

THE MILITANT

INSIDE
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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Protest U.S. attack on Iraq

The wealthy U.S. rulers have been steadily escalating their campaign of brutalization against the Iraqi people with almost daily bombings, provocations, and invasions of Iraq's airspace by U.S. and British warplanes, combined with a savage economic embargo. This brutalization is also

EDITORIAL

directed at working people in the United States and worldwide, as Washington seeks to numb us to their assault on our fellow workers and farmers and prepare the ground for wider attacks.

This pro-war campaign calls for a strong response by working people — a concerted effort to explain the truth about imperialism

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Washington steps up assault on Iraq

BY MEGAN ARNEY

After a month of almost daily air strikes against Iraq, the U.S. military force in the Arab-Persian Gulf stepped up its attacks in the last week of January, including a bombing near the southern city of Basra in which 11 people were reported killed and 59 injured.

At the same time, Washington escalated its "antiterrorist" propaganda campaign against Iraq and announced it would widen the range of its targets of attack.

Since its four-day bombing assault on Iraq in mid-December, U.S. forces have carried out virtually daily attacks on Iraqi defense facilities. Washington has claimed "self-defense" as U.S. and British warplanes fly freely over northern and southern Iraq, in the "no-fly" zones decreed by Washington and its imperialist allies after the Gulf War in 1991.

Following a several-day lull, U.S. warplanes resumed their attacks January 23 by firing laser-guided bombs against Iraqi defense sites in the southern part of the country, near Basra. The next day, U.S. planes from a NATO base in Incirlik, Turkey, entered Iraqi airspace in northern Iraq and launched two separate bombings. U.S. offi-

400 rally in Mississippi for Steelworkers on strike at Titan Tire

Militant/Dave Ferguson

Some 400 people rallied January 23, in Natchez, Mississippi, in support of members of United Steelworkers of America Local 303L on strike against Titan Tire. The main issues in the strike are defending medical benefits for workers and retirees and limiting the massive overtime Titan boss Maurice Taylor is demanding. Among those who turned out for the rally were locked out workers from Crown Central Petroleum in Pasadena, Texas; two carloads of catfish workers from Belzoni, Mississippi, who are demanding better working conditions; and Steelworkers on strike against Kaiser Aluminum from Gramercy, Louisiana.

cialists justified the attack saying their warplanes had been "illuminated" by an Iraqi radar defense system.

On January 25, U.S. jets launched their most intense assault since the December

bombing blitz, firing missiles in several areas in northern and southern Iraq. The biggest attack was on areas outside Basra, Iraq's second-largest city, where U.S. missiles hit

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Miners in Romania battle police to win wage raise and stop pit closures

BY ROBERT DEES

AUGSBURG, Germany — After a two-week strike and a five-day march toward the capital Bucharest during which they fought

pitched battles with the police and military, miners from the Jiu Valley in Romania scored a victory against government attempts to shut down some of the mines.

Their fight registered a blow against the efforts of the Romanian government and imperialist powers to move toward restoring capitalist rule in that workers state.

Ten thousand miners laid down their tools January 5, demanding a 35 percent wage increase and a halt to plans to close two mines in the region. As the government refused to negotiate, some 8,000 miners began a more than 200-mile march on Bucharest from Petrosani January 18. By that afternoon, the government had banned all road and rail traffic in the region. The miners continued their march on foot and in a caravan of some 300 vehicles. They first encountered Interior Ministry troops — reportedly 2,500 strong — at a blockade of concrete slabs and rubble near the town of Bumbesti-Jiu. After a night of fruitless negotiations, the miners overran the roadblock. Local residents supported the miners by throwing rocks at the cops. Back in Petrosani, 1,000 women demonstrated in

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Farmers fight for land, oppose discrimination settlement

BY NAOMICRAINE

Farmers fighting to defend their land and against racist discrimination by the U.S. government are organizing meetings and a March 2 rally in Washington, D.C., to oppose the consent decree the Clinton administration is trying to use to end a lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

"I do not believe that the proposed settlement agreement and consent decree equitably compensates our Black farmers," said Gary Grant, president of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association (BFAA) from Tillery, North Carolina. Grant and his family have been fighting for more than 20 years to save their land from foreclosure.

Working farmers across the U.S. confront a growing crisis, as the prices they receive for the products of their labor drop, often below the cost of production. Many face foreclosure by the banks when they can't meet loan payments or obtain further credit to get through a rough period.

Among farmers who are Black, this process is greatly accelerated. In 1920, about 14 percent of farms in the United States were owned by Blacks; by 1992 the number was less than 1 percent. Hundreds of farmers filed complaints with the federal government over the last 15 years stating that they were routinely denied aid and loans that were granted to farmers who are white by the U.S.

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Kaiser strikers in Ohio: 'One day longer'

BY JAY RESSLER

NEWARK, OHIO—"We'll stay out one day longer" was Mike Yahn's response to Kaiser Aluminum's January 14 announcement of a lockout. Yahn, an oiler-mobile equipment operator with 22 years at Kaiser, was walking the picket line here January 24.

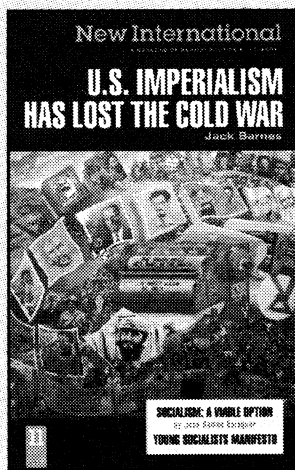
He explained maintenance workers are a special target of the company. After combining maintenance jobs over the years (for example, machine oilers are responsible for cutting the grass!), Kaiser now seeks to eliminate the oilers' and other maintenance jobs altogether and use outside contractors.

Officials of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) ended the 15-week strike against Kaiser Aluminum and Chemical Corp. January 14 and offered to return to work under the terms and conditions of the expired contract. Kaiser rejected the offer and informed the Steelworkers they were locked out.

Prior to the lockout announcement, Kaiser upped the ante by demanding 800 jobs be slashed, up from a previous demand of 400. They offered remaining workers \$3.00 per hour in wage increases over five years as blood money.

Union officials said Kaiser's refusal to al-

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EU-U.S. 'banana war' escalates

European Union (EU) officials demanded an emergency meeting with the World Trade Organization (WTO) in an attempt to stall hefty banana-export trade sanctions soon to be imposed by Washington.

The U.S. government is seeking WTO authorization to slap sanctions on \$520 million worth of European exports starting February 1 as retaliation for alleged EU non-compliance with a WTO ruling favoring Wall Street's interests in the banana trade over those of European capitalists.

Thai banks post major losses

Six Thai banks posted major losses for the fiscal year of 1998. Bangkok Bank, the country's largest, suffered a 49.5 billion baht (US\$1 = 36.40 baht) loss. The third largest bank, Thai Farmers Bank lost 38.8 billion baht. "Problem loans" accounted for nearly half issued by the banking sector as of the end of last October.

Two thirds of Thailand's finance companies have folded over the past year, unable to service their loans. As a result the government has organized "fire sale" auctions, in which billions of dollars of Thai assets are being sold off to imperialist banking institutions at as low as 26 percent of face value. An auction in February will involve 134 pieces of real estate.

Tel Aviv occupational forces pushed back in Lebanon

Hezbollah guerrillas reported January 22 they pushed back an overnight attempt by Israeli soldiers to take over the Lebanese village Shaqra, five miles north of the "security zone" Tel Aviv occupies. Guerrillas detonated a roadside bomb as Israeli soldiers tried to sneak into the village. Then they opened fire as troop reinforcements came on the scene, forcing soldiers to retreat.

Hezbollah is an armed organization fighting with others to expel 4,000 Israeli troops and Zionist-backed South Lebanon Army militia from the southern part of Lebanon they forcibly inhabit. Israeli officials justify such incursions by claiming the villages they trample and shoot up are "guerrilla strongholds." Many of these "strongholds" are



Hundreds of people protest government of Peruvian president Alberto Fujimori in Lima, October, 1998. Resentment of austerity imposed by the regime is spreading among working people.

actually towns, semi-abandoned due to the heavy shelling from Israeli troops that destroy their crops and houses. Tel Aviv launched 107 air raids against Lebanon in 1998 and countless shellings.

Aluminum bosses in Mozambique fire 400 strikers

The Mozambican Aluminum plant — a joint venture partially run by South African bosses — fired 400 construction workers January 19 who were demanding wage parity with their South African counterparts.

The strike began January 18. Strikers held 30 bosses hostage during a protest action for seven hours, until riot cops dispersed the crowd. Some 3,000 other workers in the plant reportedly did not participate in the labor action. According the African Eye News Service, this is the second time in less than six months workers downed their tools demanding wage parity. The company offered the sacked workers one week's pay,

but they demanded compensation equal to six months wages.

Miners strike in Zambia

Demanding three months of unpaid wages, more than 600 miners on the 6:00 a.m. shift at Chibuluma mines in Kalulushi, Zambia, refused to go underground. The members of the Mineworkers of Zambia demanded the company restart contract negotiations broken off as the government tried to sell off the mine. Workers also wanted the removal of mine boss Michael MacNamus and human resources boss Jason Ndhlovu. Earlier that day workers locked MacNamus in his office.

The company offered to pay workers half their wage arrears, which miners rejected. Later that day the second shift joined the ranks of the strike. Strikers effectively shut down the mine, and say they will not go back to work until their demands are met, according to an article in the *Zambia Times*.

Peru president losing popularity

Peru's Bonapartist president Alberto Fujimori is sagging in the popularity polls as the economic crisis there produces ever-worsening conditions. According to one poll taken December 11-12 in 32 districts of the Lima province, 60 percent of Peruvians disapprove of Fujimori and 65 percent disapprove of the government as a whole. Another survey asked what has been Fujimori's major achievement. The second most common answer was "none at all." That survey also pointed out that unemployment (now at 50 percent), poverty, and low wages were cited as among the country's top problems.

Fujimori was elected in 1990 based on a popular platform that included ending gov-

ernment corruption, waging a war against terrorism, and stabilizing Peru's economy. Once in office he cracked down on democratic rights and carried out a tough austerity program aimed at slashing the social wage, selling off state-owned industries, and attacking other gains of toilers there to attract more foreign investors. These measures have begun to take their toll on workers in Peru, many of whom initially gave Fujimori the benefit of the doubt.

Fujimori, who is considering running for a third presidential term, replaced Peru's prime minister and made a Cabinet shuffle in early January in an effort to give his regime a facelift. In a recent move to regain his facade as a man of the people, Fujimori traveled to Corpacancha, Peru, in the Andean mountains to mill around with indigenous peoples there. One of the peasants who attended the public relations stunt was asked by the *New York Times* if he would to vote for Fujimori in upcoming elections. Claudencia Martin Gustavo said probably not because, "We don't have enough food and our incomes are not enough for our families."

Ecuador students reject austerity

Protests by high school and university students across Ecuador have been growing in response to government austerity measures, which include steep raises in electricity and cooking gas prices. The cops used tear gas against protesters and made more than 100 arrests. Students burned tires and hurled stones at police in response. Leaders of the protests have called a national strike for January 27.

Paris convicts 107 in mass trial

A French court reconvened in the prison gymnasium in Fleury-Merogis, France, January 22 to convict 107 of 138 Algerians arrested in 1994-95 "antiterrorist" sweeps. Twenty-four of the defendants were detained in prison for nearly five years before going on trial on charges such as sending arms, money, and medical supplies to; providing unspecified "documents" to; or harboring "Muslim militants" from Algeria.

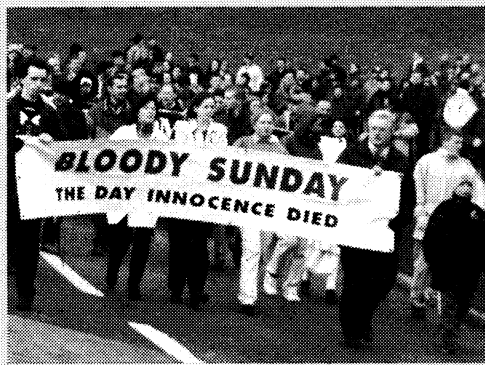
Many defendants refused to attend proceedings, which began in the gymnasium Sept. 1, 1998, and the majority of the defense lawyers boycotted the pseudo trials. Three men, Mohamed Chalabi, Mourad Tacine, and Mohamed Kerrouche, were convicted as ring leaders and sentenced to eight-year prison terms. Twenty-one others were given up to six years in prison. The remaining people were given sentences of a month to two years. Thirty-one defendants were acquitted of all charges. "Four years of hell for an acquittal," commented one of the defendants.

— BRIAN TAYLOR

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Miners in Romania battle cops and win

Continued from front page
support of the miners.

The next day the workers reached Targu Jiu, where "they were received by thousands of residents with an ovation," reported the German paper *Süddeutsche Zeitung*. An additional 2,000 miners from the Gorj coal region joined the march there. Also waiting for the miners there were another 2,500 special Interior Ministry troops sent to stop them. Massive teargas attacks failed to disperse the miners, who overran this cordon as well.

By January 20, the march column, joined by numerous villagers, was estimated as large as 20,000. Farmers were providing marchers with food along the way. President Emil Constantinescu called an emergency session of parliament and threatened to use the army against the strikers.

Miners attack 'like an army'

The miners squared off again with police forces the next day, an estimated 3,500 to 6,000 of whom massed to stop the march in the town of Ramnicu Valcea. The miners overran this blockade as well, with the support of local townspeople. "The miners attack in an organized manner, like an army," complained government spokesperson Rasvan Popescu. There were reports of miners saving cops from being lynched by furious townspeople. According to official figures, 133 people were injured, including 124 cops. Miners, now within 100 miles of the capital, took up the chant, "Bucharest, Bucharest."

Several officials of other unions and locals called on their members to not support the Jiu valley miners, but hundreds of miners from other regions were reportedly joining the march, often also overcoming roadblocks to get there. Schoolteachers in the Neamt and Maramures regions also went on strike. In several cities Black Sea harbor workers were reportedly planning to strike the following Monday, and 8,000 workers at two tractor and truck factories in Brasov called on the government to resign.

Counterdemonstrations against the miners were also reported in Bucharest and other cities, calling for the defense of "democracy." The *New York Times* stated that on January 22 "at least 10,000 people, mainly students and academics" marched in the capital denouncing the miners. The European Union and the U.S. government sent declarations of support to the government at the height of the showdown "for Romanian democracy."

The Interior Minister, criticized for "weaknesses" of the security forces, resigned. The strike was declared illegal and the capital city off-limits. Constantinescu had previously proclaimed he would never meet with the head of the miners' union, Miron Cozma, who he termed a "criminal." But on January 21 Constantinescu sent a delegation to try to negotiate.

A two-mile-long army convoy of tanks and other armored vehicles was reported moving toward Pitesti, about 75 miles from the capital, the next day, and Constantinescu blustered that he would declare a state of emergency if the miners did not go home. They didn't budge. Several generals and government ministers were fired. That afternoon, negotiations between Prime Minister Radu Vasile and union officials reached a rapid settlement.

Resistance to worsening conditions

Inflation in Romania was 64 percent in 1998 and more than 153 percent the year before. On average, miners earn the equivalent of about \$220 a month. Two years ago 40,000 miners worked in the Jiu valley — half are now out of work. Nationally, only half of the former 180,000 miners are working.

Under these conditions, miners were asking for a wage increase and a halt to plans to close two pits, as well as \$10,000 severance and a plot of land for miners who are dismissed. Union chief Cozma stated that all the miners' demands were met, a claim the government disputes. According to a report in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*, the demand to keep the two mines open was won, but the wage increase is conditional upon reducing losses in the mines. A 30-day period has been set to negotiate details.

The capitalist press has tried to portray



Miners, one wearing a helmet taken from riot cops, after breaking through a police barricade January 21 on the way to Bucharest to demand a pay raise and a halt to mine closings.

the miners as "privileged," since they earn nearly twice the national average.

Alexandru Kulcar, a miner from Lonea, showed a reporter his apartment. He keeps chickens and pigs to supplement his family's diet. The kitchen has a coal oven. Father, mother, and a 13-year-old daughter sleep on two couches in the living room. Their third

room is empty, as Kulcar cannot afford to heat it. "Others have four or five children and are unemployed," he said. "They've got it worse."

The average wage nationally is about \$115 a month, of which two-thirds must be spent on food. Sixty-eight percent of population lives below poverty level.

Overproduction crisis in steel fuels protectionist demagoguery

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The growing crisis of overproduction in the steel industry worldwide is exacerbating trade conflicts and threatens to break out into a full-scale trade war among Washington, Tokyo, and Brussels. In the United States, the steel bosses, with full support of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) officialdom, have been conducting a reactionary protectionist campaign under the theme of "Stand up for Steel. Stand up for America." The steel bosses are calling for stiff sanctions to be imposed particularly against Japanese imports. They demagogically proclaim that this will "save American steel jobs." Among the strongest proponents of this effort is ultrarightist columnist Patrick Buchanan.

In September, Bethlehem Steel, USX, and 10 other steel companies and the USWA filed trade cases demanding that import duties be imposed on steel coming into the United States from Japan, Brazil, and Russia. In October, a nonbinding resolution calling for a one-year ban on steel imports passed the House with 340 votes. "All the blood is gone from our industry," proclaimed USWA president George Becker, who has been leading the charge against steel imports. "We can't bleed anymore. We don't have enough steelworker jobs to give away to keep the economies of Japan, Russia, and Brazil going."

Under the guise of fighting imports, U.S. steel bosses in the 1980s proceeded to eliminate 300,000 jobs. As the current campaign gets under way, some 10,000 steelworkers have already been laid off, and twice that number affected by short work weeks and other work slowdowns. According to a report by the International Labor Organization, 51 percent of steel jobs in the United States were eliminated between 1975 and 1995, while production fell by only 10 percent. In Japan, 48 percent of steel jobs were cut with only a 1 percent production loss. In early January, U.S. president William Clinton announced a \$300 million tax break for steel companies. He also threatened to impose stiff duties on steel imported from

Japan if shipments to the United States don't rapidly fall to 1997 levels. "It is no secret that trade tensions between the United States and Japan are increasing quite dramatically," stated U.S. trade representative Charlene Barshefsky. "Steel is perhaps the most visible element of that." The Japanese government, in response, announced plans to challenge the 1916 U.S. anti-dumping law before a World Trade Organization panel. European producers also blasted the tax break as an illegal subsidy. The drive toward protectionist measures has been spurred by the collapse of economies in many Asian countries producing a sharp decline in demand for steel in much of the region that was formerly one of the world's biggest importers of steel products.

While Washington may be leading the way, a number of other countries have also adopted or threatened trade sanctions against steel imports. In June, Taiwan's rulers slapped anti-import duties against steel beams imported from Japan and products from Poland, Russia, India, and south Korea. In November, the government of India placed duties on products coming from Russia, Kazakhstan, and Ukraine. Chilean and Brazilian officials are considering similar measures.

Eurofer, the European steel producers' association, has filed charges against the "dumping" of hot rolled coils by Bulgaria, India, South Africa, Taiwan, and Yugoslavia. Eurofer is planning further complaints against heavy plate and wire rod imports coming from China, India, and Turkey. Authorities in the United Kingdom are demanding that tariffs be imposed on these products to "protect British jobs." According to Eurofer documents, for the first time in its history the European Union became a net importer of steel in the first half of 1998.

Overcapacity and deflationary spiral

These stepped-up conflicts over imports are rooted in the worldwide "overcapacity" of steel production — that is the production of more steel than can be sold profitably — under deflationary conditions, which has led

Imperialist diplomats and the big-business press are loudly bemoaning the setback for capitalist restoration that the miners' strike represents.

"Capitalism is for criminals," miner Constantin Botezatu told a reporter for the *Christian Science Monitor* during the strike. "It is very bad for Romania."

Last fall, the International Monetary Fund (IMF) suspended payments to the Romanian government as punishment for failing to more rapidly to implement the imperialist lending institution's plans, which include shutting down some 140 mines and selling off numerous state-owned industries. IMF officials arrived January 20 to negotiate a new \$10 million loan, on top of the nearly \$3 billion currently owed by Bucharest.

Government plans also call for laying off 70,000 out of the current 95,000 auto and steel workers, who supported the miners. On Sunday, the CNSRL trade union federation, which is considered friendly to the government, announced plans to strike starting February 15 to push the government to take steps against the economic crisis. The opposition BNS union federation said it would consider joining the walkout.

The miners had marched on Bucharest three times in 1990 and again in 1991, when they helped bring down the first openly pro-capitalist government.

They have a history of battling the former Stalinist regime as well. In 1977 the miners led the first uprising against Stalinist dictator Nicolae Ceausescu. They took Ceausescu's envoy hostage and won a wage increase to boot.

Alexandru Kulcar, of the Lonea mine, said, "If our problems are not resolved, it is quite possible we will march again."

to the plummeting of prices of raw materials and commodities. This is compounded by the collapse of the currencies and economies in Southeast Asia.

World steel production in November plunged 9.3 percent, one of the biggest drops on record. According to the London-based Iron and Steel Statistics Bureau, excess capacity in steel new equals more than a quarter of world production — at least 250 million tons — and it continues to rise. While steel bosses rail against imports, steel production is actually on the decline. Japanese steel output is now at its lowest level in 27 years. Last year Japanese companies cut their production by 12 percent. Plants in Europe anticipate producing about 7 percent less in 1999. Operating rates at U.S. mills in November and December dropped to 72 percent of capacity, compared with 96 percent at the start of the year. But these reductions don't come anywhere near reversing the huge global overcapacity in steel. The economic crisis in Asia has also led to a dramatic drop in steel exports by the European Union and the United States. In the first five months of 1998, total steel exports by European producers to Asia were down by more than 50 percent.

According to the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Washington's exports to China, Taiwan, Japan, and Korea fell 80 percent last year, and are expected to fall further this year. As opportunities to export steel to Asia declines, these shipments are instead being diverted to Europe and the United States. While Washington is targeting Japan for possible trade sanctions for the time being, further conflicts with producers in Europe loom as well. A January 11 article in the London *Financial Times* states, "Europe, where steelmaking remains organised on a largely national basis, may have to swallow more substantial cuts in capacity if a trade war is to be avoided."

Brian Williams is a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 2609 in Sparrows Point, Maryland.

YS members sell 'Militant' to miners, join pro-choice actions

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

E-mail: 105162.605@compuserve.com

BY JACOB PERASSO
AND JENNIFER PONCE

SPRINGFIELD, Illinois — Young Socialists members and other socialist workers are participating in a regional team here. In the last few days, the team has visited striking workers, local coal mines, a farmers convention, campuses, and other sites.

At nearby Crown coal mines, where members of the United Mine Workers of America were recently on strike, several workers reported that relations between bosses and miners were more tense than before the strike. Miners bought seven *Militants*. Several were familiar with the paper and were eager to read the latest issue. Truckers coming in and out of the mine also bought four *Militants*.

At the Tazewell Machine Tool picket line in Pekin, Illinois, United Auto Workers (UAW) members have been on strike since last September. Striking workers there spoke about the solidarity they had gotten from other workers, including UAW members at Caterpillar and Mitsubishi. One striker bought a subscription to the *Militant*, and another bought a single copy.

The team also went to the University of Illinois at Springfield, Lincoln Land Community College, the National Farmers Organization Convention in St. Louis, and other plant gates in the area. In those locations, the team sold one subscription, seven *Militants*, and met many interested people.



BY OLYMPIA NEWTON

WASHINGTON, D.C. — Some 150 people turned out here January 23 to defend several area abortion clinics against anticipated blockades by antichoice forces. This was the final of three days of mobilizations organized by the Washington Area Clinic Defense Task Force (WACDTF) around the 26th anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* Supreme Court decision, which codified a woman's right to choose abortion.

In a victory for women's rights, no clinics were blockaded or closed over the entire weekend. Many of the participants — the majority of whom were young women — decided to join in the clinic defense efforts as a result of the intensified violence against clinics in the past year. Katherine Sanders and Tanya Carulli, both 19-year-old American University students, were at their first clinic defense.

"I've been meaning to do this for a while," Carulli said. "A woman's body should not be in the hands of white males on Capitol Hill. This is a legal right, which needs to stay that way." Sanders agreed, adding she was there to defend access to the clinics "because I feel strongly about the right to choose and am opposed to the violent harassment women have had to face."

The night before, the Capitol City chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW) held its annual candlelight vigil for a woman's right to choose abortion. About 100 people attended the event, including delegations from the women's groups at Georgetown University, George Washington University, and American University. Patricia Ireland, the national president of NOW, addressed the crowd.

Participants then lit candles for the women who died from unsafe abortions before the right to legal abortion was won, and all of the clinic doctors, staffers, and escorts killed by rightist violence since then.

In conjunction with the anniversary, antichoice forces held a weekend of activity in

Washington. The largest event was the annual "March for Life," which was smaller this year than in years past. Another activity was the fourth annual Banquet of the White Rose. The gathering, which consisted of nearly 70 rightists, honored those who have been imprisoned for violence at clinics, including firebombings and murders. The banquet was organized by the Rev. Michael Bray, author of the book *A Time to Kill*. According to the *Washington Post*, Bray told a news conference that "violence against 'abortionists' to prevent them from 'slaughtering innocent womb children' is entirely justifiable." The antichoice forces planned to picket and possibly blockade several area clinics over the duration of the weekend, as they had in previous years. Only one picket of several dozen people occurred and all patients were safely escorted to the clinic. Members of WACDTF attributed this to the fact that defenders of abortion rights were visibly mobilized in large enough numbers to deter anti-clinic violence.



Militant/Carole Lesnick

Candlelight vigil for a woman's right to choose abortion, January 21, in Los Angeles area, on the anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*.

◆
BY MICHAEL BROUMAS

LOS ANGELES — About 45 people attended a candlelight vigil outside Glendale Memorial Hospital January 21, on the eve of the 26th anniversary of *Roe v. Wade*. The event was sponsored by the San Fernando

Valley NOW chapter. Chants included "Ho Ho, Hey Hey, abortion rights are here to stay" and "What do we want? Reproductive rights! When do we want them? Now!"

The demonstration was called in part to protest Glendale Hospital's decision to eliminate reproductive services following the hospital's takeover by Catholic Healthcare West. It was also to remember the thousands of women who lost their lives in unsafe abortion attempts before *Roe v. Wade*, the flyer for the event explained.

Signs held by protesters read, "Women must have control of their bodies" and "Abortion rights NOW." While many organizations were present, this reporter found many women and a few men that had come to the demonstration on their own just to be part of the fight.

'Militant' digital photo archive is up and running

BY MEGAN ARNEY

Since November the *Militant* has been using its newly established electronic photo archive. The staff of the *Militant* and its sister publication in Spanish *Perspectiva Mundial* set up the system working with Graeme Cookson, a professional photographer from London, England, who volunteered his help.

The digital photo files are shared with Pathfinder Press, enabling the book publisher and the socialist newsweekly to eliminate duplication of labor and save time in production while maintaining a digital archive of high-quality photographs that can be used for years to come by all those in-

involved in publishing communist literature.

This is part of the transformation under way in the production of Pathfinder books and pamphlets. Volunteer workers in Pathfinder's printshop are now organizing to produce communist literature with less labor, and at a lower cost, using fully digital methods. More than 100 supporters of the communist movement around the world are putting the entire back list of Pathfinder's arsenal of more than 350 titles in electronic form and are sending them to Pathfinder on CD-ROMs, ready to be used for making printing plates with the printshop's recently purchased computer-to-plate system.

The *Militant's* photo archive spans its 70-year history, recording a visual history of working-class struggles for more than a century. It includes drawings from the Paris Commune and the Russian revolution, photos from labor battles that forged the industrial unions this century, and images of revolutionary leaders like V.I. Lenin, Leon Trotsky, Nelson Mandela, Ernesto Che Guevara, and Malcolm X. The civil rights movement of the 1950s and 60s, the Cuban revolution, the struggle for women's liberation, and labor battles up until a couple months ago are recorded in tens of thousands of photographic prints and negatives. Some of these images exist nowhere else. All new photos coming in will now be stored only in digital form.

For about three years, the *Militant* has been produced with electronic photos, replacing halftones produced from prints that required more labor and training to produce and paste up, and which put greater limitations on quality. But each image was scanned separately, and then deleted after the paper was printed. If the same photo was needed for a Pathfinder book, the print had to be rescanned. Sometimes the staff of *Perspectiva Mundial* would scan the photo again — all at different specifications. This created an enormous amount of duplicated work.

Photos in the archive are stored at a quality that can be used for anything from a newspaper to book covers, and posters. The standard for the digital archive is based on the professional quality needed for images in Pathfinder books and pamphlets, that is, high quality for long-term use. The main photo archive consists of high resolution images — electronic files of about 24 megabytes for a color photo and 8 megabytes for black and white. High resolution photos are saved on CD-ROM, a copy of which is kept off-site. A lower resolution version of the photo, adequate for use in the *Militant* and *PM*, is easily accessible for day-to-day use.

The archive will make the irreplaceable wealth of photos acquired by the commu-

nist movement over decades more usable and accessible. Photos in the archive can be looked up from several workstations in the offices of the *Militant*, Pathfinder, and the printshop.

An image database allows users to search for images by entering up to five keywords. A search using the words "Cuba," "women," and "cooperatives," for example, rapidly brings up thumbnail images of all photos with those words in the attached caption. A copy is then made that can be adjusted for a particular use, leaving the original intact.

The *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* staffs have begun using the establishment of a digital photo archive to upgrade skills in manipulating photos — lightening, sharpening, and cropping — and designing ads and the *PM* cover.

Maintaining the system means daily political attention in editing, scanning, and captioning images that come in. In addition, members of the Pathfinder staff are scanning dozens of photos every week, which are then sent out to the volunteers who are converting the books into digital form.

Photos can be scanned and introduced into the archive from prints, negatives, or slides. When possible, negatives are used because more information can be captured from them, producing higher quality images. The *Militant* editors encourage correspondents to send in negatives of their pictures, or, if not, at least prints. If readers send photos or negatives together with a self-addressed, stamped envelope, they will be returned after scanning.

Sometimes there's not time to send in negatives to meet the *Militant's* weekly publication schedule. Correspondents around the world have been sending in scanned photos by e-mail for more than a year now. About half of the photos regularly used in the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* come in this way. Correspondents can keep doing this, but please also send the negatives or prints for the long-term archive. The box on the left gives some pointers.

Pointers for sending photos by e-mail

The following are some tips that readers can use when sending a photograph to the *Militant* electronically.

- You want to capture as much of the image as possible in the dots or "pixels" — points of color — that make up the digital picture. The more pixels you have, the more detail is included in the photo. The file size gives you an indication of how many pixels there are. For typical use in the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*, a color photograph should be at least 1.5 megabytes, and a black-and-white image at least 750 kilobytes. You can scan the photo at whatever resolution (often 300–400 dots per inch, or dpi) that will give you that file size.
- Files in the TIFF format are preferred. JPEG files can be used, but they must not be condensed more than an "8".
- You can compress large files as a .zip file to send them without losing quality.
- Some scanners offer a choice between "optical" and "enhanced" scanning. Use the optical resolution number. A scanner using "enhanced" resolution is actually making up information to fill

in parts of the image it can't record, resulting in a low quality scan.

• A few readers have asked about digital cameras. In general, these cameras do not yet capture images with file sizes large enough or at the quality of the permanent archive. So the *Militant* is recommending to correspondents to use conventional cameras until that quality becomes available.

• Always remember to send the negatives (or prints if necessary) to the *Militant* for the long-term archive. The e-mail photos are not sufficient. If you want them back, just send a self-addressed, stamped envelope along with the negatives; they will not be saved if you don't request them.

• Send captions for every photo. Captions should contain as much detail as possible. The bare essentials of captioning include: date and location of the photo, photographer credit, and names of individuals in the image when possible. Keep in mind the caption is the only way to identify the photo once it is archived!

—M.A.

'Militant' to kick off renewal campaign

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Supporters of the *Militant* and its Spanish-language sister magazine, *Perspectiva Mundial*, will kick off a four-week international subscription renewal campaign starting February 6 and ending March 7. This will be combined with a single sales campaign for both publications. Goals for the sales effort will be printed in the next issue of the *Militant*. Socialist workers and members of the Young Socialists will use the campaign to reach out to workers involved in labor struggles and farmers fighting to stay on the land. It's an opportunity to deepen collaboration with workers, farmers, students, and others who have been reading the *Militant* and expand the paper's long-term readership. The *Militant* urges its supporters to send in notes, articles, and especially photos about sales activities and upcoming political events. Below is a report on a sales team supporters in Boston organized in Massachusetts and New Hampshire. Any readers interested in joining sales teams in your area should contact supporters in the cities listed on page 8.



BY JOHN HARDING

BOSTON — Six supporters of the *Militant* visited garment shops, textile mills, and a meatpacking plant last week. In Manchester, New Hampshire, we vis-

ited Jac-Pac, a beef processing plant where 600 members of the United Food and Commercial Workers work. A large number of workers are Mexican, and union members at the plant say the issue of immigration has become big in the area. Workers bought six copies of *PM* and four of the *Militant*.

South of Manchester, which is on the Merrimack River where rows of abandoned textile mills still stand, is Lawrence, Massachusetts, home of Malden Mills. Workers there are members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees (UNITE). Socialists organize weekly sales of the *Militant* and *PM* at the plant gate.

There are also large garment shops in Lawrence, such as Grieco Brothers, and a production plant for New Balance running shoes. Workers at the New Balance distribution warehouse in the city have won a fight to get the company to recognize UNITE as their union, but they still do not have a contract. We had an afternoon sale at the UNITE-organized Grieco Brothers, where one worker bought a copy of the *Militant*.

In the south of Massachusetts lies another old center of textile and garment manufacturing in Fall River and New Bedford. The area is also a major center of cranberry farming. Both of these cities are made up in a substantial majority of immigrants from Portugal. Three workers bought the *Militant* at Duro Finishing, organized by UNITE.

Students rally for affirmative action in Michigan



Militant/John Sarge

Chanting, "We demand equality and integration in education" and "Affirmative action is the way, Long live the fight of MLK," more than 250 students and others held a march and rally at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor January 18, the Martin Luther King holiday. Affirmative action programs at the school are under attack by two separate law suits. Protesters included a group of high school students.

We also spoke to several fishermen at the docks in New Bedford. Some 1,200 fishermen work on about 300 boats, owned and operated for the most part by individual

working fishermen. Many of the boats were idle that day. One fisherman said that due to declining fish stocks the government has cut their fishing days to 120 per year.

Washington steps up military attacks on Iraq

Continued from front page

residential neighborhoods, wreaking destruction. The neighborhood of al-Jumhuriya north of Basra and the nearby town of Abu Falous were devastated.

The government of Iran reported that one missile landed within its territory, outside the city of Abadan, which is 30 miles east of Basra.

U.S. officials tried to dismiss criticism of the bombing of residential areas, asserting that it was due to an "errant" missile. Pentagon spokesman Kenneth Bacon said the bombing "created some damage, we realize that and we regret any civilian casualties," but then blamed the deaths on the government of Iraq. "This was done in response to a provocative attack against our planes by Saddam Hussein," he asserted.

U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright, in the Middle East to try to drum up support for the U.S. war drive, voiced passing regret for the death of civilians and declared, "It is essential for the no-fly zones to be protected and for our pilots to be able to defend themselves when attacked."

Washington widens range of attack

The Clinton administration signaled an escalation of its war campaign in late January by announcing a widening of the range of what it deems legitimate targets of attack.

On January 26, U.S. national security advisor Samuel Berger declared, "Our response need not simply be against the particular source of the violation or source of the threat, but our response as appropriate will be against any of the [Iraqi] air defense system that we think makes us vulnerable."

In other words, Washington now proclaims it will bomb Iraq wherever and whenever it sees fit. Washington's maintains 15,300 troops stationed in the Arab-Persian Gulf area, with some of them on maximum alert. The Pentagon has increased its arsenal of F-16 fighter jets in the region to 190.

Meanwhile, U.S. officials and the big-business media have cranked up their antiterrorist propaganda to justify the U.S. assaults on Iraq. The *New York Times* editors ran a front-page article January 27 accusing Baghdad of harboring "one of the world's most infamous terrorists."

The newspaper cited "intelligence reports" asserting that Abu Nidal, a Palestinian political figure who broke with the Palestine Liberation Organization years ago to set up a separate group that opposes the Israeli regime, "moved to Baghdad last year and obtained the protection of President Saddam Hussein." Reporter James Risen added, "Officials caution that there is no evidence that Abu Nidal is planning to conduct terrorism on Iraq's behalf," but "that could change."

Unable to muster the imperialist-led anti-Iraq "alliance" that fell apart after the Gulf War, Washington has increasingly resorted to unilateral action. On December 16, U.S. military forces, with British support, unleashed a four-day massive bombing campaign against Iraq. The pretext for the assault was the charge that Baghdad had reneged on a promise to allow United Nations "weapons inspectors" access to any area of Iraqi territory.

This assault left the U.S. rulers no closer to their goal of undermining and ultimately overthrowing the Iraqi government. Since

then, Iraq has refused to allow the return of the UN "inspectors," whose role was further discredited after reports in the U.S. big-business media acknowledging their spying for Washington.

Meanwhile, frictions over Iraq continue between Washington and the governments of France and Russia. These tensions rose when chief UN "inspector" Richard Butler issued a report January 25 to the United Nations Security Council. Butler accused Baghdad of continuing to conceal information about its alleged weapons arsenals.

The report was dismissed by Moscow, a

Security Council member, which now refuses to recognize the team of spies known as the United Nations Special Commission, or "UNSCOM," and is demanding the dismissal of Butler.

Paris and Moscow are pressing for an end to the eight-year U.S.-initiated economic embargo on Iraq. The French government has called for a "new system of continuous monitoring" as an alternative to the U.S.-led UNSCOM. Paris is pushing to lift the oil embargo in hopes of French oil companies regaining prominent trade deals with Iraq.

Continued on Page 10

Pathfinder Capital Fund scores victory

With more than \$350,000 raised for new equipment, supporters now seek additional \$200,000 for printshop

BY DAVE PRINCE

The Pathfinder Capital Fund registered a big victory this week. Contributors brought the fund total to \$354,700, going over the \$350,000 needed to pay for the new Agfa Galileo computer-to-plate equipment now on line in Pathfinder's printshop. This tremendous response to the appeal made it possible to make a \$114,000 payment on the equipment due at the end of January. Outstanding pledges will need to be collected in the next two weeks to make the final payment of \$114,000, which is due in mid February. So far \$224,000 of the funds pledged have been collected. The new equipment is essential to maintain Pathfinder's printshop — making it possible to use new technology to sharply reduce the costs of producing books.

The members of the Capital Fund Committee, a group of seven socialist workers across the United States, are now turning their attention to raising the additional \$200,000 in capital toward the total of \$550,000 needed. Achieving this as soon as possible is also crucial to carry through the transformation of how Pathfinder books are produced.

For now, the use of this \$200,000 for capital needs must be deferred. But it is essential as a bridge to help the printshop cover a serious conjunctural short fall in sales to meet operating expenses, while workers in the shop reverse the drop in sales, increase productivity, and reduce scrap on Pathfinder and other work — sharply cutting costs, increasing margins,

and regenerating the capital.

To achieve this goal two components of the fund are needed. The successes to date have been led by socialist workers who have made contributions ranging from \$1,000 to several thousand from special circumstances and windfalls, as well as by those in a position to give larger contributions from bequests, accident settlements, and job-related buyouts.

Contributions between \$1,000 and several thousand will continue to be a central part of the fund. At the same time, more large contributions are needed to meet the goal, from larger assets — bigger blocks from capital sources. In response to this special appeal, one longtime capital fund contributor put together a \$65,000 package to help meet immediate and long-term needs.

The Capital Fund Committee is stepping up its efforts to organize this stage of the fund. Members of the committee made presentations on what the fund has achieved and the goals before the printshop today to individuals and at meetings in Greensboro and Denver. A trip is planned to Vancouver January 30-31 to raise funds, and more are in the works for the coming weeks.

The socialist workers in the printshop have produced three Pathfinder books and six pamphlets from digital files in January, including *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* by Jack Barnes and *By Any Means Necessary* by Malcolm X. More than 100 volunteers internationally are expanding their efforts in scanning, proofing, formatting, and digitizing the graphics for the 350-plus titles that Pathfinder keeps in print, to keep this

production flowing.

As soon as the books and pamphlets are produced they are shipped to fill outstanding orders. In January, 700 books produced from the newly prepared digital files sold for more than \$5,000, and at substantially lower costs because of the new equipment. In addition to eliminating the highly labor-intensive and skilled task of stripping of film — the method used before acquiring the CTP equipment — press operators are starting to utilize the higher quality plates to make significant cuts in costs and time on printing the books.

Heidelberg press operator Nell Wheeler reported that in running *Leon Trotsky Speaks* with the new plates she was able to cut the printing time in half compared to using plates from hand-stripped film. Each signature of several hundred sheets took about 10 minutes to set up and print, compared to 20 minutes with the old method, because the greater accuracy of the plates virtually eliminated the need for adjustments on the press. Scrap was reduced by 50 percent for the same reason. The cost and time savings in printing will be substantial when multiplied by the more than 10 books a month the printshop will produce to keep Pathfinder's full back list in stock to meet increasing need by workers and farmers in struggle.

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

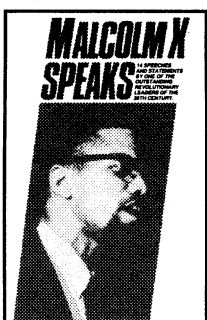
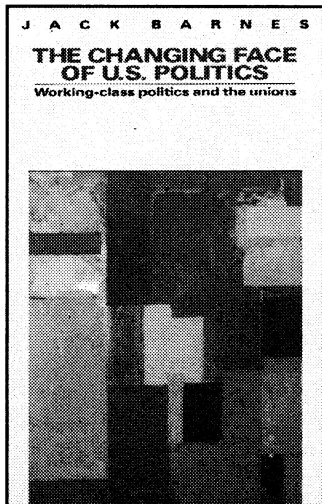
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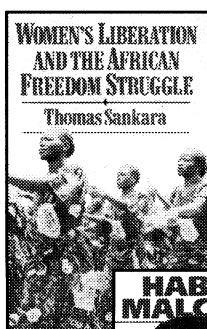
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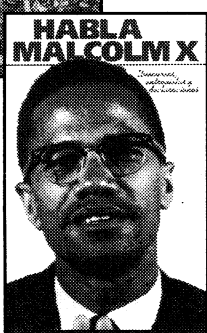
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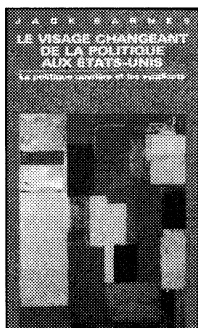
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Lenc-Smith workers call rally



Militant/Betsey Stone

Locked-out Lenc-Smith workers' sign reads: "Today it's us, tomorrow it's you."

BY HARVEY McARTHUR

CICERO, Illinois — Workers on strike at Lenc-Smith here have called for a support rally outside the annual meeting of company shareholders in downtown Chicago February 3. "We want to educate shareholders and passersby about the things the company is doing to us," said striker Grace Herrada, "and pressure the company before negotiations start again on February 4."

The 150 workers, members of International Union of Electronic Workers

Local 1199, have been on strike since July 1, 1998, after rejecting company demands to cut their pay by up to \$2 per hour. On January 15, Lenc-Smith bosses declared they were locking out the strikers, rejecting an offer on an unconditional return to work made by union officials. This came after strikers overwhelmingly voted down the company's latest contract proposal in late December.

The February 3 rally will be held at noon in front of the Standard Club, 320 S. Plymouth Court, Chicago.

Tazewell strikers win support

BY JACOB PERASSO AND JACK WILLEY

PEKIN, Illinois—"Our strike remains 100 percent solid. No union member has crossed because of the solidarity we've received from many union locals and individuals," said Jim Blanchard on the picket line in front of Tazewell Machine Works.

Caterpillar workers in UAW Local 974 are hosting a chili dinner benefit, on February 6, from 1-6 p.m. for their union brothers on strike against Pekin-based Tazewell company. Eighty-two members of UAW Local 2283 have been on strike against the Caterpillar contractor since October 5. One of the main demands of the company is to eliminate the "dues check off" procedure, which allows the union to collect all dues money in a single payment deducted from members' paychecks. Tazewell's demand to eliminate this is viewed by strikers as a direct attack on the union.

Many strikers point to bigger stakes for the bosses and the union in the strike. In the past decade or so, Caterpillar, one of the largest earth-moving equipment builders in the world, has moved large sections of production to small contractors like Tazewell. These shops are largely nonunion and workers make substantially less money and benefits than workers at Caterpillar.

Henry Cakora, owner of Tazewell Machine Works, has hired dozens of scabs in his attempts to break the union. He has taken the union to court, attempting to get a series of injunctions pinned against the union and filed a lawsuit against two strike leaders for supposed violence.

The company has tried to brand the strikers as violent. The latest attempt was claiming a bomb threat was called in to Tazewell Machine Works and insinuating it was done by striking workers despite no evidence. "The Pekin Daily Times always covers the company's lies about union violence. The same day as the supposed bomb threat, the guys' cars on the picket line were shot at with paint balls, but the newspaper didn't say a thing about it," explained Terry Beebe, on the picketline.

"This is the company's second attempt to break the union," said Blanchard, who was part of the last organizing drive. "In the 1970s, another union in the shop was driven out after an unsuccessful strike. Before we organized the shop in 1989 under the UAW, Tazewell was a hell hole and if you spoke

up you were fired. With the union we have rights." Cakora's actions have strengthened the resolve of the strikers. Chad Hartley, Local 2283 president summed up what several others expressed. "We will not go back until he backs down, even if it means Tazewell goes out of business. We will stay out one day longer."

Striking miners back fight against toxic dump

BY CANDACE WAGNER

PARDEESVILLE, Pennsylvania — Joe Lupcho, president of United Mine Workers (UMWA) Local 803 and fellow local member Larry Romanchik greeted everyone as they arrived at a January 24 spaghetti dinner fund-raiser at the St. Nazarius Church in this small town in anthracite coal country. Fifty-nine members of UMWA locals 803 and 1531 have been on strike against Jeddo Coal since March 26, 1998. The miners sponsored the spaghetti dinner to benefit an organization called ACTION ALL, which has been spearheading a campaign to stop a landfill at a worked-out area of the Jeddo mine. The mine owner, James Pagnotti, hopes to sell the land to Cranberry Environmental Inc. for \$1. This company would bring in construction and demolition waste from the surrounding seven counties and "possibly" from out of state, said Joanne Balay, a leader of ACTION ALL.

This would save Pagnotti millions of dollars from the expense of back filling the strip mined area. According to Balay, the dumped materials would include asbestos, lead, and other toxic substances. The Luzerne County Court recently ruled in agreement with the local zoning board against giving a special zoning exception to the landfill. "The court disagreed with the challenge of Cranberry that the opposition experts weren't really experts," said Balay. These experts testified to the danger of pollution reaching the Susquehanna River from the landfill.

Among the 250 diners who came by over the course of the afternoon were UMWA members on strike against Jeddo, as well as union miners that work at Blaschak mine in Mahanoy City, Pennsylvania. Members of other unions were there as well. Several reported that their locals had taken up collections for the striking miners.

MSI strikers go back to work with victory

BY KEVIN DWIRE
AND MARK SIMON

MARIETTA, OHIO — About 100 supporters cheered on the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) members at Magnetic Specialty, Inc. (MSI) here as they returned to work on midnight shift, January 17, and again on day shift the next morning. About 50 workers, who organized the union in 1995, won a three-year contract after striking for 22 months.

In one of the most important gains, an indication of the unity generated during the fight, MSI was forced to rehire all the 16 workers it fired during the strike.

One of the largest contingents was a group of workers from USWA Local 5668 in Ravenswood, West Virginia. Several members of the Women's Support Group of the local also attended. This local, representing workers at Ravenswood Aluminum, successfully fought a 1990-92 lockout.

About 250 people attended a victory cel-

ebration at the Marietta Shrine Club January 24. Workers from several battles in the area came to the rally. A couple carloads of striking Steelworkers from Kaiser Aluminum in Newark, Ohio, as well as members of the Laborers Union from Spencer, West Virginia. They struck Monarch Rubber a month after the MSI strikers went out.

Bob Stanley, one of the 16 fired MSI workers whose jobs were restored with the contract, said that the MSI steelworkers "try to help out other fights." He added, "When it started, I didn't know about unions, and this really opened my eyes. 'I was glad to see us all go back. We all went out together, and we went back in together. It was really a good sight.'"

"This will help other workers fight and win the union," said Gary West, a mill operator in the plant. "Everywhere I go, I'm asked was it worth it. I answer that before, they could just fire you if they didn't like you. But now we have a union." West said



Militant/Matt Herreshoff

Steelworkers at MSI return to work triumphantly on the midnight shift January 17.

that some of the replacement workers still in the plant "are starting to get the message. One said that maybe we can get some things fixed around the plant now. I believe if we

did it again, more would join the strike."

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

Quality Meat strikers discuss stakes in fight

BY KATY LEROUGETEL

TORONTO — "Why is everything else increasing and wages are decreasing? We want an explanation on this," said one striking member of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 743. "They just want more and more from us. I'm on the line and they push me like an animal — like in Roman times. We have to fight the rich up there. At the end, is this capitalism — who can be the biggest dinosaur?"

The 800 meatpackers at Quality Meat in Toronto and nearby Bramalea have been picketing since December 7, opposing wage cuts of up to \$6 an hour.

On January 12, the unionists voted 58 percent against another contract proposal from the company. Since then, there have been no negotiations and the company has

stepped up threats of closure. These include appeals to strikers picked up prominently by the Portuguese radio station. Many strikers are Portuguese.

The January 19 strike update issued by the union negotiating committee declares, "The last offer was not good enough, and until the company understands this and takes us up on the offer to continue negotiating, there is nothing to be done."

Five members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) local 5338 visited the Bramalea picket line on January 20 after work. Marco Constantine commented afterwards, "The same thing happened to my brother who worked at Canada Packers. They rationalized and shut down plants. If Quality closes, well, I tell you, at least they are doing something for the rest of us. We're

going to be in negotiations soon, you know. And Harry [the company owner] is going to get ideas from this."

"You can always go get another job," said Fitzroy Card who had also visited the line with Constantine. "After all, we're the ones who make the money for them."

His friend, also a Quality butcher on strike, is working part-time at Maple Leaf Foods, where workers' wages were cut by 40 percent after a four and a half month strike last year. He said, "At Maple Leaf, butchers make Can\$14.25 (Can\$1 = US\$0.66) an hour — 35 cents less than the last Quality offer. And at Maple Leaf you only get overtime pay after 44 hours a week. Quality offered it after 42 hours. From my point of view, we need to work. Our big mistake was not to go out on strike at the

same time as Maple Leaf last year."

The Quality Meat workers accepted a one-year extension of the contract at that time.

Sunil Dat Pariagh, one of the members of USWA Local 5338 who visited the picket lines, said, "The strikers are doing what they've got to do. We should come back with 20 Steelworkers and hold up the bus carrying scabs for four hours, not just half an hour. Then those people wouldn't come back."

The union has responded to attempts at driving a wedge between strikers and Ontario hog farmers. Hog producers currently lose roughly \$60 on every hog sold and have been mobilizing to demand government aid.

Taking issue with the accusation in a December 22 *Toronto Star* article that union strikers "don't care" about the farmers and "are only after themselves," the union responded in a letter to the editor: "[T]o lash out at hard-working people without whom the industry would simply not exist is grossly unfair. Perhaps...the *Toronto Star*...should be taking a closer look at how the rollbacks to producers and workers alike are being reflected in the price of pork to consumers."

Katy LeRougetel is a member of USWA Local 5338.

Kaiser strikers upbeat in Newark, Ohio

Continued from front page

low workers to return to work came as a surprise. "From day one of this strike, Kaiser has pleaded to our members to end the strike and return to work," said Bob Andrews, a staff representative of USWA District 1

Many union officials and members believe the declaration of a lockout gives the union an edge in the battle with Kaiser that erupted into a strike on Sept. 30, 1998. David Foster, chairman of the union negotiating committee, told the Newark *Advocate*, "The company is now in position of having a labor dispute that has no end point. If we have to go two years or three years to win it we are prepared to do that."

Gary Sites, president of Local 341 here, headed a delegation of strikers to a victory celebration for the MSI workers in Marietta, Ohio (see article above). He was upbeat, saying that now union members will be eligible for unemployment benefits and the company is barred by law from hiring permanent replacement workers.

Judy Keller, vice president of the local, who was a utility operator and a ground crane operator prior to the strike, spoke to the *Militant* at the union hall just outside Newark. She said that in fact there has been a lockout from the beginning, recalling that on September 30 two busloads of scabs were brought into the plant at 5:20 p.m. The contract expired at 7:00 p.m., but workers didn't walk out until 11:20 p.m. "The four o'clock shift was 'locked-down' that day," Keller remembered. Workers were not allowed on the job but were herded into a lunchroom by supervisors to watch safety films.

Of the 3,100 workers who struck against Kaiser nationwide, 242 are locked out at the Newark plant. In response to the company's demands for job cuts, pickets explained, "There are no spare people!" In fact, several chimed in at once, "There aren't enough people now."

Since the strike began, Kaiser keeps an off-duty cop stationed just inside the plant

gate at \$25 per hour. Three pickets have been arrested on trumped up charges. In at least two cases the charges have been dropped. The International Management Assistance Corp. (IMAC) thugs, who had initially herded scabs and acted to provoke strikers, have been replaced by a less blatant outfit, Doyle Security.

Pickets maintain a presence in a triangular island at the gate. Early in the strike they had built a wind break out of bales of straw, but were ordered to tear it down.

A homeowner next to the entrance allows the workers to maintain a small shed on her property and use electricity from her house. Kaiser has suddenly "discovered" the fence around her yard to keep in her dogs is two feet over the property boundary and is demanding she move it.

Around 100 scabs are working in the plant. Some are local people, others are being referred by the nearby Zanesville, Ohio, Job Service, while still others have license plates from West Virginia and Kentucky, according to locked-out workers.

At the Newark plant, the one bargaining unit employee who had resigned from the union and scabbed, was escorted out of the plant after the lockout was declared.

Pickets said last year they produced 10 to 12 million pounds of prime metal. That meant 10-12 full trucks left the plant every day. Now only three or four trucks leave most days, and many do not appear full.

Kenny Dowell, a crane operator with 20-years, said, "We've been raped by this company over the years; we've bent over backwards to help it become competitive, but this is like a smack in the face." During the 1980s workers gave concessions of \$3.85 per hour in wages and additional concessions in benefits in return for a special issue of stock whose face value doesn't change.

Strikers are beginning to organize various committees like a food pantry committee to help the worst off members, as well as a "corporate campaign" committee.

Keller said she has traveled to several cities in strike-related activity.

Jay Ressler is a member of USWA Local 1299 in Detroit. Gary Boyers and Henry Hillenbrand contributed to this article.

Locked-out oil workers call solidarity rally at Crown

BY DEAN COOK

HOUSTON — The locked-out workers from Crown Central Petroleum in Pasadena, Texas, are organizing a rally to bring together workers who are engaged in struggle to mark the third anniversary of the lockout at Crown. The 252 members of the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Union (PACE — formerly OCAW) were locked out of their jobs on Feb. 5, 1996, when they refused to accept a concessionary contract that would have eliminated their seniority and 105 jobs for union workers, making the jobs temporary.

The workers are not only fighting for a fair contract so that they can return to work, they are also defending themselves against a civil lawsuit Crown has filed against them in an attempt to destroy the solidarity of the workers and their union.

The lawsuit, filed in Federal Court, names 14 workers, one union official, and their Local, and charges the workers with sabotaging the refinery — also Crown's justification for the lockout.

Organizers of the rally have invited members of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association (BFAA); National Organization for Women (NOW); members of the Catfish Workers of America fighting for justice in Belzoni, Mississippi; Steelworkers on strike at Titan Tire in Natchez, Mississippi; Steelworkers locked out at Kaiser Aluminum; and United Mine Workers of

America members from the recent strike in Illinois. So far, the BFAA, NOW, and the Kaiser workers have confirmed they will have speakers at the rally.

Everyone is invited. Come listen to workers speak and then participate in an action at the Crown refinery gates.

The rally is scheduled for Feb. 5, 1999, at Local 4-227 located at 704 East Pasadena Freeway in Pasadena, Texas, and then at the refinery gates. The rally will be divided into two parts, the first beginning at 11:00 a.m., the second at 3:30 p.m. In between, everyone is invited to a reception at the hall for hot-dogs and good conversation.

For more information about this rally, check the Defending Workers Rights' newsletter at www.nwwin.com/~ocaw4227, or e-mail us at dcook@nwwin.com, or call 713-475-9560.

Another rally is being organized in Baltimore, Maryland, where Crown's corporate office is located. This rally, organized by the staff of PACE, is scheduled for February 11 at the Blaustein Building at One North Charles Street in downtown Baltimore.

For more information about the Baltimore rally, contact the Crown Boycott Office at 410-837-7906.

Dean Cook is a locked-out member of member of PACE Local 4-227. This article will be appear in the next issue of the Defending Workers Rights newsletter.

Odd coincidence — Much of the insurance industry is based in Hartford, Connecticut. Most of the city's (the city, not the suburb's) residents are Puerto Rican and



Harry Ring

Black. And a recent report says, dangerous conditions and safety code violations have been found in 30 of the city's 35 school buildings.

Mum's the word — During the shopping season, we assumed it was

fad seizure that made it hard to snare a Furby, the cyberpet. But it may be that the National Security Agency was scooping them up. With a tiny built-in recorder, the furry little fella can pick up conversations and, with a synthesizer repeat what's said. NSA, the spy agency with the big ears, has banned Furby from Ft. Meade, one of the places it operates from, and it's likely the ban will be extended.

Family values — More than 250,000 women in impoverished Peruvian mountain villages and city shanty towns have been subjected to forced sterilization, according to a study by the Latin American and Caribbean Committee for the Defense of Women's Rights

W?le?me — In Los Angeles, the INS (*la migra*) suspended the citizenship applications of 2,500 people they had wrongly told they owed another \$130 in added fees. Also, 10,000 successful applicants received erroneous, illegible notices of their swearing-in date. There's a hotline where you can get the correct day. If you don't speak much English, have a translator at your elbow. The hotline folks are "English only."

Now here's the oxymoron — A team of psychologists in England say that humor increases workers' productivity, making it important for bosses to be funny. One researcher opined, "You could call it humanization of managers."

Corporate theology — The Pope's Mexico visit was sponsored by 25 corporations. A potato chip company added stamp-size pictures of His Holiness to their packages. And posters declaring, "Mexico: Always Faithful," graced with the Pepsi logo.

Season's greetings — As Xmas and Hurricane George approached Puerto Rico, Elisio Rivera and his family stocked and readied a nearby cave. Their small house was badly damaged, the cave secure. They lived in the cave several weeks while beginning extensive repairs on the house. The government even agreed to financial help. Meanwhile, the Dept. of the Family sent a warning: Get the kids out of the

cave or we'll take them away.

Wasn't that awesome? — Researchers in England and Australia report that military veterans who witness atomic bombs tests are dying from a rare type of bone marrow cancer at 10 times the normal rate.

Thought for the week — "People are just turned off.... The HMOs are corporate executives practicing medicine where profit is the motive, not the best interests of the patients." — Michael Bidhart, lawyer for Theresa Goodrich, who was awarded \$116 million punitive damage by a jury for the HMO death of her husband.

1979 Weber case: Steelworkers defend affirmative action

The excerpts below are from the *Weber Case: New Threat to Affirmative Action*, a pamphlet published by Pathfinder in February 1979 in the heat of the most well-known battles for affirmative action. Brian Weber, a white lab technician for Kaiser Aluminum in Gramercy, Louisiana, sued to overturn an United Steelworkers of America-negotiated plan for affirmative action in 1974, claiming "reverse discrimination."

In June 1979 the U.S. Supreme Court upheld the legality of the affirmative action program at Kaiser Aluminum. The *Weber* case was a battle over equality where it counts most in capitalist society — equality on the job, in hiring, training, and promotion.

BOOK OF THE WEEK

It was a challenge to all programs that allow Blacks, Latinos, and women to get jobs previously held only by white males. It tried to make it illegal for unions to negotiate affirmative action programs that have begun to overcome the racist and sexist divisions sown for decades by the bosses. A ruling in favor of Weber would have put wind in the sails of racist, right-wing forces to use the "reverse discrimination" argument to roll back civil rights gains in education, employment, housing and every other sphere of life.

This pamphlet, currently out of print, answers the myth of "reverse discrimination," explains why quotas are needed, and why all workers should support affirmative action. The excerpts are from the final section, "What you can do." Copyright © 1979 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted with permission.

BY ANDY ROSE

When all the facts are presented, the legal case against Weber is compelling. But that is no guarantee that the Supreme Court will uphold affirmative action. The courts do not hand down rulings solely — or even mainly — on legal grounds. They make *political* decisions.

The Civil Rights Act of 1964 was won through a political struggle that shook American society to the roots. It took mass rallies, marches, sit-ins, and freedom rides — and the lives of many civil rights fighters — to wrest this historic concession from a racist government.

The law itself was weakened by the fact that Congress was made up — as it is to this day — solely of Democrats and Republicans, with no representatives of the Black masses or other working people. These big-business legislators tried to limit the law and leave key provisions ambiguous. Enforcement and interpretation of the law have varied over the past fifteen years — depending not on fine points of legal argument, not on the shifting composition of the Supreme Court, but on the strength and determination of the independent movement for Black rights.

Ironically, the Supreme Court's strongest ruling ever against job discrimination was issued in 1971, under the Nixon administration, by Nixon-appointed Chief Justice Warren Burger. In the case of *Griggs v. Duke Power Company* the court unanimously declared that the civil rights law prohibits "not

only overt discrimination but also practices that are fair in form but discriminatory in operation." That includes practices "neutral in terms of intent," which the court said were illegal "if they operate to 'freeze' the status quo of prior discriminatory employment practices."

More recently, the top court has been whittling down this mandate for affirmative action. In some cases it has said that victims of racial oppression must prove "intent" to discriminate. The court has also upheld seniority systems that perpetuate the effects of past discrimination. The most serious legal blow to Black rights was the *Bakke* decision.¹

In making these rulings — as well as others restricting the rights of women, Blacks, unionists, and workers in general — the Supreme Court is operating as one arm of the overall offensive of the government and employers against working people. The Carter administration, Congress, and the courts; both the Democratic and Republican parties; government officials from the federal to the local level — all have joined in the attempt to increase profits at the expense of wages, drive down the aspirations of working people, and heighten the divisions among workers.

Behind these attacks stand powerful forces — the biggest and richest corporate empires in the world.

But the potential power of working people — who are the vast majority of the population and who produce all the goods and services that keep society running — is even greater....

Educational campaign

The fight to defend affirmative action and defeat Weber needs to be intensified. The overriding task right now is education. The working people of this country must be informed about the facts in the *Weber* case and their stake in the fight. The truth is our most powerful weapon.

The stand taken against the *Weber* decision by the Steelworkers union and the AFL-CIO helps to make it clear where the real interests of working people lie. Even though top union officials have come out against affirmative-action quotas in the past (and the AFL-CIO continues to maintain that "we're against government-imposed quotas"), they cannot help recognizing that Weber's suit is an attack on Black rights and on the entire labor movement. The union position needs to be publicized and discussed throughout the ranks of the unions, as a first step toward mobilizing union power against the *Weber* decision....

While the *Bakke* case was before the Supreme Court, students took the lead in rallying opposition to Bakke, including a march of 10,000 on Washington. If the forces that defended affirmative action against Bakke's challenge can be brought together again they could play a big role in helping to organize bigger and broader actions against *Weber*.

The potential for such a campaign of education and action is great. The *Bakke* decision sounded a warning to many in the labor, Black, and women's movements that the right-wing offensive against affirmative action must be answered. And despite confusion over quotas, there is more sentiment than ever among working people for equality and against discrimination....

Racist system

Socialists wholeheartedly support the



Militant/Lou Howart

A union contingent at anti-Bakke march on April 4, 1978, in Washington, D.C.

struggle against *Weber*, a struggle for basic democratic rights. Members of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance are helping to defend affirmative action and spread the anti-*Weber* fight in the unions, on the campuses, and in the Black, Chicano, Puerto Rican, and women's movements.

We also believe that this is part of a broader struggle against a system that tramples on the needs and hopes and rights of the overwhelming majority of people.

Rallying the labor, Black, and women's movements to oppose *Weber* can score an important victory for civil rights. It can also be a step toward mobilizing the ranks of la-

bor to take control over their own unions and transform them into fighting organizations for the defense of *all* working people....

Racial discrimination exists for an economic reason — the greed for profit. Socialists are convinced that eliminating the profit system — this dog-eat-dog jungle that goes by the name of capitalism — is the only sure way to eliminate racism once and for all.

¹ In June of 1978, the Supreme Court struck down affirmative action quotas at the University of California at Davis medical school, in *University of California Regents v. Bakke*.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



February 8, 1974
SAN FRANCISCO — Defense attorney Howard Moore spoke to the *Militant* forum here Jan. 25 about the latest developments in the case of the San Quentin Six.

Moore represents Fleeta Drumgo, one of the six Black and Latino defendants who were charged with murder and conspiracy in the alleged prison escape attempt in which George Jackson was killed Aug. 21, 1971. Moore formerly served as co-counsel to Angela Davis.

Moore's appearance at the forum came one week after the indictments against the six were thrown out of court on grounds that the grand jury that handed down the indictments had been chosen from a pool that had excluded Blacks, Latinos, Chicanos, blue-collar workers, and youth.

Moore expressed the possibility that the dismissal of the indictments by acting Judge Vernon Stoll Jan. 18 could result in a statute that would prohibit the exclusion from the grand jury of Blacks, Chicanos, youth, and blue-collar workers.

But unless there's a mass movement, Moore continued, the precedent set by Judge Stoll's decision could be ignored by the courts. It's conceivable, however, that any person tried in Marin County who was indicted in 1971 or 1972 could have their conviction overturned he said.



February 7, 1949

The *Militant* has often pointed out how periods of peace are growing shorter and shorter as capitalism declines. Up until the turn of the century, wars between the imperialist powers ended in relatively stable periods of peace. Today the periods of peace resemble those lulls in war when the opposing sides hold their positions waiting for fresh supplies to mount a new offensive.

Thus the period of "peace" we are now enjoying is no more than a short breather so far as the ruling capitalist class is concerned. With the Marshall Plan they are patching up the worst ruins left by World War II and re-creating the battered capitalist economies of Europe.

The North Atlantic Pact picks up where the Marshall Plan leaves off. Its aim is construction of a vast ring of military bases around the Soviet Union rearmament of the Western Powers and mobilization of new armies from the thinned ranks of Europe's youth. The North Atlantic Pact is even designed to bypass the old legal hurdle that America cannot be committed to war without Congressional approval. It is an open secret that the Wall Street rulers have already made a deal with the other imperialist powers to plunge America into atomic war when the hour strikes.

Protest U.S. assaults on Iraq

Continued from front page

and to protest the U.S.-led bombing of Iraq.

"Wag the dog" arguments to the contrary, the U.S. government is not assaulting Iraq as a slick maneuver to deflect public attention from the domestic crisis engulfing the Clinton administration. While the government crisis can be a factor in the timing of tactical decisions by the White House, such as when to unleash a new bombing, much bigger forces are at work. Washington's drive to war is fueled by the class interests of the U.S. ruling families and their Democratic and Republican servants: the need to use military might to try to shift the relationship of class forces in favor of U.S. imperialism at the expense of working people as well as Washington's imperialist rivals. As a faithful representative of the U.S. billionnaires, Clinton has been a war president from the start.

The U.S. rulers' goal is to undermine and ultimately overthrow the regime in Iraq as a way to establish stronger U.S. domination of the Middle East, deal a blow to the Palestinian struggle for self-determination, further their military encirclement of the workers state in Russia, and strengthen their hand against their imperialist rivals.

In the 1990-91 Gulf War, Washington cold-bloodedly slaughtered 150,000 Iraqi farmers and workers — one of the worst crimes of the 20th century. But even with that barbarity, the U.S. imperialist rulers were unable to achieve their fundamental goals, revealing their weakness.

Instead, the result has been increased social turmoil and struggle throughout the Middle East. The imperialist powers have failed to suppress the fighting Palestinians. And Washington has been unable to break the spirit of dignity of the Iraqi people who, despite facing a capitalist regime that does not represent their interests, have only hatred for U.S. and British brutality and refuse to be starved into submission to imperialism.

Meanwhile, the imperialist powers are plagued by rivalry between them, as Paris in particular pushes for ending the embargo to advance its own interests in the Middle East. Moscow correctly views the U.S.-led military drive

against Iraq as a dagger aimed against Russia, which Washington is seeking to encircle in an inexorably advancing confrontation with the workers and farmers of that country, where capitalism was overthrown 80 years ago.

This conflict is unfolding in an increasingly volatile world, where the capitalist economy is wracked by a growing crisis of overproduction. From the ruinous financial crisis in Brazil to the battle by Romanian miners against layoffs and mine closings, this is a world of increasing social dislocation and struggle.

In face of this capitalist disorder, the U.S. rulers are cranking up their economic nationalism, as in the virulent "banana war" between U.S. and European competitors. At the same time, they are driven to resort more and more to force to bolster their interests. This situation — stemming from U.S. imperialism's weakness — makes Washington increasingly dangerous.

So far, the U.S. rulers have paid a small price for their latest aggression against Iraq. At loggerheads with Washington, Paris and Moscow have issued sometimes loud, but weak, protests. The lack of response emboldens Washington to escalate its provocations and to set a precedent for carrying out further aggression around the world.

Only the workers and farmers government of Cuba has spoken out clearly against the imperialist assault on Iraq, setting an example of dignity for all working people.

What is needed now is a *campaign* by workers and farmers who are opposed to Washington's war drive to get these facts into the hands of other working people and encourage discussion as well as action. That action includes joining and reinforcing struggles by workers who are resisting the employers' attacks and by working farmers who are resisting the attempts by the owners of capital, with government complicity, to expropriate their land and livelihood. This campaign means stepping up efforts every day to get the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and Pathfinder books to picket lines, on the job, to farming communities, on campuses, and seeking out others to organize public protests against the U.S. bombing of Iraq.

London can't halt Irish struggle

After 27 years London has yet to own up and take full responsibility for the massacre it organized in Derry, Northern Ireland, of 14 civil rights marchers on Jan. 30, 1972. Through marches of up to 40,000 people, the relatives of those shot on Bloody Sunday won a new public inquiry into the killings last year. It is clear the British rulers deeply fear the truth. First they claimed they could not find many of the soldiers there on the day of the assault. Now they repeat the same smears they made in 1972.

This is part of London's broader efforts to chip away at the gains nationalists registered in the April 10 "Good Friday Agreement" on Northern Ireland. Those who want to maintain British rule are insisting Irish nationalists disarm first and prisoner releases be slowed down. London has tried to shift the focus away from the whole setup of British rule, suggesting that the problem is the Irish people. Behind this stalling, the anti-Catholic assaults continue, attacks by pro-British loyalist thugs often backed up by the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC). Nationalist residents of Garvaghy Road in Portadown, Northern Ireland, report they have faced more than 130 attempted marches by loyalists in their area since July 5, 1998.

It is London that is the source of violence. Like everywhere else in the world, from Iraq to Kosovo, these upholders of "civilization" showed on Bloody Sunday how their rule rests on brute force. Far from being the neutral force supposedly keeping the "tribes" apart, London has been trying to preserve its division of Ireland and direct rule of the North through armed force.

These efforts will fail. The march in Derry on the anniversary of Bloody Sunday will be a powerful answer to this stalling, showing that it is the nationalists who retain the high ground. The issue is not "decommissioning," but when the RUC and British Army will go.

As workers in Britain — from Skycheffs strikers at Heathrow airport to the Jubilee electricians victory — begin to resist the employers through their unions, and as more people join protests against police brutality and cover-ups, so the achievements of the Irish nationalist struggle will serve as an example of how it is possible to push back the British rulers. Progress by the Irish will weaken the British rulers and strengthen all working people. Grasping the central place of the Irish struggle for workers and farmers in Britain today is key for all fighters.

Clinton plans domestic military command

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

The Clinton administration has taken further steps in its militarization drive to extend the use of force around the world and at home. U.S. defense secretary William Cohen announced January 21 that the White House projects spending nearly \$7 billion over six years to build a missile system similar to the "Star Wars" program pushed by President Ronald Reagan in the 1980s.

That same day President Clinton called for spending \$2.8 billion to establish a domestic military command to combat "terrorism." Washington has military commands overseeing regions around the world but none for the continental United States. To justify this plan, the U.S. president claimed that "probably a terrorist group that attempts to bring to bear either the use or the threat of a chemical or biological operation" in the United States would materialize in the "next few years."

In paving the way for this assault on civil liberties, Clinton said in a *New York Times* interview that any supposed germ or chemical weapons attack would provoke "at least a proportionate if not a disproportionate response."

The proposed missile system would purportedly give Washington a complete defense against nuclear attack, which also means the ability to carry out a first strike with nuclear weapons. Such a system would violate the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM), signed in 1972 with the former Soviet Union. The treaty presumed that neither state would launch nuclear-armed missiles against the other if it lacked the means to block retaliation.

Since 1983 the U.S. government has spent some \$55

billion to build a workable missile system. "Those of us who work in the program are very confident we're going to have a working system and we're going to have it soon," said Lt. Col. Richard Lehner, a spokesman for the National Missile Defense Program, at the Pentagon.

While Moscow and Beijing have objected to the construction of the military system, Washington has threatened to abrogate the ABM treaty unless the Russian government agrees to the changes that would permit the project to proceed.

In a January 22 *Wall Street Journal* article, Republican senator. Jesse Helms, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee called for trashing the ABM treaty. "Toss it into the dustbin of history and thereby clear the way to build a national missile defense," he declared. Helms said Washington is vulnerable to "outlaw regimes," specifically referring to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, which "test-fired a missile over Japan last August" and is "capable of striking both Alaska and Hawaii."

Russian officials called Clinton's move a unilateral assault on the treaty. "The United States is misleading world opinion," declared Col. Gen. Leonid Ivashov, head of international military cooperation at the Russian defense ministry. He said Washington was exaggerating supposed missile threats from Iran and north Korea to justify building a national missile system.

"Once [U.S. officials] become sure they can defend themselves against our missiles, they will start speaking to us from a position of strength," said Gen. Yuri Lebedev, a Russian arms control negotiator.

Farm struggle

Continued from front page

Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Over the last several years, farmers have been organizing protests and demanding government action to address this crisis. This included two lawsuits against the USDA and its director, Daniel Glickman, demanding redress for racist discrimination. In October 1998 they won a victory when a federal judge certified the plaintiffs in *Pigford v. Glickman* and *Brewington v. Glickman* as a class.

In an attempt to put a lid on this fight, the government, liberal big-business press, leaders of many civil rights organizations, and some union officials have been campaigning for these farmers to accept the consent decree signed by lawyers for the class-action suit and for the USDA. Under this deal, most Black farmers who provide some documentation of discrimination would receive from the USDA \$50,000 — a small sum considering farmers' operating costs — and have their debts to the government agency canceled. A smaller group of farmers who provide extensive documentation can be awarded larger sums — or nothing at all — without recourse to appeal.

The deal is also supposed to put on hold USDA foreclosures against farmers whose bias claims are upheld. Glickman announced a similar temporary moratorium on foreclosures against farmers who are Black following a December 1996 farmers' rally outside the White House.

But Georgia farm leader Eddie Slaughter described how he is currently working with Carl Parker, a Black farmer from Ashburne, Georgia, whose 400-acre farm is supposed to be advertised for sale by the USDA February 1 in their attempt to foreclose on him.

"This is another of many foreclosures by the USDA in violation of their own rules," Slaughter pointed out. "Carl Parker's land had been protected before because he was in bankruptcy and he had filed a discrimination complaint. When the bankruptcy was lifted, the USDA pounced, even though there is supposedly a moratorium on foreclosures."

"Those good old boys in the USDA county office don't care what they say the policy is in Washington. And the USDA in Washington doesn't take any action against them."

"We're organizing a news conference next week and we're calling on churches, unions, and Black elected officials to protest this foreclosure," explained Slaughter, who is the vice president of the BFAA. "The consent decree is not aimed at restoration of Black farmers' land, but at eradication. We'll be in front of the courthouse in Washington March 2 to make that clear," Slaughter continued.

The BFAA announced several upcoming events in a news release issued January 28. These include a February 3 meeting at Howard University in Washington, D.C., sponsored by the Student Association, where Grant will speak on "40 acres and a mule! Black farmers fight to save their land — the battle against continuing discrimination by the U.S. Department of Agriculture."

It also announced the first national meeting of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association, which will be held in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina, Saturday, February 20. The conference will discuss and map out strategies against the continuing discrimination faced by Black farmers and landowners and the devastation caused to their families and communities.

The BFAA national meeting will take up plans for the rally in Washington, D.C. March 2 prior to the "fairness hearing" scheduled to finalize the consent decree. BFAA members are filing formal objections to the settlement before U.S. District Court Judge Paul Friedman.

For more information, contact the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association, P.O. Box 61, Tillery, North Carolina, 27887. Tel: (252) 826-3017.

Stu Singer in Washington contributed to this article.

U.S. gov't bombs Iraq

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which sits on top of 10 percent of the world's oil reserves.

French premier Lionel Jospin stated, "There is a need for France to assert itself more on the international scene," assuring this was "not because of its power or wanting to teach anybody lessons, but because it has a different way of seeing a certain number international realities."

Moscow is wary that U.S. imperialist aggression against Iraq will eventually be turned against the Russian workers state. Nonetheless, the grinding campaign of military strikes against Iraq has, so far, met with relatively little opposition from other governments, either imperialist rivals such as Paris or the pro-capitalist regimes in the workers states of Russia and China.

The Russian foreign ministry limited itself to admonishing Washington for the most recent U.S. bombings, declaring, "Nothing can justify new deaths among the civilian population of Iraq, which has already been bled dry by the hardships of many years of the blockade."

At a January 24 meeting in Cairo of the Arab League, foreign ministers issued a weakly worded call for "dialogue" with Iraq instead of force. They expressed "deep concern at the use of the military option against Iraq." At the same time, while far from expressing the kind of support sought by Washington, the Arab League called on Baghdad to submit to UN Security Council demands.

Representatives of Baghdad insisted Iraq has met the UN disarmament demands and called on the Arab League to denounce the December 16-19 bombings by London and Washington. When the other government representatives declined to do so, Iraqi foreign minister Mohammed Saeed al-Sahhaf walked out in protest.

Skychefs strikers in London win solidarity

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

As a result, a rally has been called for February 1. "It's happening to them today...but it could be you tomorrow," read the rally flyer issued by the Luftansa SkyChefs

recruited as strikebreakers during the strike. But the company is clearly hurting and has been advertising on London radio stations for more replacement workers.

Women are the big majority of the daytime pickets, and are proud of the fact. "In the hot kitchen where I worked, the women — even the trained chefs — were paid about £2 per hour less than the men employed as chefs," said one picket, who preferred her name not be used. "That's why the overwhelming bulk of the women are out here standing firm and why we can never go back on the terms dictated by the company. Either we go back with our union or we must stay out here until the company closes down," she said. The other seven women nodded or voiced their agreement.

Hospital workers win strike for union in Seattle

SEATTLE — About 150 supporters attended a celebration to honor striking workers at West Seattle Psychiatric Hospital January 20. After a 138-day strike the workers, represented by Service Employees International Union (SEIU) District 1199NW, won their first contract. The celebration was held in place of the regular meeting of the King County Labor Council.

Strikers unanimously ratified a three-year contract January 9. The hospital workers won the main issue of the strike — recognition of the union. The contract also included a 4 percent across-the-board raise April 1 and 2.5 percent increases in the second and third years. A grievance procedure is established, as well as seniority rights, a new pension plan, and improved medical benefits.

All workers hired from the start of the strike — August 15, 1998 — must pay union dues. Workers hired before the strike can choose. The private, nonprofit hospital, funded mostly by King County, hired temporary workers to stay open during the strike. Some members of the bargaining unit crossed the picket line.

The workers joined SEIU District 1199NW in August 1997. They struck a year later when the hospital refused to negotiate an acceptable contract. At the celebration a

Support Group. The January 22 edition of the Heathrow airport paper, *Skyport*, reports the rally is expected to get the support of TGWU ground staff members at British Airways, Aer Lingus, Air Canada, Cargo Service Center and United Airlines.

"We've already had a lot of financial support from union members at Heathrow," Singh said. "To date the strike committee has received around £14,000 [£1=\$1.65] in financial contributions. We're now trying to build on this support."

Strikers have begun to address union meetings outside the airport. On 21 January, strike leader Garth King addressed the Rail, Maritime and Transport (RMT) workers union branch at Eurostar. The branch voted £150 to the strike fund and pledged to build the February 1 rally. Other workers who visited the picket include TGWU members from Glaxo Wellcome in Dartford, RMT members at South West Trains in London, and striking UNISON care workers in Manchester.

They're also getting support from members of the local Sikh and Hindu temples, who bring food to the picket each morning. The bulk of the strikers are Punjabi. Strike leaders attended prayers at the Park Avenue Sikh Temple in Southall, January 17, where they appealed for more support in the dispute.

Trips are being planned to the United States, France, Germany, and Spain to step up the pressure on the company. The company claims that it's continuing to provide a full in-flight catering service for Turkish Airlines, Air France, and Iberia. In addition to these, the company services Canadian Airlines, Kuwait Airlines, Saudia Airlines, Olympic, Qantas, and American Airlines. But many of the short-haul flights are being "back-catered," loading food in France, Spain or Greece for both outward bound and return journeys.

A company spokesperson admitted that the start of its new contract with Lufthansa has been delayed and Singh said that negotiations for Skychefs to handle in-flight services for SAS in Stockholm have been shelved because of the dispute.

Some work in the factory is still being done by supervisors, by some workers who never joined the action, and by some agency workers



Militant
Some of the 400 striking workers and supporters at LSG Lufthansa Skychefs, members of Transport and General Workers Union, on the picket line in London.

photo display depicted how strikers kept up their picket lines and reached out to the community for support. They intervened at King County Council meetings, organized rallies at the picket line, went to meetings in the Black community, and labor events.

Strikers at the celebration were proud of their accomplishment. Alvin Oliveros, 40 years old and a certified nursing assistant, said, "It's great to have a union in the hospital now. I've been working two days and I feel so good to go back there with confidence and pride. I feel stronger and it feels great to work with the patients."

John Kazaras, a certified nursing assistant, told the *Militant*, "One more bad boss is out." He was referring to Cliff Borda, who retired as CEO of the hospital just before the final negotiations that led to the contract. "An average worker can make a difference," Kazaras insisted. "This became a reality for me during the strike. I learned how strong the labor movement is and how much stronger it needs to be."

Sewing workers win gains in Detroit strike

DETROIT—After five weeks on the picket line, workers at John Johnson Textile Manufacturers in Detroit returned to work October 23. The nearly 160 members of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 417 went on strike September 28. They sought better pay and working conditions. UAW members demanded raises totaling \$2.70 over three years, with \$1.10 up front.

The workforce is mostly women who are Black and Chicano. They sew heavy tarpaulins for trucks, water barriers for U.S. Army boats, awnings, and covers for Hummers. A number of workers suffer back injuries from the heavy work.

While expressing frustration that they didn't get everything they wanted, Reggie Benjamin said, "We

are definitely stronger, we are more united. We went out with dignity and we came back in with dignity."

Since the strike, supervisors and office personnel have treated production workers better. Seniority is more strictly observed by bosses. Supervisors have even organized several brunches. Prior to the strike top pay was under \$9 per hour. A wage freeze had been imposed for three years under a contract signed six years ago. During each of the last three years the workers received a 50-cent raise.

The boss initially offered only a \$.39 raise this time around. Talks stalled, resulting in the strike, when he refused to budge from a \$1 per hour raise spread over three years. Three weeks into the strike the offer was lowered to 90 cents, with the threat it would continue to go down if the strike continued.

The contract that was finally ratified was for an immediate 50-cent raise, to be followed by another 50-cent raise in a year, and then a 10-cent raise the third year.

In addition workers now have a 401K retirement plan and the insurance co-pay is lower. Company benefits now include eye and dental coverage; previously workers relied on a plan through the union. The company has hired additional people to lighten the load in some of the more stressful jobs and the night shift has been recalled.

This was the first strike at John Johnson. One union member crossed the picket line. During the strike the company ran employment ads; two people took jobs but quit after two days.

Jonathan Simpson in London; Chris Rayson, a member of the United Transportation Union in Seattle; Jay Ressler, a member of the United Steelworkers of America in Detroit; and Erica Johnson, a member of UAW Local 417 at John Johnson Textile Manufacturers in Detroit, contributed to this column.

ON THE PICKET LINE

We invite you to contribute 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.

LONDON — "We are winning more and more support," said Gurdeep Singh, one of the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) strike committee members at LSG Skychefs. Singh was on the picket line outside the Heathrow-based factory where he and 277 other strikers have maintained a 24-hour, seven-day per week protest since November 20. That day the TGWU members carried out a 24-hour stoppage to protest changing work practices and pay. This became a strike when the company sent dismissal notices to all who were taking part in the action, offering them a return to work conditional upon accepting all the company's proposals.

"More and more workers, especially at the airport, are recognizing that what's at stake is union-busting," Singh said. "If Skychefs can get away with this then other companies will try to follow suit." He said there have been three airport-wide meetings of senior shop stewards aimed at broadening support for the strike. There are 30,000 TGWU members at Heathrow.

PATHFINDER

THE EASTERN AIRLINES STRIKE

Accomplishments of the Rank-and-File Machinists and Gains for the Labor Movement

Ernie Mailhot, Judy Stranahan, and Jack Barnes

The story of the 686-day strike in which a rank-and-file resistance by Machinists prevented Eastern's union-busting onslaught from becoming the road to a profitable nonunion airline. \$9.95

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 8.

LETTERS

Still questions on AMFA

In their column "How should militant workers describe AMFA?" [in the January 25 *Militant*] Arlene Rubenstein and Ernie Mailhot affirm their position that AMFA [Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association] is not a union, but explain it will become one when it is certified to represent the 9,500 mechanics and related at NWA [Northwest Airlines].

For the most part I agree with the analysis in the column, especially the point that is the workers, not the officials, who are the union. The point that workers are in a better position to fight the bosses when they are organized in an industrial union forged in struggle rather than an explicitly craft union committed to working with the company. I would add that the workers are also

stronger in a union that organizes the bulk of workers in the industry.

However I still do not understand why the *Militant* put so much focus on AMFA not being a union rather than dealing with the strategy that AMFA put forward for skilled workers in the airline industry. Such an approach would also put the *Militant* in a better position to take up the IAM tops capitulation to AMFA's ideology when it organized the splitting of the IAM at NWA, UA [United Airlines], and US Air. More explanation of why the interests of skilled and unskilled workers are the same and how the value of labor power is determined would be helpful in doing this.

Mary Martin's column on the need for a united fight by the workers organized by Teamsters, IAM [International Association of Ma-

chinists], and AMFA against NWA is helpful in clarifying the challenge in front of airline workers. Whatever the outcome of the current efforts of AMFA to divide workers in the airline industry or the IAM's "restructuring," airline workers will be forced to reforge their industrial unions in struggle.

Larry Johnston
Vancouver, British Columbia

Can I get the 'Militant'?

I hope and pray that this letter finds you all in the best of health. The reason why I am writing you all is to see how I go about getting the *Militant* newspaper. I have been locked up over 15 years flat and I got five more to go. Doing time in Texas is hard.

A prisoner
Rosharon, Texas

Subscription, books, etc.

Regarding information, subscription, books, etc.: This writer wishes to inquire about a subscription, information or books you have for sale. Is there a membership fee or do you have a branch in California? Please send me order forms if possible and any other information you might have.

A prisoner
Delano, California

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.

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Contributions make these special rates possible for those who cannot afford regular rates. Please send your donation to: **Militant Prisoner Fund, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.**

Garment workers strike in Montreal

BY MICHEL DUGRÉ

MONTREAL — "This is a fight for respect," said Marie Siméon, one of 1,300 members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) who launched a strike for a first contract here on January 21.

The workers make stockings in two different plants of the Bas Iris company. Some 400 workers in one plant knit and sew the stockings. The 900 workers at the other plant dye, press, package, and ship them. More than 90 percent of workers are Black, the vast majority of them from Haiti. About half the workforce are women. They earn less on average than most other garment workers in Quebec.

Iris workers rejected the latest company offer with a 93 percent majority, after giving their union a unanimous strike mandate. The company offered wage increases of 20, 15, and 10 cents an hour for the next three years to workers who are at or below an arbitrary classification it set up for this first contract. For the many workers it judges are paid too much, the company proposes to freeze their wages until they get down to their classification. These workers would get lump sums equivalent to 2,000 hours at 20 cents an hour for the first year, at 7.5 cents for the second year and 5 cents for the last year of the contract. Strikers think a majority of them would fall into this category, especially those who are older and more experienced.

"We're not allowed to speak during work time. We're not allowed to go to the bathroom 30 minutes before and after breaks," said Siméon. "We always have a boss on our back. In a plant big as this one, there is no infirmary. One pregnant woman who was bleeding was put on the floor of the rest room. There is no heat in the restroom nor hot water." To this day, hundreds of workers in the two plants have no breaks at all, not even for lunch.

"Until we got the union in July 1998, the bosses got used to mistreating workers," said Jorge Salcedo, who works in the shipping department. "They would point their finger at you, without even saying your name, and indicate where they wanted you to go. There was no seniority system."

The company has grown rapidly over the last few years. Until 1993, there were less



Some of 1,300 UNITE members on picket line in Montreal January 27. Signs read: "On strike for everyone" and "20 cents, 15 cents, 10 cents — Never."

than 300 workers. "The boss, Andrew Badia, made his money with our own blood," said Siméon. "But to give you an idea of the respect he has for us, every time he crosses

the picket line he gives us the finger."

"We have had to wage a long fight before we got to where we are now," she said.

Last year, before they had a union, work-

ers waged a strike in order to get improvements in their working conditions. Just before Christmas they waged another strike over the refusal by the company to give them their annual bonus, representing in some cases up to \$200. "We saw that as an attack on our union," said Siméon. This question has not been settled yet.

Workers noted changes since the union was certified in July 1998. "We couldn't take breaks to go to the toilet and now we can," said Marie-Florence Sanon. "Before the union, we were treated like animals. You couldn't even scratch yourself without a supervisor yelling, 'Get back to work.'"

The strike at Iris follows the victory won in December by 4,000 UNITE members in the men's clothing industry, who struck against an attempt by their bosses to lower wages of new workers. Some 200 workers at the Agmont plant are also currently waging a fight for a first contract.

Workers at Iris have been inspired by these fights. They are picketing 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The picket lines, despite the Montreal bitter cold, are lively, with drums and other music instruments.

Michel Dugré is a UNITE member at the SFI Apparel plant in Montreal. Beverly Bernardo contributed to this article.

Maori group protests land confiscation

BY FELICITY COGGAN AND JANET ROTH

OHIWA HARBOUR, New Zealand — "The Crown [British colonial authorities] stole our land and it's time to give it back. We do not want money — we want the land," said Sharon Campbell, spokesperson for 30 Maori protesters occupying land here on the North Island's east coast.

The group, named Te Tatau Pounamu o Mataatua, set up camp on January 13 to commemorate the Jan. 17, 1866, eviction of Maori from the area under the New Zealand Settlements Act.

A leaflet produced by the group explains, "The history of this struggle is well known. We are concerned that it not be forgotten in the current climate of Crown-imposed Treaty settlements that would have Maori

accept money for *mana* [prestige] and money as a substitute for *whenua* [land]. We as descendants of those who fought and died for our land will not buy into this illusion of restoration of rights and obligations, particularly as we watch our lands being privatized and sold to the highest bidder."

The government has negotiated agreements with tribes in some other regions, involving monetary compensation and the return of some land and other resources, which aim at ending all further claims. A settlement of a land confiscation claim by Whakatohea, one of the local tribes, is currently being prepared. If it is signed, Campbell told the *Militant*, "it would extinguish all future rights to lands and fisheries."

The site of the occupation is part of this land claim. Campbell explained that prior

to 1866, the area around the harbor was one of the most densely populated in New Zealand. The produce of the harbor was shared by several tribes. Whakatohea had 17 trading boats and 1,000 acres in produce, she said. "We had a very good economic base. They came and destroyed all the boats and took the economic base away."

The occupation drew national media coverage and sharp criticism from the government, which stated it will not negotiate with the protest leaders.

The deputy leader of the right-wing ACT party and its environmental spokesperson, Kenneth Shirley, immediately visited the site. In a report to the acting prime minister, he condemned the protest as "unauthorized and illegal" and urged the government to "uphold the law."

"Any sign of deterioration involving violence, obstruction or threats to property owners must result in swift action," he said.

The occupation also drew criticism from the member of parliament for the region's Maori seat, Tuariki Delamere, who negotiated an earlier NZ\$40 million (NZ\$1 = US\$0.53) settlement for Whakatohea that was signed, then rejected by the tribe before final ratification.

The news media has also prominently reported on opposition from elders of some of the four tribes represented in the protest. Several other elders were present at the protest site when these reporters visited.

A steady flow of visitors was welcomed onto the occupation site during our visit. Campbell said an important part of their protest was raising public awareness of their history and their concerns, "including among our own people." A number of visitors have been environmental activists, she said, concerned about the pollution of the harbor that the protest is also highlighting.

The protesters have issued "eviction notices" to local landowners, notifying them they are living on stolen land and that they have 12 months to vacate the land. The notice then invites these residents to visit the occupation site and talk with the protesters.

Campbell told the *Militant* that a local church minister, Jim Greenaway, has been acting as an informal mediator between the protesters and the residents. He has been telling residents who ask him what to do about the eviction notices to "bake some scones and go down to the campsite."

Felicity Coggan is a member of the Engineers Union and Janet Roth is a member of the Service and Food Workers Union, in Auckland.

Irish nationalist speaks in Manchester

BY DEBBIE DELANGE AND TIM RIGBY

MANCHESTER, England — Dozens of people turned out to hear Paul Butler, a Sinn Fein member of Belfast City Council, speak here January 21. Sinn Fein is the leading party in the fight for a united Ireland free of British domination.

Butler reaffirmed Sinn Fein's commitment to the April 10, 1998, agreement signed by the British and Irish government as well as the major parties in Northern Ireland. The

pro-British Unionist and Conservative parties are trying to frustrate progress in implementing the agreement. They hope to block Sinn Fein from seats it is entitled to on the Executive of the Northern Ireland Assembly and stop any more republican prisoners held by British and Irish authorities from being released. For Sinn Fein, the agreement is a stepping stone towards institutions that operate in the whole of Ireland, Butler continued. Ulster Unionist Party leader David Trimble, slated to be the first minister of the

Northern Ireland Assembly, "has problems with his constituency," the Sinn Fein leader said. "They have to understand the years of Unionist domination are over. The people of Ireland voted overwhelmingly for the agreement, and no party has the right to frustrate the wish of the Irish people."

Butler also spoke of the expansion of Sinn Fein which, he said, is on the road to becoming the major nationalist party in the north, and of the activities of the recently formed Sinn Fein Youth. These include "white line protests" demanding the release of political prisoners, where up to 100 people stand along the line in the middle of the road holding placards. Youth interest, he concluded, is a measure of the success of Sinn Fein's struggle.

Asked what people in Britain could do in solidarity, Butler suggested the most important activity was to put pressure on the government to implement the agreement.

The next day Butler was interviewed on GMR, a local radio station, reflecting a new level of interest in the question of Britain's rule of Northern Ireland. Until a few years ago, the nationalist party was banned from the airwaves by the British government.

An upcoming issue of the *Militant* will feature firsthand coverage of the January 29-31 events in Derry, Northern Ireland, marking the 27th anniversary of "Bloody Sunday," when British troops killed 14 Irish civil rights protesters in 1972.

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