

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Cuban leader speaks on war for independence, against slavery

— PAGE 8-11

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Black farmers speak out on fight against U.S. gov't discrimination

BY STU SINGER

WASHINGTON, D.C. — "The government has conspired against Black farmers. The local plantation owners and the local lending institutions want Black farmers out of business. Land is power. Their intent is to do away with Black farmers," veteran Black rights fighter Eddie Carthan told the *Militant* from his store in Tchula, Mississippi.

Carthan is not surprised about the recent disclosures that some Democratic and Republican Party politicians are members of the Council of Conservative Citizens, the group that used to be called the White Citizens Council. "Trent Lott and the others are the ones who would like to turn the clock back," he said, referring to the Senate majority leader, who is from Mississippi. "But it will never happen. This whole fight by Black farmers is not just a landowners issue. It goes much deeper. It has to do with the empowerment of Black people throughout the United States."

Carthan, who farmed until 1997, hopes to be in Washington March 2 for the federal

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Clinton pushes militarization, erosion of social wage

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

With pomp and fanfare, U.S. president William Clinton announced a plan to "save" Social Security as the centerpiece of his State of the Union speech January 19. His proposal reopened the door to the idea of privatizing Social Security and gambling retirement benefits on Wall Street's stock market bubble.

At the same time, Clinton reiterated his administration's earlier announcement of the biggest increase in military spending in more than 15 years. He also threatened Tokyo with punitive trade measures, illustrating sharper conflicts with Washington's imperialist allies, who are also competitors. And he promised to toughen his "law and order" course by putting an additional 50,000 cops on the streets.

Clinton delivered the annual address to Congress as his presidency is in the midst of a deep crisis. Behind it is the spreading crisis of overproduction of the world capitalist system and the resulting decline of confidence in its leading personnel, not only among working people but among the system's beneficiaries.

Since January 7, the Senate has been conducting Clinton's trial on the two articles of impeachment the House of Representatives approved in November. Indications are that the Republican majority in the Senate will push for prolonging the trial by calling witnesses, including Monica Lewinsky, the

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U.S., NATO hands off Yugoslavia now!

Working people should condemn U.S. war threats against Yugoslavia and campaign to tell the truth about the imperialists' aims in the Balkans. Washington sheds crocodile tears over the slaughter of Albanians in Kosovo, as it moves step by step toward an

EDITORIAL

eventual military onslaught against all the peoples of Yugoslavia.

The U.S. rulers couldn't care less about the national rights of Albanians there. Their howls about "crimes against humanity" are cover for their plans to unleash massive airstrikes, or whatever other force they think can serve their interests, in the Balkans. These are the same imperialists responsible for the devastation of the Iraqi people, who

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Washington probes military strikes against Yugoslavia

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

The Clinton administration is preparing to possibly launch a military attack on Yugoslavia. After meeting with Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic January 19, U.S. general Wesley Clark, the supreme commander of NATO, said, "He is most compliant when threatened directly with heavy military pressure," the *New York Times* reported.

Following that meeting, the U.S.-dominated NATO command sent warships to the Adriatic Sea, off the coast of Yugoslavia, and put pilots on alert to be ready to bomb on 48 hours' notice, instead of 96 hours. The British government doubled its deploy-

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Hundreds protest KKK rally in Birmingham, Alabama



Militant photos by Clay Dennison

More than 600 people mobilized against the Ku Klux Klan in Birmingham, Alabama, January 16. The rightists drew only a few people to their rally, which was provocatively scheduled for the Martin Luther King holiday weekend.

North Carolina tire strike stays solid

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina — The strike by some 1,450 members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) against

Continental General Tire Co. remains solid as the work stoppage enters its fifth month. Workers interviewed by *Militant* reporters on the picket lines January 16-17 remain

upbeat and confident of victory.

"When we went out most of us knew it would be a long haul," said Cedrick Davis, who has worked in the plant seven months. "This strike is bigger than Continental General Tire and our union."

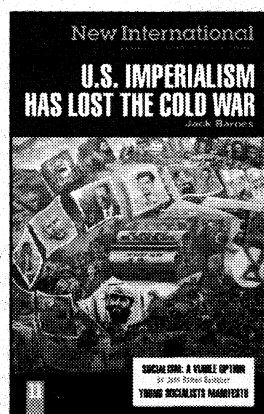
"This strike has made us a union, before we were just an organization," chimed in Rose Sanders. "They fused us into one big powerful union."

Bruce Nash, a member of the union's health and safety committee with 27 years at the plant, said, "This is not about money. This is not an economic strike. It's about busting the union and demoralizing the union."

At a January 12 news conference held outside the plant gates and attended by some 300 strikers, USWA vice-president John Sellers announced a stepped-up media campaign to present the union's point of view to the public. Full-page ads were placed in several newspapers, including the *Charlotte Observer*, and *Wall Street Journal*. Radio messages were to be played on eight Charlotte radio stations, as well as in Mayfield, Kentucky; Bryan, Ohio; and Mt.

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From Pathfinder



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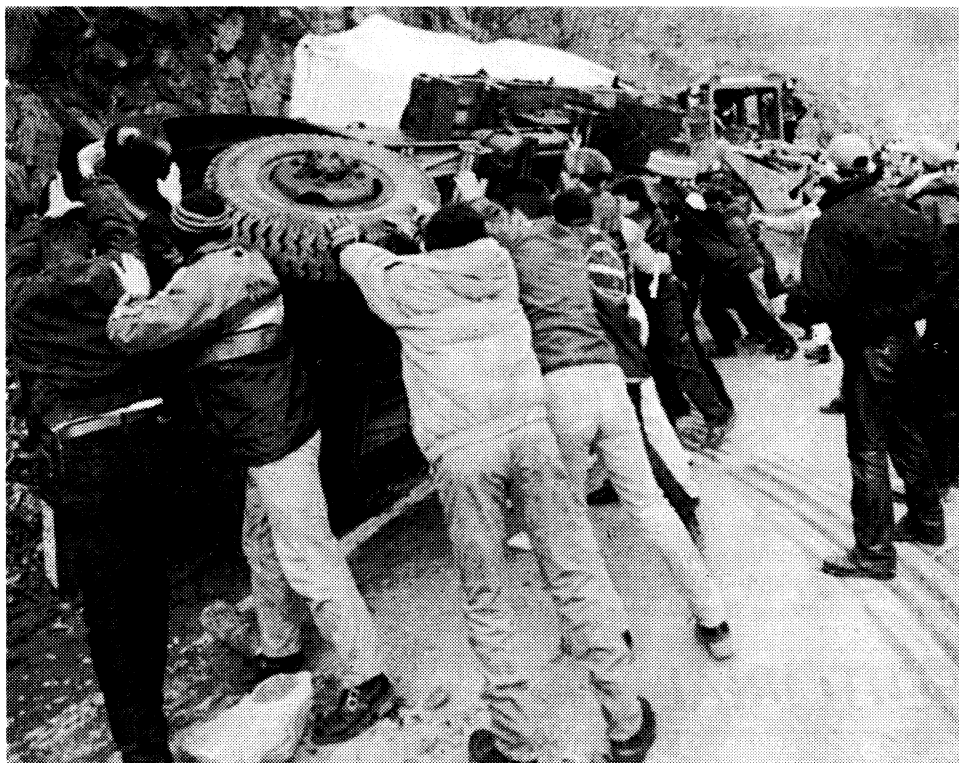
10,000 miners rally in Romania

Ten thousand miners marched toward Bucharest, the capital of Romania, January 18 demanding higher wages and an end to proposed layoffs. The government deployed police against the workers. The cops used helicopters, fired tear gas and smoke bombs, blocked roads, and halted all trains from the Jiu Valley coal region, vowing to use "all legal means" to stop the miners. January 18 marked day 14 of the strike. A local court declared the strike illegal January 15.

Washington sanctions Russian institutes over Iran relations

Washington slapped sanctions on three scientific institutions in Russia January 12, accusing them of providing the Iranian government with missile and nuclear technology. The Moscow Aviation Institute, the Mendeleyev University of Chemical Technology, and the Scientific Research and Design Institute of Power and Technology are barred from buying U.S.-made goods, exporting products to the United States, or selling to the U.S. government. Russian officials denied the allegations.

"Any attempts to speak to us in the language of sanctions and pressure are absolutely unacceptable," read a Russian foreign ministry statement. "Naturally they will not go unanswered." Gennady Seleznyov, the speaker of the lower house of parliament said, "Americans keep finding new areas for



Miners in Romania remove government roadblocks January 18 on march to Bucharest

confrontation and that spells no good for Russian-American relations." The latest round of sanctions brings to 12 the total number of Russian companies and institutes Washington has sought to penalize for al-

leged dealings with Tehran.

Yeltsin faces impeachment

Russian president Boris Yeltsin could face an impeachment vote in the Duma, Russia's

lower house of parliament, as early as February, according to Russian Communist Party leader Gennady Zyuganov.

Five impeachment charges will be levied against him. The charge that Zyuganov says would have the most backing accuses Yeltsin of illegally launching the 1994-96 war against Chechen independence fighters, which was a fiasco for Moscow. Other charges blame him for the break up of the Soviet Union and "genocide" against the Russian people. Three hundred of the 450 votes in the parliament are needed to impeach.

Turkey has new prime minister

The Turkish government, after six weeks of failed attempts, elected a new prime minister January 11. Bülent Ecevit replaces Mesut Yilmaz, who resigned last November under allegations of corruption. Ecevit, head of the Democratic Left Party who was thrice elected as prime minister in the 1970s, after a failed first attempt was able to patch together a minority coalition with the participation of two conservative groupings. Ecevit describes his regime as having "a limited tenure to govern." The principal task "is to carry Turkey to the general and local elections" in April.

Ecevit projects pushing through austerity measures such as hacking social security. He is known for sending troops into northern Cyprus in 1974, following a coup in southern Cyprus that was backed by the Greek government. That island remains divided today.

Tensions recently flared over attempts by the Greek Cypriot government to install Russian missiles in the south, a plan that has been halted for now.

Protesters demand Palestinian Authority release prisoners

Scores of Arab women protested outside the Palestinian National Council building in Ramallah, West Bank, January 13, demanding the release of Palestinian political prisoners held by the Palestinian Authority (PA). "Justice minister, where's the justice?" they chanted blaming PA justice minister Freih Abu Medein for the jailing of some 450 Palestinians without a trial. "We want an end to the issue of political detention," said Maysar Jaber, whose husband along with others were rounded up by PA cops as a suspect in a September suicide bombing in Jerusalem. "The only thing they did was believe in a political line that is different from the Authority."

Meanwhile, some Palestinian officials gave Yasser Arafat's government two weeks to either press charges or release the detainees. Many of these arrests came as concessions made through "peace" deals between Tel Aviv, Washington, and the Palestinian Authority. The Israeli government has been responsible for jailing tens of thousands of Palestinians during nearly three decades of military occupation of Arab land.

— BRIAN TAYLOR

Tokyo prepares for military interventions

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

The ruling Liberal Democratic Party and the Liberal Party in Japan agreed January 7 to revise a 1992 law that would permit the nation's military to participate in UN "peace-keeping" operations. Officials from the two capitalist parties said more legislation was necessary to activate a section of the law allowing the military to perform other actions that could result in armed confrontations.

The agreement clears an obstacle for Japanese prime minister Keizo Obuchi to form a coalition government with the Liberal Party, which is pressing for a revision of the

constitution to give Tokyo more flexibility for military intervention. Following its victory in World War II, U.S. military occupation forces imposed a pacifist constitution on Japan, which Tokyo adopted in 1947 renouncing its right to launch a war.

Minister of Justice Shozaburo Nakamura told his staff January 4 that the Japanese people were "writhing because they cannot revise a constitution imposed by Allied forces so that the country would not be allowed to wage war, defend itself or have an army." Nakamura criticized U.S. capitalism as the kind that "sends nuclear bombs and

missiles when others begin to win."

Pointing to trade frictions between Washington and Tokyo, Nakamura added, "U.S. free market capitalism is not free. They threaten you with things like the Super 301 trade bill." He later apologized for his remarks.

Tokyo, with one of the top military budgets among the imperialist powers (\$45 billion in 1996), has stepped up its belligerence following Pyongyang's August 31 launch of a satellite over Japan.

"If north Korea dares to launch another ballistic missile, we will work closely with the United States and south Korea to take decisive action against the country," said Prime Minister Obuchi. Tokyo's forces frequently participate in U.S.-led military maneuvers in the region, such as last year's Rimpac 98 joint naval exercises off the coast of Hawaii.

Meanwhile, Japan is mired in its worst recession in more than 50 years. "The crucial question in looking back on the Japanese economy in 1998 is whether it experienced a deflationary spiral that could trigger a depression," said the December 31 *Japan Times*. Japanese businesses and households lost a combined capital of \$7.3 trillion between 1990 and 1996, according to a report released December 27 by Japan's Economic Planning Agency.

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Puerto Rican independence supporters push back gov't probe

BY BETSEY STONE

CHICAGO.— Supporters of democratic rights scored a victory here January 7 when members of an Illinois State legislative committee investigating charges of improper use of funds at Clemente High School here had to admit in their final public hearing that they found no illegal activity at the school.

The investigating committee was set up in early 1997 after the *Sun Times*, one of the two big-business dailies in Chicago, raised a hue and cry accusing the local school council and supporters of Puerto Rican independence at Clemente of using Chapter 1 state "poverty funds" to support pro-independence groups and causes. The newspaper charged that money may have been used to "bankroll fund-raisers to try and free convicted Puerto Rican independence movement terrorists" and to turn the school into "a hotbed of Puerto Rican nationalism underwritten by taxpayers."

The investigating committee was chaired by pro-statehood Puerto Rican legislator Edgar Lopez, who vowed the investigation would result in criminal charges. But despite two years of searching, which included dozens of interviews and an extensive examination of school financial records, Steven Miller, the committee's legal counsel, had to admit they had not been able to find evidence of burglary, embezzlement, or other criminal activity involving funds.

A final report prepared by the committee does call for greater oversight and more auditing of school financial records by state education officials. It also repeats many of the slanders against supporters of Puerto Rican independence made in the newspapers and at the hearings.

Witch-hunt of independence movement

From the first day of the committee's hearings, which began in March 1998, it was clear the purpose of the investigation was to carry out a witch-hunt of pro-independence Puerto Rican groups and individuals.

A special target was the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, a community organization that rented some of its classrooms out for use by Clemente students. The center is headed by José López, a longtime activist

in support of Puerto Rican independence. López's brother, Oscar López, is one of 15 Puerto Rican political prisoners held in U.S. jails.

The key witness called by the investigating committee was Rafael Marrero, a former Puerto Rican independence activist turned government stool pigeon. From 1989 to 1994 Marrero worked at the Puerto Rican Cultural Center. As testimony to the supposed misuse of funds, Marrero pointed to student trips to Puerto Rico, a legal clinic at the school, contracting an education expert to rewrite the curriculum, presentations by pro-independence speakers and artists, and a school bulletin that noted the birthdays of Malcolm X and Ho Chi Minh, as well as May 1, International Workers Day.

Marrero is also the FBI's main witness against José Solís Jordán, a professor at the University of Puerto Rico who is being framed up on charges of attempting to bomb a military recruitment center in 1992. Solís' trial is scheduled to begin in Chicago February 22.

Smear campaign sparks protests

Community organizations, students, teachers, and others have organized to fight back against the attacks. More than 300 people marched on the *Sun Times* building in February 1997 in response to the first sensational headlines. Hundreds of opponents of the witch-hunt attended the hearings.

On Sept. 18, 1998, Clemente parents, educational experts, teachers, students, and others convened a community hearing at Malcolm X High School. Nineteen witnesses provided testimony praising the cultural and educational programs initiated by the Clemente local school council, including the work to involve parents more in school life. Peter McClaren, a professor of education at the University of California at Los Angeles, discussed the ideas of the famous Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, whose views inspired many of the changes in the Clemente curriculum. A booklet was produced with the record of this hearing, which was distributed in the community and to members of the investigating committee.

These activities and protests helped ex-



Militant/Rose Baker

December 10 rally at United Nations calls for release of Puerto Rican political prisoners. Chicago investigation was an attack aimed against those who support independence for Puerto Rico and on the democratic rights of all.

pose the *Sun Times* articles and the hearings as an attack not only on Puerto Rican pro-independence activists but also on community participation in school life, and on free speech, most importantly the right to teach the truth about U.S. colonial occupation of Puerto Rico.

At the final public hearing Rep. Connie Howard, the only Black member of the investigating committee, dissociated herself from the slanderous charges against activists at the school. "I don't believe there is compelling evidence of any conspiracy of Puerto Rican activists to subvert Chapter 1 funds into the independence movement," she said. Howard questioned Marrero's credibility and made it clear she thought many of the changes introduced by the local school council at Clemente were positive.

Seth Donnelly, an activist in the Friends of the Puerto Rican Cultural Center, was sworn in as an unplanned witness at the final hearing after he attempted to speak from his seat in the audience to correct something one of the committee members had said. He

explained that community activists had decided not to testify at the hearings after police made intimidating visits to the homes of potential witnesses. He said witnesses had also received letters in the mail warning that their testimony under oath could result in criminal charges.

Donnelly also spoke out against the kangaroo court nature of the hearings, calling them "biased" from the beginning.

After the hearing, as supporters of the Puerto Rican independence movement and others gathered in the hallways outside the hearing room, there was a feeling of satisfaction that the committee had been pushed back. But for many there was also a consciousness that, as one activist put it, "This is just one battle in the on-going war" against government and right-wing attacks on pro-independence groups and individuals.

The Committee in Solidarity with José Solís is urging supporters of democratic rights to mobilize again to attend the trial of Solís, which begins February 22 in the Dickson Federal Building.

A LETTER FROM EUROPE

Swedish rulers debate joining euro rapidly

BY CARL-ERIK ISACSSON

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — The euro — the attempt at a common currency by 11 of the 15 member states in the European Union — came into being January 1 at a time of heightened competition between rival capitalist powers. The strengthening of U.S. imperialism relative to its competitors in Europe, which had been the trend since the early 1980s, has peaked.

One result is that a debate has widened among the rulers of Sweden, Denmark, and the United Kingdom over whether to rapidly join in the euro. Stockholm, Copenhagen, and London have formed a sort of "dollar-pound" block within Europe, and chose not to take part in the euro from the start this year. The prospect of serious competition between the euro, the U.S. dollar, and the Japanese yen has led many to rethink this stance, fearing their own bourgeoisie will be sidelined.

Swedish prime minister Göran Persson announced January 6 that he wants to hold a special convention of his Social Democratic party early in the year 2000 that could take a stand on Sweden's participation in the common currency. A national referendum later that year could make it possible to join the common currency in 2002.

Persson noted that there is a similar shift in view among many in the ruling class in Britain and Denmark that "has an impact on us, but it doesn't determine what we will do." Echoing a phrase often used by British prime minister Anthony Blair, Persson declared, "Yes, if it is good for our country we will join EMU [European Monetary Union]. That is what we will now discuss with the Swedish people." The Swedish Social Democratic party has recently signed the pro-EMU common election manifesto of the

social democratic parties in Europe for the European parliament this summer. Bourgeois public opinion as registered in polls in the big-business press has also changed. In December 1998, just before the euro took effect, a poll in the conservative daily *Svenska Dagbladet* listed 44 percent opposed to rapid adoption of the euro in Sweden, and 39 percent for. One month later, the numbers are reversed with 45 percent in favor and 38 percent against. A similar shift has occurred in Denmark.

One example of why figures like Persson and Blair feel pressure to sign on to the euro was the announcement January 11 by the four-nation European consortium Airbus that it won nearly half of the world market for big commercial jets, gaining market share over its U.S. rival, Boeing.

Economy in Germany slows down

Meanwhile the German economy, the largest in the euro-zone with about 36 percent of the area's output, is showing signs of a slowdown or even recession. In December 1998 unemployment climbed over 4 million for the first time since the social democratic government was elected last fall. The number of jobless workers was 251,300 higher than in November, and the national unemployment rate rose from 10.2 to 10.9 percent. Although it is 324,300 fewer than in December 1997, it is the sharpest December rise in unemployment since the reunification of Germany in 1990. In the East unemployment rose to 17.4 percent, and in the West it's at 9.3 percent.

"Despite recording annual growth last year of 2.8 percent, the strongest since reunification, Germany is in the grip of a downturn so pronounced that private researchers suspect that the economy may ac-

tually have contracted in the final three months," the *Financial Times* of London reported January 15.

Foreign orders for German products fell 4.2 percent in November. Over the last year there has been a sharp falling off from the peak annual growth in foreign orders of 23.1 percent in September 1997. Growth in industrial output slowed sharply to 0.5 percent in November compared to November 1997, down from the peak of 7.8 percent in January last year. The French and Italian economies are also slowing down.

In a sign that the employers won't have an easy time convincing workers to sacrifice in the name of defending the euro, IG Metal, the 2.7 million-member metalworkers union in Germany, is demanding wage increases of 6.5 percent this year.

Finance ministers from Europe who met with their Asian counterparts in Frankfurt January 15 were concerned about the financial crisis in Brazil, expressing hopes that the impact won't be as severe as when Moscow defaulted on its foreign debt last year, and that the newly launched euro would buttress financial stability in Europe. They particularly worry that a general crisis in Latin America would hurt the U.S. economy, depressing U.S. demand for European exports at a time when the German economy is slowing down.

Concerns over the fluctuations in exchange rates between the dollar, the euro, and the yen were also expressed at the meet-

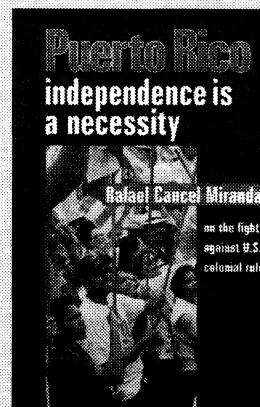
ing in Frankfurt. The social democratic governments in France and Germany now fear the euro will be too strong against the U.S. dollar, thus hurting exports from Europe to the United States and fueling unemployment. Similar concerns are expressed by the Japanese government. They favor managed exchange rates between these currencies, a proposal that U.S. federal reserve chairman Alan Greenspan and European central bank president Wim Duisenberg both reject.

Carl-Erik Isacsson is a member of the metal workers union in Södertälje, Sweden.

FROM PATHFINDER

Puerto Rico: Independence Is a Necessity
Rafael Cancel Miranda on the Fight against U.S. Colonial Rule

In two interviews, a leader of Puerto Rico's independence struggle speaks on the brutal reality of U.S. colonial domination, the resurgence of the independence movement, the campaign to free 15 Puerto Rican political prisoners, and the example of Cuba's socialist revolution for all those fighting for freedom. He addresses, above all, the new generation joining this struggle. In English and Spanish. **\$3.00**



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Socialist candidate backs right to hold teach-in on death penalty

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

BY RYAN KELLY

OAKLAND, California — Rashaad Ali announced his campaign as the Socialist Workers candidate for the California State Assembly, 16th District, in front of Castlemont High School in east Oakland as students arrived for school January 14. Ali, an airline worker and member of the International Association of Machinists, is running in the March 30 special election.

Students and teachers in the Oakland unified school district had scheduled a one-day teach-in at three Oakland high schools on the death penalty and the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal. Abu-Jamal, a recognized Black journalist and activist in the defense of Black rights, was sentenced to death on frame-up charges in the 1981 killing of a Philadelphia cop. An international campaign demanding a new trial for Abu-Jamal has become a focus of opponents of the death penalty.

Superintendent of Schools Carole Quan, School Board president Noel Gallo, and other officials had been pressing for weeks to shut down the planned assemblies. A few days before the scheduled teach-ins, a cop was shot and killed in Oakland. Despite pressure from the police department and the school board to cancel the assemblies, the teachers' union, the Oakland Education Association, voted to continue with the pro-

grams.

Quan overruled the union's decision under the pretext that it would be "insensitive" following the Oakland cop's death.

As students arrived for school at Castlemont January 14, the day of the scheduled assemblies, they were met by Ali and supporters of the Socialist Workers campaign.

Candis White, a 10th grader at Castlemont who was scheduled to speak at the assembly opposing the use of the death penalty, told campaigners, "It's wrong to say the judicial system can kill someone."

As more city buses rolled up to drop off the students, the crowd around the campaign table grew as Ali began "soap boxing."

"Working people should oppose the cancellation of the teach-ins organized for today by students and teachers on the death penalty and frame-up victim Abu-Jamal," the candidate said. "The shrill campaign to gain sympathy for this cop is an affront to all of us who have been victims of police brutality and murder. Students should learn about the real role of the police as protectors of the racist and class-divided capitalist system we live in."

Young Socialists member and City College of San Francisco student J.P. Crysdale explained, "The Young Socialists uses the Socialist Workers campaign to advance the fight against police brutality, win a new trial for Mumia Abu-Jamal, and to stand with the Oakland teachers and students who are demanding the right to free speech in their schools."

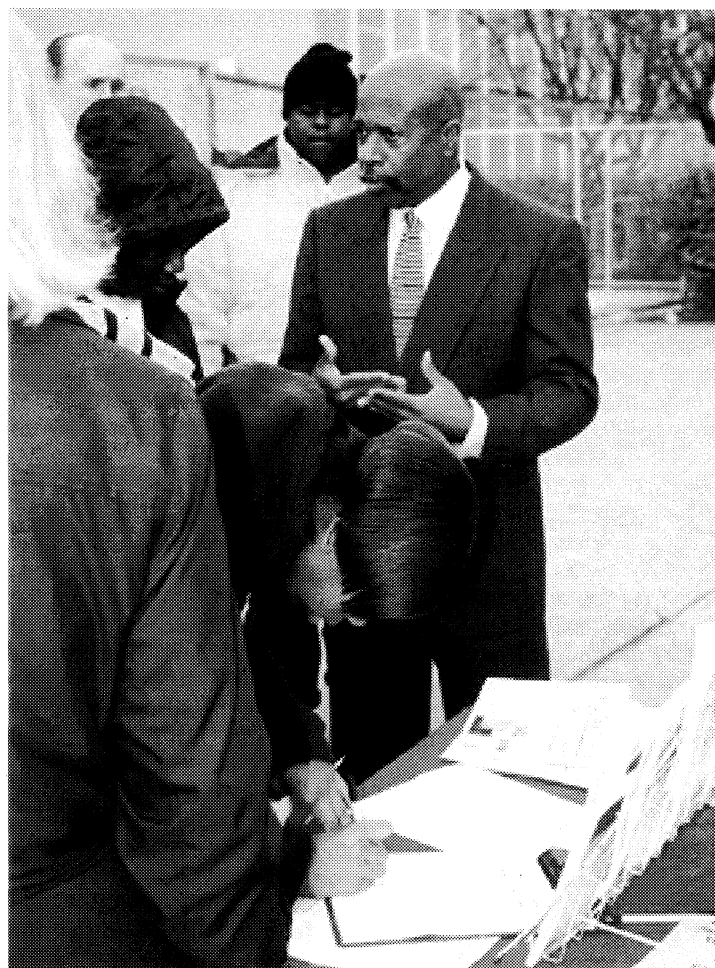
Sophath Mey, the Castlemont junior class president and vice president of the Asian Student Union, spoke with Ali and his supporters. She protested the cancellation, saying, "I believe that we, as intelligent adults,

have the right to speak our mind. If we are taught about the Ku Klux Klan, Malcolm X, and Martin Luther King, we have the right to learn about Mumia Abu-Jamal."

Ali pointed to the recent cop killing of an unconscious woman, Tyisha Miller in Riverside, near Los Angeles, December 28. "The murderous assault on Iraq is an extension of the U.S. rulers barbarity and attacks on the rights of workers and farmers at home — from the greater use of the police and hired thugs against workers on strike, to the stepped up executions, police violence, deportations, and government attacks on affirmative action," he said.

Chris Valin, 24, a teacher at Castlemont, stopped by the table and later returned. "It doesn't make sense: as an observance of a cop getting shot we don't talk about our problems of justice?" he asked.

Fifteen students signed up on a list stating that they would like to help the campaign, before a school administrator an-



Militant/Ellen Haywood
Rashaad Ali announces campaign January 14 in front of Castlemont High School in Oakland, California, where superintendent overturned decision by students and teachers to hold teach-in on death penalty and the case of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

nounced "Lock down" and padlocked the front gate. Ali will be holding a campaign rally in Oakland on February 5.

To find out how to help the campaign please write to: Socialist Workers Campaign Committee, 3542 Fruitvale Ave. #244, Oakland, California, 94602, or call (510) 531-2533.

Steelworkers strike solid at Continental General Tire

Continued from front page

Vernon, Illinois, where the company's other plants are located. While putting forward the union's just demands, the *Charlotte Observer* ad also reveals the national chauvinism promoted by the USWA officials when it states, "German Executives are double-crossing American working families." Continental General Tire is owned by capitalists from Germany. The ad points out that the company took \$90 million in wage and benefit concessions from the workers in the last contract. The strike began September 20 over unfair labor practices, wages, and pensions that are below industry standards, unfair down time and incentive practices, outside contracting of union work, and the company's demand for concessions in work schedules, mandatory overtime, health insurance, and seniority.

Continental General Tire claims to be running the plant with 530 replacement workers, but production levels are far below the

33,000 tires produced each day prior to the strike. Only four of the 1,450 union members have crossed the line. Vance Security thugs continue to patrol the plant. The company argues for a new round of concessions from the union in order to "remain competitive" with a nonunion tire plant being built by Bridgestone/Firestone in Aiken, South Carolina.

'We're saying enough is enough'

"For three years we've been preparing for this strike," stated striker Danny Adams. "We gave into them last time. This time we're saying enough is enough."

In 1995 the workers took deep concessions. Since then the company has been implementing mandatory overtime and raising the production rates. Continental is getting 25 percent more production than in 1994 at less wages. Some workers are scheduled for three different shifts in a seven-day period and then forced to work on their next

two off-days, Adams noted.

"The company wants to go from five to four shifts and eliminate some 130 jobs," stated William Dunlap. "With the four-shift schedule, we'd only get one weekend off per month. That's no life."

In mid-November the company informed the strikers that if they didn't return to work by November 17 they would be replaced. That night some 300-400 workers gathered in front of the plant. "We stood together and nobody crossed," stated Rose Sanders. "At midnight we rushed toward the plant and stopped at the white line where the company property begins. We rallied and hollered at them all night."

On December 20, the company announced that they were cutting all insurance coverage for the striking workers. "They thought they would break us by now, but we're holding together. They haven't broken anybody," recounted Sanders. "Our attitude is that we will survive this. We are

not as oppressed as the company thought we would be."

A number of strikers proudly pointed to the support they have won throughout the community and from working people in the area. At Continental's plant in Bryan, Ohio, some 300 workers donated \$7,000 to the Charlotte strikers. Members of the United Auto Workers from the Freightliner truck plant in nearby Mt. Holly, North Carolina, "come by all the time with food and contributions," commented Joel Klitzka. Other working people, from airport workers to members of the Communications Workers of America, have also been very supportive.

While this reporter was visiting the picket line, a member of the International Association of Machinists from the Philip Morris plant who used to work at Continental General Tire stopped by, as he does every week.

In Mt. Vernon, Illinois, where the company's plant is still nonunion, the USWA is making plans for another union certification vote after the strike in Charlotte is settled. Andy Hodges, secretary of USWA Local 850, told the *Militant* about his recent trip to the Mt. Vernon plant. "I was there January 13-15 and spoke to meetings of union supporters. The union lost the vote last January, but the pro-union workers there, organized in their 'Bucket Brigades,' do weekly collections at the gate. So far they have sent over \$9,000 to help our strike," Hodges added that the company pressured the local radio station in Mt. Vernon to pull the union's radio ad.

Strikers have also spoken to members of USWA Local 665 at Continental's Mayfield, Kentucky, plant.

"We're going to win," stated Billy Jack, who has 27 years at this plant. "Either we win or they put a 'for sale' on it. One of the two. There's life after General Tire."

As we left the picket line, Nash urged us to visit the picket lines of 800 Steelworkers on strike against International Nickel in Huntington, West Virginia.

Brian Williams is a member of USWA Local 2609 in Sparrows Point, Maryland. Floyd Fowler and Dan Fein from Atlanta contributed to this article.

ABC lockout ends, contract fight continues

BY MITCHEL ROSENBERG

NEW YORK — ABC Television ended its 74-day lockout of 2,700 hourly workers, members of the National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians (NABET) January 15.

The TV network, owned by the Walt Disney Co., still has a concession contract on the table that workers discussed in meetings organized in December. They will vote on it by mail by February 7. Officials of NABET Local 16 in New York are proposing to reject the company's package, according to Jim Joyce, mobilization coordinator and a member of the local's executive board.

NABET, which is part of the Communication Workers of America, also represents ABC workers in Chicago, Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Washington, DC., including members at local TV and radio affiliates. About half of the workers are in New York, with nearly 1,000 at the national network center.

The lockout began November 3 in response to a one-day protest strike the previous day by NABET members over ABC's

refusal to provide details of the new health package it sought to impose on workers. This is information union members had "repeatedly asked for...to no avail," according to NABET leaflets distributed from the picket lines. The same literature explained, "We continue to pursue an Unfair Labor Practice charge through the National Labor Relations Board." The union went to court during the lockout to contend the company's attack was illegal.

The day before Thanksgiving, ABC canceled health insurance covering NABET workers and their families.

During the lockout, ABC hired freelance audio, video, and graphics production workers to join management as scabs. Workers on the picket lines pointed out numerous weaknesses in the quality of broadcasts while they were out. Many of the same freelancers are among the up to 45 percent of the workforce ABC seeks to hire as temporary, part-time workers under their proposed contract, to erode the union shop. Some workers look forward to the challenge of recruiting them to the union's side.

Many NABET members, like Marty Domacasse, a master control network engineer with 19 years at ABC, speculate the company ended the lockout out of concern over losing credibility of its news coverage of the impeachment of U.S. president William Jefferson Clinton, since many Democratic politicians have refused to be interviewed by ABC during the lockout. Domacasse also pointed to the media giant's effort to introduce new hosts on its morning program, "Good Morning America," and the negative impact the lockout would have as it sought to pretty up its image. Finally, Domacasse said, "the company saw the union as stronger" as it fought through the lockout, reaching out for and receiving solidarity from unionists and others — "more friends on the picket lines" than in previous actions. NABET members are upbeat about returning to work, with the fight around the contract still ahead.

Mitchel Rosenberg is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees in New York.

Workers involved in fights in North Carolina pick up the 'Militant'

BY DAN FEIN

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina — Two *Militant* supporters from Atlanta and one from Washington D.C. met here over the Martin Luther King Jr. weekend to visit working people in the area involved in struggle.

We spent a number of hours January 16-17 on the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 850 picket line at Continental General Tire in Charlotte. Seven strikers bought the *Militant*, in part due to the coverage on the Black farmers' lawsuit against racist discrimination and the Steelworkers strike at Titan Tire.

On January 17 the team sold to workers at the US Airways hangar at the Charlotte airport. International Association of Machinists (IAM) members there have been without a contract for more than three years. Among other articles we pointed to the article in the *Militant* entitled "How should militant workers describe AMFA?" No papers were sold.

The next day, we sold 37 *Militants* and 3

subscriptions. The day started in Kannapolis, North Carolina, at the huge Fieldcrest/Cannon textile mill complex. Workers there have attempted several times to organize a union at this plant. The most recent vote on whether to join the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UFCW) failed in 1997. Thirteen mill workers picked up the *Militant*.

Twenty participants at the Martin Luther King Day parade in Charlotte bought copies of the paper later that morning.

Continental General strikers receive their \$110 weekly strike checks on Mondays at the USWA Local 850 union hall. The hall was full of strikers getting their checks and eating lunch, when we arrived. Some strikers recognized the *Militant* and team members from past visits, and were anxious to read the past *Militant* coverage of their strike. We sold three subs and four copies of the *Militant* to workers at the union hall.

Dan Fein is a member of UFCW Local 1996.



Militant/Linda Joyce

Young Socialists member and Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Congress Paul Cornish, center, campaigns at King Day parade in Atlanta January 18.

Pathfinder capital fund: \$344,000 is raised toward \$550,000 for printshop; payments are needed now

BY NAOMICRAINE

Supporters of Pathfinder Press need to step up efforts to raise the capital needed this month to pay for equipment in Pathfinder's printing plant. The final payments are due in late January and mid-February for the new Agfa Galileo computer-to-plate equipment that was delivered in November. The press operators in the printing plant are now using the state-of-the-art equipment for the great majority of the work going through the shop, saving labor and improving the quality of the Pathfinder books they are producing.

There has been a tremendous response to the \$550,000 capital fund launched in October. Of the more than \$340,000 pledged since then, over \$220,000 has been received. Now the additional \$114,000 already pledged

needs to be collected rapidly, and another \$10,000 raised, to finish paying for the Galileo. The remaining \$200,000 of the fund also needs to be raised as soon as possible.

Ten Pathfinder books and pamphlets are currently in production in the printshop, and more are on their way. More than 100 volunteers around the world are scanning, proofreading, formatting, and digitizing the graphics for the 350 titles Pathfinder keeps in print. The socialist workers in the printshop can now take these digital files, output printing plates, and maintain a just-in-time inventory with less labor and a smaller staff.

Some of the books that were prepared digitally by volunteers and coming off the press this month will immediately head out the door. Orders for a total of 250 copies of four titles — *By Any Means Necessary* by Mal-

colm X, *Malcolm X on Afro-American History, Women and the Cuban Revolution*, and *Leon Trotsky Speaks* — are waiting to be filled. Pathfinder also has orders for more than 70 copies each of two temporarily out-of-print books that the volunteers are making final corrections on: *American Labor Struggles: 1877-1934* and *Blacks in America's Wars*.

"The printing quality is obviously better on the cover of *By Any Means Necessary*," noted Bill Estrada, who operates the sheetfed presses that print Pathfinder covers and text. "It's because of the work of the volunteers, who readjusted all of the photographs digitally, and also because we're going direct from computer file to plate." Compared to the previous printing, which was done on the same press, the cover pho-

tograph of Malcolm X is much sharper, with more detail and more vibrant colors.

"The registration is much better with the plates from the Galileo," Estrada added. "That means we can spend less make-ready time to set up jobs on the presses, and have fewer problems with poor registration." He said the sheetfed crews are now meeting to decide on goals to measure and improve their production rates.

Accelerated capital fundraising activity

The \$200,000 Pathfinder supporters are organizing to raise now, beyond paying for the computer-to-plate system, is essential to help the printshop cover a serious conjunctural shortfall in sales to meet operating expenses, as the shop crosses the bridge in this transformation. A growing number of workers in the printshop are part of the effort to broaden the base of commercial work the shop takes in, to reverse a drop over the last several months in the sales revenue the shop needs. This is combined with the campaign throughout the shop to increase productivity and reduce scrap, cut production costs both on Pathfinder books and other work, and improve margins.

The Capital Fund Committee, a group of seven socialist workers across the United States, has met twice by phone over the last week to take steps to accelerate fund-raising efforts. A meeting of eight supporters took place January 10 in Minneapolis. The meeting began with refreshments and a political discussion on the Clinton impeachment trial and why workers should oppose it, the growing labor resistance and working class-vanguard in formation, and the election of Bonapartist Reform Party governor Jesse Ventura in Minnesota. Then supporters viewed a demonstration of how volunteers scan and proofread Pathfinder books. The meeting resulted in \$3,000 in pledges. Other meetings are in the works in Vancouver, British Columbia; Greensboro, North Carolina; and Denver, Colorado.

"Members of the Capital Fund Committee are ready to do some extra traveling over the next weeks to participate in these gatherings and a number of others like them," said Maggie Trowe, a meatpacker in Des Moines, Iowa, who heads that committee.

"We are encouraging those who value Pathfinder's irreplaceable contribution to the advancement of revolutionary struggles to organize meetings in their areas, and to continue to follow through work that has already begun. We should make this the highest priority, and spare no effort to reach out to friends and supporters, whether in our cities, or in the outlying region. We need to act rapidly and energetically on this, to raise what we need to help maintain the printshop at this important juncture and strengthen ties with an important part of our movement."

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

U.S., NATO intervention in Yugoslavia

Continued from front page

ment of Harrier ground attack aircraft at the NATO air base in Italy from four to eight.

The pretext for these threats is the disintegration of an agreement signed by Milosevic and U.S. government representative Richard Holbrooke last October, under the threat of NATO air strikes. Hundreds of "peace monitors" have been deployed in Kosova under the banner of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) as part of this agreement. The "observers," many of them retired cops and soldiers dressed in civilian clothes, are patrolling the streets of Kosova in their jeeps.

A French-led "extraction force" of 2,000 troops is based in neighboring Macedonia, supposedly to escort small numbers of the "observers" from Kosova if NATO decides to pull them out. "A bigger Nato force of up to 8,000 troops might be needed to extract all of them," such as if NATO planned an assault, London's *Financial Times* opined.

Pretext for NATO threats

The so-called monitors are headed by U.S. official William Walker. Belgrade had rejected a request from the OSCE to allow a commando unit from Poland to accompany Walker. On January 18, the Belgrade government ordered Walker to leave the country, two days after he described the killing of 45 Albanians in and around Racak, Kosova, by Yugoslav government forces a "crime very much against humanity" and called for an investigation by the imperialist-crafted International War Crimes Tribunal.

Walker is a former U.S. ambassador to El Salvador from 1988-93, appointed by the Reagan administration at a time when the Salvadoran government, which had close ties to Washington, was organizing death squads against workers and peasants.

Washington has seized on Walker's expulsion as a pretext for the latest round of

threats. "The situation is as serious now — perhaps more serious — than it was in October," Holbrooke said on CNN January 18. Holbrooke reminded the CNN reporter the NATO military alliance at that time was "96 hours away from bombing."

Cranking up the pressure on Belgrade, Louise Arbour, chief prosecutor of the "war crimes tribunal," tried to enter the country January 18, supposedly to investigate the massacre in Racak. She was blocked by Yugoslav border guards from entering Kosova, a region in Yugoslavia where the oppressed Albanian majority is fighting for independence. Arbour announced in Skopje, Macedonia, that she would attempt another entry, setting the stage to provoke another confrontation.

At an emergency meeting of the UN Security Council Beijing and Moscow prevented the organization from passing a resolution demanding that Belgrade allow Arbour to enter Kosova to "investigate war crimes." Both governments are opposed to the imperialist military intervention against Yugoslavia, which is also ultimately aimed against them.

While Washington had reduced the arsenal of some 300 warplanes it mobilized in the Balkans last October, the "activation order" authorizing military action "is in effect," said NATO commander Clark. "The alliance is prepared to take further measures if deemed necessary," he added.

Roots of struggle in Kosova

The U.S. government is using Belgrade's latest military attacks on the Albanians' struggle for independence in Kosova as a pretext to campaign for launching air strikes and a military occupation of the province. When the Stalinist bureaucracy that controlled Yugoslavia began to disintegrate in the late 1980s, rival factions of the ruling stratum sought to grab land and resources

for themselves. In Serbia, the dominant republic of what remains the Yugoslav federation today, the Milosevic government whipped up Serb chauvinism to justify its course, beginning with a campaign against the Albanians who make up 90 percent of the population in Kosova, which was an autonomous region. Belgrade revoked that autonomy and cracked down on strikes and protests by workers and students there. As this repression continued in recent years, the demand for independence as the only road to self determination has grown.

Confrontations have escalated between the Yugoslav Army and the UCK, which is waging an armed struggle for independence. On January 18 Serbian tanks and artillery pounded the village of Racak, following the slaughter of 45 residents there the previous week. Also on January 18, UCK rebels ambushed a Serbian vehicle 25 miles north of Pristina, Kosova's capital. The next day UCK fighters killed one Serbian cop and wounded two others in another clash in Racak.

The U.S. rulers, who aim to use military force to reestablish capitalist property relations in the Yugoslav workers state, have waited as the regime of Milosevic does the imperialists' dirty work of inflicting punishing assaults on the Albanian toilers. Washington's aims are the same as in Bosnia, where it has headed an occupation force since 1995.

The NATO military alliance's "credibility is being tested right now," declared the editors of the *Washington Post* January 20. "Now is the time to take a stand. NATO must prepare to use force, ground troops as well as air power, to enforce a cease-fire and an interim political settlement."

Meanwhile, Washington has helped establish a "Balkan brigade" of 4,000 "peace-keeping" troops from Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Macedonia, Turkey, Greece, and Italy.

Black farmers keep up their struggle

Continued from front page
court "fairness hearing" on the proposed settlement of the Black farmers' antidiscrimination suit against the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). "This case doesn't end with this settlement," he said. "It took years just to get a court to hear it. It's a victory that the government admits doing wrong. But the settlement is bad. It's not even a crumb from the table, not a drop in the bucket. It does not address the behavior of Department of Agriculture employees or prevent incidents like this from happening in the future. The settlement is an attempt to get rid of us. But that won't happen."

Turned down for loans year after year

James and Gwendolyn Stephenson, Black farmers in southern Arkansas, have been systematically fighting for equal treatment from the USDA for almost 20 years. They are experienced farmers, both from farm families, who have tried to get government farm loans for operating expenses and purchasing land. But year after year, the county agents of the USDA's Farmers Home Administration in Chicot County, Arkansas, turned them down.

"I wrote letters to the Agriculture Department almost every year about this and they never did anything," Gwendolyn said. "It wasn't until the last two years that we found out no one ever looked at these letters. They were just stacked up in a room in Washington."

"The county agents said I was a bad manager and did not have a good plan," James said. "Just last year I applied to buy 799 acres of farmland in their inventory that was appraised at \$322,000. When I told them I was interested, they reappraised it for \$379,000. When I told them I was still interested, they told me the land wasn't available, that it was tied up in litigation. I filed a civil rights complaint and there is going to be a hearing January 28 in Smackover, Arkansas. We're still fighting."

James Stephenson is the Arkansas state president of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association (BFAA). "We'll be coming to Washington for the hearing March 2. We can't wait for this money. All farmers in Arkansas are in bad shape. We haven't recovered from last season's crop failures."

Celebrations commemorating Martin Luther King Jr.'s birthday in a number of cities were opportunities for Black farmers and their supporters to talk about their con-



Militant/Linda Joyce

Eddie Slaughter (holding banner at left), vice president of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association, leads a contingent of supporters of Black farmers' fight for land and against discrimination in the Martin Luther King Day parade in Atlanta.

tinuing struggle. Black farmers are still battling over issues that remained unsettled from the overthrow of slavery through the civil rights movement.

"Martin Luther King went to the Black farmers for support during the civil rights movement," Eddie Carthan pointed out. "It was Black farmers and landowners who offered refuge to civil rights workers and provided bond to get them out of jail."

Martin Luther King Jr. Day events

In Atlanta, Black farmer leader Eddie Slaughter and others came up from Buena Vista in southern Georgia to march in the King Day parade January 18. Many participants and onlookers in the parade learned from their signs, banner, and fliers that — contrary to the claims of the USDA publicity mill and the news media — the struggle for justice by Black farmers is not settled.

Gary Grant, president of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association, spoke to an audience of 150 people in Albany, New York, January 18. The event was sponsored by several labor union organizations to celebrate King's contributions to the fights of organized labor.

After Albany, Grant was heading to Rochester, New York, to speak to students there and meet with Mayor William Johnson, who has previously stated that "these farmers need our moral and political support." Grant

urged meeting participants to "stand with us" and attend a March 2 rally in support of Black farmers before the hearing in Washington, D.C. He said that Blacks, whites, and Latinos must unify in this struggle and that the fight of family farmers for their land is the "unfinished business of this country" reaching back to the Civil War.

United Steelworkers of America Local 2609 at the large Bethlehem Steel Sparrows Point mill in Baltimore holds a yearly Martin Luther King Jr. commemoration at the union hall. Some 150 Steelworkers, their families, and others from the community joined in religious services and heard young people talk about King's life and the civil rights movement of the 1950s and '60s. Many of the Black workers at Sparrows Point were involved in hard-fought battles against segregation in the mill and for affirmative action.

Local 2609 president Burt Dixon encouraged those at the King meeting to attend a February 3 meeting at Howard University in Washington where Grant is speaking.

North Carolina farmers gathered in Zebulon, a town between Raleigh and Rocky Mount, to discuss their challenge to the terms of the consent decree signed January 5 by lawyers for the Agriculture Department and for the Black farmers. Attorney Stephon Bowens from the Land Loss Prevention Project in Durham is preparing a legal challenge to the settlement that is to be heard at the March 2 "fairness hearing" at 10:00 a.m. in the U.S. Courthouse in Washington.

The text of the consent decree states, "Objections to the proposed settlement by class members will be considered by the Court if such objections are filed in writing with the Clerk of the Court on or before February 15, 1999. Attendance at the hearing is not necessary; however, class members wishing to be heard orally in opposition to the pro-

—CALENDAR—

PENNSYLVANIA

Lattimer

Spaghetti dinner fund-raiser. Sponsored by the United Mine Workers of America on strike at the Jeddo Mine to benefit ACTION ALL, an organization fighting to stop the dumping of waste into the old mine. Sun., Jan. 24, 12-4 p.m. St. Mary's Church hall (North of Hazelton, east off Rt. 309)

WASHINGTON

Seattle

The Frame-up of Mumia Abu-Jamal, the Fight for a New Trial. A community meeting to show the video documentary of "Mumia Abu-Jamal: A Case of Reasonable Doubt." Questions and discussion to follow. Sat., Jan. 23 1-4 p.m. Seattle Central Community College Lecture Hall 4106 (4th Floor, Main Building) Sponsored by Seattle Mumia Defense Committee. For more information, call: (206) 728-9781.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

40 Acres and a Mule!!! Black farmers fight to save their land — the battle against continuing discrimination by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Hear Gary Grant, president of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association (BFAA) from Tillery, North Carolina. Wed., Feb. 3, 5 p.m. Howard University Blackburn Center 2400 6th St. NW. Sponsored by the Howard University Student Association. For more information, call (202) 806-7008 or (202) 806-5983.

posed settlement should indicate in their written objection their intention to appear at the hearing."

Farmers debate proposed settlement

Almost all Black farmers the *Militant* has spoken with view the settlement as inadequate. But farmers are divided about what it would take and whether or not it is possible to get a better settlement. Virtually every Black farmer interviewed is angry that the settlement contains no provisions to remove USDA officials responsible for the discrimination from their posts.

"The enforcement provisions for the consent decree itself are a joke," as Slaughter put it. "As always, you can file a complaint, but don't expect any action."

The consent decree calls for establishing "an independent Monitor who shall report directly to the Secretary of Agriculture ...and make periodic written reports...on the good faith implementation of this Consent decree."

"The USDA has had at least two reports from its own Inspector General documenting ongoing discrimination in the last two years and [Agriculture Secretary Daniel] Glickman has done nothing about it," Slaughter said. "The discrimination is continuing today, it is not something in the past."

Sandy McKinnon has been farming in Robeson County, North Carolina, for more than 20 years. In spite of the two-year-old moratorium on farm foreclosures announced by Glickman, the USDA sent him a "Dear Debtor" letter a few months ago announcing they would withhold any payments he is due from the government in order to pay off farm debt to the USDA. The letter specifies the government will seize payments from farm programs, Social Security, veterans, or Black Lung benefits.

"I'm only able to farm about half my land now because I cannot get any loans from anyone," McKinnon said. "Everyone is afraid of me because of the USDA offsetting my income. If they can do that, even though there is supposed to be a moratorium, then the settlement is not going to change anything," McKinnon also is planning to be in Washington March 2.

Since the announcement of the settlement the Clinton administration, Glickman, some Black elected officials, and other individuals have been campaigning for the farmers to accept the settlement as is and end their fight. These include Dr. Joseph Lowery, the former president of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. In the January 13 issue of the *Alabama Greene County Democrat*, Lowery is quoted saying, "The settlement of a multimillion dollar lawsuit instigated by Black farmers against the U.S. Department of Agriculture is a landmark achievement in the struggle for repair of damage inflicted by years of discriminatory policies and practices by our government." The *Democrat* identifies Lowery as the "chairman of the Black Leadership Forum and convener of the coordinating Council of Black farm groups."

Iowa farmer Gary Cornelious was quoted in the *New York Times* saying, "I think it takes a lot of courage for the Government and Secretary Glickman to acknowledge that people have been treated poorly and they should be commended for that." Cornelious is a Glickman appointee to the Iowa Farm Service Agency state committee.

"People like Lowery are saying it's settled," said Eddie Slaughter. "But it's not. We'll be at the courthouse in Washington March 2 to make that clear."

Stu Singer is a member of the United Transportation Union. James Harris in Atlanta and Eva Braiman in New York contributed to this article.

Kaiser Aluminum strikers build solidarity, bosses declare lockout



Militant/Jeff Powers

BY JEFF POWERS

SPOKANE, Washington — Some 400 strikers and their supporters took part in Steelworker Family Day here January 10. They caravaned from Kaiser Aluminum's Mead plant to the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) local union hall at the Trentwood plant, where they lined the street for two hours. The rally included members of the Teamsters, United Food and Commercial Workers, and Communication Workers of America (CWA).

Marcia Beck, a member of the CWA Mobilization Committee, said she first learned about solidarity last summer during her participation in the several week strike against U.S. West. "I was really impressed by the Teamsters from UPS who came to our picket line after they

worked all day," Beck said.

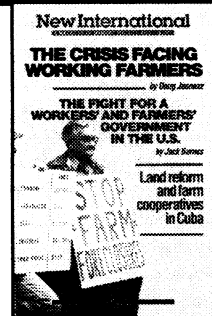
The January 10 action was organized by the Steelworkers to show that their strike was still strong after 102 days on the picket line. The Trentwood and Mead plants account for more than two-thirds of the 3,100 strikers. USWA members are also on strike at Kaiser Aluminum's three smaller plants in Tacoma, Washington; Newark, Ohio; and Gramercy, Louisiana.

Kaiser Aluminum bosses announced January 14 that they were locking out the strikers at all five plants. This followed an offer by USWA officials the day before that strikers return to work under the previous contract while talks continued.

Jeff Powers is a member of United Transportation Union Local 845.

NEW INTERNATIONAL NO. 4

The Fight for a Workers and Farmers Government in the United States by Jack Barnes ♦ The Crisis Facing Working Farmers by Doug Jenness ♦ Land Reform and Farm Cooperatives in Cuba, two speeches by Fidel Castro \$9.00



Poultry strikers win support from unions and Black farmers

BY CHRIS HOEPPNER
AND WILLIE REID

CORYDON, Indiana — "Tyson needs to treat people with respect," said Kim Stewart, who has worked at the poultry plant here for 11 years. "I've been here through three contract periods and two different owners. If your child is ill, you shouldn't have to go through the harassment they put you through to just get the message and the time off you need to care for your child."

Jessica McCormack, who has worked here five years, added, "Supervisors yell at people, they're just disrespectful. We won't put up with it."

More than 300 poultry workers here went on strike against Tyson Foods, the country's largest poultry processor, January 3. Most of the strikers, who are members of the United Food and Commercial Workers Local 227, are women. Wages for production work "top out" at \$8.10 an hour, for those who have substantial seniority. The strikers are resisting proposed takeaways that include ending paid breaks, reducing overtime pay and bereavement leave, and a 60 percent increase in health insurance costs. "They didn't think we would last," Stewart said, "because it was cold and windy. But we work in cold temperatures and we stood right out here to let them know we could."

Mike Flynn, a representative of Local 227, listed some of the ways they are preparing for a long fight. "Every Thursday food is distributed to the strikers. We have established a hardship fund to help strikers with

their utility bills and other necessities. Friday and Saturday we organize weekly boycott activities at stores to urge people not to buy Tyson products." A building near the site is being prepared for meetings and a kitchen.

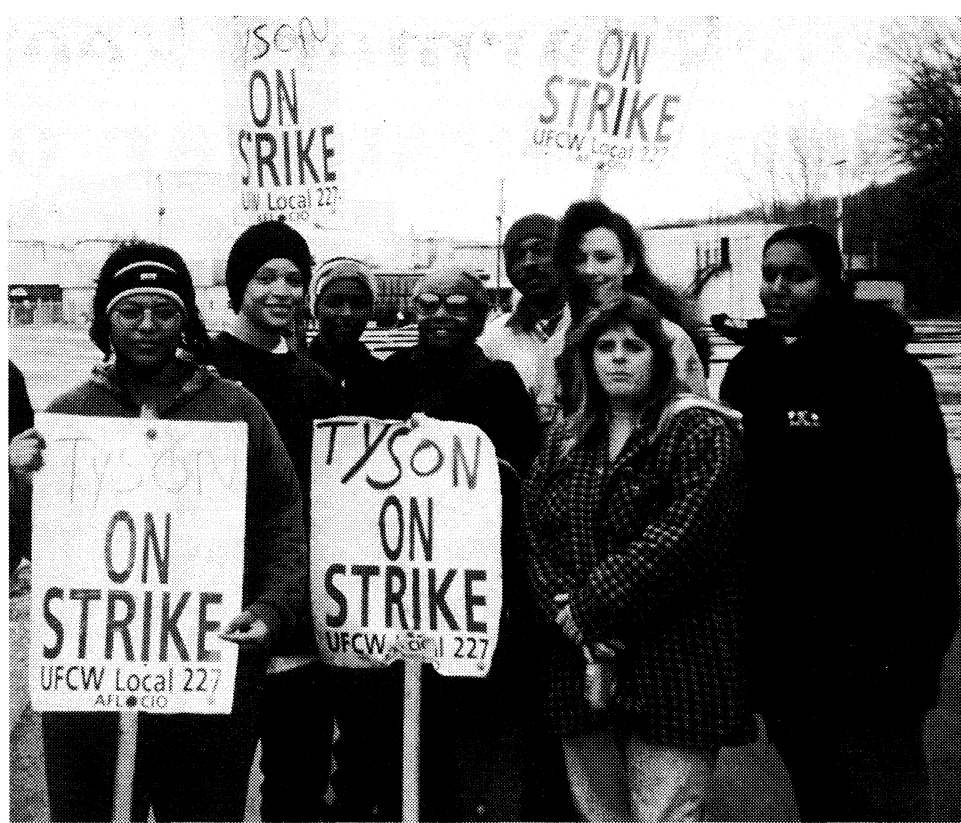
Jim Horn, a UFCW member at the Colgate plant in Jeffersonville, Kentucky, saw the notice about the strike at Tyson posted on his union bulletin board. He joined the picket line and brought a truckload of firewood for the burn barrels. Horn plans to get some of the strikers to explain the issues in their fight at his union meeting later in January.

Strikers said workers at a car parts plant close by took up a collection for the strike. One benefit for strikers and their families was a chili dinner sponsored by the UFCW and the United Auto Workers January 18.

As these correspondents distributed the *Militant* at the picket line, we asked about support from farmers. The lead article on the front page about the Black farmers' lawsuit against decades of discrimination prompted strikers Gayle Paxton and Elaina Willis to help contact Mattie Mack.

Mattie and Bill Mack are Black farmers in Brandenburg, Kentucky, which is just across the Ohio River, about 15 miles from the Tyson plant. Mattie is well-known for her outspoken views and activities on farm issues.

"We're familiar with Tyson and some of the people," she explained. "In fact one of the workers there is one of the best tobacco strippers around. Several worked over here to raise money in anticipation of the strike.



Militant/Jim Horn

UFCW strikers and supporters on picket line at Tyson Foods in Corydon, Indiana.

I'm going on the local radio station in the next few days. I'll take the opportunity to urge people to support their strike for justice." Mattie and Bill Mack took the union facts sheets to make sure they had the accurate information from the union. Bill added, "It's just not right to cut their break time and not give them a living wage, when everyone knows Tyson makes big money."

They described in detail the discrimination they have faced since they bought the farm in 1964 and how they had to persevere to keep it. Their 100-acre farm includes six acres of tobacco and a few acres of corn and hay for 100 head of cattle and some hogs.

"We got 10 cents a pound the last time

we brought hogs to the market," Bill Mack said. "So I just slaughtered some, smoked the hams, and hung them up for home use. I'll wait until the price rises before I go back. I don't know what I'll do with the next lot."

Bill retired three years ago from a local chemical plant, a job he finally got as the result of the gains of the civil rights movement. He always worked to support the farm because racist practices made it difficult to get loans. Mattie kept the farm going, raised a large family, and has been active in various farm organizations. She is part of the Black farmers' class-action lawsuit against the USDA and is a leader of the Minority Farmers of Mead County.

She expressed this opinion on the proposed government settlement of the lawsuit. "While I could live with the \$50,000 from the USDA," Mattie pointed out, "I know too many who have lost their farms over the years or are just hanging on. This is just a drop in the bucket and won't make up for what they've been through. So it's not right and I'm willing to speak out about it."

To contact UFCW Local 227 call 1-800-443-5191, extension 115 and 123. Donations can be sent to the Strike Assistance Fund, c/o UFCW Local 227, 7902 Old Minors Lane, Louisville, KY 40219.

Willie Reid is a member of the United Auto Workers. Chris Hoepfner is a member of the UFCW.

Miners solid in 9-month Jeddo strike

BY NANCY COLE
AND CANDACE WAGNER

HAZLETON, Pennsylvania — Striking anthracite coal miners began the new year solidly behind the job action they were forced to take nine months ago at the Jeddo strip mine.

Nearly 60 miners — members of United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) locals 803 and 1531 — struck the mine on March 26 of last year, rejecting the company's so-called last, best offer.

Strikers have little confidence the company, which is owned by Pagnotti Enterprises, is seriously interested in reaching an agreement with the UMWA. Picket captain Robert Lynch said he believes Pagnotti CEO Charles Parente was hired to "deal with the union."

Until 1994, the miners here worked under a master anthracite contract covering workers at the region's four unionized mines. That year the mine owners refused to negotiate a joint contract. The bosses and union settled separate contracts at three of the mines. Jeddo Coal Co. held out. The miners worked without a contract until December of 1997, when Jeddo declared its proposal in effect. Contracts at the other three mines have since expired again and new agreements have been signed.

The "contract" that Jeddo imposed on the miners a year ago, which it had planned to implement in stages, was a serious assault on the union. It granted the company a blank check to impose "reasonable rules" and throw seniority and past practices out the window. The mine owners also asserted the right to subcontract out nearly every job in the mine. They asked for a hefty pay cut.

Strikers believe they have no choice but to hold firm against these union-busting measures, said George Mazur, a drag line shovel operator for more than 20 years at the Jeddo mine. *Militant* correspondents spoke with Mazur on the picket line January 6. He left to go straight to his afternoon job as a temporary factory worker — at a substantially lower wage than he made at the mine.

The company has not dug coal during the strike but is loading and transporting a by-product coal-and-shale mixture that some power plants burn. The breaker is also processing coal from Pagnotti-owned nonunion mines. Strikers report that besides truckers, both hired by Pagnotti and independent com-

panies, a small number of scabs have been hired to work in the breaker and in loading.

Strikers receive union strike benefits. Every other week, they send a truck to Harrisburg to fill up from a food pantry organized by the AFL-CIO there. In addition, they have received donations from other unions from as far away as Oregon, Lynch said.

On a rainy Monday, January 18, some 10 strikers were on the picket line. In the picket shack a lively discussion took place with *Militant* reporters. Richard Patskan Sr. has worked for the Pagnotti family for 38 years. He is four years from retirement. Anthony Gabriel Jr. is a drag line operator with 23 years at Jeddo. They and a third miner described the forces allied with the company against them, including the unemployment office, the police, and the federal mine inspection agency.

Gabriel explained initially the state agreed to pay unemployment benefits to miners based on the fact that since the company had imposed its final offer and refused to bargain in good faith, the unionists are in fact locked out. When the company challenged that decision, the benefits were revoked and strikers now must repay up to thousands of dollars each to the state when in the future they qualify for unemployment. "It took them 18 weeks to decide to give it to us and only 3 days to take it away" after the company's challenge, Gabriel said. The union is appealing the decision.

The miners see the demands of the Pagnotti family as part of a campaign to drive the union out of all the anthracite mines. "If they break the union here, they can dig coal at Jeddo and send it to the next mine that's struck," Patskan said.

Over the Christmas holidays, nails were spread out prior to a snow in the area where strikers park their cars. Tires on three or four vehicles were damaged. "Who did it? The same guy who did that," declared Patskan, pointing to the broken window in the picket shack. "Either the company or the scab truckers. It's not the first time."

Workers in the anthracite mines endure regular layoffs, which means that the wages of \$12-13 per hour at Jeddo make for a modest income. "In 1990 I made \$17,000 and in 1996 I made \$12,000," Patskan said. The wages are relatively high for the area though. Many strikers have had a difficult time finding other jobs since the strike began.

The discussion in the picket shack turned

to broader topics. What did the *Militant* reporters think about the GATT and NAFTA trade treaties? The new Labor Party?

Coming up is a spaghetti dinner in solidarity with the strikers and in celebration of a recent court victory in a local campaign to stop a landfill on the Jeddo mine property.

Nancy Cole is a member of the International Association of Machinists and Candace Wagner is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees in Philadelphia.

Lenc-Smith strikers face lockout

BY HARVEY MCARTHUR

CICERO, Illinois — Strikers at Lenc-Smith here were dealt a blow January 15 when they were locked out by the company. The attack came after officials of their union, the International Union of Electronic Workers (IUE), offered the company an unconditional return to work. This came one month after strikers overwhelmingly voted down the company's latest demands for pay cuts.

Workers are still picketing, and have begun to discuss how to continue the struggle. "We're going to stick together," said striker Willie Walton. "We've got to."

Lenc-Smith workers walked out July 1, 1998, after the company demanded pay cuts of up to \$2 per hour. This would have left many of the workers, who produce cabinets for video games, earning only \$6.25 per hour. The strikers include Mexican, Black, and Polish workers, many of them women.

Strikers have maintained daily picket lines at the plant, trying to discourage applicants seeking work as strikebreakers. They organized a contingent to participate in the October 12 immigrants rights march in Chicago, and held a three-day hunger strike in November that drew national and international coverage on Spanish-language television.

Lenc-Smith hired strike breakers and used temporary labor agencies to try to keep production going during the strike. The bosses hired Cicero cops as company guards, who arrested strikers on trumped-up charges of harassing strikebreakers and resisting arrest on several occasions.

On December 19 IUE officials presented another contract proposal, which strikers voted down 72 to 9 as it still contained the big wage cuts the company had demanded.

"The union representatives first said the pay cut was only going to be 25 cents an hour," said striker Reyes Flores. "But we asked more questions and finally found out that the 25-cent cut was on top of the cuts the company wanted in July. There's no way we could have accepted this."

On January 13 union officials organized another meeting and, according to strikers, told the workers they had to end the strike. The officials said workers could not vote on ending the walkout, which angered many strikers. One circulated a petition before the meeting, demanding the right to vote on what to do. Strikers leaving the meeting said IUE officials told them the company agreed to take them back under the old wages while negotiations continued. Many workers said they were prepared to return to work on this basis. "It's good. It's all been worked out," was a typical comment.

Others were suspicious of the agreement, noting that they had seen nothing in writing. "I don't buy it," said Lupe Sertuche, a seven-year veteran of the plant. "They just tried to brainwash us in there. We should keep on picketing until we get an agreement."

Some strikers continued to picket the plant for the next two days, waiting for word on when they would return to work.

Having heard nothing from the company or union officials, some 25 strikers met at the plant January 18 and organized a car caravan to the IUE office looking for answers. Union officials then told them Lenc-Smith bosses had declared a lockout.

The discussion among many workers has now turned to how to continue fighting Lenc-Smith and reach out to other workers for broader support.

Cuba's first war of independence, the struggle against slavery, and the forging

BY RICARDO ALARCÓN

Commander of the Revolution Juan Almeida Bosque:¹
Compatriots:

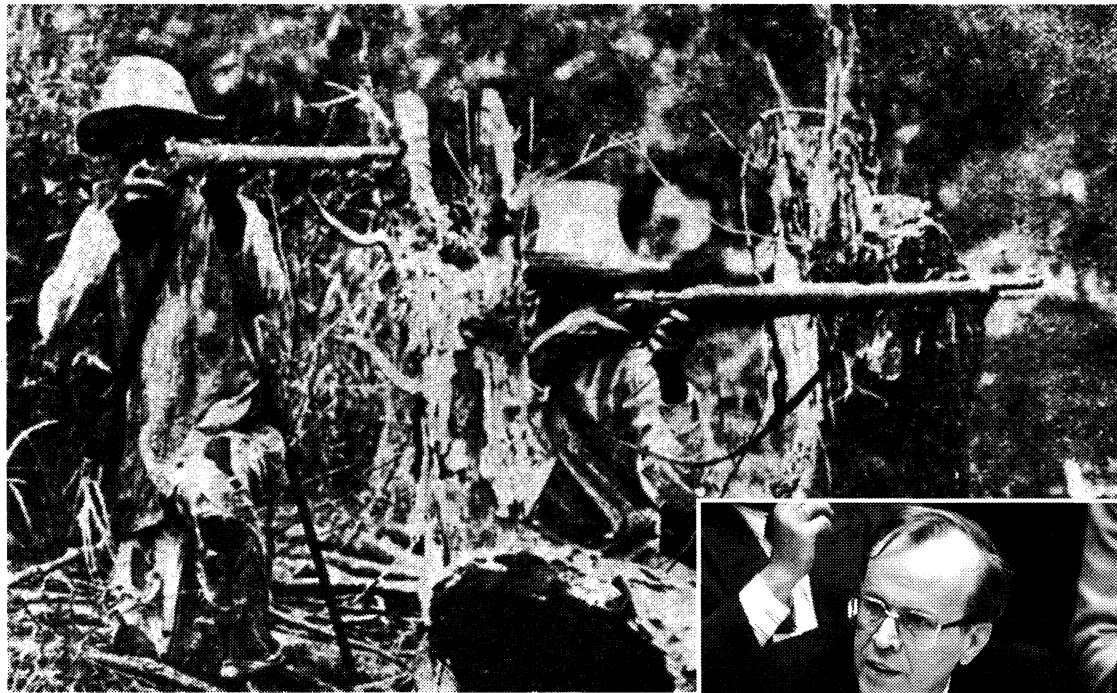
That morning was lit up by an idea, more than by the sun:

"Citizens, up until this moment, you have been my slaves. From now on, you are as free as I am. Cuba needs all her sons and daughters to win its independence. Those who want to follow me can do so; those who want to stay here can do so. Each person will be as free as the next."

That announcement, repeated by all the property owners surrounding Céspedes on Oct. 10, 1868, would indelibly mark the character of the war.

With those words, 130 years ago today on this very spot, the Cuban nation took its first steps and our single revolution was begun, a revolution that successive generations of Cubans would later continue. For almost a century the nation would carry out extraordinary feats, withstand defeats, and endure sacrifices, until attaining victory. Born of an unlimited love for justice, equality, and human dignity, the Cuban nation was able to confront the worst adversities with stoicism, learning how to grow as it faced them, without ever abandoning its ideals. It inspired men to offer everything and to fight to the end, without anyone's help, following the example of the person who, on this date, summoned us to embark on the course. One hundred thirty years later, the same revolution confronts similar obstacles, resisting, persevering, and

¹ Juan Almeida was a founder of the July 26 Movement and a central leader of Cuba's Rebel Army during the revolutionary war of 1956-58. He is currently a vice president of the Council of State and president of the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution.



"Complete abolition of slavery in all its forms and manifestations; real emancipation; and the full exercise of citizenship, with the same civil and political rights as other men; the elimination of racism, including prejudices and discrimination — these were the steps history demanded. And they could be taken up only by a real and profound revolutionary movement." Above, combatants in the 19th century wars for Cuban independence. Right, Ricardo Alarcón, president of Cuba's national assembly.



emerging triumphant. In doing so it recognizes that the road we have traveled is the best homage to those who took history by storm on Oct. 10, 1868.

In a society poisoned by the system of slavery, freeing the slaves and openly proclaiming this goal in the new movement's first act gave it the most deeply radical character, confronting squarely the main question of the epoch. But Céspedes did not limit himself to breaking the chains that subjugated those men. In a single stroke, he went much farther.

until 1878. A large portion of the independence forces were freed slaves. As initiator of the war in 1868, and later as president of the Republic of Cuba in Arms proclaimed the following year, Céspedes is generally considered the father of the Cuban nation.

The Ten Years' War did not win Cuba's independence nor did it put an end to slavery in Cuba, which was finally abolished only in 1886. A second war against Spain was fought from 1895 to 1898. As the independence forces were poised to defeat Spain's colonial troops, however, the United States government entered the war. In this first war of the imperialist epoch, the U.S. rulers finished off Spain and militarily occupied Cuba (as well as Puerto Rico, the Philippines, and Guam). The aspirations of the Cuban fighters were frustrated, as wealthy U.S. families bought up vast tracts of Cuban land and industry and imposed a virtual protectorate over the island.

Sixty years later, on Jan. 1, 1959, U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista was toppled in decisive battles of the revolutionary war waged by the workers and farmers in arms, organized by the Rebel Army and July 26 Movement commanded by Fidel Castro. This victory opened the door, finally, to independence, guaranteed by the first socialist revolution in the Americas.

The *Militant* is reprinting Alarcón's speech as part of celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Jan. 1, 1959, victory. Throughout the coming year, the *Militant* will publish other speeches and materials documenting the revolutionary acts of Cuba's workers and farmers in power.

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Its real precursors were not those groups, but rather the slaves themselves, who more than once had rebelled against that abominable system. The Matanzas uprisings of 1843, drowned in a sea of blood, shook colonial society.³

These uprisings would provoke fear among the reformers, wealthy Creoles who hoped to modify the oppressive society in which they lived, but at the same time went no farther than what an anachronistic and obscurantist system was capable of conceding. In the face of their colonial masters, the slavemasters could make no demands. The most important separatist efforts promoted by the Creoles sought to perpetuate slavery and annex the island to the United States. Significantly, their principal actions were armed expeditions, openly organized and prepared on U.S. soil, from which they sailed for Cuba unhindered — in marked contrast from what would later occur with the efforts made by émigré patriots there. Those expeditionaries, furthermore, consisted almost entirely of foreigners, with very few participants who had been born in Cuba.

The slaves, for their part, were subjected to the cruellest exploitation, isolated in their barracks, without access to education, lacking the means to transmit their demands and organize themselves. It was therefore virtually impossible for them to assume the leadership of a struggle of national dimensions. They could — and, on a number of occasions, they did — rebel against their masters, doing them harm or escaping into the mountains. But they were not in a position to transform their struggle into a movement that other forces would join to conquer equality and through it political independence, which was the guarantee of true and definitive justice.

That role could be assumed only by freed slaves, artisans, and Creole property owners who were prepared not only to abolish slavery completely, but also to incorporate newly freed slaves into the common national effort. Opposing ill treatment or criticizing the excesses of human bondage was not sufficient.

This was not a question of compassion, philanthropy, or economic calculation. If the aim was to create a nation — an objective made necessary by the evolution of colonial society — it was absolutely necessary to determine which human forces would constitute this nation, and fully integrate them as part of it.

Complete abolition of slavery in all its forms and manifestations; real emancipation; and the full exercise of citizenship, with the same civil and political rights as other men; the elimination of racism, including prejudices and discrimination — these were the steps history demanded. And they could be taken up only by a real and profound revolutionary movement.

The essence of that movement had to be justice and solidarity. This was the fundamental message of La Demajagua. As Antonio Maceo⁴ proclaimed years later, on Oct. 10, 1868, "Cuba unfurled the banner of a war for justice."

That morning, Céspedes addressed some twenty-odd slaves, since this was all who were at his disposal. This was not, therefore, a decision that had measurable importance in concrete military terms. The goal

He converted them into citizens with the same rights as everyone else. He defined the homeland as an ideal, as a work in progress that belonged equally to whites and blacks, former masters and servants, and that summoned everyone equally to battle. The last pealing of the bell of La Demajagua was not a call to begin the working day, nor did it announce liberty alone. Above all it summoned everyone to join in the common task.

It marked the founding of the only true democracy, one that recognized no privileges, rejected prejudices, exalted virtue, placed its trust in man, and opened the door to everyone.

Here then, the Republic of Cuba was born. The struggle to conquer the homeland began.

Slavery was the decisive question that defined Cubans. This vicious exploitation of human beings was the main source of wealth of the prosperous Creoles² and provided the colonial regime's base of support.

Over the course of the last century, the subject of slavery was present constantly in the thinking of our intellectuals and politicians. It was always the dominant theme in proposals to reform the colonial system, in efforts to modify relations with the colonial power, and in plans to map out a future for the island. Later, during the war itself, it would weigh greatly, like a heavy burden.

In addition, at a time when Cuba was arising as a distinct entity and had to separate from Spain by force, slavery was part and parcel of the decisive question: Who is a Cuban? Who is part of this new nation?

We have to go more deeply into our history to understand the meaning of what occurred that day, to untangle the complexity of the problem. For slavery would not be abolished by a single noble act of incomparable altruism, or by a formal proclamation. Putting an end to slavery demanded a struggle requiring tenacity, firmness, and wisdom. It would be an inseparable part of the war itself, marking it indelibly, while at the same time determining the future course of our life as a people.

Blacks play key role in forging nation

The appeal issued at La Demajagua by a group of white property owners signified a total break with the line of thinking and conduct toward slavery and blacks that the reform-minded sectors — including those with the most advanced ideas — had maintained.

² Creoles are native-born Cubans of Spanish descent.

³ A number of slave rebellions occurred in 1843 in Matanzas in central Cuba. Hundreds of slaves were killed during these uprisings. In the period of severe repression that followed, 1,000 slaves and free blacks were garroted, hanged, or drawn and quartered.

⁴ Antonio Maceo, a black Cuban known as the Bronze Titan, was a leader of the 1868-78 and 1895-98 wars of independence. He was killed in battle on Dec. 7, 1896.

This speech was given by Ricardo Alarcón, president of Cuba's National Assembly, at a ceremony in the town of La Demajagua on Oct. 10, 1998, marking the 130th anniversary of the opening of the revolutionary struggle in Cuba for independence from Spain. It was published in the Oct. 11, 1998, issue of *Juventud Rebelde*, the weekly newspaper of the Union of Young Communists (UJC), under the title "130 years ago our single revolution began."

Cuba's revolutionary struggle began with the independence wars of the 19th century and has continued through the battles against U.S. imperialist domination of the island between 1898 and 1959, the 1956-58 revolutionary war against the U.S.-supported dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista that triumphed on Jan. 1, 1959, and through the 40-year struggle to advance and defend Cuba's socialist revolution, which continues to this day.

Alarcón's speech is of special interest, since it concentrates on the class forces and social dynamics that guaranteed the revolutionary character of the intertwined struggles for independence and the abolition of slavery that forged the Cuban nation.

On Oct. 10, 1868, Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, the owner of a sugar plantation at La Demajagua near the town of Manzanillo in southeastern Cuba, rang the sugar mill's bell and assembled his slaves. Céspedes announced he was freeing them, and called on them to join him in a fight to win Cuba's independence from Spain. As he and other revolutionaries had planned, Céspedes then formed up a contingent of fighters and attacked the nearby town of Yara. This act, known in Cuban history as the *Grito de Yara* (Cry of Yara), was the beginning of Cuba's first war for independence, which lasted

revolutionary of the Cuban nation

was not to use these men to create a substantial detachment of the Liberation Army that would later arise and use them to march on Yara. Twenty men was nothing against a hundred thousand soldiers of colonialism, or compared with the hundreds of thousands of slaves on the island.

But it was precisely to that mass, and to their masters, that the message was directed.

A complex process began that would have its ups and downs. While sticking tenaciously to principles, this movement attracted to it the greatest possible number of forces, including even large landowners from the West. The unequal relationship of forces the patriots faced would compel them to go after this sector, but loyalty to their ideals made them keep to a radical and consistent trajectory even in that initial stage.

A channel had been opened up in La Demajagua that would permit the slaves themselves, as well as the most sincere abolitionists, to move forward over the opposition of the sugar-growing oligarchy and the fears and inconsistencies within the revolutionary camp as well. On October 28 a municipal council in Bayamo unanimously decreed immediate abolition. In April 1869 the constitution of Guáimaro decreed freedom for all Cubans and an end to slavery.⁵ But a subsequent accord of the House of Representatives on July 5, the Regulation on Freed Slaves, maintained subjugation of the former slaves by compelling them to continue working.

It would fall to Céspedes to annul this act on Dec. 25, 1870. His decision put a definitive and complete end to slavery throughout the territory of the republic, including the area covered by the so-called *patronato*.⁶ Even before that, on March 10, the Revolutionary Government had declared null and void the contracts of Chinese immigrant laborers, which were a not very disguised form of servitude.⁷

In this way, Céspedes pointed out, these people had restored to them their "natural condition of free men, fully exercising their individual will, enjoying the same civil and political rights as other citizens, with perfect equality."

Full abolitionism had won out, and it would be the norm inside the territory liberated by the Republic in Arms. Nevertheless, the re-

public would have to continue waging hard-fought battles against the large landowners who controlled the wealthiest part of the country in the West, and against their agents abroad who promoted disunity and conspired against the revolution, seeking to derail it from its course.

The message of La Demajagua reached all Cubans. One of the principal representatives of the reform-minded landowners even stated on Oct. 24, 1868, that "Cuba has never been closer to a true social and socialist revolution."

General Dulce,⁸ for his part — in a decree issued Feb. 12, 1869, unleashing the fiercest repression against independence forces and their supporters — included among the most serious crimes, together with insurrection, conspiracy, and sedition, that of "disloyalty" by "coalitions and leagues of day laborers and workers."

On April 9 of that year some of the first martyrs for liberty were executed by garroting. These consisted of several tobacco workers, members of the so-called Laborers Guild, a secret society in Havana. One of them, Francisco de León, on the steps of the execution stand, gave a rousing speech that ended with a salute to the independence of Cuba and to Carlos Manuel de Céspedes.

The acts of repression were concentrated particularly against the association of tobacco workers, the principal nucleus of the incipient Cuban workers movement, which had already carried out some strikes beginning in 1865, and whose newspapers were suppressed.

Irrational violence was unleashed against the entire population of Havana. This was on top of the terror caused by incidents like those at the Villanueva and Tacón theaters, and that of the Louvre sidewalk, and later on the murder of the medical students.⁹

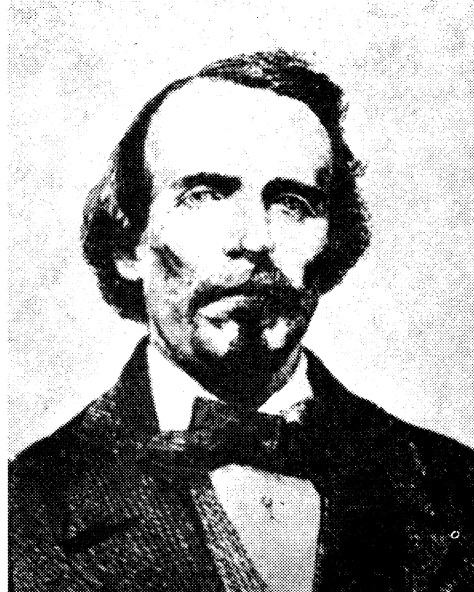
The generalized repression provoked the exodus of a substantial part of the Cuban population. According to a Spanish historian, between February and September 1869 alone, over 100,000 persons left the country from the port of Havana.

These included wealthy families, but a significant number of workers also left. This emigration would have been an indispensable aid to the revolution. But the émigré

⁸ Spanish Gen. Don Domingo Dulce was sent to Cuba as governor in 1869 to help defeat the independence forces.

⁹ On Jan. 21, 1869, a pro-Spanish paramilitary unit attacked the Villanueva theater in Havana, a popular location for Cubans. Three days later, these forces opened fire on the Louvre sidewalk café and other locations in the center of Havana. Fourteen Cubans were killed in these attacks, and several dozen were wounded.

On Nov. 27, 1871, eight medical students at the University of Havana were executed by the Spanish colonial authorities, charged with desecration of the grave of a supporter of colonial rule. On that same day five black men, two of whom were members of Abakuá societies — secret organizations formed originally by freed slaves — made a daring raid in an attempt to rescue them. All five were killed.



Clockwise from top left are Cuban revolutionary leaders Carlos Manuel de Céspedes, Antonio Maceo, José Martí, and Ignacio Agramonte.

population was unable to unite against the annexationist intrigues of the large landowners and the systematic opposition of the government in Washington.

The émigré workers gave generously from their wages to acquire arms and prepare expeditions, devoting their time to the defense of the Cuban cause. More than a few gave their lives in battle. Of the 156 expeditionaries aboard the *Virginus*, for example, 47 were workers, 23 of them tobacco workers.¹⁰

The question of the Cuban émigré community would have decisive importance in the course of the war. As far as the most powerful landowners who had gone abroad were concerned, their relations with the revolution would reflect the stance taken by the sector that controlled the greatest riches of the island, largely in its western part. The Council of New York was an extension of the Council of Havana,¹¹ and an expression of their interests, which were intimately linked to slave production. Despite numerous efforts directed toward them by those from the east and from Camagüey — efforts that began before October 10 and continued later under the Revolutionary Government — the war could not be extended to the West, where various attempts at uprisings by local patriots were frustrated by the Havana leaders.

Their conduct was opportunistic and traitorous. They pretended to support the revolution, as long as it developed far from their properties. And their support was exclusively based on the hope of obtaining concessions from Spain, or, failing that, a Yankee intervention to annex the island to the United States. This group was essentially annexationist, and their positions on social and race questions never went beyond the bounds of reforms.

This led to one of the most dramatic aspects of the war, and to one of the principal causes of its defeat. The bloodiest, most prolonged, and most devastating war in the Americas had a theater of operations limited to the poorest and least developed half of the country.

The conflict had no impact on the colony's sugar production, which continued basically at the same levels through the

ten years of the war, with the exception of a few variations caused by the world market. In fact, the large landowners of the West — both Spaniards and Creoles — increased the benefits they obtained from slave labor while the rest of the country was shedding its blood for liberty.

It is an error to consider the war of 1868 as a movement of landlords and the Creole bourgeoisie, as some do, failing to look at the heart of the matter. Never in the history of Cuba was a bourgeois revolution possible, because a national bourgeoisie as a class never existed in this country. The men who initiated the revolution came from that class by birth, but they did not implement its policies or serve its interests. The initiators of the revolution, Céspedes above all, represented from the beginning the aspirations of the people, including the slave population. They fused with this population and incorporated it into the leadership of the movement at all levels.

If one wishes to classify these men from the point of view of family origin, they were our patricians. One would have to specify, however, that they were Jacobin patricians capable of radicalizing, together with the exploited masses, to the degree that the process advanced.¹²

On the other hand, the political clumsiness of the colonial power and the outrages committed by the mob of Volunteers in the cities,¹³ especially Havana, put many of those large landowners in difficult situations and in some cases harm was inflicted on their properties or they became victims of the repression. From the perspective of the revolutionaries, this reality justified efforts to draw them toward the cause, look for their support, or seek to neutralize them.

In addition, the revolution desperately

¹² The Jacobins were the dominant political force during the period when the most far-reaching gains of the French Revolution (1793-94) were consolidated. Led by revolutionary-minded bourgeois figures, such as Maximilien Robespierre and Jean-Paul Marat, the Jacobins' mass base was among the urban petty bourgeoisie and artisans of Paris and other major cities. At their high point, there were more than 5,000 Jacobin clubs across France. The Jacobins raised supplies for the revolutionary army; advocated universal male suffrage, public education, and separation of church and state; policed price-gougers in local markets; and purged corrupt and reactionary government officials.

¹³ The Volunteers were Cubans who joined the fight of the Spanish colonial authorities against the independence forces. Up to 73,000 served and they played a prominent role in the war. They were notorious for the atrocities they committed.

¹⁰ The *Virginus*, carrying an armed expedition to join the independence struggle, set sail for Cuba in 1873 from the United States. The ship was captured and 52 of the 150 men on board were shot by Spanish authorities.

¹¹ The Revolutionary Council of Havana, formed by reform-minded figures and those linked to Cuban landlords, sought to put a brake on the revolutionary struggle.

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needed indispensable supplies from abroad. It also needed solidarity and international support for Cuba's single-handed struggle. At that time, few Cubans had been trained and prepared for a diplomatic and propaganda effort. The best people from the central and eastern parts of the country were fighting in the war. The best people from the West had left the country.

All these factors were at the root of the complex, contradictory, and difficult relationship that existed between the wealthy émigrés and the Republic in Arms. Generally, whenever the Great War and its internal conflicts are discussed, three factors are examined: the Liberation Army, the revolutionary government, and the House of Representatives. But one must add a fourth factor — the émigré community — which had close links with the other three and played an important role, by commission or omission, in the course of events.

There is not time here to go into this important topic more fully. I will limit myself to pointing out that in those years, the group of large landowners in exile, dominated by annexationists, was the major influence among the émigré community as a whole. It contained Céspedes's most bitter enemies, people who publicly opposed his policy and were later part of the conspiracy that deposed him from the presidency.¹⁴

The majority of the émigrés were artisans and humble workers, who had recently come from a racist society, and were still immersed in the struggle to survive in a strange and hostile environment. The big majority supported Céspedes. They saw the man of La Demajagua as their liberator, admired his generous sacrifice, and understood his intransigence against the exploiters and his love for justice.

Their opinions were expressed in publications that denounced the annexationist and proslavery maneuvers of the wealthy members of the Council of New York. Their sentiments were shown by the women workers of that city who gave Céspedes the gift of a saber. The latter, out of modesty, declined to accept it.

Their support was expressed in the noble gesture of the artisans who offered to provide economic support for the wife and small children of the Father of the Country [NOTE: In Spanish: "Padre de la Patria"]. This act led to an even grander gesture by Céspedes and to a clarification of his ideas: on declining the offer, he stated that he wanted his family to follow in the artisans' example of "working to survive, contributing their savings if possible to increase the funds of the Republic."

The Society of Cuban Artisans of New York, representative of the nascent Cuban proletariat, issued a protest over the ouster of the president of the Republic in Arms. They denounced and repudiated this act, even before it was committed.

This mass of poor men and women would be the source of support of the revolutionary effort throughout the Ten Years War, when the large landowners had already pulled back to await the Yankee interven-



Above: Bohemia

Above, Chinese residents declare support for Cuban revolution at Sept. 2, 1960, rally where First Declaration of Havana was read and approved, condemning U.S. imperialism's attacks on the Cuban revolution and its domination of Latin America. In addition to complete abolition of slavery, the revolutionary government headed by Céspedes during first independence war "declared null and void the contracts of Chinese immigrant laborers, which were not a very disguised form of servitude." At right, Fidel Castro, center, and fellow activists with La Demajagua bell, symbol of revolt waged by freed slaves and abolitionists for Cuba's independence. Castro and other student leaders brought the bell to University of Havana in 1947 and displayed it as symbol of Cuba's trampled sovereignty. Bourgeois government wanted it for a superficial showing.



tion. And these poor men and women continued doing so in subsequent efforts, supporting Martí's party¹⁵ and continuing the struggle until 1898. The truth is that throughout these 30 years, as Máximo Gómez recognized, "the combatants' last recourse was always the tobacco worker's knife."¹⁶

Colonial repression was unleashed with particular fury against the defenseless population, trying to eliminate all forms of collaboration with the Liberation Army. Among the measures adopted by General Dulce in 1869, and denounced by Céspedes before the world, was "the confiscation of the possessions of members of the republican army and of those suspected of sympathizing with the revolution; the forced requisitioning of horses on farms throughout the districts in arms; ... the forced concentration of the inhabitants of the rural areas and the consequent abandonment of their farms; and the destruction of all crops and cultivatable land to deny food to the patriots; the capture and immediate execution of all Cubans found in the rural areas, unarmed as well as armed."

An Irish journalist who visited the island during the war left testimony of the devastating portrait he encountered in the villages of Las Villas: "The majority of the inhabitants were in a state of dire poverty owing to the brutal orders dictated by the Spaniards to concentrate persons in the cities and vil-

lages, a concentration that has resulted in families decimated by hunger and illness." On arriving at Sancti Spiritus the author wrote: "One could see rows of women going door to door asking for a bit of rice, their faces displaying the indelible signs of hunger. One could also read in many of their faces sad histories of suffering and privation."

Extending the war to the entire country, effectively integrating all the territories, and obtaining necessary military supplies from abroad were strategic requirements that the revolution had to resolve in order to consolidate its forces and win.

These objectives came up against not only the power of the colonialists, but also the antinational oligarchy and the government of the United States.

U.S. gov't: foe of Cuban independence

Official U.S. documents show that between March and November 1869, the entire machinery of the federal government was mobilized in 16 states, from Florida and the Gulf of Mexico to the Canadian border, with the active participation of the navy, to turn back expeditions, stop ships, capture arms, and pursue, arrest, and sentence patriots.

The hostility of the authorities toward the Cuban cause contrasted with the displays of sympathy and support it received from the U.S. people. For example, the Commission of International Relations of the House of Representatives included in its report of June 14, 1870, numerous appendices consisting of petitions by groups of citizens demanding recognition of the independence of Cuba and its belligerent status. These came from different parts of the United States with the signatures of tens of thousands of persons. A single one of these was signed by 72,384 citizens of New York.

The official attitude, contrary to the feelings of so many North Americans, would be expressed that same day, in a message to Congress by President Ulysses Grant, where he rejected giving any aid to the Cuban patriots, describing them in the most vile and slanderous language.

Beginning in July 1870, Céspedes had warned that the U.S. government "aspires to take possession of Cuba without any dan-

gerous complications to itself, and in the meantime it doesn't want Cuba to free itself of Spanish domination, going so far as to oppose its constitution as an independent power. That is the secret of its policy."

In a message to Benito Juárez¹⁷ on Dec. 13, 1870, Céspedes stated: "You certainly know well how intense is the effort we are involved in to assure our national rights, and how great are the difficulties we must overcome, since you are aware that our enemies are numerous and well disciplined. That we have to fight in a very narrow island; that the coastlines are carefully watched by a numerous fleet; and that we are left to our own resources despite being in the center of independent America."

Two days later, in a letter to the editor of a New York daily, Céspedes denounced the

fact that while Spain could easily acquire all it needed to continue the war, Cuban patriots were being persecuted, and "ships and arms were being captured that had been purchased through the patriotism of our women's tears and the blood of our brave soldiers."

The persecution of émigrés in the United States and the actions of the authorities to prevent the sending of support to the revolutionary movement reached its highest expression with the proclamation issued Oct. 12, 1871, by President Grant himself. Alleging that the activities of the revolutionaries violated U.S.

laws, he threatened them with these words: "For this reason they are subject to arrest. They will be prosecuted vigorously, without any hope of clemency on the part of the executive power to save themselves from the consequences of their crimes at sentencing time. And I order and urge all the authorities of this government, civil as well as military or naval, to use every means in their power to capture, try, and sentence each and every one of the criminals who violate the laws, which impose on us sacred obligations to all the friendly powers."

The threats of Mr. Grant were dramatically concretized when the Yankee authorities seized the ship *Pioneer* and confiscated all the weapons it was carrying destined for Cuba. On Nov. 30, 1872, the Father of the Country ordered the withdrawal of the unofficial diplomatic representatives the revolution had established with the aim of seeking at least recognition of our status as belligerents. In doing so, he left history these words that have lasting relevance: "It was not possible to endure any longer the scorn with which the government of the United States treats us, scorn that has been growing to the same extent as our suffering. For a long time we have played the role of a beggar who is repeatedly denied alms, and in whose face the door is at last insolently slammed shut. The case of the *Pioneer* has taken our patience over the limit. However weak and unfortunate we may be, we must never cease having dignity."

While it prevented acts of solidarity by the Cuban émigré community, the United States helped the colonialists continue the war by giving them the use of U.S. territory and industry. With this support, Spain sent 83 warships to blockade the Cuban coasts, including 30 steam gunships built, armed, and equipped in the United States.

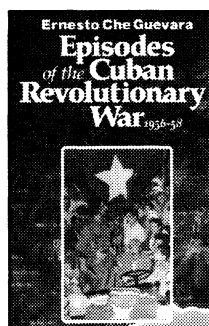
In an Aug. 10, 1871, message to the chairman of the U.S. Senate Foreign Relations Committee, a document that constitutes a profound analysis of the development of the war, Céspedes held up Washington's policy in all its nakedness: "The government of that republic [in Washington] ... is no longer just an indifferent spectator to barbarities and cruelties committed before its very eyes...but is giving indirect moral and material support to the oppressor against the oppressed, to the powerful against the weak, to the monarchy against the republic, to the European colonial power against the American colony, to the recalcitrant slaveowner against the liberator of hundreds of thou-

¹⁴ Céspedes was ousted from the presidency of the Republic of Cuba in Arms by its House of Representatives on Oct. 27, 1873.

¹⁵ José Martí, a poet and writer known as the Apostle of Cuba's Independence, was the founder of the Cuban Revolutionary Party. He launched Cuba's second war of independence in 1895 and was killed in battle the same year.

¹⁶ Máximo Gómez, born in the Dominican Republic, was a military leader of the Cuban independence forces in the Ten Years War and the 1895-98 war. Following the defeat of Spain in 1898, he was dismissed as commander in chief of the Cuban army by the proimperialist regime imposed by the U.S. occupation army. He died in 1905.

¹⁷ Benito Juárez was a leader of the Mexican republic in the 19th century and led the fight against the French occupation in the 1860s. He was Mexico's president in the late 1860s and early 1870s.



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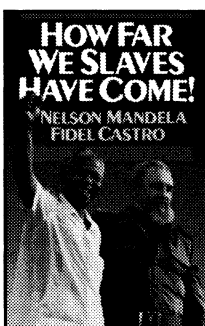
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sands of slaves."

Answering fatalist myths

Compañeras and compañeros:

After 1898, when the Yankee intervention brutally interrupted the heroic struggle of our forebears, an attempt was also made to erase the struggle from our people's memory, distort the meaning of the people's fight, and hide the true nature of their problems, how they had confronted them, and the solutions they had found.

Stress was put on the differences that the central leaders had with each other at certain moments over how to confront various problems. Any analysis of the evolution of those views and the contexts in which they were expressed was eliminated. Everything was reduced to supposed inevitable differences between personalities. In short, human passions were cited to explain the failure of the Ten Years' War. They wanted us to believe that at bottom it was our own characteristics as a people that caused the defeats we suffered. An attempt was made to introduce fatalism into the collective psychology, a fatalism that the annexationists of every type have always used to justify docility before their masters.

In 1868 the nation did not exist, nor did we possess a national consciousness. We were an amorphous, heterogeneous mass, out of which the people would emerge in the midst of struggle, and through that struggle they would identify themselves with the nation and acquire their definitive identity. Those men created the nation, forged the people, and made the Cuban national identity a reality. Would it have been possible to do this without debate, without a passionate exchange of ideas?

On many occasions, we heard repetitions of concepts that echoed the distortions and slanders that the colonialist propaganda and later, the U.S. government, gave of the events and of the participants in them.

Supposedly an "authoritarian," Céspedes nevertheless accepted the view of the majority in Guáimaro and later respected the deeply unjust and erroneous decision of the house to depose him. The person who was presented as a "militarist" nevertheless did everything possible to regularize and humanize the war. A staunch abolitionist, he made tactical concessions in the initial stage, trying to attract or neutralize the wealthy landowners of the West.

But he did not vacillate in fully exercising his authority when principles were at stake, or when it was necessary to assure the revolution's advance. He did so on Oct. 10, 1869, on the first anniversary of the insurrection, ordering the Liberation Army to put the cane fields and coffee trees to the torch. During the invasion of Las Villas, he not only ordered the burning of properties, but called upon the slaves to rise up and join the patriotic ranks. Or when he sent these freed slaves to Camagüey to protect them from their former masters. Or when he annulled the House decision that put restrictions on freed slaves, thus eliminating the system of servitude once and for all. Or when he named two blacks as regents of Bayamo, the first liberated city of Cuba and seat of the revolutionary government. Or when he promoted Antonio Maceo and Máximo Gómez to the rank of general and promoted to high rank blacks and mulattos who had emerged from slavery as well as the poorest sectors of the people. Or when he decreed on Feb. 15, 1871, that whoever intervened in negotiations and did not respect the absolute independence of Cuba and the complete abolition of slavery would be considered a traitor.

Céspedes sought to eliminate regionalism, to carry out the invasion of the West, and extend support to the most radical sectors of the exile community in their opposition to the annexationist maneuvers of the large landowners. These positions and the course that he followed all establish him as the initiator of a consistent revolutionary approach that would later have its continuity in the Baraguá Protest,¹⁸ the revolutionary work of José Martí, and the continuous struggle of our people up to the victory of

January 1 and these 40 glorious years in which, under the *Céspedesista* leadership of Fidel Castro, the people finally realized the dream of La Demajagua.

The goals of independence and justice of the Cuban revolution initiated on October 10 could not be won in that first stage. They required a national consciousness, a party that would lead and integrate the political and military struggle, and a combat strategy that would be extended to the entire island. Those conditions would later be achieved through the genius and the tireless work of Martí. But the work of the Apostle would have been impossible without the Ten Years' War, because that event was what forged the nationality, radically transformed colonial society, and turned the exploited masses of the people into protagonists of their history.

Before October 10 there were differing opinions on the timing for initiating the war. Beginning on that day and up until April 1869, differing views existed on the strategy to follow and on how the revolutionary power should be organized. There were two main poles located in Oriente and Camagüey, with two leaderships, two armies, and even two flags. It's true that in Guáimaro they had deep debates. Clearly the debates were heated, since they were trying to determine what the homeland was and to specify the road to achieving it. But the most important thing is that, with unanimous agreement, out of Guáimaro came one single revolutionary government with one single program, one single army, and one single flag. In Guáimaro the indispensable sense of unity prevailed over everything, as well as the common desire to put aside differences and combine the energies of all for the common battle.

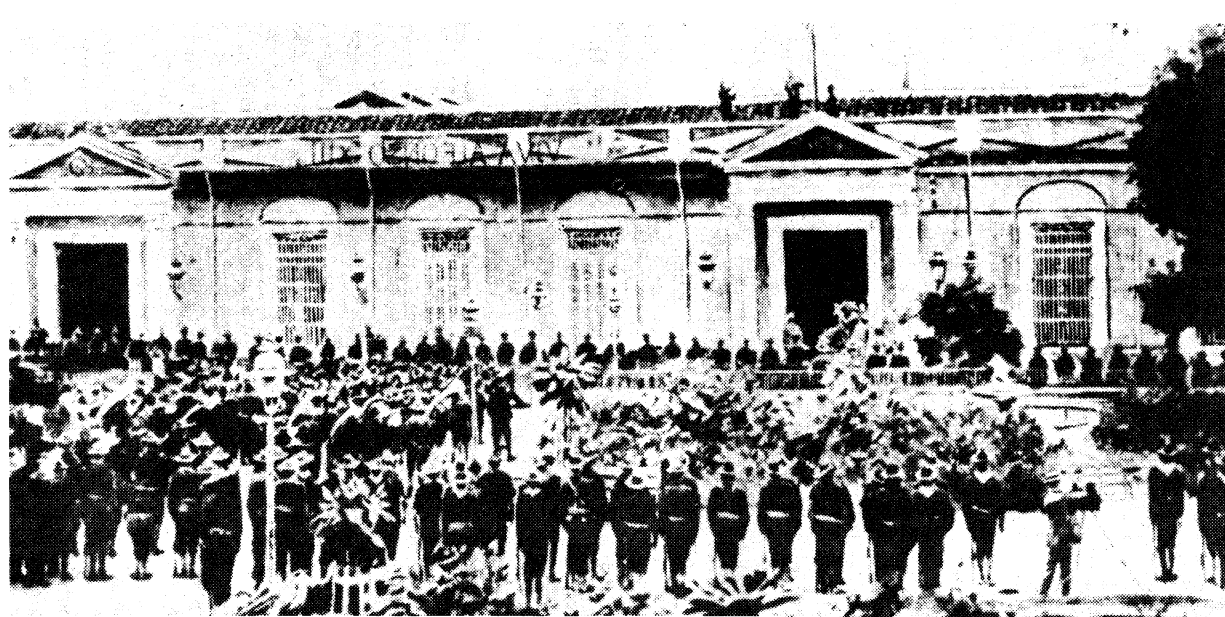
Céspedes and Ignacio Agramonte, the principal leaders of that stage, were initially the proponents of two opposing conceptions of how to organize the revolutionary power. But after his views triumphed in Guáimaro, the very same Agramonte, in the midst of his brilliant military campaign, would criticize the interference of the House of Representatives in running the war, and he would demand a single command structure to lead it. On Jan. 14, 1871, after stating that "there are differing opinions, but there are no divisions or dissensions," the distinguished Camagüeyan [Agramonte] added, "I am one of those who believes most firmly in the need to replace any official who is a hindrance to the rapid and energetic conduct of military operations." There are numerous examples of how, as the war progressed, a relationship of mutual understanding developed between Agramonte and Céspedes. In his letters, the Father of the Country made clear his happiness over this fact, and addressed to the Bayardo¹⁹ exclusively words of admiration and affection.

As Fidel has correctly explained, if Agramonte had lived he would have opposed and probably prevented the ouster of Céspedes by the House of Representatives. The historic truth is that when Agramonte was killed in the fields of Jimaguayú,²⁰ the Father of the Country lost a decisive pillar of support, his most eminent disciple, one who would have been his continuator.

The imperialist usurpation of 1898 frus-

¹⁹ Agramonte was nicknamed the "Bayardo of the Cuban Revolution." Pedro du Terrail Bayardo was a 16th-century French captain known for his courage and generosity.

²⁰ Ignacio Agramonte was killed in battle in 1873.



Militant/Damon Tinnon

"Beginning in July 1870, Céspedes warned that the U.S. government 'aspires to take possession of Cuba without any dangerous complications to itself, and in the meantime it doesn't want Cuba to free itself of Spanish domination, going so far as to oppose its constitution as an independent power. That is the secret of its policy.'" Above, Yankee occupation forces raise U.S. flag over town hall in Santiago de Cuba, 1898. At left, workers in Havana cigar factory, 1995. "The combatants' last recourse was always the tobacco worker's knife," said Máximo Gómez, military leader in both wars for Cuban independence from Spanish colonialism.

trated the movement that began here 30 years earlier. They took over the country and its resources, imposing corrupt and servile regimes that exploited and divided the people. In that debased republic, the worst vices of the colonial society were maintained. The old servitude no longer existed, but millions of Cubans suffered under capitalist slavery, and with it extreme poverty, homelessness, racism, and racial discrimination.

These six ignominious decades were a radical negation of the ideals of 1868. The republic that existed in those years was the opposite of La Demajagua. It had nothing to do with the dreams of Céspedes and Agramonte, nor with the heroism, sacrifices, and the blood shed by hundreds of thousands of Cubans over three decades.

The youth of today, who learn to love and respect our glorious founders, will have difficulty imagining that it was not always so. Under the system of Yankee domination, an attempt was made to rob the people of their memory, to distort their history, to consign to oblivion the example of these heroes and the lessons of their struggles.

The neocolony and its masters were especially implacable toward Carlos Manuel de Céspedes. Inasmuch as they were completely opposed to patriotism, they had to assure the eternal death of the Father of the Country, make him disappear completely from history, and bury his message for good.

The facts can be found in the archives and libraries. The ideas of Céspedes, his political documents, his extensive correspondence, his literary works were published and distributed more widely during the thirty years of war than they were after the Yankee intervention in Cuba. Over the course of sixty years, in the so-called Republic of Cuba, the only thing by Céspedes published was a tiny portion of his political writings in a single, limited-edition book — which included items by other authors — entitled *Brief Anthology of October 10*, published in 1938. In sixty years, three books were published about Céspedes, together with three pamphlets and 24 newspaper articles, which were not always fair in dealing with him.

In contrast, countless biographies, studies, and texts about the old annexationists and autonomists were cranked out by Cuban printshops in that same period. In addition, they built statues and monuments to these individuals, and named streets and plazas after them.

But not Céspedes. It's true that Manzanillo jealously watched after the bell, and that Bayamo and Santiago, witnesses to his death, attached his glorious name to some places. But in over sixty years, the rulers of the period erected no tributes to his memory other than his tomb.

It's good for young people today to give

²¹ Céspedes was killed by Spanish troops on Feb. 27, 1874.

thought to this. Because it illustrates the meaning of our century-old struggle and our single revolution, a revolution initiated by the man whom the enemies of the homeland wanted to destroy and make disappear. It reminds us too how he continued fighting, even after his death in San Lorenzo.²¹

The person who from the beginning foresaw that his death would come prior to the triumph, and who had warned us that he would rise up from his grave as many times as necessary to remind Cubans of their patriotic duty, continued summoning young people and true patriots to return to the road of La Demajagua.

For that reason, the first monument in Havana, a humble plaster bust, was created and erected in 1949 at the entrance to the secondary school of Víbora, paid for by the students, professors, and staff members themselves, cent by cent. For that reason in 1947, Fidel Castro and the Federation of University Students brought the glorious bell to the university steps, and rescued it from maneuvers by politicians whom he denounced in memorable rallies in the capital and in Manzanillo.²² For that reason, in 1956 the exemplary mentor Emilio Roig²³ removed the autocratic king from the site in which the spurious republic still honored him, and put there instead the creator of the homeland.

Only after 1959 with the triumph of the revolution that he initiated, have Céspedes's works and his ideas finally been rescued and disseminated on a massive scale. Today his exemplary life and his ideas are for the Cuban people an inexhaustible wellspring

Continued on Page 14

²² In November 1947 Fidel Castro emerged as a national political figure in Cuba through a campaign involving the La Demajagua bell. In preparation for his planned reelection campaign the following year, Cuban president Ramón Grau — a bourgeois politician who cultivated a reputation based on the fact that he served briefly as the country's leader coming out of the revolutionary upsurge of 1933 — planned to bring the La Demajagua bell from Manzanillo to Havana. The Manzanillo municipal council, which had jurisdiction over the bell, refused to take part in these maneuvers and rejected Grau's request. Castro and the Federation of University Students then obtained the council's permission to bring the bell to the University of Havana, and to put it on display there as a symbol of Cuba's trampled national sovereignty. Castro and other student leaders went to Manzanillo and brought the bell to Havana by train. Thousands greeted its arrival, but the following day it disappeared mysteriously. Rallies of thousands of students were held at the University of Havana, addressed by Castro, holding the government responsible for the theft of the bell. The campus was closed by its chancellor for 72 hours to prevent "disturbances." The bell turned up several days later in the hands of the government, and it was returned to Manzanillo.

²³ Emilio Roig (1889–1964) was a leading Cuban historian of the independence struggle and the subsequent struggle against U.S. domination.

¹⁸ In the Baraguá Protest, issued in 1878, Antonio Maceo declared his refusal to abide by the Zanjón Agreement between the Spanish government and the majority of the independence forces, which ended the Ten Years' War without Cuban independence. Baraguá was the town in which Maceo communicated to the Spaniards his decision to continue the struggle.

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

The 'Euro': The launching of the New European Currency and the Accelerating Imperialist Rivalry between the U.S. and Europe. Speaker: John Benson, member of the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers. Fri., Jan. 29, 7:30 p.m. 2546 W. Pico Blvd. (1 1/2 blocks west of Vermont). Donation: \$5. Tel: (213) 380-3460.

FLORIDA

Miami

Celebrate 40 Years of the Cuban Revolution. Speakers: Andrés Gomez, Antonio Maceo Brigade; Ernest Mailhot, Socialist Workers Party; others to be announced. Sat., Jan. 30, 6:30 p.m. dinner, 7:30 p.m. program. 137 N.E. 54th St., Donation: \$6 dinner, \$4 program. Translation into Spanish and French. Tel: (305) 756-1020.

GEORGIA

Atlanta

On the 26th Anniversary of Roe v. Wade: What Strategy in the Fight for Women's Rights? Speaker: Meg Novak, Socialist Workers Party National Committee. Fri., Jan. 29, 7:30 p.m. 230 Au-

burn Avenue. Donation: \$4. Tel: (404) 577-7976.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

No to NATO/U.S. Intervention in Kosova. Fri., Jan. 29, 7:30 p.m. program. 87A Halsey Street. Donation: \$4. Tel: (973) 643-3341.

NEW YORK

New York

Stop Police Brutality! Hear a panel of activists in the fight against police brutality. Speakers: Mirta Calderon, mother of Anibal Carrasquillo, who was killed by cops; Carmen Torres, cousin of Yvette Marin Kessler, who died in police custody; Al Duncan, Socialist Workers Party; and others. Fri., Jan. 29, 7:30 p.m. program. 59 4th Avenue (near Bergen) Near Atlantic and Pacific subway stops. Donation: \$4. Tel: (718) 399-7257.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

How can Airline Workers Fight to Defend our Unions and Win a Decent Contract? Speakers: Rebecca Arenson, Young Socialists, and member of the International Association of Ma-

chinists (IAM); and Nancy Cole, Socialist Workers Party, member of IAM at US Airways. Fri., Jan. 29, 7:30 p.m. program. 1906 South Street (at 19th) Donation: \$4. Tel: (215) 546-8218.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

Challenges Facing the Labor Movement Today. Panel discussion: John Walson, strike captain for United Steelworkers of America Local 7945 in Tacoma, Washington; Rich Doff, member of USWA Local 7945 on strike at Kaiser Aluminum; Fri., Jan. 29, 7:30 p.m. 1405 E. Madison. Donation: \$4. Tel: (206) 323-1755.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Free Leonard Peltier! Speaker: Breeze Luetke-Stahlman, national chairperson for the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee. Fri., Jan. 29, 6 p.m. dinner, 7:30 p.m. program. Florida Ave. (just west of 18th Street.) Donation: \$4. Tel: (202) 387-2185.

BRITAIN

London

Why Working People Should Continue the

Fight for Justice for Stephen Lawrence. Fri., Jan. 29, 7 p.m. 47 The Cut (near tube Waterloo) Donation: £2. Tel: 0171-928-7993.

Manchester

Fighting Racism Today: from the Stephen Lawrence Family Campaign in the UK to the Black Farmers' Struggle in the U.S. Speaker: Paul Galloway, Communist League. Fri., Jan. 29, 7 p.m. 60 Shudehill Donation: £2. Tel: 0161-839-1766.

CANADA

Vancouver

The Crisis of U.S. Imperialism and the Impeachment of Clinton. Speaker: Norton Sandler, leader of the Socialists Workers Party in San Francisco. Sat., Jan. 30, 7:30 p.m. 3967 Main St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (604) 872-8343.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

U.S., NZ: Hands off Iraq! Speakers: Ghaleb Javer, member of the Iraqi community in New Zealand; and Janet Roth, Communist League. Fri. Jan. 29, 7 p.m. 203 Karangahape Road. Donation: \$3. Tel: (9) 379-3075.

Clinton pushes militarization, cuts in social wage

Continued from front page

former White House employee whose affair with Clinton and his attempt to cover it up triggered the yearlong scandal.

Whether Clinton will be acquitted by the Senate, convicted of the charges of perjury and obstruction of justice and ousted, or remain in office after being censured is not predictable yet. In a sign of the uncertainty and instability that has proliferated among ruling circles, Rep. Jennifer Dunn, Republican of Washington, said in her rebuttal to Clinton's speech: "These are disturbing and controversial times in the nation's capital." Referring to remarks by a TV network anchor that "the capital is in chaos," Dunn commented in a not-too-reassuring way, "Ladies and gentlemen our country is not in crisis. There are no tanks in the streets."

The drive to remove Clinton from office is led by rightist politicians, particularly the ultraright. This reactionary impeachment offensive comes from weakness, not strength. It is an attempt by a section of the ruling class to take away through a "cultural war" what they have been unable to wrest from working people in direct class conflict — like reversing a woman's right to choose abortion or doing away with affirmative action.

Sensing that the real target of the impeachment campaign is not the president and his offensive behavior but gains working people have made in struggle, a large majority within the working class has steadfastly opposed the right-wing attempt to remove Clinton from office.

The liberals in the White House are attempting to turn this sentiment into political support for their course. This course consists of a bipartisan foreign policy aimed at keeping as much of the world as possible open for the trade, investment, and exploitation that U.S. imperialism needs. This is combined with an increasingly bipartisan domestic policy that has shifted to the right over the last decade on all major social questions — from immigration to welfare.

Clinton repeated in his State of the Union address a favorite theme of bourgeois politicians of all stripes: that Social Security may be bankrupt within a few decades because a bigger section of the population is living longer after retirement.

The 1935 Social Security Act and other programs that provide some income security for workers — unemployment insurance, workers' compensation, Medicare, and Medicaid — were concessions by the employers' class to massive struggles by the toilers. Social Security, for example, was a concession to the CIO movement in the 1930s that also led to the formation of industrial trade unions. These programs provide some possibility for workers to make it through a lifetime, to have pensions, to be able to provide care for the young. They also tend to tie the working class together and buffer the dog-eat-dog competition bred by capitalism.

All these programs have been eroded by the bipartisan assault on the social wage, which is aimed at increasing the portion of the surplus value the bosses rob from the workers and at tearing the solidarity of the working class apart. Clinton, for example, signed into law in 1996 the Welfare Reform Act that ended Aid to Families with Depen-

dent Children — the first gutting of the Social Security Act since 1935.

The most revealing explanations of what the bipartisan assault on Social Security is all about have been made by some of the more boldly forthright statisticians and economists. They argue that when the rulers passed Social Security, they never expected to have to pay out most of it, because average life expectancy was lower than retirement age. But now workers live 10 years longer than retirement age, on average. So the whole thing has become a big problem for them.

Fearful of widespread opposition among working people to any outright cuts in Social Security, Clinton proposed leaving benefits intact for the time being. He said, however, that "the best way to keep Social Security a rock-solid guarantee is not to make drastic cuts in benefits," implying that some cuts may be demanded in the future. Clinton proposed that a portion of the projected budget surplus be invested in the next 15 years to put Social Security "on a sound footing." That leaves open what will be done once an economic downturn hits and the projected surpluses disappear. Clinton also proposed that a substantial portion of the federal pension funds be invested in the stock market and that the government promote individual savings accounts for retirement supposedly to help low wage workers.

"By endorsing the concept of individual

accounts and stock-market investments, Mr. Clinton has essentially begun negotiations with Republicans and Democrats who favor such ideas," said a front-page article in the January 20 *Wall Street Journal*. "Conservative Republicans also favor individual accounts for the same reason liberals oppose them — they could be a step toward privatizing Social Security."

Most Republicans attacked Clinton for his proposals and demanded precisely such steps that would go in the direction of ending Social Security as an entitlement. Meanwhile, Alan Greenspan, chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, said a massive government investment of pension funds into the stock market would endanger the economy.

Republicans at the same time supported Clinton's main foreign policy initiatives. "The good news is that after six years of cutting spending for our armed forces, the President has signaled that he is ready to join us in strengthening our national defense," said Rep. Steve Largent, Republican of Oklahoma, in his rebuttal to the president. In his speech Clinton announced his budget proposal includes \$115 billion increase for the Pentagon, the largest since the administration of Ronald Reagan in the 1980s.

Clinton claimed this was needed to meet threats "from outlaw nations and terrorism," which include north Korea and Iraq. He also reiterated Washington's hostility against revolutionary Cuba, signaling that there will

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Semantics (I) — “spat: to quarrel pettily or briefly” — Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary

Semantics (II) — “U.S. Jet Fires at Iraqi Radar As Spat Contin-



Harry Ring

ues.” — January 13 *Los Angeles Times* headline.

Like we say, nothin’s perfect — “Replacement valves installed in [Boeing] 737s to prevent rudder problems that might have led to two crashes will have to be inspected after cracks were found in some of the devices, the FAA said.” — News item.

Leftovers — FAYETTEVILLE, Ark. — “For the next two months the Environmental Protection Agency will supervise the removal of rusted drums and toxic sludge from the city’s industrial park. The drums are filled with cyanide, solvents and acids. The site was abandoned in 1996 after R&P Electro-

plating folded.” — News item.

Don’t get excited — ANCHORAGE, Alaska — Twenty-eight of the city’s 80 schools lack sprinkler systems, but fire officials said they are still safe. The district will install sprinklers in all but eight of the schools in four years if the assembly OK’s the districts \$427 million building plan...” — News item.

Hardly worth mentioning — CANTON, Ohio — Removal of low-level radioactive waste that was mistakenly dumped into the Stark

County landfill will begin Thursday, an EPA official said. A subcontractor is to begin digging up about 93 tons of radioactive dirt along with the contaminated trash.” — News item.

Say cheese — “Police are to be allowed to keep the millions of pounds raised in fines from thousands of motorists caught speeding every year by roadside cameras. The number of cameras are likely to quadruple.” — London news item.

What year is this? — Groups in

Birmingham, Alabama, are trying to get officials to remove swastikas engraved on the exterior of the county courthouse back in 1931. Meanwhile, the Ku Klux Klan was slated to hold a rally at the courthouse January 9.

‘Best book of 1998’ — That was the judgment of *An Phoblacht/Republican News* [Ireland] in noting a new edition of *The Communist Manifesto*. It declared: “Many fine books were published this year...but the book of the year has to be *The Communist Manifesto*, 150 years old last March.”

1902: anthracite miners strike for right to a union

In May 1902, the overwhelming majority of the 144,000 miners in the anthracite (hard coal) fields of eastern Pennsylvania walked out, demanding a wage increase, an eight-hour workday, and recognition of their union, the United Mine Workers of America. Over the next five months they waged a mighty battle. They not only stood up to the mine bosses and their hired thugs, but to government troops. On October 6, the state governor sent the entire Pennsylvania National Guard, 9,000 strong, to force the mines open. The troops marched into the coal fields, but the strike stayed solid; the strikers refused to be provoked and no workers could be found to mine coal.

John Mitchell, president of the United Mine Workers, had opposed the strike and successfully fought to prevent it being extended to include the more numerous min-

who remained at work being engineers. At once the pumps and stationary engines were manned by superintendents, foremen, assistant foremen, clerks, and imported maintenance men. A few mines were shut down and flooded.

Every colliery was now a fortified camp surrounded by stockades and barbed-wire fences. Armed deputies guarded the shafts, breakers, and washeries. By June 2 there were 3,000 Coal and Iron Police and 1,000 secret operatives on duty in the anthracite field. Deadlines were established around the mine properties, and the guards were armed not only with guns, but also with flashlights and cameras to secure pictures of strike leaders for later blacklisting. Employees of the Lehigh Valley Coal Company were notified to vacate company houses unless they returned to work. Accommodations were prepared at the mines for nonunion workers. The operators were resolved to stamp out the organization of the miners, and thus free themselves from future labor disturbances.

The miners retaliated against the importation of the Coal and Iron Police by organizing a boycott. They abstained from all intercourse not only with scabs and Coal and Iron Police, but also with all persons who continued to serve them. “Unfair lists” of those who refused to join the strike were posted. Any business place which supplied the wants of those on the “unfair lists” was deserted by the strikers. Even a secondary boycott was in force against the families of the scabs. Children of strikers in some of the Wilkes-Barre schools left the classrooms because of the presence of children of non-strikers. At the Wilkes-Barre Lace Mill 1,100 girls walked out to demand the discharge of five girls whose fathers or brothers still worked in the mines. The boycotts were both spontaneous and effective; for the strikers, who with their families and sympathizers made up the vast majority of the population, regarded the boycott as their one weapon against the non-union workers who were undermining their attempt to improve their working conditions....

Nevertheless, the boycott continued in full force. The strike was further strengthened by the calling out on June 16 of the fire bosses. Although they were not members of the United Mine Workers, about 30 per cent of them quit work. The collieries were now endangered by cave-ins and explosions.

Meanwhile the West Virginia district had sent in its request for a special national convention; however, Mitchell was reluctant to act, since he feared that a general sympathetic strike would be declared. He preferred therefore to pocket the requests for two or three



There were thousands of children among the strikers. Pennsylvania laws barring the employment of children under 14 years of age inside a mine and under 12 outside were routinely ignored. Anthracite bosses complained that boys were allowed to vote in the United Mine Workers. The union replied that if the boys were old enough and responsible enough to work 10 hours a day, they were old and responsible enough to cast a half-vote in the local union. Above, child miners in 1908.

weeks. Only on June 18 did Mitchell issue the call for a special national convention at Indianapolis, and he set the date one month distant, July 17. With a month’s warning given them, the operators began a drive to open the collieries before the convention was to convene. Action was demanded of them by the New York Times:

The facts being as we find them, and there being no advantage apparent from arbitration, the duty of the operators is to begin mining coal without further delay. Their interests demand this....

Notices were distributed by the operators among the miners urging them to return to work. The Coal and Iron Police became daily more provocative; and on July

1 the first loss of life in the strike occurred, when Antonio Giusuepe, a striker, was shot fatally by a Coal and Iron policeman from behind the stockade of a colliery. Arrests for “inciting to riot” became more frequent: on July 2 four pickets at Hazleton were held for \$500 bail each on charges of “rioting and intimidation”; on July 7 at Williamstown 10 strikers were arrested for “inciting to riot.” Adopting a different tactic, the Philadelphia and Reading Coal and Iron Company announced a 10 per cent increase in wages for all men who had remained at work during the strike. There was, nevertheless, no break in the strikers’ ranks, and the operators could not procure the miners necessary to open the collieries.

BOOK OF THE WEEK

ers in the bituminous coal fields, where the union’s main base was. On Oct. 21, 1902, after two days of debate, the strikers delegates approved Mitchell’s proposal to go back to work under binding arbitration of their dispute with the coal bosses. The arbitration commission’s settlement included about half of what the miners had demanded in increased wages and lower hours, but did not provide any union recognition. That right was won only after 13 more years of struggle.

The excerpts below are from a chapter in *American Labor Struggles, 1877-1934* by Samuel Yellen, which describes the 1902 anthracite miners strike. The book is copyright © 1936 by Samuel Yellen and published by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted here by permission of Pathfinder.



BY SAMUEL YELLEN

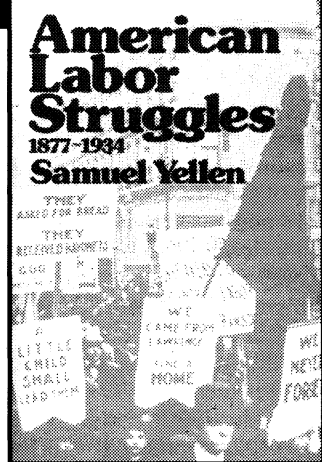
[T]he Executive Committee of the three anthracite districts met on May 21 at the Wilkes-Barre and voted that all engineers, firemen, and pumpmen, unless they were granted an eight-hour day with no decrease in wages, were to stop work on June 2. When this ultimatum was not complied with, the engineers, firemen, and pumpmen left their posts as ordered; from 70 to 80 per cent of the 5,700 employed in the anthracite districts responded on the first day, nearly all of those

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—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



February 1, 1974

An agreement ending the month-long strike in Southern California’s retail food industry was ratified by union members Jan. 5.

A coalition of unions, including Teamsters, Butchers, Operating Engineers, and Machinists, representing 22,000 workers, struck three leading supermarket chains on Dec. 3.

In retaliation, members of the antiunion Food Employers Council locked out members of striking unions at all of its members stores. This affected the jobs of an estimated 100,000 workers.

Members of the different unions got different settlements out of the strike. These included wages increases, raises in pension fund contributions, and — for Teamsters — an end to compulsory overtime for 25 percent of its membership. Meat Cutters, Teamsters, and Operating Engineers also won a modified escalator clause.

A key issue for the Meat Cutters was the “new methods clause.” The jobs of thousands of butchers have been jeopardized by the introduction of machinery to speed up production. While maintaining the right to strike over this question in Northern California, the butchers failed in efforts to get this provision extended to contracts in Southern California.



January 31, 1949

When a clique of Army officers staged a coup d’etat in Caracas, Venezuela, Nov. 24, the U.S. State Department hastened to announce that the property of investors in Venezuela was “safe” but that it was still “too early” to discuss formal recognition of the military conspirators. The overthrown Gallegos government had polled 70 percent of the vote in a free election last spring. The smashing of such a democratically-elected regime shocked public opinion in the United States and the Truman administration was sharply criticized for its role in fostering totalitarianism in Latin America. On Jan. 21, not even two months since the officer clique seized power by force and violence, the administration recognized the plotters as the legal government of Venezuela.

A State Department spokesman announced with the usual poker face of an imperialist diplomat that this “delay” was deliberately designed to make “abundantly clear” that it considered forcible overthrows not only deplorable but usually inconsistent with the acknowledged ideals of the American Republic. The military gangsters who brought totalitarianism to power in Venezuela gun in hand made no comment. Nor did the oil companies, mainly Standard Oil and Royal Dutch Shell, who have some \$2 billion worth of investment in Venezuela.

Cancel Brazil's foreign debt!

"If current trends continue, within a decade our hemisphere will be the biggest market in the world — with more than 850 million consumers buying \$3 trillion worth of goods and services. These are remarkable, hopeful times." — Clinton at 1994 "Summit of the Americas"

Within a few weeks after the U.S. president's glowing speech the Mexican peso was devalued by 15 percent on December 20, 1994. The capitalists' "solution" to the peso crisis was more austerity, more debt at loan-shark rates, a sharp reduction in real wages, and the accelerated sell-off of Mexico's national patrimony to imperialist big business.

Four years later their "solution" to the Brazilian currency crisis is the same, a variant of the future facing every country held in economic bondage to world finance capital. The devaluation in Brazil, which accounts for 45 percent of the economic output in Latin America, is threatening to spread throughout the region. It reflects a deepening of world capitalism's deflationary conditions and how the stability of the imperialist countries themselves are increasingly bound to the effects of the crises and breakdowns in the exploited Third World.

The "bailout" deals arranged by Washington through the International Monetary Fund from Brazil to Indonesia are aimed at ensuring governments in the semicolonial

countries continue making debt tribute.

U.S. financial barons are seizing the national patrimony in these countries as collateral on new loans. They are gobbling up huge chunks of industries owned by the government or national bourgeoisie at bargain-basement prices. The austerity demands imposed on Brazil as the terms for the "rescue" deal will mean social devastation for millions. Workers in Brazil already face increasing joblessness, soaring inflation, and other cutbacks.

But the toilers are rebelling against assaults on their standard of living, like the auto workers at the Ford plant in São Bernardo, Brazil, who refuse to accept layoffs and have returned to the job site each day demanding that they be rehired. In 1997 when unemployment shot up in Argentina, thousands of workers and farmers blocked highways and organized mass meetings to press their demands for jobs and better social services. Landless peasants in Brazil have already carried out land occupations and other protest actions. This is Wall Street's nightmare.

Working people around the world should view as our own the struggles by workers and peasants in Brazil against unbearable conditions. We should especially call on Washington and other imperialist governments to cancel the debt they use to squeeze blood money from our fellow toilers in the semicolonial countries.

U.S. hands off Yugoslavia

Continued from front page

slaughtered more than 150,000 in the 1991 Gulf war and are imposing sanctions today that are responsible for 5,000 deaths each month.

Washington attempts to portray itself as the "peacekeeping force" in Kosova much the same way it did in Bosnia, where it established itself as the dominant power in Europe on the blood and bones of the Yugoslav people. As the rival national capitalist classes of Europe, wrapped in the United Nations flag, wore themselves out in futile attempts to displace one another as the "winner" there, Washington unfurled its NATO banner in 1994 and decisively moved in. The aim was never to halt "ethnic cleansing" or impose "democracy," but to establish U.S. supremacy in Europe and create conditions that will one day facilitate the restoration of capitalist social relations throughout the Yugoslav workers state.

As the fighting unfolded in Kosova, the U.S. wealthy class held back from intervention, hoping the regime of chauvinist Serbian leader Slobodan Milosevic could do its dirty work and demolish the independence fighters in Kosova. Instead the Albanian people have grown even more determined to resist national oppression — creating a bigger obstacle for the warmongers in Washington.

Clinton's war moves in the Balkans, as in the Middle East, are part of the imperialist military encirclement of the Russian workers state. The eastward expansion of the NATO military alliance and its occupation force in Bosnia are part of the U.S. rulers' preparations for their eventual

military confrontation with workers and peasants in Russia, Yugoslavia, and other workers states. They aim to wipe out the remnants of the social conquests that abolished the system of private profit, including centralized economic planning and state monopoly of foreign trade, and crush the struggles and aspirations of working people there. This is the only road for the wealthy class to restore capitalist rule and reimpose its dog-eat-dog system of wage slavery on these toilers.

The fight for self-determination in Kosova and the battle by 10,000 miners in Romania against layoffs confirm that it was the U.S. rulers who lost the Cold War. They have not been able to establish conditions for stable capitalist property relations in any place where it has been overturned. And they will have to take on and try to defeat a working class that will begin to link its struggles with the resistance of workers and farmers around the world.

The Marxist magazine *New Internationalist* no. 11, featuring "U.S. Imperialism has Lost the Cold War" and the Pathfinder book *The Truth about Yugoslavia: Why Working People Should Oppose Intervention* explain why U.S. imperialism is sinking its tentacles deeper into the powder kegs of the Balkans and elsewhere. These books point to coming explosions of class struggle that will result from the intensifying competition and interimperialist conflicts that will shake the foundations of the world capitalist system. Class-conscious fighters can use these political weapons to wage a steady campaign among fellow workers and farmers against imperialism and its wars.

Cuba's first war of independence

Continued from Page 11

through which the pure waters of patriotism and the virtues and values of the Cuban national identity will always flow.

On this very spot thirty years ago, the commander in chief [Fidel Castro] gave a very important speech. He spelled out the great truth of our history, which many have tried to hide in various ways, that in Cuba there has been a single revolution, beginning with the movement Céspedes launched on October 10, 1868. Fidel summarized the indissoluble continuity of our historic process with this admirable idea: "In those days, we would have been like them. Today, they would be like us."

To be like them today — when the homeland faces powerful enemies that threaten it just like then, when we must face the dangers of confusion and vacillations promoted from abroad — means, above all, to revive the message of La Demajagua and turn it into a norm of conduct, into a guide for revolutionary action.

It means intransigent defense of the absolute independence of the homeland, without concessions of any type that might inflict harm to national dignity. It means true, real, and tight unity among all Cubans. It means the elimination of even the last vestige of discrimination or prejudice that separates us. It means a tireless struggle for equality and solidarity among men, based on the ethical foundation of sacrifice, selflessness, and virtue.

That is the legacy left to us by our common father, the founder, the eternal president of the homeland.

He was the one who told us that "those who are not prepared to sacrifice everything for the freedom of the homeland are not revolutionaries." He was the one, a wealthy landowner, who abandoned his wealth and gave even his personal belongings to the revolutionary cause. He was the one who sacrificed his family and promised to

leave them "an inheritance poor in money but rich in civic virtues." He was the illustrious man, the poet who, until the eve of his death, used rustic writing tools that he got from the forest. He was the inspirer of the Manzanillo and Bayamo symphonies who in his last base in the Sierra Maestra admired the dances that the former slaves practiced for him. He was the one who called blacks his brothers and workers his compañeros. He was the one who maintained an unwavering loyalty to the revolution despite the injustice, abandonment, and ingratitude he received. He was the one who fought to the last instant, completely alone, almost blind and surrounded by enemy soldiers.

Today, an attempt is being made to uproot from the hearts of men and women the sense of justice, to impose the dogma of selfishness and greed. In this world the Cuban revolution remains the only road forward for our people, and, at the same time, the bearer of indispensable values for humanity. In the midst of the war, Céspedes defined the fundamental differences between Cuba and colonialism, and he traced the unbridgeable divide that separates us today, even more sharply, from the imperialists: The enemy "fights to maintain the slavery of blacks, to propagate obscurantism, to perpetuate injustice. The Cuban patriots fight for the liberty of all men, for the triumph of justice, for the forward march of civilization. Over there, speculation, dishonor, and darkness; over here, reason, truth, and light."

The Cubans of today and tomorrow will continue defending the homeland established on this spot, the revolution initiated on October 10. We will continue defending our socialism, which in this sacred earth established its firmest roots. We will continue fighting, ever onward to victory.

Long live free Cuba! Independence or death!

Brazilian gov't begins to push through austerity

BY HILDA CUZCO

In an effort to comply with the demands of their imperialist masters on Wall Street, Brazil's lower house of congress approved January 20 a cut in social security. The move came after the country's currency, the *real*, was devalued 9 percent against the U.S. dollar on January 13, causing fears that the "Asian flu" will spread to the continent's largest country and affect the entire Latin America. Four days later, the Brazilian government of Fernando Henrique Cardoso let the real trade freely in the market, no longer pegged to the dollar, to avoid the depletion of hard-currency reserves. In the last five months, those reserves had plunged to \$30 billion as the government used hard currency to buy up reals to shore its declining value.

Last year, Washington and other imperialists had cobbled up through the International Monetary Fund (IMF) a \$41.5 billion "rescue package" to avoid what is now unfolding in Brazil. The IMF conditions for turning over the loans centered on major belt-tightening demands, which the Brazilian government had been reluctant to pass. The Cardoso regime has received \$9 billion of those loans and another \$9 billion is due at the end of February.

After rejecting austerity measures four times in the past, Brazil's congress passed a change in the social security system that requires retirees, for the first time, to pay taxes — an effective cut in benefits. Those over 70 years old, and those with less than \$400 monthly income, are exempted. The measure amounts to \$10 billion in spending cuts, out of the \$23.5 billion the government had proposed to comply with the IMF demands before the devaluation. The bill is now in the Senate for ratification.

In a news conference in Washington, Brazilian finance minister Pedro Malan said January 18 that the Cardoso government was ready to take any measures necessary to avert the danger of a new inflation, and reassure foreign investors so they would not flee. "We know additional measures may be required," he told reporters. Malan met with U.S. Federal Reserve chairman Alan Greenspan and deputy U.S. treasury secretary Lawrence Summers January 18 to assure them of his government's determination to push ahead with austerity measures.

Following the meeting, a U.S. official reiterated that the adoption of "strong policies, which especially meant carrying through on deficit reduction measures, strong anti-inflation monetary policies and continued structural reforms" was necessary. Malan met with IMF managing director Michel Camdessus, who welcomed the social security cut. He made his visit along with Brazil's new central bank president, Francisco Lopes. Malan had indicated before his arrival that he would ask for a release of the IMF loans ahead of schedule. No such discussions took place, however.

Brazil's central bank has also raised interest rates to make it more expensive to speculate against the real. Overnight loan rates jumped to 41 percent from 36 percent, and the interbank rate was set at between 24.75 percent and 41 percent. Working people and middle-class layers are those hardest hit by the cumulative impact of these measures as unemployment is rising and prices are beginning to soar. Unemployment is expected to reach 12 percent this year.

Air fares have gone up already, with the lowest price on the popular Rio de Janeiro-São Paulo shuttle jumping to 113 reals from 65 in mid-January. A sale on air fares, with reductions of up to 35 percent, has been canceled.

At Electro, a major electronics chain in Rio de Janeiro, credit terms had become onerous before the devaluation. The store has been charging its customers an interest of 6.9 percent per month, almost 83 percent per year. Imported goods prices are rising quickly now. An imported refrigerator-freezer at Electro, for example, now costs nearly \$3,500.

Food prices are also rising. Basic food items such as milk have gone up to 95 centavos per liter from 79 in the last week; and staples such as beans have jumped to 2.40 reals per kilogram from 1.80 in the same period (1 kilo = 2.2 pounds). As a result, in a country of 165 million, the largest in Latin America, social inequalities are sharpening. Brazil's wealthiest 10 percent of the population hold 48 percent of the country's income. In comparison, the poorest 10 percent receive only 1 percent of Brazil's income, according to a World Bank report.

The Brazilian crisis is increasing strains in neighboring Argentina, where the regime of president Carlos Menem insists it will maintain the country's peg to the U.S. dollar at all costs. Estimates show this may push the unemployment rate in Argentina to 18 percent from the current 12 percent. Argentina is Brazil's closest trading partner, with 30 percent of its exports going to that country.

According to Argentina's economy minister, Roque Fernández, the country's gross domestic product could shrink as much as 1 percent this year, instead of a previous projected growth rate of 3 percent for 1999. This will affect auto, steel, and cement industries in particular. Ford Motor Co. has already laid off 1,400 workers. Rising interest rates and falling real wages are expected to reduce demand and sink national car output from 455,000 units in 1998 to 430,000 this year. "The Argentine economy will react with a deep recession," said Dario Lizzano, head of equity research at Santander Investments in Buenos Aires.

Rhode Island hospital workers fight lockout

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

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.

PROVIDENCE, Rhode Island — Members of New England Health Care Employees Union District 1199 have been locked out since staging a one-day walkout December 22 to protest concession demands by Women and Infants Hospital. Since then, union members have kept mass picketing going around the clock, organized a rally of 1,000 people, packed the galleries of the state legislature here, and won wide support from working people.

The 1,121 union members include 500 nurses as well as technical, clerical, maintenance, engineering, and food service workers. "We're helping to set a foundation for other unions," said Richard Olivieri, 18, who works in the receiving department. "We're showing our strength and standing up for what we believe in."

Patrick Quinn, staff organizer for 1199, said the struggle has "received support from the Teamsters, United Nurses and Allied Professionals, and Pipefitters. Job security is the biggest issue. The union wants to maintain its contract, current job levels, and job security provisions with the hospital after it merges with Life Span, a bigger hospital network that runs numerous nonunion facilities." Workers on the picket line point out the hospital administration is seeking to weaken the union and erode wages and rights in preparation for the takeover.

The hospital's demands include a wage freeze for the first year of

the contract and future wage increases below the rate of inflation, allowing the hospital to subcontract services, cutbacks in contributions to health and pension funds, and more nurses working part-time.

Many union members, the vast majority of whom are women, have experience from a 25-day strike against the company in 1988. In that strike they won a strong contract.

The hospital administration is keeping the facility open with supervisors and the help of the U.S. Nursing Corporation, a Denver-based scabbing outfit.

The union is fighting company attempts to limit picketing, through a claim of "union violence" during the mass rally January 5. Normally the company has taken scabs in the back way, but as a provocation to the union, the bosses made them walk through the picket lines that day. Company claims of supposed union violence fell flat in court, however, according to union members present, because even the video tape shown by the hospital revealed nothing the judge considered to be out of hand.

The union also won a victory by securing the right to unemployment benefits for the locked-out workers.

Waterside workers fight firings in New Zealand

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — Fourteen waterside workers (stevedores) are picketing ships owned by Pacifica Shipping at the Onehunga wharf here. They were given, in their words, "a real sad Christmas" when they were laid off by the company on December 23.

Pacifica's four ships ply the coastal shipping trade in New Zealand. Unlike most shippers, the firm often directly hires watersiders to load and unload its ships, rather than relying on workers employed by the ports.

After settling a contract with the majority of the watersiders in the middle of the year, Pacifica demanded in December that working hours be increased with no raise in salary. When, to a person, the work-

ers refused to sign, they were sacked. Waterside Workers Union member Warren Sinel told the *Militant* January 3 the demand by the company was prompted by their purchase of a new ship, "fast on the water but very slow to load and unload."

Sinel is one of the four casual workers among the 14. The casual employees were working without a contract before the dispute.

The loading and unloading of the ship is performed by employees of the International Stevedoring Organisation, which supplies nonunion crews to shipping companies.

As we spoke, the Pacifica ship *Spirit of Vision* was entering the port. Draped over its side was the banner "NZSU [New Zealand Seafarers Union] only work with union labour." Sinel explained that the Seafarers' refusal to work alongside the scabs slows the work down considerably.

On the first day of the picket a confrontation between the pickets and scabs led to assault charges being laid against union members. These charges are being contested by the union, which is also mounting a legal challenge to the dismissals.

Reinforcements from other watersiders swelled the picket to 100 people on one occasion in the last week of December, reported Sinel. These unionists traveled the few kilometers from the major Auckland Port. Onehunga, where the dispute is centered, is a fraction of the size and typically services just a couple of ships a week, Sinel explained.

Pickets told the *Militant* they are determined to reclaim their jobs. "We are fighting to keep union labor on this wharf," Sinel said.



Teachers join locked-out hospital workers picketing Women and Infants Hospital in Providence, Rhode Island, January 9. Workers have been locked out since December 24.

Militant/Margrethe Siem

Movie projectionists protest 60 percent pay cut

COQUITLAM, British Columbia — "Famous Players and Odeon Cineplex are trying to spread a cancer across this country. Their attempt to cut back projectionists' wages 60 percent over three years is outrageous," declared Ted Buranyi, a member of Firefighters Union Local 1941 in Port Coquitlam. He was one of more than 150 unionists and their families who mobilized January 9 in front of the Famous Players Giant Silver City Complex here to support the 60 projectionists locked out since September across British Columbia.

The projectionists are members of the International Alliance of Theatrical Stage Employees (IATSE) Local 348. The previous evening over 100 unionists and supporters mobilized at the Richmond Silver City complex to picket and convince moviegoers to support the projectionists' fight against wage rollbacks. Four high school students from Pinetree Secondary in the area told the *Militant* they were trying to convince young people not to go to the movies to support the pro-

jectionists. "It's disgusting what Famous Players is doing.... What future is there for young people if this happens," said Trisha Sopphusson.

"We work seven days on seven days off and average 45 to 60 hours during the week we work," projectionists' representative Martin Hoare said. "We operate four to six screens at a time and get \$30 an hour when we do so. Our base rate is \$18.37 per hour. We also repair, do maintenance, and install. The bosses make it seem that we do nothing and get paid an outrageous amount, which is not true."

He added, "Famous Players owes us over \$100,00 in back overtime pay for the last three years. We need solidarity in this fight. If it can happen to us, it can happen to anybody."

M.J. Rahn, a member of Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees Local 1999 in Woburn, Massachusetts; Patrick Brown, a member of the Meat Workers Union in Auckland; and Ned Dmytryshyn, a member of International Association of Machinists Local 11 in Delta, British Columbia, contributed to this column.

— LETTERS —

An Israeli Bonapartist?

An item in the "In Brief" section of the January 11 issue of the *Militant* reports that Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu has been forced to agree to elections for that office early this year, due to the growing political and economic instability in that country. The article mentions that one of Netanyahu's opponents would likely be former chief of staff of the Israeli Defense Forces, Lt. Gen. Amnon Lipkin-Shahak. A January 7 article in the *Miami Herald* by Tel Aviv correspondent Nomi Morris on Shahak's election campaign was headlined "Israeli ex-soldier runs to lead a country 'at war with itself.'" After reading this article, it seems to me that this campaign has a number of parallels with the Hugo Chavez election campaign in Venezuela.

Shahak, Morris writes, is "launching a new political movement with the stated ambitions of reviving the deadlocked peace process and easing the country's economic and social crises." Though a veteran of the same commando unit as both Netanyahu and Labor Party leader Ehud Barak, Shahak has attacked both Likud and Labor. "Today a new movement is beginning,

with me at its head," Shahak explained at a press conference announcing his bid for prime minister. "I have come to enlist again, as a civilian, to defend Israel during one of its most difficult periods, [threatened] not only from the outside, but from the inside." His party still has no name, no clearly articulated program, and no list of running mates.

Shahak directly blames the Netanyahu government for "a deep crisis in the fabric of Israeli life" — a crisis only he can cure. Whether or not his election campaign develops into a full-blown Bonapartism like that of Chavez, it bears watching.

Bill Kalman,
Miami, Florida

FBI vs. pro-choice activists

It's useful for *Militant* readers to know about a recent probe by the FBI here in Cleveland. Two local abortion rights activists were targeted following the October 23 murder of Dr. Barnett Slepian in Amherst, New York.

The probe began after Robert Stauber and Michael "Malikee" Gingerich went to Buffalo to attend a vigil for Dr. Slepian the day after

his murder. They mistakenly thought the vigil was being held at Slepian's home, and were confronted by Amherst cops. The cops demanded their identification, recorded the license number of their car, and directed them to the vigil location. The two men went to the vigil with a banner from the group Refuse and Resist!

FBI agents soon visited the home of the woman who lent them her car to go to the vigil, saying she would be charged as an accessory to murder if she did not cooperate in the investigation of Stauber and Gingerich. When she refused to answer their questions, the agents began visiting her neighbors.

When both men learned they were being investigated, they contacted an attorney, Mark Kaiser. On November 19, three agents went to Kaiser's home, knowing he was not there, and confronted his wife.

Stauber and Gingerich were the subjects of a nationwide alert released by the FBI on November 20. According to the Associated Press, the FBI press release read, "There are two more men [the FBI] think might have information about the sniper slaying of Dr. Barnett Slepian. The FBI office in Cleveland asked

police across the country Friday to look for Donald Stauber and Michael Gingerich."

The alert was issued even though the FBI knew the whereabouts of both men. Stauber and his attorney had met with FBI agents that day at an East Cleveland restaurant. During the meeting Stauber refused to answer questions from the federal cops.

Gingerich and Stauber held a news conference at the Cleveland federal building November 24, demanding that the FBI issue a statement that they are not being sought and that there is no "be on the lookout" order in effect. They are also demanding an apology from the FBI.

Kevin Dwire
Cleveland, Ohio

Thanks to the 'Militant'

I have recently renewed my subscription to the *Militant*, after an almost two-year span wherein I had taken a look at other "leftist" publications by others referring to themselves as "Communists."

It was at best enlightening, and at worst, discouraging to have been appraised that not all who say they

represent and are fighting for the working class actually do practice the unity, tolerance, and acceptance that they preach.

Rather than talking about the working class in a heavily politicized, rhetoric slanted towards the bourgeoisie (as is found in the literature of other "Communist" parties) the *Militant* appears to speak from the viewpoint of the working class and directs its reportage to the workers themselves. This is not only refreshing, it's very uplifting, encouraging, and is honestly appreciated by someone like myself, who had, frankly, all but given up on equating "communism" with "honesty." Thanks to the *Militant* and its "of, by, and for" the working class reportage, I am once again able to realize the difference between false "leftists" and actual progressives. Jessica Monique McDonald
Inkster, Michigan

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Greece: students protest education cuts

BY CAN COBAN
AND GEORGES MEHRABIAN

ATHENS, Greece — Some 15,000 students marched here January 15, bringing the city center to a halt. High school students, who were the overwhelmingly majority of protesters, were joined by hundreds of university students and teachers. The teachers union declared a strike to coincide with the student action. Thousands more demonstrated throughout cities across the country, giving the action a nationwide dimension.

There have been protests for almost nine weeks, including occupations of many high school campuses and some college buildings, aimed at overturning the Arsenis Law. This law attempts to significantly reduce access to higher education by instituting restrictive examinations and is a blow to public education. It is part of a broader package of assaults the government says are needed to meet the economic criteria for Greece to enter the European Monetary Union.

Throughout this city, especially in working-class neighborhoods, contingents assembled around the occupied high schools and universities from the early morning hours. *Militant* correspondents joined the contingent of high school students from the neighborhood of Zografou. The group of 300 marched into the center, blocking the main boulevard and chanting, "It will not pass," referring to the Arsenis Law.

The occupations peaked at 2,000 schools just prior to the holidays. Many occupations were suspended during the two-week Christmas period. But other students maintained guard at some 400 schools. "This last week school assemblies were held to decide whether or not to resume. As of today, 650 schools had voted to resume the occupations," said Andreas Simopoulos, a high school student in Zografou attending the demonstration. "This is despite a public campaign of threats from the government, which is threatening to cancel the entire school year, as well as arrest and prosecute students found on occupied school grounds."

Simopoulos continued, "Our response was not to be intimidated but rather to re-

spond to the threats. We descended on the Zografou City Hall and met with the city council and got the mayor to sign a declaration putting high schools in this municipality off limits to the cops."

Television broadcasts have been showing daily clashes between parents and students occupying the schools. *Militant* reporters saw one such clash in another area of Athens. "Some parents came to our school early in the week and tried to break the chains at the gate and put an end to the occupation," said Andreas Kilchikzis while his high school contingent was assembling. "We pushed them back. In the exchange we discovered that they did not even have children in this school, but rather in a nearby elementary school that is not even occupied. This showed that many of these clashes are organized by supporters of the government and are not genuine." An assembly of students and parents has been called for January 17 to help clear the air, Kilchikzis added.

"A lot depends on today's march," said Simopoulos. "After so many weeks many students are tired and feel like they have done the maximum. A big turnout will help give folks courage, since they face a lot of pressure and many are starting to say let's go back to school. The assemblies over the next few days will be decisive."

"It would be totally wrong to go back to classes now," added Georgia Kafedzi, another student. "After so many weeks to go back without pushing back the law would mean having fought so long for nothing."

At a meeting of 250 called by the parents association at the Zografou High School two days later, parents, teachers, and students aired their views on the continuing struggle. The meeting was opened by presentations of two representatives each from parents, teachers, and students.

One parent doubted the students' knowledge of the actual law they were fighting against. Another parent, who teaches both at the public school and at a private university preparatory institute, said the new law reinforces private education. "Before kids would go to the private institutes to prepare for entrance exams in four subjects. With

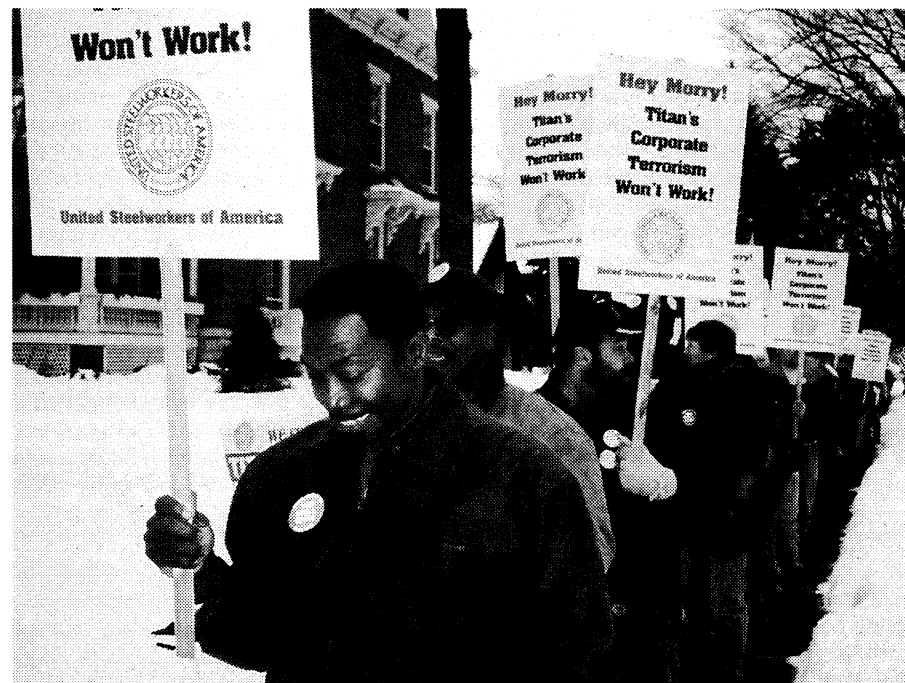
the new law it will be 10 subjects, in 26 different national exams."

No one present spoke in opposition to the struggle being waged by the students, although many favored doing something other than occupying the school. In the end, the meeting decided unanimously to support whatever decision the student body took at its general assembly. The next day, following three hours of discussion, the students in Zografou voted 170 to 20, with 15 abstaining, to continue the occupation.

The student protests have provoked a government crisis. On January 14 the main opposition New Democracy Party submitted a motion in parliament of no confidence in the education minister.

Meanwhile, hundreds of farmers in the area of Thessaly also took to the roads on January 15 against government agricultural policies. "We will rally for our problems and support the farmers, some of whom are our fathers," one youth at a joint farmer-student rally in Karditsa told the daily *Athens News*.

Steelworkers fight Titan for contract



United Steelworkers of America strikers at Titan Tire and their supporters picketed Titan owner Maurice Taylor's mansion, above, and the company's non-union plant in Quincy, Illinois, January 14. Strikers are from USWA Local 164 in Des Moines, Iowa, who walked out May 1, 1998, and Local 303 from Natchez, Mississippi, who struck September 15. Steelworkers took action over forced overtime, two-tier wages, pensions, and health care. Twenty members of USWA Local 787 from Bridgestone/Firestone in Bloomington, Illinois, joined the rally.

Militant/Ray Parsons

Venezuela president: austerity in name of 'the people'

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

Venezuelan president-elect Hugo Chávez Frias, approaching his February 2 inauguration, has already begun forming his government and laying out policies of the new regime. The initial steps planned by this widely popular Bonapartist politician in the name of the Venezuelan people include deepening the austerity drive of his predecessors and pushing to dissolve Congress.

Chávez has invited presidents Fidel Castro of Cuba, Fernando Henrique Cardoso of Brazil, and Andrés Pastrana of Colombia to his inauguration in the capital city of Caracas. In the name of "national reconciliation," Chávez also invited Marcos Pérez Jiménez, a former Venezuelan dictator now living in Spain who held power from 1948 through 1958. This drew dissent from the social democratic party, Democratic Action.

Chávez went on a European tour January 11, aimed primarily at seeking debt-renegotiation deals while also looking to secure more loans in France, Germany, Italy, and Spain. He also visited Canada and Cuba. According to Venezuelan finance ministry reports, Chávez inherits a \$48 billion debt — half of it owed to imperialist banks. Nearly \$3 billion of the foreign debt falls due this year. Some 40 percent of the Venezuelan budget currently goes toward servicing this debt.

After twice denying Chávez an entry visa into the United States, the White House has now issued an invitation to Chávez to meet with U.S. president William Clinton in Washington January 27.

One of Chávez's early announcements was to back a recent increase in electricity fees. He also proposes to enforce stiffer collections of taxes. "Not paying taxes is a so-

cial crime," Chávez declared in a December 6 press conference, "because taxes are, precisely, the contribution a person or corporation makes for the social benefit of the group. Thus, we have to provide laws in Venezuela to make tax evasion a crime."

Reassuring employers they can expect "more of the same" on the austerity front, Chávez is keeping Maritza Izaguirre, finance minister for outgoing president Rafael Caldera, in her post.

Like other Bonapartist figures, Chávez, who was jailed for four years for his role in a February 1992 coup attempt, emphasizes his ties to the military. He is appointing several military officers — some of whom participated in the failed 1992 coup — to high positions in his government. This includes retired Rear Adm. Hernan Gruber Odreman as Caracas governor, Lt. Col. Luis Reyes Reyes as infrastructure minister, and former civic-military National Defense Higher Studies Institute member Toro Hardy as ambassador to Washington. He earlier named Gen. Raúl Salazar defense minister.

Campaign promises fading

Chávez often invokes Simón Bolívar, a leader of the 19th century national liberation struggles in Latin America, as part of his nationalist demagoguery. During his election campaign he boasted that he would force oil companies in Venezuela to adopt social programs. In his first meeting with Chevron bosses in mid-January, however, no such demands by Chávez were reported. The oil giant set up shop in the Boscan oil field in 1946, but left in the mid-1970s when Venezuela's oil resources were nationalized under the social democratic government of Carlos Andrés Pérez.

During that period workers won a number of social benefits from the bosses, paid for out of the profits from the oil industry. But with the economic depression and sharp decline in oil prices in the late 1980s, the bosses and government went on an offensive. They slashed social services; dropped much needed subsidies on food, electricity, water, and public transportation; and sold off state-owned factories, throwing tens of thousands of workers on the street. Chevron returned to Venezuela in 1995.

Chávez also promised to raise workers' wages during his campaign. But when asked after the election about fulfilling that vow, he said, "I cannot make the mistake as president of Venezuela to say at this moment that there is going to be an amount of increase to the minimum wage because that decision will not be a unilateral presidential decision. We will discuss this with workers, businessmen, with the outgoing government."

The Caracas newspaper *El Universal* ran an article in early January subtitled, "The New Government's Dilemma." In it Aurelio Concheso writes, "The dilemma that the government of President-elect Hugo Chávez will face... is how to articulate an economic program whose most immediate results would indicate he is capable of meeting the expectations" of Venezuelans. He must explain "why it is necessary to take measures, or in many cases continue government policies already being implemented" that diverge from what he promised.

Chávez's continued call for a constituent assembly, dissolving Congress, and rewriting the Venezuelan constitution, has drawn opposition from government officials and from Democratic Action. The opposition forces argue he has no constitutional power

to call for a "popular referendum" on the assembly by decree, which he says he will do on February 15 if officials do not.

"Do the Venezuelan people want a constituent assembly, yes or no? If the people vote yes, nobody and nothing will be able to keep us from democratically" calling one, he declares, masking this undemocratic move under the rubric of giving "the people" the right to vote on this question. Many Venezuelans hold Congress directly responsible for real corruption that flourishes there.

Pedro Pablo Aguilar, the outgoing president of Congress, said Chávez is seeking to abuse his power "like a strongman appointed by providence." Meanwhile, the Christian democratic COPEI, originally against the constituent assembly, buckled and aligned with Chávez. "COPEI supports the change and is not afraid of a referendum," said COPEI secretary general Donald Ramírez.

Working-class resistance

In Venezuela today, real wages have fallen 66 percent in 15 years, and about 80 percent of Venezuela's 21 million people live in poverty. Venezuela has one of the largest gaps between rich and poor — half the country's income goes to 20 percent of the population. There have been ongoing strikes and protests by many working people for higher wages and pension increases. On January 8 oil workers waged a 24-hour strike at Petroleos de Venezuela. Some 20,000 education ministry workers in Lara State took to the streets January 14 demanding unpaid wages and other benefits. Health ministry workers in Tachira State also threatened a possible strike. And more than 400 street vendors rallied that day to denounce their eviction from Plaza Bolívar in Porlamar.