

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

AFL-CIO officials promote nationalism in WTO protests

— PAGE 6

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'Stop the execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal'

BY CANDACE WAGNER

PHILADELPHIA — "Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!" demanded some 1,000 protesters who rallied outside the state office building here October 16.

They turned out in response to Pennsylvania governor Thomas Ridge's signing of a death warrant for Abu-Jamal three days earlier. Local protests, from New York to Chicago and San Francisco, drew hundreds of people within days of the setting of the December 2 execu-

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

— See editorial, page 10

tion date.

Abu-Jamal, a journalist and Black rights activist, was railroaded to death row in 1982, accused of killing Philadelphia policeman Daniel Faulkner.

The fight to prevent his execution and win a new trial that could lead to his release has gained international support.

The U.S. Supreme Court refused on October 4 to consider an early appeal on several specific charges that the state of Pennsylvania denied him a fair trial. This decision does not preclude the top court from considering these same issues following lower federal court appeals.

On October 15 Abu-Jamal's lawyers, Leonard Weinglass and Daniel Williams, filed a motion for a new trial in federal court and a request for a stay of execution pending.

Continued on Page 4

Wyoming soda ash miners reject contract over 12-hour shifts

BY DAMMON BERECELLI

GREEN RIVER, Wyoming—Miners who are members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 15320 overwhelmingly rejected a contract offer from General Chemical Soda Ash Partners, Inc. on September 30.

The proposal, which included a proposal to go from the current eight-hour shifts to 12-hour shifts and wage increases of only 2 percent a year over three years, was voted down by a vote of 348-61.

The current contract expires November 14. The company and the union scheduled more negotiations to start October 21.

Rufus Spann, a continuous miner operator who has worked at General Chemical for 23 years, explained that 12-hour shifts were the big issue for most miners. According to him, the company proposed a "voluntary" 12-hour shift schedule, but "you know damn well, as soon as you vote that in, it'll be mandatory."

General Chemical mines and processes trona, otherwise known as soda ash, a mineral used to make baking soda and in the

Continued on Page 4

'Navy out of Vieques now!' say Puerto Ricans

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

A panel appointed by U.S. president William Clinton has publicly issued its recommendation that the U.S. Navy resume bombing exercises on the Puerto Rican island of Vieques, and that the Navy brass be given five years to propose an alternative site to relocate its live-fire bombing range.

This move is a response to the eruption of protests in Puerto Rico, and among many Puerto Ricans in the United States, against the decades-long U.S. military occupation of Vieques. Many see it as an effort by Washington to deflate opposition and hold onto the island as long as possible. Since World War II the Navy has occupied two-thirds of the small island, with a bombing range on the eastern tip and an ammunition depot in the west.

Protests against the Navy's occupation and devastation of Vieques have been unabated since April 19, when David Sanes, a civilian guard, was killed by a 500-pound "errant" bomb dropped by a Navy plane during target practice.

The fight to remove the U.S. military from the island has become a flashpoint for the nationalist resurgence that marks all politics in Puerto Rico today. Protesters have established several civil disobedience camps in the Navy's eastern "restricted zone" for the past six months, and the Pentagon has so far suspended its maneuvers on the island.

The battle over Vieques has been intertwined with another anticolonial struggle, the campaign to win freedom for 17 proindependence political prisoners, which scored an important victory in September when Clinton ordered the release on parole of 11 prisoners.

"The panel's recommendation is a fraud," said Ismael Guadalupe in an October 21 telephone interview from Vieques. Guadalupe, a leader of the Committee for the Rescue and

Thousands in Washington, D.C., demand 'Stop the deportations!'



Militant/Margrethe Siem

Several thousand people marched October 16 in Washington, D.C., to demand rights for undocumented workers and oppose raids by immigration cops. See coverage on page 10.

Development of Vieques, explained that "if the U.S. Congress and the president accept the proposal, the Navy wouldn't be required to leave within five years, as the press is saying. They would simply have five years to do a 'study' to find an alternative location. That's unacceptable. The Navy must not resume its bombing. It should leave our island immediately and clean it up."

Clinton's panel was headed up by Francis Rush, a U.S. deputy assistant secretary of defense. The other members were former congressman Lee Hamilton, retired Marine Corps general Richard Neal, and retired Navy vice admiral Diego Hernández, former commander of the Third Fleet.

The panel, appointed shortly after the flare-

Continued on Page 5

Senate rejects test ban treaty; U.S. gov't pursues first-strike nuclear capacity

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

The U.S. Senate voted down the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty October 13. The vote was a humiliation for U.S. president William Clinton, who signed the treaty in 1996 and once described the pact as the most important of his presidency.

The Senate debate ended with a statement by Senator Jesse Helms, a right-wing Republican from North Carolina, taunting Clinton through an explicit reference to the Monica Lewinsky scandal that triggered impeachment proceedings against the president last year.

It was a graphic reflection of the coarseness of bourgeois politics that's become more pronounced since the failed impeachment campaign against Clinton led by rightist forces a year ago. Behind it is the crisis of overproduction of world capitalism, which is fueling interimperialist competition and new attempts by Washington to maintain its hegemony as the number one military and economic power. The drive by the U.S. rulers to bolster their superiority against their imperialist rivals, extend U.S. finance capital's domination of the semicolonial world, and take military initiatives aimed against workers states such as China, has a lot

Continued on Page 8

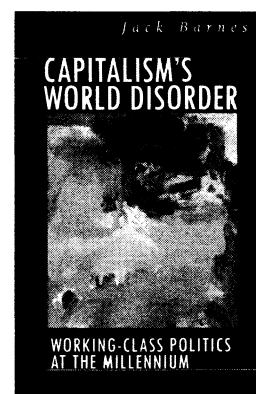
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WORKING-CLASS POLITICS AT THE MILLENNIUM

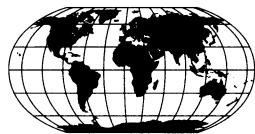
JACK BARNES

"The capitalist rulers offer us social disaster. They offer us depression. They offer us death from curable disease. They offer us war. The offer us fascism. They offer us an unending list of horrors. But we offer ourselves the ability to prevent those horrors from becoming the final reality, the confidence that we can transform that future."



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or from Pathfinder at 410 West Street, New York, NY 10014

Miners confront cuts in black lung benefits — page 7



Protesters defy troops in Jakarta

Ten thousand people, many of them students, protested in the streets outside the Indonesian parliament in the capital Jakarta October 14. As soldiers and riot cops attacked with tear gas and water cannons, the protesters defended themselves with rocks and petrol bombs. The next day the cops attacked another protest of 5,000 people that closed down Jakarta's business district. Around 30 demonstrators were hospitalized, while 10 cops were injured. Demonstrations also occurred in at least two other locations in Jakarta.

The protesters chanted slogans against President Habibie, hated for his close ties to the dictator Suharto who resigned in May 1998. In the eyes of many, Habibie confirmed those links by calling off a probe into charges of corruption against Suharto.

Okinawans: U.S. bases out!

An increasing number of Okinawans are resisting U.S. military presence on that Japanese island. After the 1995 rape of a 12-year-old girl by a U.S. soldier, protests forced Washington to agree to relocate its Futenma Air Station, provided that Tokyo find another location. Nago, Okinawa, an island city of 55,000 residents, is one of the prospective sites, despite the 1997 vote by Nago citizens against the scheme.

Okinawa makes up only 0.6 percent of Japan's total land mass, yet it houses 75 percent of all U.S. military installations. In Ginowan, the old location of Futenma, 800 people gathered in late September to inaugurate an island-wide organization to protest any placement of the U.S. bases.

Czech privatization stalls

The government of the Czech Republic has come under fire by officials of the European Union (EU) for lack of headway in economic "restructuring" — that is, reestablishing private ownership of banks and industry and moving against social rights that working people won when capitalism was overturned there following World War II. In the early 1990s the Czech government, which is trying to join the EU, planned to sell shares in state companies to private investors. Several years later, the banks are still largely state-owned and con-

Thousands in Mexico remember Tlatelolco massacre



Thousands of people march in Mexico October 3 to commemorate the Tlatelolco massacre. Mexican soldiers killed some 300 people Oct. 2, 1968, after being sent to crush a rally of workers, peasants, and students demanding price decreases and a halt to military persecution.

trol a large part of the economy — a quarter, in the case of the Komerční bank, the largest in Eastern Europe.

Jordanians protest Israeli attack

The government in Jordan has made a formal protest to Tel Aviv after events in Hebron on October 9. On that day Israeli settlers attacked a group of Jordanian parliamentarians as they left the Ibrahim Mosque in this West Bank city, which is divided between jurisdictions of the Palestinian Authority and the Israeli government. The settlers have built houses and whole towns on land claimed by Palestinians as their own. Israeli soldiers were present during the incident, the Jordanians said, and had tried to search the members of the group before they entered the mosque. The 80-seat lower house of Parliament in Jordan condemned the attack the next day.

Fujimori hit with nat'l strike

Protesting rising unemployment and Peruvian president Alberto Fujimori's unconstitutional designs to run for reelection, working people staged a national strike October 14. Police helicopters were hovering over the city early that morning and police forces were doubled in working-class communities all over Peru. The construction workers union, teachers unions, the Gen-

eral Confederation of Workers in Peru, and others were part of the strike. More than half of the toilers in that South American country are unemployed or underemployed.

U.S. infant mortality fails to fall

Data released in October by the U.S. Department of Health reveal that last year, for the first time in almost four decades, the infant mortality rate in the United States failed to decline. At the turn of the century 10 in 100 children born alive died before reaching their first birthday. The figure fell every year from 1961 until 1997, when it stood at less than 10 per 1,000 live births. The rate of 7.2 per 1,000 remained static in 1998. Last year also saw a rise in the number of babies whose weight was dangerously low. According to the same report, the infant mortality rate among Blacks is more than double that among their white counterparts.

Wages drop in New York City

Real wages of residents in New York City have declined in the 1990s according to a Fiscal Policy Institute study. Sixty percent of the population experienced a 20 percent decline in income. The gap between rich and poor is greater in New York than in any other state, declared James Parrott chief economist for the institute. Average hourly wages rose in this period, but the median (half above and half below) wage fell 6.3 percent, relative to the cost of living. "In recent years, Wall Street has experienced robust growth, but only 7 percent of New York households have reaped the benefits," read a September 7 article in the *New York Times*.

— BRIAN TAYLOR
AND PATRICK O'NEILL

Pakistan military organizes coup

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Nawaz Sharif, the prime minister of Pakistan, was ousted in a military coup October 13 just hours after he fired Pakistani Gen. Pervaiz Musharraf, the army chief of state. The military placed Sharif and his top aides under house arrest, closed down the National Assembly building of Parliament, and suspended the Constitution — effectively imposing martial law. "The whole of Pakistan will come under the control of the armed forces," declared Musharraf in a statement broadcast on television two days after the coup.

Tensions reached a boiling point between Sharif and Pakistani military leaders over the conflict in Kashmir, after U.S. president William Clinton leaned on Sharif to back off from an escalating confrontation this summer with the government of India over control of the disputed territory. Washington, which has backed pre-

vious military regimes in Pakistan, gave tacit approval to the coup after Pakistani chief of intelligence Lieut. Gen. Mohammed Ziauddin paid a visit to CIA head George Tenet in Washington last month. Two weeks before the coup the Clinton administration accused Sharif of "undermining democracy", suggesting his regime had become corrupt and autocratic.

"The last thing we need is a chaotic Pakistan," said a White House official, the day after Sharif was deposed.

India and Pakistan were formed as two separate states after gaining independence in 1947 as a result of British colonialism's divide-and-rule tactics. The two regimes, which have clashed over control of Kashmir, have fought three wars since 1947. The Muslim majority in Kashmir has waged a decades-long struggle for self-determination. More than 20,000 people have been killed in the region since 1989.

THE MILITANT

End the death penalty

The governor of Pennsylvania wasted little time in issuing a death warrant for imprisoned political activist Mumia Abu-Jamal—one week after the Supreme Court refused to hear his case. The *'Militant'* covers this fight against state-sanctioned murder, which has become an emblem for many working people and youth. Don't miss a single issue!



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Editor: NAOMI CRAINE

Young Socialists column editor: CECILIA ORTEGA

Business Manager: MAURICE WILLIAMS

Editorial Staff: Hilda Cuzco, Martin Koppel, Argiris Malapanis, Brian Taylor, and Maurice Williams.

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'Cuban revolution stands out as an example for others'

BY JIMALTENBERG

BERKELEY, California — "There is something about Cuba that resonates with us," said Karen West, as she welcomed Mary-Alice Waters to Barnes & Noble Booksellers here October 11. West, the bookstore's community relations manager, had invited Waters to speak on "The Cuban Revolution Today" as part of its regular series of discussions with authors.

West introduced Waters as the president of Pathfinder Press and editor of numerous books on Cuba, including Ernesto Che Guevara's *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War* and Bolivian Diary, and Harry Villegas's *Pombo, a Man of Che's Guerrilla*. West noted that Waters is editor of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist* and has written extensively on the Cuban Revolution, the fight for women's rights, and other topics. "Pathfinder," she said, "is exciting and intellectually challenging."

About 90 people filled all the chairs the store had, and sat or stood in the aisles between bookshelves to hear Waters's presentation on Cuba, which was followed by a lively

discussion period. Among those attending were students from the nearby University of California at Berkeley campus, students from California State University in Hayward, a young steelworker from a nearby mill, store patrons who stopped when they saw the crowd gathering, and some who regularly attend author speaking engagements at this large store.

Barnes & Noble set up an attractive display of Pathfinder books, and invited Waters to sign copies of her books as participants stayed to talk with her after the meeting. Sales included three copies of *To Speak the Truth: Why Washington's Cold War Against Cuba Doesn't End*, containing speeches of Fidel Castro and Guevara, and three of the issue of *New Internationalist* containing Waters's article "Defending Cuba, Defending Cuba's Socialist Revolution," as well as various pamphlets on Cuba. Some of the young people in attendance sat on the floor during the meeting leafing through Pathfinder titles.

Revolutions are made, Waters explained, when "millions set out to change the course of



Militant/Hank Scheer

Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder and editor of numerous books on Cuba, speaking at author's event at Barnes & Noble Booksellers, October 11 in Berkeley, California.

their lives, when humans say 'enough' to absolutely intolerable conditions. But it can't be done without leadership." The story of how such leadership was forged in Cuba out of the efforts of ordinary men and women is told by Che Guevara in *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War*, Waters said.

By taking control over the means of production, the working people of Cuba were able to change social priorities. A different class was in power than under the U.S.-backed

dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. The Cuban workers and peasants took the product of their own labor and used these resources to advance the human condition in their country, Waters explained. Nationalization of the means of production eliminated the institutional foundations propping up racism and sexism.

Waters explained that the Cuban government did not implode in the late 1980s, as had happened in the Soviet Union and eastern Europe, because the working class was never driven from political power in Cuba.

One young participant in the meeting asked Waters how a revolution could take place in the United States. "We have seen the beginning of revolutionary struggles" in this country, Waters replied, struggles in which the elements of the third American revolution are clear. A thorough democratic revolution that would have created the conditions for racial equality was blocked with the defeat of Reconstruction after the Civil War, a defeat that coincided with the United States becoming an imperialist power for the first time, she noted.

She also pointed to the labor battles of the 1930s, in which working-class resistance to intolerable economic conditions began to take on a broader social character.

The 1987 stock market crash heralded the onset of another worldwide crisis of the capitalist system, one that will lead to great class battles. Whether these lead to a social revolution depends on leadership, she stated. Organizations need to be built that can point working people toward the overthrow of the capitalist system. Otherwise the same conditions created by capitalism will continue.

"The century that has already dawned will not be one of peace and prosperity for the capitalist system, but one of capitalist disorder," Waters said. "We can see it in Kosova, East Timor, Iraq. Economic crises will get deeper and more violent." Holding up a copy of the recently published Pathfinder book *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working Class Politics at the Millennium*, Waters said that this is a world in which people are looking for solutions. "That is why the Cuban Revolution stands out as an example."

France: '35-hour week,' joblessness spark actions by bosses and workers

BY RAFIK BENALI

PARIS — A proposed law that would nominally cut the workweek to 35 hours, with the stated intent of creating more jobs, has become the focus of debate across France. Some 25,000 employers and their supporters rallied here October 4, "For free enterprise and against the Aubry Law." The law currently under debate was proposed by Labor Minister Martine Aubry of the Socialist Party.

At the same time increasing numbers of workers are critical of the law, which would allow the bosses to restructure their operations in such a way that very few jobs will in fact be created. This has been part of the discussion at actions by workers, including a 50,000-strong demonstration here October 16 against layoffs and for jobs.

The bosses' rally was called by the employers' organizations MEDEF and CGPME. It is only the second time in 20 years that these groups have organized such a rally. They were joined by the capitalist farmers organization FNSEA and by UNAPL, which organizes small artisans and professionals.

MEDEF president Ernest-Antoine Sellière spoke at the rally. "If you mock the existing labor agreements you will see the results," he threatened. "Full employment can only be attained with us. Not without us. Not against us... The Aubry laws are laws against business."

The big-business daily *Le Figaro* denounced the 35-hour workweek law as a measure "against businesses and jobs."

Alain Madelin, president of the conservative Liberal Democracy party, promised that when a conservative government returns to power in France the 35-hour law will be annulled. The current government is a coalition of the Socialist Party (SP), French Communist Party (CP), Greens, and the Citizens Movement, a split off from the SP.

The 35-hour workweek is to be established through two laws. The first, adopted two years ago, opened negotiations between the unions and the bosses. During this period a number of agreements were signed at local companies.

The second law, currently being debated by the National Assembly, is to set the conditions under which the law is to be applied. Sellière presented the bosses' position that the agreements already signed with the unions be respected and that the new law not impose stiffer conditions.

Some of the bosses present at the rally threatened to quit France if the law passed. Bruno Grandpierre, the president of two different companies, said, "35 hours—I'm going to the United States! Seventy jobs lost for France!"

Others complained of the social taxes that

employers have to pay to finance the social security system.

While the bosses were holding their rally, between 10,000 and 25,000 workers were demonstrating at the other end of Paris. The demonstration was part of a national day of protest called by the CGT trade union confederation for "a law that will create jobs." The CGT, which is associated with the CP, called for modifying the draft of the second law.

The day of action drew between 30,000 and 70,000 workers nationwide. Several other smaller unions joined the action as well as committees of unemployed. But the other large union confederations such as Force Ouvrière and the CFDT did not support the action.

Workers oppose hours 'annualization'

The 35-hour workweek law is an extremely complicated document. In a series of stages, it lowers the legal workweek to 35 hours from its current level of 39 hours. However, this "35-hour week" is seen as an annual average, thus allowing many weeks of unpaid overtime, including work on Saturdays, followed by days off. Such "annualization" of work time has been a long-term demand of the bosses.

At the Peugeot auto factory at Poissy near Paris, the agreement signed drops coffee breaks and job training time from the calculation of the average working week, although such time will still be paid through a special bonus.

Thus, to reach a 35-hour week, the company only had to reduce production by 1.5 hours per week. In addition, the speed of the assembly line has been increased by 25 percent. So far, no one has been hired to make up for the reduced work time. When details of the local agreement were announced, spontaneous work stoppages took part in the several parts of the Peugeot factory.

In most cases, the reduced average workweek will not lead to reduced wages. The reduced work time will be compensated for by a special bonus. However, it is not decided whether newly hired workers will receive this bonus, thus opening up the door to a nationwide two-tier wage system.

March for jobs, against layoffs

The October 16 march of 50,000 workers demanding jobs and an end to layoffs was called following the announcement by tire manufacturer Michelin that the company would slash 7,500 jobs, even as it posts record profits. Communist Party general secretary Robert Hue issued the call for the action, and it was supported by the Greens and Citizens Movement. Prime Minister Lionel Jospin, the head of the Socialist Party, opposed the call for the demonstration. Two centrist groups, Workers Struggle (LO) and

the Revolutionary Communist League (LCR), signed the call. None of the trade unions endorsed the action.

Hours before the demonstration began, CP officials announced they had reached an agreement with the government on adjustments to the 35-hour law and would be voting for it. Raymond Schwenke, a full-time staffer for the CP who took part in the demonstration, argued that this was "the most important consequence of this action" because the amendment "makes it an obligation for a company to create new jobs whenever public funds are used to help finance its transition to the 35-hour week."

The new amendment, however, does not specify how many new jobs must be created in order to qualify for government assistance. It would allow government aid to companies that hire only one person.

The current government was elected based on a campaign promise to reduce unemployment by reducing the work week. In a recent poll, only 23 percent thought the new law would reduce unemployment.

Unemployment in France has stayed above 9 percent for the last 15 years. It was 12.6 percent in 1997 and has declined only slightly since then. These high rates are part of a long-term trend: unemployment in France averaged 4.2 percent during the 1970s, doubled to a 9.3 percent average in the 1980s, and has averaged 11.5 percent during the 1990s.

The number of those working part-time grew to 16.5 percent by 1996. One-quarter of women workers are in part-time jobs today. The bosses have increased use of temporary workers, generally subcontracted through employment agencies such as Manpower.

Young people and women have been hit hardest by the economic crisis. Marching behind a banner of the CGT Unemployed Committee from the Ardennes region, Farida said that she has finally found a part-time training program at a hospital. "We are paid for four weeks work at the hospital and then unpaid for four weeks of classes," she explained. "There are no plans to hire anyone at the end of the program. We have no job security and can be thrown out of the training program at any time." She asked that her full name not be published.

Mounting criticism of the Aubry law by both bosses and workers is not the only problem facing the government. For several weeks, tens of thousands of high school students have been demonstrating throughout France, demanding more teachers and materials. Over 150,000 demonstrated September 30 and over 100,000 again on October 7. The Paris demonstration of over 10,000 was largely dominated by students from the technical high schools in the working class suburbs.

Nat London and Thierry Bernard contributed to this article.

FROM PATHFINDER

Episodes

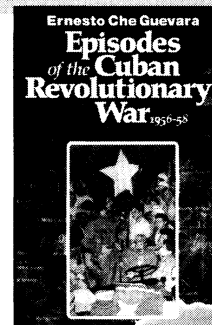
OF THE CUBAN REVOLUTIONARY WAR, 1956-58

ERNESTO CHE GUEVARA

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'Only in Pathfinder books can you find true history'

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

"Last week we sold one copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder* at Malden Mill. Our total sold in the city is six..." — Ted Leonard, member of the Union of Needletrades and Textile Workers in Boston.

"Placed four titles in a Latino community store..." — Tom Fiske, airport worker and member of the International Association of Machinists (IAM) in the Twin Cities, Minnesota.

"I and another Pathfinder supporter visited Indiana, Pennsylvania, and placed *Capitalism's World Disorder* and seven other Pathfinder titles at a campus bookstore..." — Danny Booher, member of the United Steelworkers of America, in Pittsburgh.

These are some of the reports the *Militant* has received from union members participating in the campaign to place *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* in stores and libraries where workers, farmers, and young people browse, read, and buy.

"Pathfinder supporters in the IAM have placed a total of 25 books since the beginning of the campaign," stated a report by Arlene Rubinstein, an airport worker in Atlanta. The campaign runs through to the end of the year.

Rubinstein explained that these workers "use the book to respond to political discussions on the job. Questions about Patrick Buchanan, the Reform Party, and Jesse Ventura (Northwest Airlines features Ventura on the cover of their in-flight magazine) give us opportunities to discuss politics and move the book both on the job and through placements."

Buchanan, who is putting together an incipient fascist cadre, is preparing his followers, or "brigades" as he calls them, to break from the Republican Party in a bid for the presidential candidacy of the Reform Party. This move is opposed by Minnesota governor Ventura, a Bonapartist politician who strives to dominate the Reform Party himself. "*Capitalism's World Disorder* contains the clearest explanation a working person can find about such figures," reports Rubinstein. "And it explains how workers and farmers have the potential power to defeat them and the capi-

talist system that breeds them."

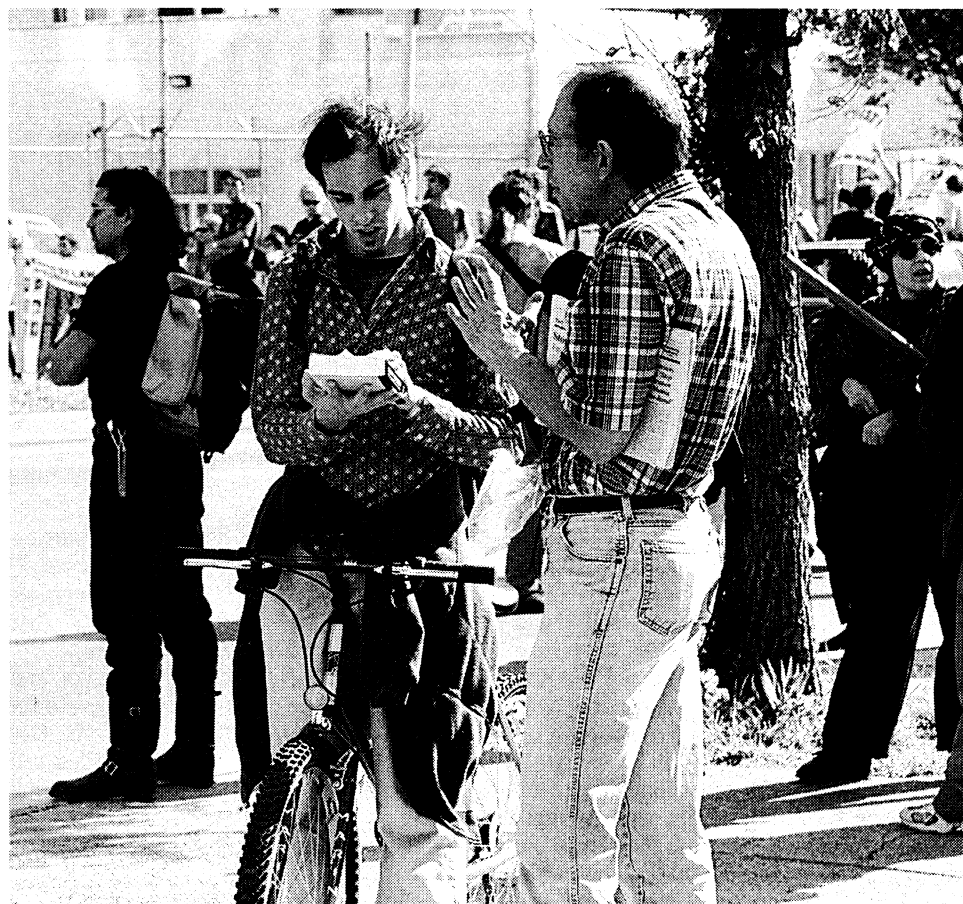
The *Militant* has received several reports from teams that have traveled outside their home cities to promote the book. Such teams are finding that it's best not to organize a crowded and exhausting itinerary, but instead to allow time for political discussions with the workers, farmers, and young people they meet. Those discussions can also lead to useful collaboration on visits to possible outlets for Pathfinder books.

"Buyers in two bookstores in Inverness and Dundee took a Pathfinder catalogue each, one took a copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder* and one said he would order it," reported Harry Robinson and Frances Rogan from Manchester, England, on their return from a trip to eastern Scotland. "Our team also visited three oil rig construction yards, Barmac in Nigg and Ardersier in the northeast and Kvaerner in Nethil in Fife," they continued. "At Nigg we sold 78 *Militants* to two shifts of workers, and a copy of the Pathfinder pamphlet *Che Guevara and the Imperialist Reality*."

"Our team went to a livestock market at Inverurie to talk with working farmers and find out their views on the crisis in farming and proposed changes to land ownership laws in Scotland. Farmers bought two copies of the *Militant* and three copies of the pamphlet *Farmers Face the Crisis of the 1990s*."

Angel Lariscy writes from Miami that "volunteers have made sales and promotion trips to the central and western regions of Florida. A couple of visits to a library in a town in sugarcane country, northwest of Miami, netted an order for 13 books, including English- and Spanish-language titles by Malcolm X, and *The Communist Manifesto* in Spanish."

"Karl Butts, a vegetable farmer in Plant City, has taken on the task of placing Pathfinder books" at a library and community college near him, reports Lariscy. "He told us, 'If I had found Pathfinder books in the library at my college or in the bookstores I visited 10, 15, 20 years ago I would be a different person today. This is what motivates me to help get Pathfinder books into places where people can find them.'"



Militant/Naomi Craine

Chris Remple (right) discusses *Capitalism's World Disorder* at march to free Mumia Abu-Jamal in Philadelphia October 16. One copy of book was sold at protest. The same day, two copies were sold at march in Washington, D.C., to defend immigrant rights.

Lariscy also reports, "Michael Martinez, a senior at North Miami Beach High School, said he found his first Pathfinder book, *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War*, in a chain bookstore in Miami almost two years ago. He found the advertisements for other Pathfinder titles in the back. He called Pathfinder Press in New York, and they told him there is a Pathfinder bookstore in Miami."

"Martinez, who is 17, delved into the pamphlet by Rafael Cancel Miranda, *Puerto Rico: Independence is a Necessity*, in his presentation on the Puerto Rican struggle at the Militant Labor Forum on October 2 in Miami. 'Maybe only in these books can you find true history,' he said in his talk, 'Surely not in any school books.'"

Pathfinder supporters in Atlanta, Houston, and Miami went to North Carolina in early October. "The highlight of our trip was talking to workers at the plant gate of Continental General Tire," reports Kay Sedam. "Steelworkers there had just registered a victory after a yearlong strike in which fewer than 20 of 1,450 workers crossed the picket line, and the company hired 800 replacements. Of the

hundreds going in and out of the gate, about half were former strikers, and half former strikebreakers.

"We handed out leaflets with a report from the *Militant* on the contract settlement and an advertisement for *Capitalism's World Disorder* at the special price of \$20, which holds until the end of the year. Before our trip we contacted many strikers whom previous teams met. One said he'd be finishing his shift at 7 p.m., and that he wanted 'the book.' Sure enough, when he came out he had his \$20 ready, along with a \$5 donation for the *Militant*."

"One worker told us that 'things are tense in here,'" Sedam continued, referring to the coexistence of strikers and strikebreakers in the plant. "'This is my first day back but things were fine inside,' said another. Many former strikebreakers, supported the union's victory. In all we sold 21 copies of the paper."

"Workers and other Pathfinder supporters in the area had recommended several bookstores for visits," said Sedam, "and we took the time to stop by them. One shop took two copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder* on the spot, and ordered eight other titles. These included the latest issue of *New Internationalist*, *The Truth About Yugoslavia*, and two Malcolm X titles."

1,000 in Philadelphia oppose death sentence

Continued from front page

ing that appeal. They want to call witnesses who did not testify in the original trial, to present new evidence and bring evidence of police coercion of witnesses.

U.S. District Judge William Yohn, who has been assigned to the case, has the option of issuing a ruling solely on the written record of the 1982 trial. The 1996 "Effective Death Penalty Act" signed by President William Clinton was designed to discourage federal courts from granting new trials in state death penalty cases.

If Yohn rules that the appeal can be dealt with rapidly, before the December 2 execution date, he may refuse to stay the execution. The appeals process could take several years or go much more rapidly.

With the new stage in the fight, marchers expressed an increased urgency to campaign against the execution. The majority of those who rallied here were young people from all over the East Coast and beyond.

Atiya Hoya came up from Washington, D.C. Originally from Philadelphia, she recalled when a police bomb was dropped on a house occupied by the group MOVE in 1985. Philadelphia mayor, Wilson Goode, ordered the bombing and blocked firefighters from battling the blaze. "Kids in school came in talking about the smoke in their houses," said Hoya.

Eleven people were killed in the house and an entire city block of homes in the Black community was destroyed. Abu-Jamal wrote and spoke extensively of previous attacks on this group as well as other cases of police brutality.

Having lived through that experience, Hoya said she felt that "we aren't told the whole story by the government and the media. It isn't enough to learn the truth but we have to organize to get the word out."

The day before the rally Liz Sanger saw a flyer up at her school, Columbia College in Chicago, announcing that a bus was leaving in an hour to come to Philadelphia for the march. She got on the bus for the 14-hour trip.

Among the 32 others on that bus were Anita Mechler and Alexandra Gonzalez. They organize support for Abu-Jamal on their respective college campuses — Loyola and DePaul. They reported that recent cases of police brutality in Chicago have spurred interest in the Mumia Abu-Jamal case.

Fabio Ortiz traveled on a bus from Chapel Hill, North Carolina. He is a member of the Human Rights Club at his school. Ortiz said that besides building support for Mumia Abu-Jamal, death penalty opponents in North Carolina have organized opposition to the recent execution of a Black man in Greensboro.

Micah Wood came to the rally with friends to learn about the case of Abu-Jamal. His issue is the fight for a united Ireland.

Gordon Everett and David Gaiter are members of the United Auto Workers and work together at a General Motors parts plant outside of Pittsburgh. They estimated that 30 marchers came from that city. The two are veterans of past marches for Abu-Jamal. They reported that on the Thursday before, hundreds marched to the courthouse

in Pittsburgh to protest the setting of an execution date.

While many motorists passing the march honked in support, an ambulance driver used his loudspeaker to shout, "let him fry, let him fry." A van passed the march with a sign painted "fry Mumia." In recent months the Fraternal Order of Police and Daniel Faulkner's widow have stepped up their campaign for the execution of Abu-Jamal.

Continuing actions are planned in Philadelphia and other cities to stop the execution and to free Mumia Abu-Jamal.

FURTHER READING FROM PATHFINDER

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Miners reject contract

Continued from front page

manufacture of glass. It is one of five trona mines in southwestern Wyoming that together account for 90 percent of U.S. production of the mineral. The five facilities together employ about 3,000 workers.

Although Wyoming is a so-called "right-to-work state," union membership at the General Chemical mine is close to 100 percent. General Chemical has around 430 hourly employees. The only other union trona mine in the area, FMC, is also organized by the USWA and employs approximately 1,000 workers. General Chemical is currently the only soda ash mine in the area where the entire workforce works eight-hour shifts. Other mines work a combination of 8-, 10- and 12-hour shifts.

Other issues besides hours and pay in-

cluded job combinations and retirement pensions. The big majority of miners have worked at General Chemical for more than 20 years, although miners reported that the company has hired about 30 workers, most of them young, in the last two years. Miners at General Chemical make \$1-2 an hour less than some other local mines, both union and nonunion. Spann said, "They have been taking away from us for a long time," and noted that General Chemical is the only trona mine without a bus to take its employees to the mine site.

USWA Local 15320 struck General Chemical for four months in 1993. Several miners described the strike as a militant, sometimes violent struggle. The company hired a few hundred replacement workers during the strike, most of them from Mexico.

YOUNG SOCIALISTS AROUND THE WORLD

Young Socialists speak at 'open mike' on Cuba

This column is written and edited by the Young Socialists (YS), an international organization of young workers, students, and others fighting for socialism. For more information about the YS write to: Young Socialists, 3284 23rd St., San Francisco, CA, 94110. Tel: (415) 824-1429. Email: INTERNET:105162.605@compuserve.com

BY MANUEL GONZÁLEZ

FRESNO, California — The Young Socialists was invited to share the platform at the Gaia House here September 25 for an "open mike" event that featured musicians and political speakers. The Gaia House regularly hosts speakers for a free speech forum.

More than 40 youth were in attendance. Kahinde Solwazi, a professor at Fresno City

College, spoke on political prisoners in the United States and talked about the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal. Freedom of the press in this society means "freedom for business people," Kahinde said.

He then pointed to the Pathfinder literature table and encouraged everyone to read the books by revolutionary leaders around the world. Solwazi concluded by saying, "We ask you to give Mumia support, and to build a society for justice."

This reporter, a member of the Young Socialists in Santa Cruz, spoke about the Cuban revolution. I recently returned from Cuba, where I attended the International Seminar of Youth and Students on Neoliberalism.

I explained that in Cuba workers and farmers use the revolutionary government to confront some of the social problems Kahinde talked about, such as racism and sexism. The presentation included an overview of Cuban history prior to the revolution and the gains made on behalf of workers, farmers, and revolutionary youth through mass revolutionary struggle. I also talked about the class struggle in the United States and stressed the importance for young people who want to change this world of becoming involved in working-class struggle.

During the discussion period, many questions were raised regarding Cuba, such as the effects of the fall of the Soviet bloc in regards

to Cuba and the development of the tourist industry.

One young person asked about the economic blockade and role of Washington toward Cuba. I replied that the U.S. government is the biggest terrorist in the world and has a history of supporting, training, and financing counterrevolutionary organizations. U.S. imperialism's attempts to crush the Cuban revolution has not been successful, because the Cuban people are armed, willing, and organized to defend their revolution.

I concluded by stating, "There are fighters in countries all around the world who look to Cuba as an example of revolutionary struggle and a way forward for humanity."

Meetings set pace for Pathfinder Fund

BY JON ERWAY

NEWARK—In the eighth week of Pathfinder's \$125,000 international fund, supporters sent in \$14,848. This is the best collection for one week so far in the campaign, bringing the total collected to \$54,833, or 44 percent of the goal. To get on target and achieve the goal by November 15, \$17,843 needs to come in each week for the next four weeks. The following reports show how this can be done.

CHICAGO—Pathfinder Fund supporters held a rally here October 9 featuring Martin Koppel, editor of *Perspectiva Mundial*, who participated in meetings that led to Pathfinder's soon-to-be-released *Making History: Interviews with four generals of the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces*. His talk linked a range of political questions facing working people today with the experience of workers and farmers holding power in Cuba for 40 years.

Young Socialists member Marcelina Pedraza, a member of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, said that studying Pathfinder books, especially combined with classes like those YS and SWP members held during the summer, "really is the way to educate ourselves and also educate others."

Melanie Zimmer, an airline mechanic and member of the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA), helped staff the Pathfinder book table at the recent Grito de Lares pro-independence festival in Puerto Rico. She urged those at the meeting to "maybe squeeze out just a little bit more" to ensure that Pathfinder books stay available to the "thousands of mainly young people like those who came to Lares in search of solutions."

David Yard, a member of the United Mine Workers of America in central Illinois, sent a message explaining how miners utilized Pathfinder publications to help defend the UMW strike against Freeman United Coal last year from a probe by the FBI.

Two people bought copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder*; and \$835 was collected.

—PATTIE THOMPSON

PHILADELPHIA—Pathfinder fund supporters in here took a big step towards reaching their \$3,600 goal at an October 16 rally featuring *Militant* editor Naomi Craine. Among those attending the event were a number of youth who heard about the meeting at a protest earlier in the day against the planned execution of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

'U.S. Navy out of Vieques'

Continued from front page

up of protests in April, has been "studying" the situation in Vieques for months. Its recommendation was leaked to the press in early September. The White House had been stalling on the release of its findings, hoping the issue would die down, but it hasn't.

"Our demand that the Navy leave our island is nonnegotiable," said Carlos Ventura, president of the Fishermen's Association of Southern Vieques, in a phone interview. "Not one more bomb, not one more military maneuver."

"That's not just the position of the Vieques fishermen, but of all of Puerto Rico. Even the government of Puerto Rico has said it will not do the Navy's dirty work of evicting people from the camps," knowing such action would get it in hot water.

Ventura added, "The goal of the U.S. government is to ask for five years of 'time out' so they can find some sleight of hand to stay on our island."

The Vieques fishermen have for decades spearheaded the fight against the use of their island by the U.S. military, which has disrupted their livelihood with constant bombings and war maneuvers in fishing waters.

"The history of the U.S. Navy here has been a bitter one," Ventura said. "It's a history of lies. In 1940, the Navy told the residents of Vieques that they would only have to leave the island temporarily and that after the war they would be allowed to return to their homes. But they lied."

"Then the Navy argued that they had to stay in Vieques and carry out target practice during the Cold War. Then it was Vietnam. Later, it was their invasions of Grenada, Panama, the Persian Gulf, Haiti, and Kosovo. The U.S. military used Vieques for all these wars."

"Now they say they need our island for their so-called war on drugs, claiming the radar they are installing here is to detect drug traffickers, not for military purposes. But of course we know it is for military use."

Thousands volunteer for camps

Ventura noted that U.S. officials have warned they intend to forcibly evict those camped out in the restricted zones. "But if they evict us, we're going to return. And that's

only going to make things worse for them."

Why? Because, he said, "the United States goes around the world talking about restoring human rights — from Somalia to Yugoslavia. Well, for 60 years, the U.S. military itself has been violating human rights in Vieques. And if they arrest us in the camps, the whole world will find out how they are violating our rights and how they are lying."

The fishermen's leader reported, "Thousands of people around Puerto Rico have volunteered to replace us on the camps if we are arrested — even church groups." The Vieques fishermen have set up one such camp at La Yayí. Hundreds of workers, college and high school students, fishermen from around Puerto Rico, and political and religious figures have visited the camps to express their solidarity.

Meanwhile, Ventura said, the fishermen and others have been building facilities in the restricted zone. "With the help of several unions — the water workers, the telephone workers, and others — we've built a pier at La Yayí to make it easier for residents of Vieques to visit the camps, especially the older people, who now want to come back to the areas where they grew up."

"The old folks are telling the story of their lives before the Navy forced them to leave — what crops they were growing there, how they earned their livelihoods, how the Navy lied to them claiming they would be allowed to return after the war." They're giving the new generation an education about half a century of resistance.

In face of these continuing protests, a number of capitalist politicians have jumped on the Vieques bandwagon. In Puerto Rico, even the two colonial parties have voiced support for getting the U.S. Navy out of the island — the pro-Commonwealth Popular Democratic Party (PPD) and the ruling New Progressive Party (PNP). This includes both Gov. Pedro

Continued on Page 10

— CALENDAR —

CALIFORNIA BERKELEY

Resistance in Paradise: Vieques, Puerto Rico vs. the U.S. Navy. Speaker: Carlos Zenón, president of the Vieques Fishermen's Association. Sun., Nov. 7, 7 p.m. *La Peña Cultural Center, 3105 Shattuck (2 blocks East of Ashby BART, 3 blocks south of Ashby Ave).* Sponsored by the Fellowship of Reconciliation. *Casa Puerto Rico and Comité 98.* Donation: \$5 to \$10. For more information, call (415) 752-4044 or (415) 495-6334.

Carlos Zenón will also visit Chicago November 3-4 and Twin Cities, Minnesota, November 5-6.

MASSACHUSETTS BOSTON

Tour of Dr. Alfredo Portero, Director of Medical Cooperation Center in the Ministry of Public Health, Havana, Cuba.

Thurs., Oct. 28, noon. Report from Cuba's Medical Brigades in Latin America, the Caribbean and Africa: A Central Part of the Revolution. *CPCS-Deans Conference Room, 4th Fl, Wheatley Hall, University of Massachusetts.*

Tue., Nov. 2, 7 p.m. Cuba's System of Public Health and the Challenges of a Changing World. *Room 104, Barnum Hall, Tufts University.*

Thurs., Nov. 4. Cuban Healthcare and the World, 4 p.m. Room 4, Coolidge Hall, 1737 Cambridge St., Harvard University. Cuban Healthcare and the World, 7:30 p.m. Room 121, Academic Building, Roxbury Community College. Sponsored by the Student/Faculty Cuban Medical Doctor Tour Committee. For more information, call (617) 267-5773 or e-mail: CKaiserL@emerald.tufts.edu

CANADA

TORONTO

A Young Socialist/Communist League Class Series on *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*. Class held every Sunday at 11 a.m. *Pathfinder Bookstore, 851 Bloor St. W.* For more information, call (416) 588-4324.

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Australia	950	390	41%
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New York	13,000	9,006	69%
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Newark	9,000	4,548	51%
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—PETE SEIDMAN

WTO: a tool for enforcing domination of U.S. finance capital

AFL-CIO officials use American nationalism in protests against World Trade Organization

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Government ministers from 132 countries will attend the meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Seattle November 30 to December 3. The WTO's stated purpose is to "help trade flow as freely as possible."

Various union officials, environmental groups, and other liberal and radical forces are planning protests outside the Seattle meeting calling for "fair trade." A typical leaflet produced by People For Fair Trade denounces the WTO as "A secretive trade group in Geneva... striking down our laws" that is responsible for "disappearance of manufacturing jobs" and "dirtier water and air."

In fact, the WTO is not a forum to free up world trade, but rather a tool used by the imperialist powers to reinforce their domination of the semi-colonial world. It is also an arena that these powers use, or ignore — depending on what serves their interests — in their intensifying trade conflicts among themselves. Washington, in particular, often assumes the mantle of "free trade" as it pursues a trade policy aimed at gaining the maximum advantage for U.S. finance capital.

Like other economic and military pacts or organizations set up and used by the competing ruling classes of the economically advanced capitalist countries, the WTO simply reflects the world relationship of class forces. It's not the source of the worsening exploitation of workers and peasants around the world. The normal functioning of the imperialist system — the highest and final stage of capitalism that arose at the end of the last century and the beginning of the current one, when a handful of economically developed nations finished partitioning the world among themselves, subjecting two-thirds of humanity to their economic and political domination — is at the root of this economic and social devastation.

Class-struggle minded workers and farmers oppose the WTO and all other forums through which the imperialist powers seek to deepen their brutal exploitation of toilers around the world. But the "anti-WTO" campaign launched by the trade union officialdom, environmental groups, and others points away from the kind of international solidarity that workers and farmers need to build, and pushes working people towards the "America First" economic nationalism of the ultraright. The arguments put forward for "fair trade" are arguments for *protectionism* — measures against the foreign competitors of U.S. capitalists to preserve the profits of the latter.

Anti-WTO protests feed nationalism

The nationalist character of the protests being prepared at the end of November in Seattle is reflected in a report in the October 16 *People's Weekly World*, the newspaper of the Communist Party USA, on the national convention of the AFL-CIO. The delegates, it states, "hammered out a program meant to defend the interests of American workers from the ravages of a global attack by transnational banks and corporations."

Such a stance feeds the reactionary nationalism of Patrick Buchanan and other rightists. Posing as a representative of the "American working man," Buchanan aims to divide working people's ranks between native-born and "aliens." He also scapegoats other oppressed layers of the working class for the crisis of capitalism.

Buchanan employs harsh rhetoric against international agreements like the WTO in order to deflect the anger of working people from the capitalist exploiters at home. "The Global Economy is proving to be a high-speed transmission belt of global financial disasters," he wrote in late 1997 in a column in which he announced the "triumph of a blazing new nationalism." Buchanan and other rightists are deadly enemies of working people, whose reactionary politics will be translated into violence against workers organizations through street gangs that the ruling class will turn to when they feel the crisis of their system is getting out of their control.

Real role of World Trade Organization

To state that the WTO is about "free trade" as do both the publicity of the trade body and of the forces organizing protests against the Seattle

meeting, is to misrepresent the real role of this outfit. The WTO, along with most other trade organizations — like the Asia Pacific Economic Council (APEC) or trade pacts like the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) — is not neutral. The employing classes use it to advance their trade and foreign policies.

Washington utilizes the WTO in its ongoing efforts to weaken and eventually overthrow the Chinese and other workers states. It has continually blocked China's application for WTO membership as it tries to force Beijing to knock down more barriers to capitalist goods and investment, and to dismantle the country's planned economy. As it becomes clearer that investment and trade won't accomplish this in and of themselves, Washington has stepped up its military pressure and preparations as well. President Clinton has given the go-ahead for a new "Theater Missile Defense" system to be placed on the soil of Washington's Asian allies, designed to provide the Pentagon with an effective first-strike edge in a nuclear confrontation. Beijing has strongly protested this move.

Workers states such as China and Cuba have to participate in meetings of organizations like the WTO to defend their possibilities for minimizing damage from trade barriers and economic sanctions imposed by imperialist governments. Class-conscious workers defend the right of Cuba, China, and other workers states to take part, while at the same time explaining why the WTO serves the interests of Washington and its imperialist allies.

In a striking instance of how the masters of finance capital manipulate such forums to their ends, Clinton and the other representatives of imperialist governments pushed through preparations to send their troops to occupy East Timor at the meeting of another organization presented as a "free trade" body — the APEC summit held September 10–13 in Auckland, New Zealand. Washington has brought a number of trade disputes before the WTO. At the same time it has continued to act unilaterally to defend its imperial interests, regardless of what the rules of a given trade pact dictate.

The U.S. rulers and the European Union (EU) powers, for example, clashed sharply over the passage of the Helms-Burton bill that Clinton signed into law in March 1996. This legislation escalated Washington's economic war against Cuba. It permitted Cuban-American and other U.S. businessmen whose property on the island was confiscated by Cuban workers and peasants after the 1959 revolution to sue companies abroad that invest in those properties. Canadian government officials protested against the Act. The EU passed a resolution condemning the legislation. "It is ... unacceptable that a third country could tell us how to conduct our trade," stated EU official Jean-Pierre Leng at that time.

When the WTO appointed a panel to hear an EU complaint on the matter, U.S. government officials stated that the panel had "no competence to proceed."

"We will not show up," said a White House aide. Confronted with Washington's economic and military weight — demonstrated the previous year on European soil in Bosnia — the EU allowed the deadline for pursuing the case to lapse.

Interimperialist rivalry

That clash between the EU powers and Washington was not an isolated affair.

In 1995, the WTO's first year of existence, Washington launched a trade offensive against Japan, demanding that it expand the market for U.S.-manufactured automobiles and auto parts. U.S. trade officials filed a grievance with the WTO, and at the same time gave notice they would unilaterally impose tariffs on luxury Japanese cars that would effectively double their wholesale prices.

Last March the U.S. government slapped tariffs on more than a dozen products exported by EU countries to try to force the removal of tariffs on bananas exported to Europe from Central and South American plantations, where U.S. companies predominate. Washington judged a ruling by the WTO in 1997, which had led to a partial tariff



The contrail of a Minuteman rocket in an antimissile test seen in the sky over Victorville, California, October 2. The Pentagon said it successfully tested a crucial element of its "Star Wars" missile system aimed at giving Washington first-strike nuclear capacity. Washington has made public plans to deploy such a Theater Missile Defense system in Asia aimed above all at the Chinese workers state. At the same time, the U.S. rulers have, up till now, barred China's membership to the WTO as part of their effort to open up the country further to the capitalist market system and do away with its planned economy.

reduction by the EU, to be insufficient.

Earlier this year, Washington and Ottawa announced sanctions against the EU, retaliating against its 11-year ban on imports of hormone-treated U.S. beef. The governments in New Zealand and Australia have complained to the WTO about quotas and tariffs imposed by Clinton on their lamb exports, also in July. Other conflicts have broken out over EU threats to refuse landing rights to older U.S.-manufactured planes fitted with "hush kits." One of the sharpest head-to-head confrontations has been between the passenger jet manufacturers Boeing and the European Airbus consortium.

While the U.S. rulers often present themselves as the foremost advocates of so-called free trade, they don't talk about their simultaneous protectionist policies. The U.S. government maintains 8,000 taxes on foreign goods, with some as high as 458 percent of their import value, according to James Bovard's book, *The Fair Trade Fraud*. Since 1980, Washington has negotiated more than 170 bilateral accords to restrict imports. Quotas agreed to affect up to half of world trade. The U.S. government maintains 3,000 clothing and textile quotas, as well as limits on autos, sugar, dairy products, peanuts, beef, and machine tools. All of these measures are designed to bolster the profit of U.S. capitalists.

The unsettled and conflict-ridden reality of international trade in a world dominated by the capitalist market system surfaces in such disputes. The rivalries among Washington and other major capitalist powers, the largest of which are Germany and Japan, form a growing and destabilizing factor in world trade. In their tussles, each of these giants is attempting to shape the WTO, or interpret its rules, in a way that can give legitimacy to or rationalize its trade demands.

One indication of the growing disorder in trade relations is the militaristic language often used by commentators on international trade. One European commentator warned recently of the danger of different trade disputes "degenerating into political trade wars."

Workings of imperialist system

Among the imperialist powers represented in the WTO are the governments of Australia, Canada, Japan, New Zealand, and the United States, as well as a number of countries from Western Europe, including Britain, France, and Germany. The capitalist rulers of these countries exploit not only the workers and farmers within their nations' borders, but in the Third World as well.

Such powers also dominated the WTO's predecessor, GATT (General Agreement

on Tariffs and Trade), formed in 1947. GATT and "other international credit and financial bodies," established around the same time, "proved to be effective weapons for defending U.S. interests," said Ernesto Che Guevara, speaking to a United Nations-organized conference in 1964. Guevara, born in Argentina, was a central leader of the Cuban revolution.

The "penetration of capital" from the imperialist countries "sometimes takes very subtle forms," said Che. "The International Monetary Fund, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development [World Bank], GATT ... are examples of international organizations placed at the service of the great capitalist colonialist powers — fundamentally, United States imperialism."

The imperialist powers in the WTO and other such bodies aim to *reinforce* the continual transfer of wealth from the semi-colonial world to the coffers of imperialist banks and other such financial institutions. They do not create that transfer, however, for it occurs as part of the normal workings of the imperialist economic system. As Che explained in his speech to the UN conference, these bodies have the character of "fetishes," which the ruling class and its lieutenants in the labor movement use to confuse working people about the real source of the problem. Rather than having an independent existence, these institutions act as a conduit through which the world relationship of class forces is expressed.

The oppressed countries, which have inherited economies distorted by centuries of colonial and semicolonial domination, face an accelerating squeeze as the prices for raw materials and other commodities they export drops and the rates for manufactured goods they are forced to import rises. From 1980 to 1987, for example, the buying power of Africa's export earnings decreased by 30 percent, and that of Latin America and Asia by 25 and 10 percent respectively. Export prices received for commodities have fallen especially sharply in the last couple of years. For African countries prices for nonfuel primary commodities dropped by 7.2 percent in 1998; for Asian countries the drop was 10.8 percent.

Other figures confirm the gap in development. In 1991 the Gross National Product of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean averaged \$2,390 per person per year. That was among the highest in the "low and middle income" world according to the World Bank, which compiled the statistics. The comparable figure for the member countries of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, made up almost entirely of

Continued on Page 10

Miners confront cuts in black lung benefits

BY BILL REYNOLDS

CHICAGO — Some 200 people attended the annual National Black Lung Conference here, October 7-9. The meeting was sponsored by the National Black Lung Association (BLA), the National Coalition of Black Lung and Respiratory Disease Clinics, the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) and the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Medicine and School of Public Health.

The large majority of participants were doctors and other health-care professionals, lawyers, UMWA district and international officials, and retired miners in the BLA. Conference workshops focused on the details of trying to win a black lung claim for a miner through the government bureaucracy. The event was held several hours away from the nearest coal communities, a departure from past years.

Alan Derickson, a doctor who recently published a book on black lung, opened the conference by reviewing the nearly 100-year struggle by miners in the United States for health care and compensation for black lung, which was only officially recognized as a disease by the U.S. government with the passage of the Coal Act in 1969.

Black lung, known medically as Coal Workers Pneumoconiosis, is a disabling occupational lung disease caused by breathing in coal dust. It is a progressive disease that causes shortness of breath and eventually suffocation. While there is no cure, black lung can be eliminated entirely through proper air ventilation, water sprays to reduce dust levels, and respirators in the mines. Roughly 1,500 workers a year die of black lung. Countless others' lives are cut short by the disease and related illnesses, but go unreported.

In the early 1970s, on the heels of the 1969 black lung strike that forced the passage of the Coal Act, about 70 percent of miners with claims received compensation. Three decades later, black lung remains the main killer of miners, but the government and coal bosses have succeeded in sharply curtailing compensation. In the past 10 years just 4 percent of those who applied for benefits won them on the first try. Through appeals, the number rises to 7.5 percent. Since the passage of a new workers compensation law in Kentucky three years ago, the number of miners with black lung there who qualified for benefits dropped from over 79 percent to just 0.9 percent in 1997.

The reality for most miners suffering from black lung is to die without ever receiving benefits. The existing laws and regulations benefit the coal bosses, who have resources



It took mobilizations of coal miners like this action to win black lung benefits in 1960s

to hire lawyers and call on insurance executives to argue their case. Because of costs and bureaucratic delays, miners are often forced to represent themselves.

In recent years, opposition to this situation has been growing in the coal fields. In response, the U.S. Department of Labor proposed new regulations for coal miners seeking compensation. These proposals, submitted just prior to the conference, are based in part on two public hearings held in 1997. The proposals, contained in a lengthy and mind-deadening U.S. Labor document, are largely cosmetic. For example, the government proposes that coal companies be limited in the amount of medical evidence allowed to rebut evidence brought by miners. Coal miners are often subjected to tests by dozens of different doctors.

"There are now no limits on the number of exams that can be introduced, and miners often complain that coal companies overwhelm judges with numerous reports from doctors who nearly always conclude that the miner has no black lung," reported the Louisville, Kentucky, *Courier-Journal*.

Representatives from the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA), the National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health, and the UMWA spoke about the current government regulations on controlling dust levels in the mines. Since 1969, underground coal companies have been responsible for monthly "self-inspection" of dust levels with annual tests by MSHA. Cheating is widespread, especially in non-

union mines where workers who speak out against conditions are frequently fired. Water sprays used to control dust are turned off or clogged, only to be cleaned during a MSHA visit. In some mines, curtains used to help circulate fresh air to the mine face, where coal is being extracted, are not even put up until an inspector comes.

Often the MSHA tests are rigged too. Under the law, coal companies can lower production by 40 percent during tests, causing less respirable dust. Frequently, MSHA inspectors leave the mine during the test, and the fines for high dust levels only range in the hundreds of dollars.

The assistant secretary of labor for mine safety, Davitt McAteer admitted at the black lung conference that "there is widespread cheating by coal operators." He continued, "Pneumoconiosis should not even exist. It's a shame it has not been wiped out in this country yet." He presented recommendations from a government commission, including MSHA taking over dust-sample testing and "single sample" tests of miners who breathe in the most dust. Currently, tests are taken in several different areas of a mine and averaged out. Miners who work where the coal is extracted are exposed to substantially higher dust levels.

There have been several commissions in the last couple decades making the same proposals. Paul Seigle from the Chicago Area Black Lung Association noted that the commission recommendations have been demanded by miners since the 1970s. Joe

Main, director of the department of occupational health and safety for the UMWA, said the proposals have no meaning since they have never been acted on by MSHA.

This year's black lung conference takes place in the context of a broader assault by the coal operators, with government backing, on the health and safety of miners. This has led to a growing mood of resistance in the coal communities. In September, the UMWA organized five mass meetings in the coalfields in defense of lifetime health care and pensions for retired miners and their spouses. About 70,000 retirees are threatened with losing company-funded health care because of a series of recent court rulings around the 1992 Coal Act.

Over the last year, there have been three strikes — against Jeddo in the eastern anthracite coalfields, Freeman United in central Illinois, and Deserado in Colorado — with central issues including company attacks on health care and pensions. This past summer, 36 miners carried out a successful organizing drive at Green Pond in western Kentucky after the company announced it was cutting their medical coverage.

Cecil Roberts, president of the UMWA spoke at the black lung conference. He opened by reviewing the social movement that developed in the 1960s demanding better working conditions and compensation for black lung, and described the recent meetings around the Coal Act. The promise by coal operators that pensions and health care would be guaranteed with every contract was won in 1946, after coal miners defied a court injunction making their nationwide strike illegal, he noted.

Roberts referred to the strike against Pittston coal company a decade ago, during which 40,000 miners walked off the job in solidarity. One of the central issues in the strike was medical benefits. He said, "We will do the same thing a hundred times more for the 70,000 retirees," and threatened to call a march on Washington next year. He made similar statements at the Coal Act meetings.

Several retired miners who are in the Black Lung Association told *Militant* reporters they had participated in the recent meetings to defend their lifetime health care. Herman Klass, president of the Indiana BLA, said the working conditions are getting worse in the mines in southern Indiana and western Kentucky. Some miners in their 30s and 40s are coming into the local UMWA clinic with black lung.

"We have to act," Klass said. "It's going to take a march and lot more to keep our health care. So many of these guys have put in 30 or 40 years in a mine. Many have black lung but have been turned down for benefits. And now the operators say they're going to just cut it off," he said. Klass worked in surface mines for 36 years and has been denied benefits for black lung.

John Votava, a member of the United Steelworkers of America in Chicago, contributed to this article.

Natchez tire strikers battle frame-up

BY SUSAN LAMONT

NATCHEZ, Mississippi — "They take notice of us when we get together," said James White, a striker who has worked at Titan Tire for 32 years. The 56-year-old tire builder was explaining the importance of the growing unity among unionists shown at the September 11 march and rally here.

The event marked the first anniversary of the strike by United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 303L against Titan Tire. It drew several hundred supporters from Steelworker and other unions in the Southeast, including USWA strikers from nearby Kaiser Aluminum in Gramercy, Louisiana, and Continental General Tire in Charlotte, Louisiana. The Continental Tire workers have since won a new contract after their year-long strike, and returned to work.

At the September 11 event, a spontaneous walk into the plant occurred, as demonstrators reached the plant gate after marching from the union hall where everyone had gathered. Curtis Dromgoole, a bias cutter operator with 12 years at Titan, smiled when he recalled what happened. "I saw everyone going in, so I said, 'I'll go in, too.'"

Al Reynolds, a 44-year-old bias cutter, described what happened at the gate. "We had a rally up at the union hall, and then we decided to march to the gate," which is only a few blocks away, he said. "The gate wasn't closed, and the guard said, 'Come on in,'" — something others who were there that day have also reported. "There was no 'no trespassing' sign, and when the police asked us

to come out, we came out." The action, he said, "was great."

Nevertheless, the *Natchez Democrat* described the march as an "ugly display." A few days later, arrest warrants for trespassing began to be issued to strikers. To date, 23 people have been arrested, including White, Dromgoole, and Reynolds. There was an initial court appearance September 27, where those arrested pled "not guilty."

The hearing on the charges is set for October 26, before a city judge. "If we're found guilty, we will appeal," Reynolds said. The trespass charges carry a maximum sentence of six months in jail and \$500 fine. The company is also seeking to place an injunction against the union to restrict picketing. "We'll appeal that, too, if we lose," Reynolds said, adding that the company had tried a similar move early on in the strike and lost.

Several strikers, including one older white worker, noted that with only two exceptions, all those arrested are Black. This is seen by Local 303L members as a move to try to sow division among the strikers. One of the two whites arrested was USWA Local 303L president Leo "T-Bone" Bradley. The other was Mike Willey, a Natchez-area photographer hired by the USWA International to take pictures of the September 11 event.

'The rest of the story'

On September 16, the *Natchez Democrat* carried a guest "Opinion" piece on their editorial pages by Willey. His article, written as a participant in the September 11 action,

answered the *Democrat's* scurrilous charges against the union marchers.

"I haven't been arrested yet. I don't know why. I am one of the people *The Natchez Democrat* called 'culprits' who entered the main building of the Titan Tire plant last Saturday afternoon. And what I saw inside amazed me," Willey wrote.

"The huge building was silent. I saw no machinery running. Only maintenance lights were on. I saw no work going on. I saw fewer than 10 employees inside, all of whom appeared to be doing custodial work. Titan Tire, which plant owner Morry Taylor has said is currently producing thousands of tires, seemed to be almost deserted.

"The Steelworkers paraded through this darkened environment, harming no one, doing no damage, for about five minutes. They were exiting Titan Tire when Natchez police officers arrived. The police made no arrests. The crowd went on to its cookout." Willey was arrested shortly after this article appeared.

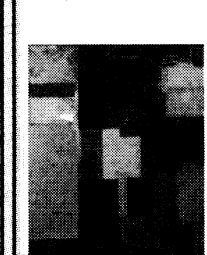
Meanwhile, an investigation of the Natchez plant by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration is underway, following an October 4 explosion and fire at the plant in which two replacement workers were burned. This was the most serious among an increasing number of injuries sustained by scabs working in the plant, strikers report.

Susan LaMont is a member of USWA Local 2122 in Fairfield, Alabama.

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Senate votes down nuclear test ban treaty

Continued from front page

to do with the outcome of the Senate vote.

Supporters of the treaty insisted it "would lock in U.S. nuclear superiority," while opponents said alternatives to atomic test blasts could not guarantee the viability of Washington's nuclear arsenal. Only 26 governments have ratified the treaty.

The pact would extend an earlier ban on atmospheric nuclear testing to those conducted underground. While it prohibits nuclear weapons test explosions around the world, it would allow governments with nuclear weapons to conduct experiments to verify the reliability of their nuclear warheads. The pact allows most of the 4,000 components in a nuclear weapon to be modified, including casings, detonators, batteries, and arming systems.

The treaty also includes "six safeguards" imposed by the Clinton administration that provide for U.S. withdrawal if Washington deems its nuclear weaponry is inadequate.

While the big-business media called the 51-48 vote to reject ratification a blow to "global efforts to curb the spread of nuclear weapons," Democratic and Republican party politicians emphasized the necessity for Washington to strengthen its nuclear arsenal.

"If we cannot maintain the nuclear deterrent... then we will have to give notice and withdraw," Clinton asserted, answering Republican critics of the treaty. He stated Washington's prerogative for military intervention: "We must not only have a powerful military; we must also lead as we have done time and again.... We will continue to protect our interests around the world."

Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott, a Republican who opposed the treaty as "ineffectual," called on the Pentagon "to strengthen our nuclear deterrent in the coming decades."

Meanwhile, the Senate vote drew condemnations from Moscow and Beijing. A Chinese government official said Washington's rejection of the treaty "leaves us with the impression that America has a double standard. You tell the rest of the world not to do something then you go ahead and do it."

"There is a definite trend visible in recent times in U.S. actions, and it causes deep alarm," asserted Russian foreign ministry spokesman Vladimir Rakhmanin. He said Washington's acts of imperial arrogance "are destabilizing the foundations of international relations."

Clinton's nuke program

Last year the U.S. government spent \$25 billion to maintain and operate its nuclear arsenal. The Clinton administration has projected spending \$4.5 billion a year on the so-called Stockpile Stewardship and Management Program — "a virtual testing regime," stated an article published last year in the *New York Times* Sunday magazine, using laboratory tests and computer simulations.

Under the START II (Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty) agreement with Moscow, the U.S. and Russian nuclear arsenals would be reduced to 3,000-3,500 warheads. Although the treaty was ratified by the U.S. Senate in 1996, the Pentagon "intends to retain thousands more," the *Times* article stated. Minutemen missiles are still being upgraded and aimed at Russian targets.

Currently Washington has more than 7,100 nuclear warheads on intercontinental ballistic missiles, submarine launchers, and bombers; Russia has some 6,200 warheads. The U.S. imperialists have also deployed about 150 nuclear bombs in seven NATO countries, the *Washington Post* reported October 20. At any given time, the U.S. rulers have more than 2,300 nuclear warheads on alert that can deliver a combined power of 550 million tons of TNT — the equivalent of 44,000 atomic bombs like the one dropped on Hiroshima.

Meanwhile, the Clinton administration is pressing full steam ahead to develop a national missile system that would abrogate the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) treaty signed in 1972 with the former Soviet Union. The 1972 treaty presumed neither state would launch nuclear warheads against the other if it lacked the means to block retaliation.

Last January the Clinton administration announced it had asked Moscow to renegotiate the ABM treaty to allow the U.S. government to test interceptor missiles — a version of the Star Wars program of former president Ronald Reagan. The technology would purportedly enable Washington to shoot down incoming missiles, giving it a first-strike nuclear capacity. The White House threatened to pull out of the ABM

pact altogether if Moscow disagrees. On October 19 Moscow rebuffed Washington's offer to help complete a Siberian missile-tracking radar station in exchange for renegotiating the treaty.

"We are open to cooperation," Grigory Berdinnikorf, arms control specialist at the Russian Foreign Ministry, said three days earlier. "But if our cooperation means changing the ABM treaty our answer is 'thanks but no thanks.'"

The Pentagon has conducted several tests and spent nearly \$100 billion over the last four decades on developing the antimissile system. It successfully fired a "prototype antimissile weapon" October 3 in the first of 19 scheduled tests.

"Once [U.S. government officials] become sure that they can defend themselves against our missiles, they will start speaking to us from a position of strength," Russian Gen. Yuri Lebedev said earlier this year. Russian officials have begun to consult with Beijing about political and military cooperation should the U.S. government discard the ABM treaty. Two Russian warships docked in Shanghai October 3 for joint naval exercises to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Chinese revolution.

Tensions have risen between Washington and Beijing since the Clinton adminis-

tration floated plans last August to deploy a so-called Theater Missile Defense system in countries surrounding China, including Japan, south Korea, and Taiwan. The U.S. rulers are preparing for the day when they will attempt to use force to dismantle the gains of workers and farmers in China, who threw off the yoke of capitalists and landlords through revolutionary struggle.

Pakistan, India: possible nuke conflict

The regimes in India and Pakistan, which detonated nuclear bombs underground last year, came close to using nuclear weapons against each other in 1990. They have fought three wars since gaining independence in 1947, and edged closer to a fourth this summer over the territory of Kashmir.

The day before the U.S. Senate rejected the treaty, Nawaz Sharif, the prime minister of Pakistan at that time, was ousted in a military coup. Less than two weeks earlier, on October 3, Atal Behari Vajpayee, leader of the Hindu-chauvinist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), was reelected prime minister of India. Neither government has signed the Comprehensive Test Ban treaty.

At his press conference after the treaty vote, Clinton warned both countries about resuming nuclear testing. Asked about Washington's lack of moral authority to de-

mand that other countries stop nuclear testing, he replied, "we were in battle with the new isolationists in the Republican Party."

Ultrarightist presidential candidate Patrick Buchanan's campaign website ran an article by Joseph Farah, which stated "A little isolationism would be healthy for America.... We can't fix the whole world.... There is a role for U.S. foreign intervention. There is a time and place for military involvements.... I do not advocate retreating from the world." Rightists like Buchanan argue for winning "the war at home" first, and that when the government send forces abroad it must use overwhelming power to guarantee victory. Buchanan has used the debate to push his "America First" nationalism, insisting treaties such as this violate "American sovereignty."

Ultraconservative Sen. Jesse Helms, a staunch opponent of the treaty, helped Lott organize its defeat on the Senate floor. In the treaty debate he swiped at Clinton's affair with former White House employee Monica Lewinsky, a sex scandal that prompted impeachment proceedings last year. Reflecting the coarsening of capitalist politics, Helms suggested that British prime minister Anthony Blair might end a treaty-related phone call to Clinton by saying, "Give Monica my regards."

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

ILLINOIS

Chicago

Korea: The 1950 'No Gun Ri' Massacre and the Fight for Unification Today. Video on U.S. repression of post-WWII revolution in South and episodes of Korean War. Speaker: Cappy Kidd, member of United Auto Workers. Fri., Oct. 29, 7 p.m. 1223 N. Milwaukee Ave. Donation: \$4. Tel: (773) 342-1780.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

Socialist Election Campaign in Boston. Speaker: Andrea Morell, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Boston city council at large. Fri., Oct. 29, 7:30 p.m. 683 Washington St. Codman Sq. Dorchester. Donation: \$4. Tel: (617) 282-2254.

MINNESOTA

St. Paul

Forging an Alliance of Workers and Rural Poor. Speaker: James Harris, member of UNITE in Atlanta; an active supporter of farmers' fight in Georgia; and the national farm director of the Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Oct. 30, 7:30 p.m. Reception: 6:30 p.m. *Pathfinder Bookstore*, 2490 University Ave. (at Hwy 280). For more information: call

(651) 644-6325.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Following the Lines of Resistance: From the Coalfields to Battles of Working Farmers. A Benefit for the Pathfinder Fund. Speaker: Diana Newberry, member of UNITE in Pittsburgh, and of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee. Others to be announced. Sat., Oct. 30, 7:30 p.m. Dinner 6:30 p.m. Cohosted by the New York Militant Labor Forum. *Pathfinder Bookstore*, 87a Halsey St. Donation: Program: \$5, dinner: \$5. For more information, call (973) 643-3341 or (718) 399-7257.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

Korea: A People Divided. A relook at the Korean War and the U.S.-imposed division, and a protest of the present day sanctions and threats against north Korea. Fri., Oct. 29, 7:30 p.m. 1906 South St (at 19th). Donation: \$5. Tel: (215) 546-8218.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Celebrate the Grand Reopening of the Pathfinder Bookstore in Washington, D.C. Hear an eyewitness report from Cuba: "40 years of work-

ers and farmers in Power". Speaker: Brian Taylor, staff writer for the *Militant*, member of Socialist Workers Party National Committee. Taylor attended the celebration in Cuba of the 40th anniversary of the land reform law. Sat., Nov. 6, 7:30 p.m. Reception 6 p.m. 3541 14th St. NW. Donation: \$4. Tel: (202) 722-6221.

BRITAIN

London

Defend Free Speech. Speaker: Antonis Partasis, recently found guilty in court of distributing the *Militant* newspaper and revolutionary literature. Fri., Oct. 29, 7 p.m. 47, The Cut. Donation: £2. Tel: 0171-928-7993.

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U.S. Cover-up About Korean War. Fri., Oct. 29, 7 p.m. 203 Karangahape Road. Donation: \$3. Tel: (09) 379. 3075.

Christchurch

The Alliance of Workers and Farmers. Building a Proletarian Movement. Fri., Oct. 29, 7 p.m. Gloucester Arcade, 129 Gloucester St. Donation: \$4. Tel: 365 6055.

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MINNESOTA: St. Paul: 2490 University Ave. W., St. Paul. Zip: 55114. Tel: (651) 644-6325. E-mail: 103014.3261@compuserve.com

NEW JERSEY: Newark: 87A Halsey. Mailing address: Riverfront Plaza, P.O. Box 200117. Zip: 07102-0302. Tel: (973) 643-3341. E-mail: 104216.2703@compuserve.com

NEW YORK: New York City: 59 4th Avenue (corner of Bergen) Brooklyn, NY Zip: 11217. Tel: (718) 399-7257. E-mail: 102064.2642@compuserve.com;

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AUSTRALIA

Sydney: 1st Flr, 176 Redfern St., Redfern NSW 2016. Mailing address: P.O. Box K879, Haymarket Post Office, NSW 1240. Tel: 02-9690-1533. E-mail: 106450.2216@compuserve.com

BRITAIN

London: 47 The Cut. Postal code: SE1 8LL Tel: 0171-928-7993. E-mail: 101515.2702@compuserve.com

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Why treaties won't stop nuclear conflicts

The following excerpts are from two speeches by Jack Barnes, national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, that take up the issue of nuclear weapons and "non-proliferation" treaties. The first selection is from a talk presented on Nov. 7, 1992, four days after the U.S. presidential elections. The second is from a report presented to a special congress of the Communist League and Young Socialists groups in the United Kingdom in June 1992. Both appear in full in *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*. The book is copyright © 1999 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

BY JACK BARNES

The world in which the 1992 election campaign has taken place is marked by increased instability and growing conflicts between the major capitalist powers and ruling classes.

The one modest claim Bush makes for his administration is that for the first time since World War II our children can now go to sleep at night with the knowledge that nuclear war is not going to occur. Whatever criticisms others may have of his administration, Bush says,

from the pages of Capitalism's World Disorder

they cannot deny him that. When he raised this claim during the televised presidential debates, neither Clinton nor Perot would touch it. But of course Bush's assertion is false.

The likelihood is growing, not diminishing, that nuclear weapons will be used in conflicts accelerating around the world. The ones proliferating the farthest and fastest are tactical nuclear weapons, those under the control of battlefield commanders. The use of such tactical nuclear weapons, moreover, is among the actions most likely to provoke broader nuclear exchanges.

A large number of countries now deploy missiles for various military or civilian purposes that could be fitted with nuclear warheads—more than thirty countries so far, by most estimates, with others on the way to developing such missiles. And the wherewithal to produce tactical nuclear weapons is growing as well.

So, it is a lie that children should be able to sleep easier at night. No nonproliferation agreements or anything else will stop the nuclear threat from growing. There is no economic, scientific, diplomatic, or military way under capitalism to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons and delivery systems.

Of course, there is another way to read Bush's claim—that implicitly he is only talking about children in the United States. Perhaps he is saying that children in this country do not have to worry tonight that someone will launch an intercontinental ballistic missile at them. Never forget that when the U.S. rulers talk about "our children," when they talk about "people," they are talking about *their* children, about *their* class. That grotesque class callousness is one more piece of evidence that the working class and fighting toilers around the world are the only true bearers of human solidarity.

I do not know how the big-business press here in Britain played up Russian president Boris Yeltsin's visit to Washington earlier this month. But in the United States, and I suspect elsewhere around the world, headlines proclaimed that Yeltsin and Bush had announced plans to destroy a far greater number of nuclear warheads than had previously been anticipated. As a result, the world is supposed to be less threatened by the use of nuclear weapons.

What is actually happening, however, is the opposite of what the headlines imply.

Here in the United Kingdom, and in France as well, the imperialist governments are strengthening their nuclear arsenals, for example. Prime Minister John Major tips his hat to nuclear cutbacks, announcing plans to remove tactical nuclear warheads from aboard ships and aircraft—tactical weapons that British armed forces never had a realistic way of using. At the same time, however, London is expanding undersea nuclear weapons by installing more accurate, multiwarhead Trident II missiles on British submarines. Paris, for its part, is building five new submarines, armed with new multiwarhead missiles that will double the size of its nuclear force.

What Bush is really pushing Yeltsin to concede, in exchange for promised economic aid, is Moscow's agreement to set aside the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty, allowing Washington the option to deploy a ground-based antiballistic missile system. The U.S. rulers intend to place themselves in a stronger position against all those powers that are continuing to build up their nuclear arsenals, and against all those that will acquire them in the coming decades. That is what the talks with Yeltsin are all about, not the destruction of nuclear weapons on the road to a more peaceful world.¹

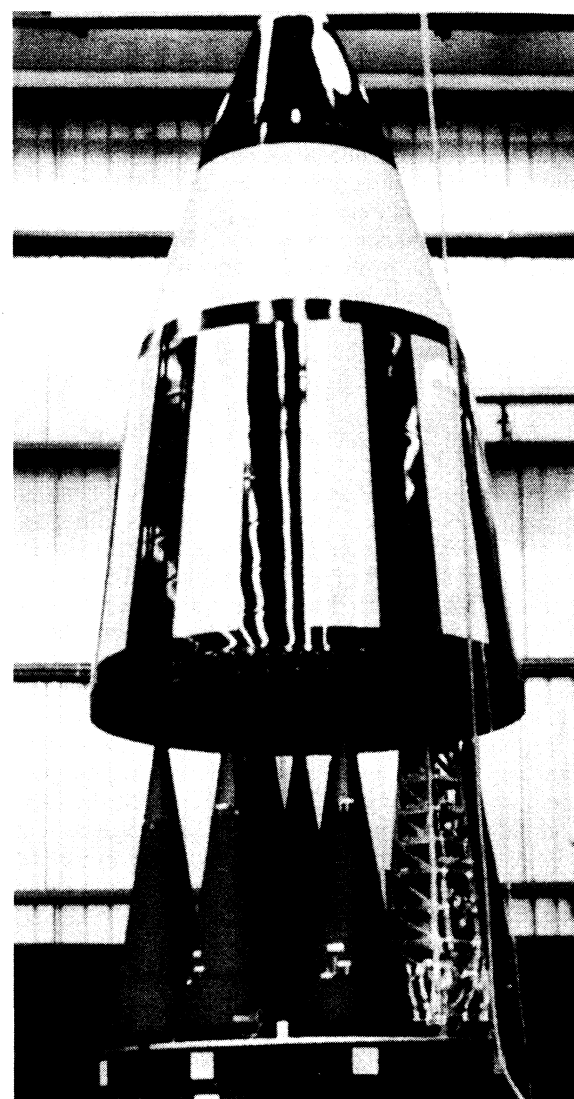
There will be more armed conflict and spreading wars in coming years. More governments in every part of the world will get their hands not only on nuclear weapons but also on ballistic missile delivery systems. At the same time, however, the working class and other toilers who have to fight and die on behalf of the interests of the exploiters will be a powerful source of resistance to such wars and prepa-

rations for war. We will have the opportunity to take power out of the hands of the capitalist rulers who are responsible for war, and for the nuclear threat that continues to hang over humanity.

During the war drive and bloody onslaught against Iraq, communist workers learned in practice how we can fight to defend space in the working class and labor movement to campaign against imperialism and war. We did so even during the stage when the capitalist rulers are always most successful in mounting patriotic backing for their war efforts—when U.S. forces go into combat, but before body bags begin returning home in unexpectedly large numbers. During the Gulf War, we saw just the beginnings of how antiwar resistance can develop among workers and youth. And we will see a similar process—similar debates, similar pressures, similar opportunities—as the capitalists mount more war drives and launch new wars.

¹ In January 1999 the Clinton administration announced plans to spend nearly \$7 billion over six years to build a long-range antiballistic missile (ABM) system, similar to the "Star Wars" program pressed by the Reagan White House in the 1980s. Implementation of Clinton's plan would mark a substantial escalation of strategic weaponry, placing Washington in a position to launch a nuclear first strike for the first time since the development by the Soviet Union of a hydrogen bomb and intercontinental missiles. Constructing the planned U.S. antiballistic missile system would abrogate the 1972 ABM agreement signed by Washington and Moscow, under which both governments are currently bound not to develop such a system.

While the U.S. government claims this move is designed solely as "defense" against "threats" from "rogue nations" such as North Korea and Iraq, its first strategic target is in reality the workers state in China—which has a substantially less developed nuclear arsenal and missile system than the workers state in Russia. Beijing immediately protested Washington's announcement. "It will have a comprehensive and far-reaching impact on the strategic balance and stability of the region and world at large in the 21st century," said a Chinese foreign ministry spokesperson. The statement warned of the added danger of joint development



Warheads for an MX missile at U.S. nuclear weapons facility. At any given time, Washington has more than 2,300 warheads on alert, with the power of 44,000 Hiroshimas. Last year the U.S. government spent \$25 billion on its nuclear arsenal.

of an antimissile system between the U.S. and other countries, clearly referring above all to the often-mentioned potential U.S. partners near China's borders, such as Taiwan, Japan, and south Korea, as well as Russia.

Already confronted with Washington's decision to expand NATO membership to several former Warsaw Pact countries close to Russia's borders, Moscow has so far refused to ratify the START II treaty on nuclear warheads reduction, which was the topic of the 1992 talks between Bush and Yeltsin referred to above. Clinton's ABM plans diminish still further the chances of any START II ratification, and bring the danger for Russia of a U.S. first-strike capacity that much closer.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

31 CENTS THE MILITANT A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

November 1, 1974

When Nelson Rockefeller made some of his stock and security holdings public last month, there was one item that was of special interest to the people of Puerto Rico. This was the bonds he holds in Puerto Rico's Water Resources Authority (Autoridad de las Fuentes Fluviales—AFF), valued at \$1,867,800.

A closer look at AFF ownership and policy gives a vivid glimpse of the way Puerto Rican society is ruled by U.S. monopoly capital.

The AFF is the commonwealth government department that controls electric and water service on the island. In recent months it has been the target of angry consumer protests as electric bills have skyrocketed. For some residents, the rates have shot up in six months from \$12 a month to \$94.35. Boycotts, pickets, and public forums have been organized in many communities and housing cooperatives throughout the island.

This same AFF that pays millions of dollars a year in interest, gives lower rates to U.S. corporations, and makes deals with CORCO [the Commonwealth Oil Refining Corp.] to unload higher oil costs onto working people—pleaded poverty last year when its employees demanded better benefits. The AFF claimed that it had a \$10-million deficit and refused to concede to workers' demands for better insurance benefits and overtime pay.

The domination of U.S. business in Puerto Rico's electric power utility is only one example of the ways in which Yankee imperialism exploits the people of Puerto Rico. This small Caribbean island has become a haven for North American capitalists seeking high

profits. "Where else can you get 100% exemption from all taxes, federal taxes included?" exhorts a recent commonwealth government advertisement in *Business Week*. The ad urges U.S. manufacturers to establish plants in Puerto Rico because "wages are lower than in any other industrial area of the U.S."

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

October 31, 1949

Stalin's pressure against Yugoslavia keeps mounting as his warlike moves multiply. Soviet troops continue to maneuver demonstratively along Yugoslav frontiers. War hysteria against the Tito regime is being whipped up to new heights in the Balkans. The Yugoslav envoy is expelled from Moscow.

Columnist Drew Pearson reported on Oct. 23 that the "chief reason why all American ambassadors from the Iron Curtain countries have been summoned to meet in London" is that the U.S. government has information from the Balkans indicating that the Kremlin "plans to infiltrate Bulgarian, Hungarian and Rumanian troops into Yugoslavia to start a revolution against Tito. Moscow would then trumpet this to the world as a revolution by Yugoslav patriots and would march across the border."

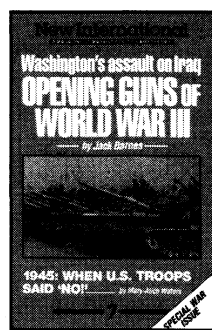
Meanwhile the political preparations for such incursions and similar attacks are being carefully carried out. Highly significant in this connection are inspired reports of mass uprisings in Yugoslavia. On Oct. 25 the *Daily Worker* featured a dispatch from Sofia to the effect that Yugoslav workers have allegedly been engaging in strikes and a "mass boycott" as part of a rising tide of "popular resistance" against the Tito regime. We may expect a barrage of similar reports in the next period.

for further reading

Opening Guns of World War III Washington's Assault on Iraq

Jack Barnes

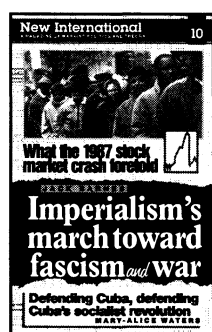
The U.S. government's murderous assault on Iraq heralded increasingly sharp conflicts among imperialist powers, the rise of rightist and fascist forces, growing instability of international capitalism, and more wars. In *New International* no. 7. Also includes "Communist Policy in Wartime as well as in Peacetime" by Mary-Alice Waters. \$12.00



Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War

Jack Barnes

"There will be new Hitlers, new Mussolinis. That is inevitable. What is not inevitable is that they will triumph. The working-class vanguard will organize our class to fight back against the devastating toll we are made to pay for the capitalist crisis. The future of humanity will be decided in the contest between these contending class forces." Jack Barnes, "Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War." In *New International* no. 10. \$14.00



Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 8, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690. Fax: (212) 727-0150. When ordering by mail, please include \$3 to cover shipping and handling.

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

Pickets, public speak outs, and workers' forums are what's needed right now to protest the latest moves by the state of Pennsylvania to execute Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Four years ago, Pennsylvania governor Thomas Ridge signed another death warrant for Abu-Jamal. Mobilizations and protests by thousands of people across the United States and internationally put a spotlight on his case and forced the state to back down at that time. Judge Albert Sabo, the infamous "hanging judge" who sent this Black worker to death row, himself had to sign the stay of execution.

Since then the bipartisan drive by the U.S. rulers to step up the pace of executions — part of broader moves to expand the powers of the cops and restrict democratic rights — has steamed ahead. Laws sharply limiting the right to appeal, like the Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act signed by President William Clinton in 1996, spur the fast track to death. There are currently at least 3,570 prisoners on death row. More than 40 percent of them are Black — more than three times the percentage of Blacks in the U.S. population. And more than half of the human beings actually executed have been Black.

Eighty-two people on death row — one for every seven executed — have been exonerated since capital punishment was restored in 1976. This highlights the fact that under capitalism workers don't get a fair trial. Abu-Jamal's case was no exception — witnesses coerced, evidence withheld, inadequate legal representation, and a vicious cop campaign for conviction.

Abu-Jamal has become an emblem of the struggle for Black rights, for justice, and against the death penalty. He speaks out not only for himself and his case, but for the hundreds of thousands of other toilers who find themselves behind bars, exposing the brutal conditions in U.S. prison system.

Those fighting for Abu-Jamal's release and against the death penalty can win reinforcements today at picket lines, factory gates, mine portals, and farm communities, where the beginnings of a rise of a new proletarian movement is visible. This is where the forces will come from needed to stop the execution of Abu-Jamal and to push back the capitalist class's offensive against working people, including the death penalty.

The death penalty is a class weapon of the ruling rich against urban and rural workers. As a proletarian army — the initial cadres of which are already being forged today — emerges with an increasing will and confidence to confront the boss class for better living and working conditions, the government will escalate its use of force to smack down this resistance.

Every execution they can get away with, every frame-up or unanswered murder carried out by cops against working people, shapes the terrain for the big class battles that are coming. What supporters of democratic rights do today can alter that field of battle to the favor of the working class.

Free Mumia Abu-Jamal!

Abolish the death penalty!

World Trade Organization

Continued from Page 6

imperialist countries, was \$21,530, or nine times greater. The figure in sub-Saharan Africa stood at \$350.

Indicating the gap in modern infrastructure, per capita use of electricity in Latin America and the Caribbean was one-sixth that of the "high income" countries in 1995. Twenty-six percent of roads in the former area were paved in 1996; in the latter, 92 percent.

This unequal relationship, reinforced at every turn with or without the existence of bodies like the WTO, brings devastating consequences for working people of these countries. To take just one instance, a person in North America lives 26 years longer on average than their counterpart in Africa.

In some of the semicolonial countries significant industrialization and economic growth has occurred, radically changing social relations and drawing more toilers under the sway of the capitalist market system. But such development primarily profits the imperialist banks and corporations, and increases national indebtedness.

Trade pacts used to deepen exploitation

The imperialist banks suck billions of dollars in interest payments from the wealth produced by the labor of working people of the Third World. By 1987 this debt stood at \$1.2 trillion. In exchange for rescheduling payments, governments in the semicolonial world were forced to turn over the ownership of many factories, mines, and land to imperialist interests in a "debt rescheduling" programs. Still the foreign debt of these countries mounts, standing in 1996 at nearly \$2 trillion. Payments of interest and principal robbed nearly \$250 billion dollars from semicolonial countries in 1999.

GATT's last seven years were devoted to the Uruguay

round of trade talks among 125 countries, which lowered many tariffs on imports and opened up some hitherto protected markets. The negotiations also ushered the WTO into being on Jan. 1, 1995. The WTO's brief covers a wider range of trade issues than GATT. Rulings by its panel are supposed to be binding, and in theory can be enforced by authorizing sanctions.

The governments of Pakistan, Indonesia, Honduras, and the Dominican Republic have submitted a paper to the WTO's general council, criticizing "the meager benefits derived by developing countries from the Uruguay Round agreements which they had said had operated to the advantage of the industrialised world," reported the *Financial Times* in an article entitled "WTO members square up for new round of discord." Cases before the WTO illustrate its one-sided character. As of September 24, governments had placed 140 disputes before the body at its headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland. "Developed countries" — a euphemism for the imperialist powers — had brought 105 of them, many directed at countries in the Third World.

The British business weekly the *Economist* reported on September 25 that "according to a new study ... rich countries' average tariffs on manufacturing imports from poor countries are four times higher than those on imports from other rich countries."

As the long-term crisis of the capitalist order unfolds, struggles to throw off the yoke of debt slavery and domination of finance capital, like those that have marked the entire imperialist epoch, will continue and intensify. These will be driven by the grinding exploitation imposed by the imperialist system, and by the vicious trade policies of Washington and its rivals.

At the same time, the rivalry among the imperialist powers will also intensify, on the diplomatic and foreign policy fields as well as in trade relations. The logic of this trade rivalry does not end on the field of trade, but on the field of battle, as has happened with catastrophic results several times in the past.

Both those among the few wealthy ruling families who call for "free trade" and those whose slogan is "fair trade" are trying to drag working people behind their trade wars and prepare them for shooting wars. Class-conscious workers demand from the rulers of the country they live in withdrawal from institutions like the WTO and favor their dissolution.

At the same time they are equally opposed to the nationalist campaigns of liberals and ultrarightists alike, whose arguments are echoed by the trade union officialdom, against these trade organizations. Only a fight for international working-class solidarity and for working people to take power out of the hands of the exploiting classes can end the imperial power of Washington and its allies once and for all.

A future article will take up in some detail the nationalist arguments of the forces building the November 30 "anti-WTO" protest in Seattle and similar actions.

Vieques

Continued from Page 5

Rosselló and Carlos Romero Barceló, leader of the PNP's right wing and currently Puerto Rico's nonvoting representative in the U.S. Congress.

In New York, both major contenders for the U.S. Senate, Democrat Hillary Clinton and Republican Rudolph Giuliani, have been reborn as champions of the people of Vieques. Democratic presidential aspirant Albert Gore has posed as sympathetic but more equivocally, saying he is for "a resolution to this important issue."

Navy secretary Richard Danzig, who endorsed the presidential panel's recommendation, has asserted that the Pentagon has failed to find a replacement for the Vieques firing range, which he calls "the only suitable training site" for joint naval, aerial, and amphibious war maneuvers using live fire.

Panel member Hamilton offered a note of concern. He said that after months of careful study, the panel had discovered that "the Puerto Rican community is very incensed by this and they all want it stopped immediately."

Marchers demand end to deportations

BY ROLLANDE GIRARD
AND JOHN SARGE

WASHINGTON, D.C. — "No human being is illegal"; "No deportations"; "Amnesty now"; "No more arrests by immigration on the job"; and "Jobs for all." These were among the most common signs as nearly 5,000 people marched through the capital to demand full rights for undocumented workers and to oppose the raids carried out by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS).

Over the last several years the Clinton administration has led the bipartisan drive to limit the rights of residents born outside the U.S. borders. In 1996 the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigration Responsibility Act was signed, beefing up the immigration cops and giving them greater powers to deport immigrants. Factory raids by the INS have become increasingly common. The 1996 "reform" also barred 1 million immigrants with legal status from receiving social entitlements, and made it harder for those without papers to gain legal status. In the last two years more than 300,000 people have been deported, more than twice the number expelled in the previous two years.

There is resistance to these attacks. In Miami, for instance, there have been several protests demanding freedom for people detained at Krome Detention Center under the 1996 law, which retroactively punishes noncitizens for past crimes, even minor ones, with deportation.

Some of those who came to Washington on a bus from Long Island, New York, have been involved in a struggle by Mexican workers to defend themselves against attacks by a right wing, anti-immigrant group. The workers have faced intimidation and even physical assault as they gather on the sidewalk to be hired by area contractors. Workers responded by mobilizing against the rightists.

In addition to dozens of buses from New York, marchers came in buses, mini-vans and cars from Florida, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Jersey, Ohio, and Texas. Some traveled across the country from California. Many city residents also joined the protest. The action included immigrants from four continents. The largest numbers were those from Latin America and the Caribbean.

'We're here, we won't go back!'

"*Aquí estamos y no nos vamos. Y si nos echan, nos regresamos.*" ("We are here and we won't go. And if they kick us out, we'll come back!") was a popular chant. As the protest progressed different contingents would call out, "Mexico!, Ecuador! Colombia!" and other countries, while others chanted, "Amnesty, Yes! Deportations, No!"

The action was called as a "March for Dignity and Amnesty." Many of the speakers promoted lobbying Congress for a "general amnesty" law under which undocumented workers who are currently in the United States could apply for legal status. Some speakers also promoted measures such as a bill proposed by Rep. Lincoln Díaz Balart to give amnesty to Colombian and Peruvian immigrants who came to the United States before December 1995 due to "terrorist violence."

Congressman Luis Gutiérrez, a Democrat from Chicago, sent a message to the meeting stating, "If you can vote, you have to vote." Those who can't vote can still work to get the Republicans out of Congress, he urged.

This action had a much larger trade union presence than a similar protest in 1996. The single largest contingent was from the Laborers International Union. New York City locals brought members on 13 buses with the unionists carrying flags from their respective countries, including Ecuador, El Salvador, Mexico and Poland. Other Laborers here included a group of poultry workers from Morganton, North Carolina and some from the Washington area. These workers were especially noticeable as they blew the hundreds of whistles that they brought.

"While some [workers] are undocumented, the taxes they pay are very well documented," declared Manuel Escobar, who was part of the Laborers contingent. Zoila Rodríguez, another member of the contingent, said that many of the 100 workers where she works at Core Recycling in New Jersey came to the march.

When asked why he made the more-than-20-hour trip Salvador López, a Mexican farmworker from Bonita Springs, Florida, explained "We need amnesty and better treatment, and better wages. We are paid \$5.15 an hour and get no benefits whatsoever."

There were farmworkers' contingents from Toledo, Ohio, and North Carolina organized by the Farm Labor Organizing Committee (FLOC). The FLOC members, wearing bright red T-shirts and waving flags, were building support for a boycott of North Carolina-based Mt. Olive Pickle Co. The union has won contracts with pickle makers in Ohio that included pay increases and some control over health and safety conditions. Workers are fighting to extend these gains to North Carolina.

As one of the buses arrived in Miami on its return trip, Max Borieux told the group of mostly Haitian participants, "This was a good event, it is a step in the struggle, and we will continue to mobilize until we reach victory!"

Rollande Girard is a member of the International Association of Machinists Local 1126 in Miami, Florida; John Sarge is a member of the United Auto Workers Local 900 in Wayne, Michigan.

Airport cleaners strike, win higher pay in Paris

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

Day shift workers make between 4,800 and 5,000 francs a month (\$785-800). Those on the night shift earn between 6,300 and 6,500 francs a month.

Many airport workers came indi-

workers who asked that only his first name be used, said, "I was already in the TGWU. I'd been a member since a unionization dispute in Garners Steakhouse in 1978."

Referring to other unionization fights led by immigrant workers in the late 1970s and more recently, Mohammed added, "Asian workers are taking a lead in the fight to defend the unions." Most of the Pricecheck workers are from Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka.

Mohammed recently joined a small delegation of Pricecheck workers to the picket line of strikers at Lufthansa Skycheffs at Heathrow airport. These catering workers, most of whom are immigrants from the Indian subcontinent, have been on strike for 11 months to defend their union and conditions.

Health-care strikers rally for contract in Illinois

GODFREY, Illinois — More than 200 members and supporters of American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Local 3784, on strike against Beverly Farms since July 9, turned out for "Strikers Week-end — Speak Out" September 18-19. They picketed and rallied in front of Beverly Farms, a private home for mentally disabled adults, during Parents Day and an annual board meeting.

Strikers explained to parents entering the health facility that they were on strike for a contract. Striker Lucille Butler said they were picketing to tell the families of the 400 residents, "They have rights too. Their children need good care."

Since the strike began, Monte Welker, the home's director, has been hiring temporary workers. According to Butler, the scabs are getting "inadequate, bad training."

The workers voted to join AFSCME by a big majority in 1994. A final contract offer was rejected in 1995 by the union membership. Beverly Farm refused to continue negotiations until they were ordered to by the National Labor Relations Board and a federal appellate court in 1998.

The union is demanding a 65-cent wage increase and a grievance procedure. Laundry and dietary workers now start at \$5.35 an hour and other workers start at \$5.50. Strike breakers hired at local temporary agencies are being paid \$12-15 an hour.

Striker Crystal Price, 25, who has worked at Beverly Farms for 6 years, explained that she has been part of a group of strikers who have been picketing a temporary agency in East St. Louis, Illinois. She said when they began 32 temporaries

Locked-out Steelworkers solid



Militant/Jim Garrison

United Steelworkers of America members picket American Steel Foundry in Granite City, Illinois, October 1. They were locked out after rejecting a five-year contract that included a measly 40-cent-a-year wage increase and inflated health-insurance costs.

ON THE PICKET LINE

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

PARIS — After 11 days on strike, workers of Abilis, a cleaning company at the Charles de Gaulle Airport here, went back to work. "This is a tremendous victory," said Rachida, one of the strikers who asked that only her first name be used.

The company increased its offer for a daily bonus to 30 francs now, and another 10 francs at the end of the year (1 franc = US\$0.16). The workers had demanded an immediate bonus of 40 francs a day. The company has agreed to continue negotiations on all other issues raised by the union, and to partially compensate workers for wages lost during the strike.

"If we don't get what we want on some other issues we'll probably have to strike again," said Rachida. "Anyway, they can't treat us like slaves any more," she added.

All 85 of the Abilis workers took part in the strike. In addition to the daily bonus, their demands included an increase in the bonus for night workers, an increase in holiday pay to 75 percent of regular wages, and the payment of a 13th-month bonus at the end of the year.

The daily bonus was the biggest issue. On the second day of the strike, management proposed a 15-franc bonus, betting on a rapid deterioration of the strike.

"They thought that we would never go on strike. Most of us were previously unemployed or receiving RMI [government assistance given to those with no other resources]. They believed that we would be ready to accept anything," said Philippe, a member of the CFDT [French democratic labor federation] union, which represents a majority of the workers at Abilis. "But it was the bosses, that got the surprise."

"Every month something was missing on our pay slip. Unpaid hours, a work day, or a bonus that was 'forgotten,'" said Christophe Maurice, a young worker proudly wearing a Che Guevara badge.

vidually to show their solidarity, even though no concrete support was organized by the unions at other companies in the airport. While this correspondent was talking to a group of Abilis strikers, two transporters who work for Brinks came to show their solidarity. One said that a strike is being prepared at Brinks and encouraged the Abilis workers to hold firm. Air France workers flashed signs of encouragement while passing the strikers.

In the same week, Air France baggage handlers organized daily one-hour work stoppages, delaying planes, to protest against the proposed agreement on the 35-hour workweek introducing work time flexibility. Paris-area airport bus drivers struck for a day October 14 for the same reason.

Shop workers in London: 'We want union rights!'

LONDON — "What do we want? Union rights," chanted a dozen workers picketing a Pricecheck supermarket in central London October 13. Jalal Uddin told *Militant* reporters, "We organize pickets like this on our breaks and days off outside different Pricecheck shops. We give out information and get people to boycott the stores until the owner recognizes our union."

Some 120 workers are employed in nine Pricecheck shops in central London owned by businessman Manzoor Chaudhary. Uddin explained, "We're only paid £3.65 [\$5.50] an hour. Our conditions are poor and we get no holiday or sick pay. Last Christmas Day we'd had enough and in some of the shops we refused to work unless we were paid overtime pay for working a holiday."

In response, Chaudhary sacked three of the most vocal workers and victimized others with demotions.

"I wasn't in the union then," Uddin added. "Most of the others weren't either, so we contacted the Transport and General Workers Union [TGWU]." Seventy five percent of the workers in the nine stores are now TGWU members.

Chaudhary conceded overtime pay for the Christmas Day, but refuses to recognize the union or reinstate the demoted and fired workers.

Mohammed, one of the sacked

— LETTERS —

An account of Titan rally

Hotheads, thugs, and outside instigators. That's what the participants in the one-year anniversary rally for the striking Titan Tire workers were called by Titan CEO Maurice Taylor and the bourgeois press.

Upon invitation from USWA [United Steelworkers of America] Local 303L member Willie Evans, I drove to Natchez, Mississippi, with some members of other union locals to participate in the September 11 rally. The next morning, splashed across the front page of the *Natchez Democrat* was the headline, "Union Charges Plant." It opened by saying, "What started as a simple union rally quickly became an ugly Saturday afternoon."

It did start as a simple union rally. (Except there was about 350 in attendance, including workers from Uruguay.) After the rally speeches, the strikers led a march down to the

plant gates. Then things got exciting; inspiring. While everyone was chanting union chants, some of the strikers decided to take a tour of their plant to see if Taylor and the scabs were taking care of it. Others joined them. (The gate was unlocked.)

The paper described the day as "ugly." (What they really mean is scary.) What I say was a beautiful Saturday afternoon. Full of worker solidarity. I guess I viewed the events from a different vantage point than Titan CEO Taylor and the bourgeois press. (Apparently the view from behind a mahogany desk is quite different.)

In an editorial, the paper called it a "mob scene" and said, "...we fear that many of the instigators at Saturday's fiasco weren't even locals." (What they really fear is worker solidarity, and that workers were testing their strength.) The paper went on to say, "We can only

hope that the culprits...are brought to justice and that our...community won't have to endure such a flagrant display of disrespect again." (I couldn't agree more. Put Taylor in jail.) Taylor and local city officials claim the unionists broke the law. In the eyes of the capitalists, maybe, but that's not the way many workers see it.

And what do city officials think of workers? Last word is that 15 have been charged with trespassing.

Just like Crown Petroleum bosses don't understand why workers and farmers travel hundreds of miles to Texas to join locked-out workers on the picket line, Titan Tire boss Taylor thinks everyone who showed up at the rally that day were thugs, there for the sole purpose of making trouble. It's beyond his comprehension that the working class can join together in struggle despite their efforts to di-

vide us.

These capitalist bosses are like sharks. Loners, swimming the ocean looking for their next meal. (My apologies to the shark.) They have no concept of human solidarity.

Workers will continue their struggle for a just society. Events like this will become more common again. (Unions were built around sit-down strikes.) The rallies will get larger. The divisions put in place by the capitalists will continue to break down. Solidarity will build. Hope to see you there.

Dean Cook
Deer Park, Texas

Chinese revolution

I was surprised by the absence of coverage on the 50th anniversary of the Chinese revolution in the pages of the *Militant*. It seems that this monumental event in the history of working people around the

were catching the bus from the agency to Beverly Farms. It is now down to five.

The morning of September 19, strikers and supporters picketed the training center where the board of directors was meeting. One parent leaving the board meeting told strikers that Welker, the director, told them a letter signed by 41 local ministers supporting the strike had been forged. One of the signers of this letter was present to inform the parent that this was not true.

In Godfrey and the neighboring town of Alton, yard after yard sports signs saying "We Support the Beverly Farms Workers" The strikers have held several rallies, including one attended by 300-500 people that was addressed by politician Jesse Jackson.

Lockout at Yellow Pages ends in Montreal

MONTREAL, Quebec — "We are very satisfied. The atmosphere is very good. Even the girls who didn't agree are very happy with the results." This is how Sylvie Champagne, who has worked 14 years at Bell ActiMédia (Yellow Pages) in Montreal described the end of their lockout to the *Militant*. The 350 members of the Office and Professional Employees Union were locked out on March 10 after they rejected the employers' final offer by 61 percent.

Workers returned to work September 27 after voting by 89 per-

cent in favor of a new contract offer. The company withdrew its demand to eliminate banked days off — days covered by the workers being paid 35.5 hours for a 37.5-hour workweek. This would have resulted in a 4.4 percent cut in hourly pay.

The union won wage increases totaling 10.5 percent over the five years of the contract, and separation pay will increase to three weeks for each year of service. Champagne commented on the more-than-six-month fight, "It was worth it. We got a good contract."

Throughout the lockout workers maintained their picket lines and organized a series of other actions to win support. They faced several court injunctions. During the six months, a part of the work normally done in Montreal was done in Toronto, where the workers, who belong to an association, did not strike. Champagne commented, "The company is afraid that the people in Toronto will change their union. The next time everyone would be out."

Jean-Louis Salfati, an airport worker in Paris; Celia Pugh in London; Alyson Kennedy, a garment worker in St. Louis, and Shelton McCrainey, a member of USWA Local 9014 in Bridgeton, Missouri; and Alexandre Geoffroy and Joe Young, a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers in St. Blaise, Quebec, contributed to this column.

world would have warranted major coverage in a socialist news weekly.

What a good opportunity to set the record straight on what the revolution was all about as opposed to what we read in the big-business media! In addition, it would be educational to explain Maoism to Militant readers and how (and if) it differs from Stalinism. What gains remain for the workers and peasants of China today despite Mao and his successors? And Taiwan? Hong Kong?

Please, it's not too late...
Barbara Greenway
Frederick, Maryland

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.

U.S. military escalation in Colombia targets working people, guerrillas

BY ANDY BUCHANAN
AND MARTÍN KOPPEL

The Clinton administration is moving to escalate significantly its military intervention in Colombia. Under the pretext of fighting drug traffickers, Washington is sending military personnel and equipment to bolster the Colombian regime's bloody counter-insurgency war in the countryside.

The U.S. rulers are concerned that the Colombian government is politically too weak to defeat the decades-long guerrilla insurgency in the countryside as well as impose the economic austerity measures on working people that foreign capitalist investors demand. The guerrilla forces, which control large swaths of territory, have not prevailed either.

The army, rightist death squads tied to the military, and private armies of drug-trafficking capitalists have terrorized peasants in the countryside and targeted urban supporters of left-wing organizations.

The impasse has led to a social breakdown, with permanent instability and violence that pervades Colombian society.

Escalating U.S. intervention

Washington has funneled \$309 million in military aid to the Colombian government this year, more than tripling the previous year's "aid" package and making Colombia the fourth-largest recipient of U.S. military funding after the regimes of Israel, Egypt, and Jordan.

On top of this, the U.S. Congress is considering a \$1.5 billion aid proposal for the Colombian government over the next three years, the bulk of it for the military. Gen. Barry McCaffrey, the White House "drug czar," has been campaigning for a sharp hike in aid to the Colombian army and police, citing a "drug-related emergency."

Washington has built radar and electronic-surveillance stations in Colombia staffed by U.S. personnel, and U.S. special forces have begun training a new elite "antidrug" battalion of 950 soldiers and 200 police officers. Plans are under way to train further units. U.S. military "trainers" are operating in combat zones. Between 100 and 150 members of the U.S. military, including members of the Seventh Special Forces Group based in Fort Bragg, North Carolina, train an Anti-Narcotics Battalion of the Colombian army.

Worst depression in decades

Colombia is reeling from the effects of the worldwide deflation in commodity prices, which has plunged the country into



Army roadblock in Colombia. Bogotá is fourth-largest recipient of U.S. military aid.

the worst economic crisis since the Great Depression. The economy shrank by 7.6 percent in the second quarter of 1999, and production plummeted by more than 16 percent compared to the same period in 1998.

Colombia depends on exports of raw materials and semi-finished goods, and is dominated by U.S. and other imperialist interests. Its main exports are oil, coffee, gold, and coal, as well as cocaine.

Fueled by falling commodity prices, Colombia's foreign debt to international banks rose last year to \$20.8 billion, nearly 30 percent of the country's gross domestic product. Unemployment has skyrocketed to nearly 20 percent. After two devaluations in one year, the Pastrana government let the peso float freely against the U.S. dollar September 26. The day before, it announced a loan of up to \$3 billion from the International Monetary Fund. Following IMF dictates, Pastrana is seeking to place the burden of the economic crisis on the backs of working people.

In July the government presented what it called the "Truth Budget," slashing state spending on pensions and other social programs. Antiunion laws accompanied the budget. On August 31 the three national trade union federations responded with a nationwide strike. Workers protested the anti-union laws, austerity measures, and the sell-off of state-owned companies. They also called for a moratorium on payment of the foreign and domestic debt. In response, the government mobilized police and army units in working-class neighborhoods and along highways throughout the country, arresting 187 people.

On October 15, some 600,000 teachers, hospital workers, and other public employees walked off the job to protest wage freezes proposed by the government — the fourth nationwide strike since Pastrana came to power last year.

Drugs: a capitalist business

In depicting the social crisis in Colombia, the big-business media paints that country as a center of the international narcotics trade. In so doing, they smear Colombian working people as well as the antigovernment guerrillas as the source of the problem.

What they fail to point out is that the production and trade of narcotics is a capitalist business run by billionaires — both in Colombia and in the United States.

In June, the Colombian government announced it had begun to include in-

come earned from drugs in the official statistics on the economy. Drug exports from Colombia total around \$4 billion a year. Colombia's Gross National Product is nearly \$80 billion. Cocaine-processing plants run by wealthy drug cartels in Colombia supply the majority of the cocaine sold on the U.S. and European markets. The vast bulk of the superprofits generated by the sale of narcotics in the United States ends up in the bank accounts of U.S. capitalists — both the "illegal" mafia type and those of a more "reputable" stripe.

The *nouveau riche* drug billionaires are a powerful section of the capitalist class in Colombia. The profits reaped in the drug trade, and the illegal character of this arm of big business, give it a particularly cut-throat character. This rise of vastly wealthy narco-capitalists has further destabilized Colombian ruling circles, fueling conflict within a class that is no stranger to resolving its differences by violent means.

Thousands of small farmers in Colombia grow coca because they cannot make a living by growing food crops or other staples. They are exploited by the drug cartels, and their crops are the targets of government anti-drug operations. Cocaine barons have become major landowners, pushing thousands of peasants off the land.

Military and rightist terror

Drug capitalists have created private armies, which unleash terror against peasants and combat the guerrilla organizations. The army and paramilitary groups have also carried out repression against rural toilers and working-class activists in the cities. Paramilitary gangs, often with ties to narco-landowners, function as an extension of the army in carrying out the regime's dirty war. There were 3,832 documented political killings in Colombia in 1998.

The United Workers Confederation (CUT) reports that 2,300 union members have been assassinated since it was founded in 1986. Some 300,000 Colombians were forced to flee their homes in 1998 alone, bringing the internal refugee population to one million.

Crisis fuels guerrilla struggle

The economic and social crisis unfolding in Colombia has fueled the 30-year guerrilla insurgency waged by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) and the smaller National Liberation Army (ELN). Today the FARC fields an estimated 20,000 combatants and controls up to 40 percent of the country.

The FARC emerged in the early 1960s from guerrilla columns led by the pro-Mos-

cow Communist Party during Colombia's 10-year civil war, which lasted from 1947 to 1957. That war, known as *La Violencia*, began in a bloody struggle between the Conservative and Liberal Party wings of the ruling class. Conservative and Liberal leaders finally sank their differences and united behind the dictatorship of General Gustavo Rojas Pinilla in 1953. The two ruling parties established a "National Front" accord, agreeing to alternate administrations every four years.

Meanwhile, a state of siege was in effect in Colombia almost continuously from 1948 to 1983.

By the mid-1960s, peasant-based guerrilla forces controlled large sections of the countryside. The FARC was founded in 1964 in response to a brutal army offensive in the Marquetalia region of Tolima Province.

As a result of massive worker and peasant protests that culminated in a 1977 general strike, the Colombian rulers were forced to lift some of the most sweeping restrictions on democratic rights. In 1982 President Belisario Betancur initiated a process of negotiations and amnesty with various guerrilla groups, which led to several of them laying down their arms, including the April 19 Movement (M-19), which had been prominent in the 1970s. M-19 began to function as a regular political party; some of its leaders were coopted into the government, and the organization has since dissolved.

Goals of the FARC

In 1985 the FARC founded the Patriotic Union (UP), a legal organization that ran candidates in the elections. But it was decimated by repression by rightist death squads, which over a decade assassinated 3,000 of its leaders and followers.

The FARC has historically been politically associated with the Communist Party of Colombia, although it is organizationally independent. At its eighth national conference in 1993, the FARC proposed a "Government of Reconstruction and National Reconciliation." Its program calls for an end to repression, land reform, and democratic reforms of the government and judiciary together with an economic program combining state-owned enterprises and private business. It calls for renegotiation of the national debt.

The FARC defines the government of national reconciliation as "pluralistic, patriotic, and democratic." It advocates an alliance of peasants, workers, small businessmen, and "the national bourgeoisie that is willing to fight imperialism."

Prior to taking office last November, Colombian president Pastrana initiated a process of "peace talks" with the FARC in the hope of stabilizing the government's position. Shortly after taking office, Pastrana pulled the Colombian army out of a large "de-militarized zone" in the south of the country, leaving it under the undisputed control of the FARC.

Since then the talks have stalled and Washington has prompted the Bogotá regime to step up its military offensive against the guerrillas. Gen. Charles Wilhelm, chief of U.S. military forces in Latin America, told a congressional commission, "I'm convinced that the [Colombian] government must strengthen its negotiating position, and I believe that increased leverage at the negotiating table can only be gained on Colombia's battlefields."

A senior U.S. official quoted in the *New York Times* offers a more sober assessment. "It is going to be a very dangerous mess, and we are going to be right in the middle of that mess," he declared.

Andy Buchanan is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Textile and Industrial Employees in Paterson, New Jersey.

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