black farmers are calling between now and March 2 to try to sell the decree. To set up meetings in union halls, at college campuses, and the countryside for representatives of the farmers who are continuing the fight to help get out the facts and broaden support for their struggle. And to publicize and build the national demonstration in Washington, D.C., on March 2 called by Black farmers' leaders.

Many Black farmers who have lost their farms or continue to be burdened by enormous debts will be forced to accept this offer. But the settlement reveals the inability of the government to address in any fundamental way many years of government indifference and outright abuse of Black farmers.

As Black farm leaders have pointed out there is no guarantee the government will implement even its piddly settlement. An earlier moratorium on government foreclosures

against Black farmers who had filed discrimination complaints was ignored by some state agencies of the USDA. None of those responsible for blatant racist discrimination, which the fight around the suit has forced the government to admit, will be removed from their post. In press reports across the country, Black farmers have explained that no amount of money, not to mention \$50,000, can compensate for the government's assault on their dignity, loss of livelihoods, and the havoc wreaked upon their families. Nor is the financial compensation protected against claims by private lenders to whom Black farmers were forced to turn as a result of government refusal to grant them loans.

Gallons of ink were poured on the front pages of the *New York Times* and other big-business dailies to give the impression that the more than a decade long battle is over. They had announced the "settlement" more than a month earlier, but had been unable to bulldoze militant farmers. Only the struggle by Black farmers and their supporters among workers and youth has forced the government to seek a settlement. The persistence of these exploited producers on the land is confirmation of the coming resurgence of the fight for Black freedom and the politically inspiring impact of this struggle on workers, students, and other farmers. It will give impetus to fights to defend affirmative action, against police brutality, for equality on the job, and other struggles.

The outcome of this fight is inseparably linked to the breadth of support among the toiling majority. Working-class fighters should spare no effort to win backing for Black farmers among hundreds of anthracite coal miners fighting in Pennsylvania, poultry workers on strike in southern Indiana, striking Steelworkers at Kaiser Aluminum, and others involved in similar fights taking place today.

Now is the time to help bring militant Black farmers to these picket lines and help organize as many of these trade unionists as possible to turn out in Washington for the March 2 demonstration!

Black farmers resist consent decree

Continued from front page

their fight for justice," urged BFAA President Gary Grant from Tillery, North Carolina. The demand for action against racist Agriculture Department officials is not just a matter of historic justice. According to the settlement, these same individuals will stay in their posts, able to deny Black farmers loans and government assistance in the future.

The terms of the consent decree cannot even be used to file civil rights complaints. Under point 20, headed, "No admission of liability," the lawyers agreed: "Neither this Consent Decree nor any order approving this Consent Decree shall be construed as an admission by the defendant of the truth of any allegation... nor shall this Consent Decree ... be offered or received as evidence of discrimination in any civil, criminal or administrative action or proceeding..."

More 'atmospheric pressure'

Griffin Todd, Jr., a 46-year-old farmer and trucker in Zebulon, North Carolina, said, "The county agents won't feel anything from the settlement. Three of the same agents who denied our family loans are still in the county office. There will just be more of the 'atmospheric pressure.'"

In a segment about the Black farmers on the television news program "60 Minutes" November 29, a Black farmer in Virginia described how the white county agriculture agent would repeatedly fall asleep during loan interviews and then deny him the loan. "60 Minutes" reporter Ed Bradley confronted the now-retired government agent, who said he did fall asleep when Black farmers met with him, because of "atmospheric pressure" weighing down on him.

"My father went to his grave because of what those people did to him. People lost their land to natural crooks and nothing is being done about it," said Morton Gerald, a retired building engineer from Maryland who has helped fight to keep land in North Carolina that has been in the family for over 100 years. "About two years ago my family met with an aide to the governor of North Carolina to try to stop the government from foreclosing on my parents' farm. They claimed they owed \$100,000, but that was a lie. They owed \$27,000 and we finally pressured them to admit it, and we raised the money and paid it off."

The extensive media coverage of the signing of the consent decree has brought the fight by Black farmers to the attention of millions of people. Todd reported some discussion he has had about it with white farmers. "Some are just bigots who don't think we were discriminated against at all. But there is a white farmer about my age who I went to school with. We started farming about the same time and originally I had more equipment than he did. I've been through foreclosure and my kids have seen their house sold out from under them. But he has been able to get the loans he's needed from the government. He told me to bring the TV cameras down to his farm to show them how unequal the treatment of Black and white farmers has been."

Farmers didn't see proposed terms

Like many of the farmers involved in this fight, Todd wants the court process to continue. "I want to see negotiations be redone," said Todd. "The farmers should be in the negotiations and the lawyers have to bring all the decisions

back to the farmers before agreeing to anything. This consent decree is an insult. It's a pacifier sticking in your mouth."

There is a lot of dissatisfaction expressed by Black farmers who have been involved in this fight with the way their lawyers handled the consent decree negotiations. At least the large majority of plaintiffs never saw a written copy or summary before it was signed. "The lawyers' job is to pacify us," South Carolina farmer Sam Jackson said. "These lawyers have not represented us. They represent the USDA, which is paying them" through the settlement.

Under the consent decree, the lawyers for the farmers are to receive \$1 million from the government as a down payment for their time and expenses long before the first farmer is scheduled to receive any payment from the government.

The basic terms of the consent decree are that for Black farmers and their families with relatively little documented proof of discrimination, the government is supposed to forgive outstanding loans to the USDA, pay \$50,000 in cash, and make payments equal to 25 percent of the \$50,000 and 25 percent of the loan payment forgiven to cover taxes. This is called "Track A."

Farmers and their families who have extensive documentation can opt for "Track B - arbitration." But this is an all or nothing gamble. As the consent decree says under section 10-i: "The decision of the arbitrator shall be final. The parties hereby agree to forever waive their right to seek review in any court or before any tribunal."

After a hearing verbal report on the proposed settlement at a meeting in the Raleigh-Durham area in November, Attorney Stephon Bowns of the Land Loss Prevention Project wrote a letter on behalf of the North Carolina BFAA to Pires, the lead attorney in the class action suit. Bowns' letter summarized some of the weaknesses in the proposed settlement.

"Why isn't there a mechanism for paying off other lienholders and judgment creditors through the settlement ... if USDA is conceding discrimination to members of this subclass?" he wrote. Will the "USDA... sanction and/or remove employees who have demonstrated a practice of intimidation, misinformation, discrimination and reprisal as evidenced by the complaints and affidavits of the Black farmers?... Why can't an adverse arbitration decision for subclass B be appealed by the plaintiff?"

A nationwide advertising campaign is scheduled to notify people of the basic terms of the consent decree and explain how they can apply to participate. Paid ads are to be published in newspapers, and the lawyers for the farmers are setting up meetings to win support for the consent decree. For example, a meeting is called for Albany, Georgia for February 11 and 12. The first notice, a one-page summary of the decree, was received by the plaintiffs January 13.

BFAA activists are available to speak before union, school and community groups and requests for speakers are coming in steadily. One important meeting that was just arranged is a February 3 talk by Gary Grant at Howard University, sponsored by the Howard University Student Association in Washington, D.C. Meetings for Grant are being organized in Minnesota for February 9-14. The BFAA can be reached at 252-826-3244 in Tillery, North Carolina.

Stu Singer is a member of the United Transportation Union.

SWP leadership

Continued from Page 12

couple dozen copies for other members of the union local. That Pathfinder pamphlet, which is currently out of print, contains the *Militant's* analysis of the 1977-78 national miners strike (see excerpt on pages 6-7). There's a thirst among many of the miners to learn more about their history and the broader impact of their struggles in society. Pathfinder is now organizing to reprint this pamphlet.

These examples alone justify the efforts by more than 100 supporters of the communist movement around the world to put the entire arsenal of Pathfinder's 350 titles into electronic form. The digitization campaign, and the successful efforts by hundreds of workers around the world to raise the necessary capital to purchase modern computer-to-plate equipment for Pathfinder's printshop, have made possible a revolution in the shop.

The printshop has been able to reduce the size of its staff from 47 to 36 since last summer, while at the same time lowering the cost of production and the skill level necessary to run the shop and maintaining or improving the standards of quality Pathfinder is known for. The goal is to further reduce the size of the printshop to 32 by the party convention.

The challenges of the communist movement on this front, were discussed at the SWP leadership meeting under a report by Mary-Alice Waters, titled, "Transforming Pathfinder production and ourselves as we respond to growing workers' resistance: Toronto II." Waters had given a similar report to an international socialist conference in Toronto last spring.

The report by Waters drew substantially on the experience that participants in the SWP leadership gathering got through a tour of Pathfinder's printshop during the Saturday evening, January 2, session of the party's National Committee meeting. The most striking aspect of the tour was not the new technology, but the increasing confidence of the socialist cadre who work in the shop. (An article on this was published in last week's *Militant*.)

These socialist workers are also deeply affected by the shifts in the class struggle. The main thing the party leadership can do to continue to advance the transformation of production of revolutionary literature is to extend the party's third campaign for the turn, Waters said.

Preconvention discussion

Over the next three months, while joining other workers and farmers in struggles, SWP branches will organize preconvention discussion based on written documents. The resolutions and strategic reports discussed and adopted by Socialist Workers Party conventions over nearly a decade analyze the deepening crisis of world capitalism that underlies the change in the mass psychology of the working class that the party began fighting to turn toward at its last convention in June 1997.

Four of these documents, based on talks presented by Jack Barnes between June 1992 and January 1995, are collected in the book *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*, which Pathfinder is in the final stages of preparing for publication in mid-February.

The earliest of the reports to be included in this new book is "Youth and the Communist Movement." It was presented in June 1992 on behalf of the Central Committee of the Communist League in the United Kingdom and leaders of three groups of young socialists in London, Manchester, and Sheffield, and was discussed and adopted by the special congress called to decide on the proposed fusion of the CL and these YS groups. That talk is scheduled for publication as a special feature in an upcoming issue of the *Militant*.

The introduction to this new collection will draw on the themes at the center of the summary presented to the recent Los Angeles party/youth conference and reports adopted at the January 1-3 National Committee meeting. It will explain why the documents collected in *Capitalism's World Disorder* are of greater value today as practical political tools to guide the work of vanguard workers and farmers than when they were discussed and adopted by earlier SWP conventions, and why they can now be seen and understood in a clearer light. That introduction will be printed in the *Militant* in early February.

Party branches will use these two items from *Capitalism's World Disorder* as the basis for their opening rounds of discussion leading up to the April 1-4 party convention in San Francisco. The other chapters of that book will be incorporated in the preconvention discussion when it is published, along with the 1990 SWP resolution "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War" and article "Ours is the Epoch of World Revolution," both published in *New International* no. 11. Along with these documents, party branches will review the section of "What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold," cited earlier.

Many preconvention documents will therefore be available to members of the Young Socialists and workers and farmers who party members will be working with and encouraging to come to the convention. Party units can organize discussions with these people that parallel the preconvention discussion in the branches over the next three months.

Iowa farmers support Titan Tire strikers

BY RAY PARSONS
AND SIMONE BERG

DES MOINES, Iowa — "We're extending our hand to yours," said Gary Hoskey, vice president of the Iowa Farmers Union, as 1,400 pounds of pork was distributed to striking members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 164 and their families December 23. The Iowa Farmers Union donated 10 hogs. The Iowa Faith and Labor Committee, PrairieFire, and the Iowa Federation of Labor paid for processing the meat.

Nearly 1,200 USWA members are on strike at two Titan Tire plants in Des Moines

and Natchez, Mississippi. Members of Local 164 walked out May 1 against mandatory overtime, two-tier wages, and for the restoration of pension and health-care benefits for retired workers.

The Natchez unionists, members of USWA Local 303L, hit the bricks in September. They are standing firm against concessions Titan has demanded as part of its recent purchase of that facility.

"Producers, whether agricultural or industrial, need to support one another in their struggles against corporate exploitation," Hoskey declared. "In both instances, large corporate interests are keeping prices high

for consumers, without giving producers proper compensation."

Hoskey raises hogs in Montour, Iowa. He gave a dramatic illustration of the crisis working farmers face today.

"Three years ago, we donated two hogs to striking Bridgestone/Firestone members of USWA Local 310. Those two hogs were worth more than ten are this year. We're being taken back to conditions of slavery."

The prices hog farmers are receiving today are less than half the cost of raising the animals. These price levels are the lowest since the 1930s depression.

Around the Midwest, farmers are turning out to demand relief at events sponsored by various forces. The "Pork Price Crisis Forum," held December 29 in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, drew some 700 people, most of them farmers. Many farmers there condemned the farm policies of the government. Some promoted a nationalistic view, blaming low prices on imports from Canadian farmers.

A rally sponsored by Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement and endorsed by other farm organizations is planned for January 12 at the State Capitol in Des Moines.

The farmers' act of solidarity was warmly received by Titan strikers. Local 164 member Denny Wicker said, "The farmers' plight is similar to ours. The only way we're going to resolve our problems is to join forces and show our strength. I'd like to see more of it."

Kathleen McQuillen spoke on behalf of the Iowa Faith and Labor Committee. "We



Militant/Tim Mailhot
Rally in Des Moines last fall for strikers at Titan. Steelworkers are reaching out for and getting solidarity from farmers.

Brazil devalues currency

Continued from Page 4

Latin America's economic output.

Brazilian president Fernando Henrique Cardoso sought to reassure investors that the devaluation would not lead to a default on the foreign debt. "The government will honor all its domestic and foreign contracts, always, because that is the basis of reliability," he declared. "Rules are made to be followed."

But Cardoso has run into difficulty pushing through the austerity measures laid out in the terms for the \$41.5 billion loan package. These conditions, which include cuts to social programs and the social security system, as well as tax increases affecting millions of workers, have still not been approved by the national legislature.

Unemployment officially stands at 7.3 percent, and is as high as 19 percent in São Paulo, Brazil's largest and most industrialized city. These numbers are expected to rise. Workers have been resisting layoffs by Ford and other companies (see page 2), and landless peasants and rural workers are continuing land occupations.

Cardoso's latest political setback came January 6, when the newly elected governor of the state of Minas Gerais, Itamar Franco, announced a 90-day moratorium on payments on the state government debt to the federal government. This triggered a rapid drop in the stock market, and spurred imperialist investors to pull funds out of the coun-

try. This capital flight reached \$1.2 billion January 12, the day before the devaluation.

U.S. treasury secretary Robert Rubin responded to the turmoil January 13 by urging, "Brazil can carry forward the implementation of a strong, credible economic program." In other words, the IMF's austerity plan.

The day before, Rubin had listed the situation in Brazil as one of his main concerns about the world economy. He refused to discuss what Washington would do if the "bail-out" began to unravel.

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DOUG JENNESS

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LETTERS

War at home and abroad

The editorial on the bombing of Iraq [in the Dec. 26, 1998, *Militant*] states that the U.S. rulers' bombardment of Iraq is an extension of their barbarity and assault on the rights of workers and farmers at home — it is right on. As Washington and Britain had just ended the bombings campaign on the people of Iraq, the next day at 4:30 a.m. a police force of 600 troopers carried out a raid on 30 people who are protesting a highway being built through Minnehaha Park and sacred Indian land. The local press is proud to let us know it was the largest law enforcement action in Minnesota State history, which the demonstrators characterized as brutal force in which they were treated like terrorists, as are the Kaiser Aluminum strikers by the FBI, and anyone who asserts their rights or challenges the social order.

The ongoing war on Iraq, the attacks on workers and farmers, and the impeachment of the president are all connected to the crisis of the system — President Johnson was the last to be impeached for his stance on stopping Black Reconstruction and connected with that industrial capitalism. Today it's in reverse, with the right wing invoking "Christian morality" just as the Spanish monarchy did with the Inquisition, but they were fighting against history. People's consciousness are being raised and it is a historical fact that the most oppressed sectors of society will be the power in the struggle for liberation, the second half of the Civil War, the American revolution that wasn't allowed to happen. All of these real antagonisms and contradictions are resurfacing and it is in this that the

Socialist Workers Party is crucial as a vanguard leader in the struggles to come.

P.K.

Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota

Liberals back U.S. war

I wanted to comment on the January 11 article titled, "Clinton impeached by Congress." I was surprised to find not one mention of the liberal Democrats' response during the impeachment debate. The liberals wrapped the American flag around the president and said you can't criticize "our" president while "we" are at war with Iraq (not a long trip to "nobody can speak against the war").

There were political rallies during the bombing where Jesse Jackson and union heads called for supporting the president as well as the bombing of Iraq. These liberal and "progressive" forces make war moves more palatable to the working class.

Pointing out rightist attacks against the Clintons is fairly easy. Printing something about those that speak in the name of the working class while dragging us into war is more fruitful.

Rick Young
Chicago, Illinois

Detroit snow disaster

Mo'town sure isn't any home to motors or people these days. Given the 12 inches of snow last weekend (January 2-3) — not the biggest in the nation — the official policy of city hall is to let "mother nature" clear residential streets, i.e. wait until the thaw comes. In practice, this means workers living in Detroit have to struggle to get out of their neighborhoods through vast masses

of snow and ice and abandoned cars. Emergency services will find it virtually impossible to get through to many places and people will suffer and some die as a result of the delay in treatment.

The city prioritized clearing the mayor's mansion, the area around Cobo Hall, home to the big-money Detroit Auto Show, and has committed itself to clearing bus routes. In practice, the clearing of bus routes isn't done some five days after the storm, and we have more snow falling. Given that there is virtually no public transportation system to begin with, you can see some of the problems. Travel by private vehicle from anywhere in the region is taking at least three times the normal time, causing considerable stress to people moving to places of work.

I work in an axle assembly plant with some 3,000 workers from the Detroit area. Co-workers are late for work daily. One of the main assembly lines was held up as parts being trucked in under the "just in time" production plan weren't received until four hours after their due time. Part of the street leading into the complex of plants has been cleared by the company, but the rest has not been touched by any city servicing of the area. It is a bus route and an important industrial thoroughfare. Major roads around and through Detroit have jack-knifed trucks all around.

This is not a simple story of a typical northern city getting hit by snow. Nature can be a big political question. There is a big social cost to working people of local government not providing the necessary services that permit people to get to work, to get to the food store, to

get to the hospital.

Here's what the January 6 *Oakland Press* had to say about the situation, comparing the response of Chicago to its snow emergency with Detroit's. "Then there's Detroit, which doesn't even pretend to clear such streets, and never has. Live there, and you're on your own until the storm melts."

"The storm reached Chicago a day or so before it got to Detroit and TV coverage of the city showed streets plowed and salted incessantly throughout the weather crisis. That may be because Chicago had more than 700 trucks in service, compared to about 60 in Detroit. Chicago is a bigger city, about three times the size of Detroit, but not more than 10 times."

While the *Oakland Press* lit into Detroit, one coworker wasn't thrilled with Oakland County's performance. He declared that "they've got millions of dollars for the public prosecutor's office, but nothing for the road clearing." There's probably another story there, but we won't go down that road.

Toni Gorton
Detroit, Michigan

Tax cuts under capitalism

In an article on the recent Quebec elections (December 14 issue of the *Militant*) it is stated that one of the contending parties "campaigns on a program to the right of the other parties, centered on tax reductions and cuts in social services."

A similar association of the right wing, unspecified tax cuts, and attacks on workers was made in a November 9 article on Quebec. "(Quebec Liberal leader Charest) proposes a 10 percent tax cut over five

years.... He has repeatedly given as model the Conservative government of Michael Harris in Ontario, which cut taxes by 30 percent in three years and laid off thousands of working people."

No details are given on what taxes, on which social classes are affected. Do those working people in Ontario who kept their jobs have a higher standard of living now thanks to Harris?

In Belgium, both the right and left wing of bourgeois politicians want workers to believe that there is a necessary relationship between high taxes on workers' wages and decent social security.

Right-wingers try to win support among better paid workers by blaming unemployed workers and other social security recipients for high taxes on wages. The left wing, with the union tops in tow, tries to convince us we should accept both existing income taxes (on fuel, on waste disposal, etc.) in order to "save social security and public services."

Communists are not opposed to really cutting taxes on working people. "The only tax should be a sharply graduated income tax on the wealthy — on those who live off the labor of working people," Minnesota SWP candidate Tom Fiske is quoted as saying in the November 9 *Militant*.

Eric Wils
Antwerp, Belgium

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.

Rallies in Derry, London will demand truth be told about 'Bloody Sunday'

More facts come out in new inquiry into 1972 British massacre in N. Ireland

BY PETE CLIFFORD

LONDON — Hundreds of people in Derry, Northern Ireland, are coming forward to make statements for the forthcoming public inquiry into Bloody Sunday, according to John McKinney. He and other relatives of the 14 Irish civil rights protesters shot dead by the British Army on Jan. 30, 1972, are determined that the truth be told. Demonstrations are being organized in both Derry, where the killings took place, and here in the British capital to mark the 27th anniversary of Bloody Sunday.

The new inquiry was won in January 1998 through a massive fight to overturn the previous Widgery Tribunal, which had exonerated the British Army and government. Demonstrations marking Bloody Sunday are an annual event in Derry; last year's attracted 40,000 people. This fight for justice has increasingly gained an international hearing too. As it has deepened, the British-organized cover-up has cracked.

The demonstrators were killed when British occupation troops opened fire on a civil rights march of 30,000 protesting London's policy of internment without trial. The march had been banned by the British government, which deployed thousands of troops to prevent it from reaching Derry city center. The 14 were shot as they fled the British Army assault as the march ended.

New evidence of the British government cover-up continues to emerge. In early December 1998, a confidential police report drawn up after the massacre was made public for the first time as a result of the relatives' fight. It described the killing of Jackie Duddy, one of the civil rights marchers, as "murder," but claimed it was not clear which Army soldier fired the shots.

The British government's nervousness is revealed by the fact that only 144 of the estimated 3,000 soldiers deployed in Derry that day have voluntarily come forward to testify before the inquiry. Government officials claim they cannot find the others. Those who supposedly can't be found include members of the Royal Anglican Regiment, who according to evidence revealed last year fired sniper shots into the crowd from Derry's city walls.

Meanwhile, those soldiers who are testifying are repeating the 1972 British government claim that they were facing attack from gunmen, acid, and nail bombs. The newly revealed police report, however, confirms that none of those killed were near bombs or using guns when shot.

The British government is also seeking to claim immunity from prosecution for soldiers who testify. Tony Doherty, a spokesperson for the relatives, said they opposed blanket immunity. "Soldiers should be legally accountable for their actions," he told *An Phoblacht* the weekly paper of the Irish republican party Sinn Fein.

The London demonstration on January 30 will for the first time march through the city center past Prime Minister Anthony Blair's residence at Downing Street and the Houses of Parliament. Alongside one of the relatives, a Sinn Fein leader will speak and for the first time the Social Democratic and Labour Party from Northern Ireland has agreed to send a speaker.

In addition, underlining how the British military occupation remains today, Diane Hammill will address the rally. Her brother was killed by a pro-British "loyalist" gang in Portadown, Northern Ireland, in 1997 as the British-run Royal Ulster Constabulary looked on. London march spokesperson Enda Finlay said, "Bloody Sunday is at the heart of the ongoing fight on all fronts for justice in Ireland and an end to the British effort to stall the gains made by nationalists."

Pete Clifford is a member of the Rail, Maritime and Transport workers union.



Right: An Phoblacht Above, 1997 Bloody Sunday commemoration drew 40,000 people in Derry. Right, nationalist residents mobilize against rightist Orange march on Garvaghy Road in December (see article below).



Unionists seek to stall Ireland agreement as rightist thugs become more isolated

BY TONY HUNT

LONDON — An agreement was reached December 18 to establish new political structures governing British-occupied Northern Ireland, as well as new all-Ireland bodies. The deal struck between pro-British Unionists and Irish nationalists comes after months of delaying tactics by Unionists over the implementation of the April 10, 1998, Belfast Agreement, which registered the advances made by the struggle for Irish freedom. However, the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) indicated January 12 that the deal should merely be "acknowledged," delaying its ratification.

The deal, which also has to be approved by the British and Irish Parliaments, would establish 10 local government departments or ministries under the jurisdiction of the new Northern Ireland Assembly established by the Belfast Agreement. These will be evenly divided between Unionists and nationalists. Sinn Fein, the party leading the fight for a united Ireland, will be allocated two of these ministries based on the size of their vote in elections to the assembly. Also agreed to are six all-Ireland "implementation" bodies, including one on Irish language, and there was an agreement on six areas "for cooperation."

In an article January 8, Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams said the December 18 agreement marked progress. But he had "considerable reservations." In December he criticized the Unionists and the reformist Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) — the largest nationalist party — for blocking the creation of a Department of Equality. Discrimination against Catholics has been one of the hallmarks of British rule for centuries and, in particular, of the Northern Ireland statelet since its creation nearly 80 years ago. This discrimination is systematically reinforced by the British rulers to keep the area within the United Kingdom.

Meanwhile, Ulster Unionist Party leader and First Minister-designate David Trimble continued to insist that

Sinn Fein will be excluded from the assembly's "shadow" executive unless the Irish Republican Army (IRA) begin surrendering weapons. Trimble was speaking after the Loyalist Volunteer Force (LVF) — a rightist death-squad — carried out a stage-managed "decommissioning" of a small quantity of weapons, reportedly to put pressure on the IRA to do likewise.

The IRA is maintaining a cease-fire in its armed campaign against British occupation of the six northern counties and for the unification of Ireland. But the IRA rejects turning over its weapons as long as the British troops and the pro-British Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) police force remain. A December 11 statement by the IRA reiterated this stance.

Meanwhile, British prime minister Anthony Blair rejected calls from another Unionist, John Taylor, and from the opposition Conservatives to stop the release of political prisoners until the IRA gives up weapons. The Conservative demands marked a break from the usual bipartisanism on Ireland among capitalist parties in London.

Rightist provocations continue

The Orange Order and other right-wing "loyalist" organizations have continued their thuggery and intimidation aimed at Catholics, as the prospect of Irish unity edges closer. The Orange Order's campaign to march through nationalist areas has led to more than 300 attacks on Catholic homes and four murders this year. Five thousand right-wingers — half the number expected — rallied December 19 in Portadown. They were banned from marching down the nationalist Garvaghy Road by the Parades Commission, a ban enforced by a barricade erected by British troops. Some 200 nationalist residents stood in protest as the triumphalist march went by.

In July the Orange Order had been humiliated when its attempt to force its way through the nationalist area disintegrated. It has, however, maintained a camp at the

entrance to the Garvaghy Road area to this day. A color party from the Ulster Volunteer Force — another death squad — participated in the December 19 event.

The sectarian parades and violent assaults by loyalists on Catholics continued throughout the holiday period.

On December 12 the loyalist Apprentice Boys shut down the city center in Derry, an overwhelmingly nationalist city, with a sectarian parade. The rightists had rejected efforts to reach an agreement with the local Bogside Residents Group. Violent clashes between the RUC and nationalists continued for several hours after the parade. Another right-wing death squad reemerged late November called the Orange Volunteers. They said they would target for assassination released nationalist political prisoners.

Sinn Fein has begun a campaign of street protests calling for the disbanding of the RUC. Further evidence emerged December 1 of the collusion between the sectarian force and death-squads. At the inquest for Terry Enright, a Catholic killed by the LVF, it was revealed that the gun used belonged to British occupying forces. The Sinn Fein street actions have been attacked by the RUC.

Meetings in nationalist areas of a commission to review policing in Northern Ireland, set up under the April 10 agreement, have been the scene of "overwhelming opposition" to the RUC according to *The Times*.

In an interview with *The Times* published December 21, RUC chief constable Ronald Flanagan attacked Sinn Fein's campaign and ruled out the ending of the force. In a desperate effort to recruit Catholics, and defend its existence, the RUC has ended the requirement for new recruits to swear allegiance to the British monarch. The Union Flag — the symbol of the United Kingdom — is no longer flown at the RUC training center or on public holidays in Northern Ireland.

At the same time, RUC thugs have stepped up assaults on nationalists. The latest attack came January 10 on a Gaelic sports team and its supporters. One nationalist had his arm broken.

BLOODY SUNDAY March for Justice, Time for Truth

London

JANUARY 30

Assemble at 12:00 noon at Victoria Embankment (Temple Tube). March at 1:00 p.m. via Downing Street to Friends Meeting House, Euston for rally at 3:00 p.m.

Derry

JANUARY 31

Assemble at 2:30 p.m. at Creggan Shops. March to rally at Free Derry Corner