

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Youth and the
communist movement

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Unionists, farmers back locked-out oil workers

Solidarity rally marks three years of fight at Crown

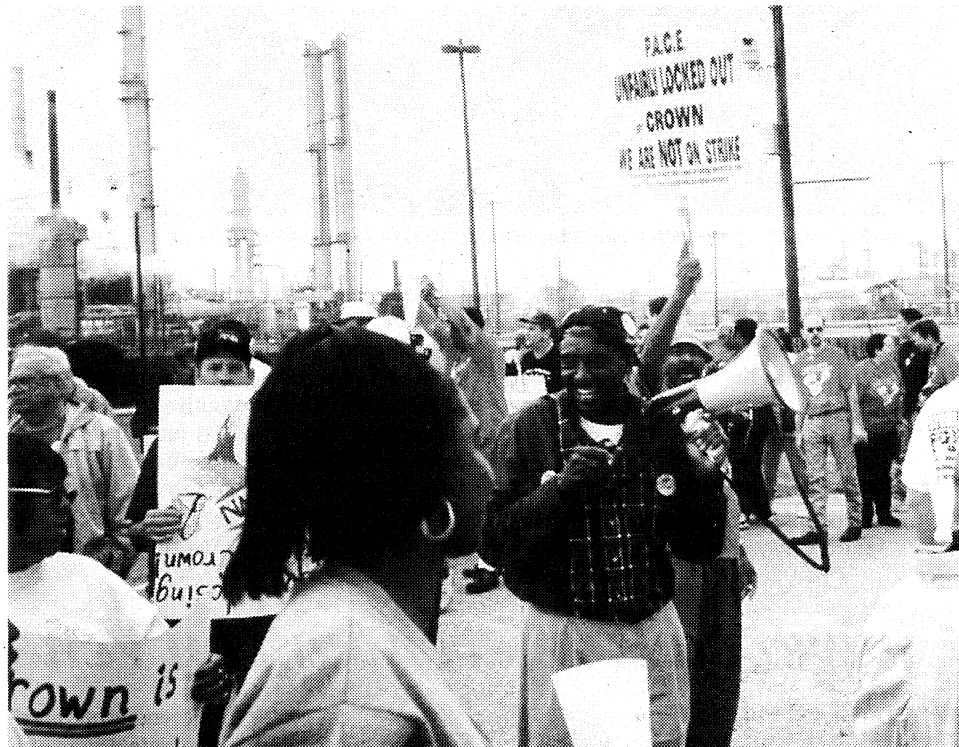
BY LAURA GARZA
AND ROBERTO GUERRERO

PASADENA, Texas — Members of at least 20 union locals from several states, as well as a representative of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association (BFAA), joined workers locked out from the Crown Central Petroleum refinery for a “Solidarity for Justice Rally” February 5. The day of pickets and rallies marked the third anniversary of their struggle.

“We’re standing up — and fighting back,” was one chant by dozens of people picketing Crown’s offices, located by the plant on a major thoroughfare. Willie Evans, on strike against Titan Tire in Natchez, Mississippi, led the crowd in the spirited picketing that began the day shortly after the 11:00 a.m. gathering at the nearby union hall.

Among those at the picket line were a dozen members of the Catfish Workers of America from Belzoni, Mississippi; about a dozen members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) initially on strike and now locked out by Kaiser Aluminum; Eddie Slaughter, vice president of the BFAA from Buena Vista, Georgia; and several members of USWA Local 303L on strike against Titan. More than 100 people joined in the

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Militant/Mike Italie
Rally in front of Crown refinery. With megaphone is Willie Evans, a Steelworker on strike against Titan Tire in Natchez, Mississippi. In front are two members of Catfish Workers of America, who are fighting for justice at Freshwater Farms in Belzoni, Mississippi.

Clinton’s missile plans raise tensions with Beijing

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Beijing is taking steps to counter plans by Washington to encircle China’s southern flank with a network of satellite radar and anti-missile weapons. The U.S. government moves are putting Washington on a collision course with the Chinese workers state.

This is unfolding as the White House has pressed a militarization drive under the guise of facing alleged threats from “rogue states” — with the Democratic Peoples’ Republic of Korea (DPRK) topping the list — and “terrorists.” The real aim is to maintain Washington’s military superiority vis-à-vis its imperialist allies, who are also competitors, and to prepare U.S. forces for possible military interventions into countries where U.S. imperialism has been unable to reestablish the domination of capitalist social rela-

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Washington demands deal for NATO occupation in Kosova

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Under the threat of NATO airstrikes, a delegation of Kosovar Albanians and Serbian government officials began talks at a U.S.-crafted “peace conference” February 6. Government officials from the United States, France, Britain, Germany, Italy and Russia have set a two-week deadline for the two parties to accept a pact at the meeting, held in Rambouillet, France.

The deal would pave the way for a NATO occupation force to impose an imperialist protectorate on Kosova. The proposed “peacekeeping” arrangement would have some 30,000 soldiers to enforce the broad authority of the “Kosovo Verification Mission” headed by U.S. government representative William Walker. Clinton administration officials are discussing plans to send up to 5,000 U.S. ground troops to join 8,000 from Britain, 5,000 from France, 3,000 from Germany, and troops from NATO candidates, Hungary, Poland, and the Czech Republic.

A major dilemma facing the imperialist military operation is how to disarm the Kosova Liberation Army (UCK), which has waged a determined struggle for independence. Pentagon officials are nervous over the political consequences of casualties among U.S. GIs intervening in the war Belgrade has launched against the Albanians’ struggle for self-determination.

The draft plan would give the Albanians in Kosova limited “self-governance,” less than the autonomy stripped away by Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic in 1989. It calls for the UCK to be dismantled within three months after an agreement is signed. The Yugoslav army would be reduced to 1,500 troops and 2,500 security police in the province. The UCK has expressed “hostility to a stipulation in the peace plan that its arms be handed over and kept in Nato-guarded stocks,” the *Financial Times* reported February 8.

Killing by N.Y. cops sparks protests

BY ITZÁ GARCÍA

NEW YORK — Four New York City cops killed Amadou Diallo, a 22-year-old vendor from Guinea, here February 4 in a fusillade of 41 bullets. The unarmed man was struck by 19 bullets as he stood in the doorway of the Bronx apartment building where he lived.

More than 1,000 people jammed onto the block where Diallo lived February 7, outraged at the killing. A majority of the protesters were from the neighborhood, which is predominantly West African immigrants. Many residents hung signs of protest out their windows. Members of Families Against Police Brutality held up photos of other victims of cop shootings. Iris Baez, whose son

Anthony Baez was killed in a police chokehold in 1994, was among those who addressed the rally.

“It’s an assassination — these cops are out of control,” declared one woman who was a friend of Diallo. “We’re like sitting ducks, none of us are safe.”

Some 2,000 protesters turned out two days later for a mid-day rally outside the federal court building in Manhattan. Speakers included relatives of Diallo and families of others who have been killed by the police. Democratic Party politician Alfred Sharpton, Rev. Hubert Daugherty, and leaders of several West African associations also spoke.

Most of the protesters were West Afri-

can immigrants and U.S.-born Blacks, but the action included a cross section of other working people in this city. Daniel Zuger, a taxi driver who is white, said he was there because, “We need to show solidarity.” He noted that many cab drivers are from West Africa.

City officials have been scrambling to try to repair the political damage. New York mayor Rudolph Giuliani canceled travel plans and says he will attend the slain man’s funeral, while calling for patience until “all the facts are in.” The generally pro-cop *New York Post* ran a cover photo of Diallo with the headline, “In cold blood — police kill unarmed man in hail of 41 bullets.” Some protesters made placards of this front page.

An editorial in the February 9 *New York Times* presented the killing as a case of some “bad apples,” stating that 90 percent of New York cops never fire their guns. The editors called for a federal investigation of the killing, a call that has been repeated by figures such as Sharpton, Manhattan Borough President Virginia Fields, former New York mayor Edward Koch, and a Black cops’ organization.

The four cops who killed Diallo — Edward McMellon, Sean Carroll, Kenneth Boss, and Richard Murphy — are members of an elite plainclothes “street crime unit.” Their lawyer defended the shooting, asserting that they had been looking for a rapist and Diallo fit the description “in a generic way.” The four police, all of whom are white, remain at work, on desk duty.

Claudia Benson said she came to the February 9 rally “because I’m looking out for my sons’ futures.” Her cousin, Brenda Holder, added, “Enough is enough. This was a senseless slaughter.” Both women plan to attend future protests. Another rally has been called for 12:00 noon, February 16, at the Bronx courthouse.



Militant/Marc Lichtman
Nearly 2,000 people rallied February 9 to protest killing by New York City cops



Farmers in Poland demand better prices, debt relief

From January 25 to February 4, farmers across Poland blocked up to 130 roads with dumped grain and tractors, demanding the government guarantee them higher selling prices for meat, grain, and other products. They also called for higher tariffs on imports. Working farmers sense Warsaw's "market reforms" in agriculture, aimed at gaining entry to the European Union, will drive many of them off the land. The government declared the blockades illegal, but on February 4 agreed to negotiate with the farmers.

Farmers are pushing for government price supports, debt rescheduling, and controls on food prices. According to news reports, Warsaw has agreed to not prosecute farmers involved in the blockades. Compared to hog prices, "[w]e pay more to feed the pigs," remarked Zbigniew Radzikowski, a farmer in Lugi Golacze, a town 60 miles east of the capital. Andrzej Lepper, who reportedly called the January 25 action, rejected the negotiations and threatened to call more protests. National cop spokesman Pawel Biedziak warned that they would clear roads by force.

Baku official asks for U.S. base

A top Azerbaijani official told reporters in late January that the Baku government would like Washington, London, or Ankara to set up military bases in the country. "You [Washington] have interests, large interests, and there is a threat to your position," said Vafa Guluzade, foreign policy adviser to Azerbaijani president Haidar Aliev. The former Soviet republic is located on the Caspian Sea, neighboring Russia to the north and Iran to the south. The U.S., British, and Turkish governments have not responded. A February 5 *New York Times* editorial urges Washington to "pass up the offer," which "would needlessly complicate relations with Russia, Armenia, and Iran."

Meanwhile, hopes for the rapid development of oil resources that would spur Azerbaijan's economy are fading. The Azerbaijani International Operating Company (AIOC), the leading oil grouping, is laying off personnel and suspending devel-



Workers protest austerity measures outside presidential palace in Quito, Ecuador, February 5.

opment projects. AIOC, which has invested up to \$12 billion in the Caspian Sea, is hesitant to put more capital into the underwater crude probes due to the low price of oil, but isn't willing to pull out and lose the potential of lucrative deposits.

Nigerians rally against oil bosses

Nineteen people were killed the last weekend in January when Nigerian troops at-

tacked protesters near a crude export terminal run by Royal Dutch/Shell, the biggest oil company in the area. In January dozens of others were killed by government troops in Bayelsa state after youth of the Ijaw tribe threatened to shut down onshore oil production if their demands for better conditions were not met. Fishing villages near the oil facilities have no electricity or clean water, and fuel prices are quadruple the regular

level. A number of the companies have been forced to make concessions to the villagers in recent months or face occupations and shutdowns.

Protests jolt gov't in Ecuador

Thousands of students, workers, and peasants held demonstrations in major cities across Ecuador February 5 to protest belt-constricting moves of the government. This was the second nationwide protest in recent weeks. The austerity moves include axing subsidies on electricity and fuel prices, raising the cost by 35 percent. This has also led to hikes in food prices. In Quito, the capital, hundreds of protesters, many of them high school students, marched toward the Government Palace. Cops and soldiers fired tear gas at the demonstrators, some of whom retaliated with Molotov cocktails. Forty people were arrested and several injured. Similar actions took place in Guayaquil, Cuenca, and other cities. At least 80 percent of the population officially live in poverty. In an effort to cool off the protests, President Jamil Mahuad declared the next day a national holiday.

Ford backs down on Brazil layoffs

The union at Ford Motor Co.'s subsidiary in Brazil announced in early February that the bosses had backed down from plans to lay off 2,800 workers at the auto giant's plant in São Bernardo. The laid-off workers had been occupying the plant since January 5 demanding they be rehired.

— BRIAN TAYLOR

Chávez calls referendum on Venezuela constitution

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

Hugo Chávez, recently elected president of Venezuela, was inaugurated at a ceremony February 2 in the capital Caracas. Among those attending the event were 16 heads of state, as well as delegations from 45 other countries. These included presidents Carlos Menem of Argentina, Fidel Castro of Cuba, and others. U.S. energy secretary William Richardson represented Washington.

Chávez called for a referendum to abrogate the constitution and create a constituent assembly with the powers to dissolve Congress, remove judges, and rewrite the constitution with the stated aim of undercutting the power of the two parties that have monopolized Venezuela's bourgeois politics for decades. He is looking to end the one-term presidential limit and is seeking special powers to pass laws without congressional approval. These measures, which expand executive power, are nonetheless highly popular. They are packaged as what Chávez dubs a "political revolution" to remove the "cancer" of corruption. In late January a Supreme Court judge ruled in favor of the referendum.

Chávez also announced the reactivation of two military parachute units and one engineers unit. These units had played a key role in Chávez's failed 1992 "anti-corruption" coup, an attempt that gave him hero status as a supposed "man of the people" in Venezuela. Making clear his ties to military and nurturing his rebel image, Chávez said, "More than a president I am a soldier that, thanks to the people, is back." During his February 2 inauguration speech he paid tribute to his coup cohorts, some of whom he

posted on a Senate balcony. Interior Minister Maritza Izaguirre, who carries over her post from the previous regime of Rafael Caldera, announced that Chávez would implement an "extremely tight" fiscal policy. This means stiffening tax collections, and introducing various trade protections. She claimed this would not affect social spending. Unemployment officially stands at 11 percent, and at least half of the employed work as peddlers.

During his campaign Chávez promised to raise the minimum wage and declare a moratorium on the nation's \$23 billion foreign debt. He is drawing back those statements. Unions are demanding raises of up to 100 percent.

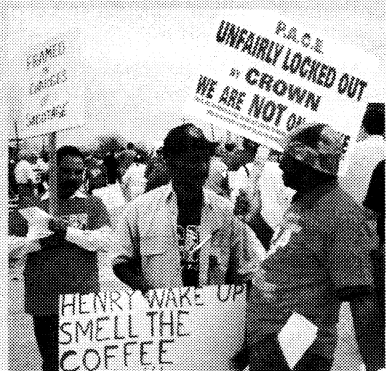
Nevertheless, Chávez remains a popular figure and foreign investors bank on him using that to push through austerity. "Chávez has the political capital to adopt the necessary reform measures" to keep foreign capitalist investors and lending institutions interested, said Michel Goguikian, head of Santander Investment in Venezuela.

"He set a good tone for a very ambitious agenda," commented Richardson, the U.S. representative. "It's a good start in the American-Venezuelan relationship."

THE MILITANT

Building links of solidarity

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Striking workers in Illinois link up fights

BY HELEN MEYERS

EAST PEORIA, Illinois — Hundreds of workers in central Illinois joined in two solidarity actions February 5 and 6 for strikers at Tazewell Machine Works in Pekin, Illinois. The 82 strikers are members of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 2283. They were joined by other UAW members from nearby Caterpillar and Mitsubishi plants, coal miners in the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), and members of the International Union of Electronic Workers (IUE) on strike at Lenc-Smith in Cicero, Illinois.

Tazewell workers walked out on October 5, demanding better working conditions and benefits. They are also on strike against Tazewell's demand to end the union dues check-off procedure, which strikers see as a company attempt to break their union.

Between 75 and 100 Tazewell strikers and supporters held a rally outside the struck plant February 5. As strikebreakers working inside the plant left that afternoon, the pickets greeted them with loud shouts at disciplined lines outside both entrances. Some of the strikers shook noisemakers of soda cans filled with small stones. They got this idea from the Lenc-Smith strikers when Tazewell striker Terry Beebe participated in an IUE support rally in Chicago two days earlier. (See accompanying article.)

Justin West, a member of UAW Local 2488 at the Diamond Star Mitsubishi plant, was at the rally. His local organized raffles and other fund-raisers to support the Tazewell strike. One group of workers donated \$1,000 from money they get from selling soda cans. "This is a fight for all workers," West said.

Caterpillar workers host fund-raiser

On February 6, UAW Local 974, the Caterpillar local in East Peoria, held a chili supper fund-raiser for the Tazewell strikers. The local's Tactical Response Team — workers who helped lead the strikes against Caterpillar in the early 1990s — played a central role in organizing the event. Hundreds of

Caterpillar workers, their family members, and retirees from the Peoria area and Aurora attended the dinner and raffle, which raised more than \$8,000. Three strikers from Lenc-Smith, some members of UMWA Local 1969 who struck Freeman United Coal last fall, and other area unionists also participated.

Chad Hartley, president of the striking local at Tazewell, described their fight. Meeting organizers encouraged everyone to rally at Tazewell on February 15 from 4:00-6:00 p.m.

Bill Wheat is a sheet metal fabrication worker who has been at Caterpillar for 28 years and was one of the "illegally terminated" workers that Caterpillar fired for union activity and was forced to rehire. He explained why the Cat workers have shown so much interest in the Tazewell strike. "Our fight had every aspect of a union struggle except the National Guard: we had state police, local police, Vance Security, marches and rallies, and it's not over yet.... The solidarity we've extended has helped the Tazewell strikers to sustain their struggle. None of them has crossed the picket line.... A victory at Tazewell will show people that unionism is back, that we can still fight, and that we can still win."

Wheat is also a member of the Tactical Response Team, which he said "sets an example. Other strikers we have helped in the past have gone on to help somebody else. The people from the Vermont foundry went to Tazewell. Tazewell people went to Lenc-Smith workers in Cicero. Lenc-Smith people came here to support the Tazewell chili dinner. It's the companies that are creating all this solidarity."

A high point of the afternoon event came when Tazewell striker Beebe introduced three members of IUE Local 1199 who were locked-out during their strike at Lenc-Smith. "We need to get up to Chicago," Beebe told the gathering. "I want to get a busload from here to go to up to Cicero to go on that picket line." During the next hour, some two dozen Caterpillar and Tazewell workers and retired



Militant/Jacob Perasso

Miners discuss strategy with Lenc-Smith strikers at a February 6 fund-raiser to support Tazewell strikers. The event was organized by Caterpillar workers in UAW Local 974.

UAW members signed up to go on the bus.

Increased police harassment

At Tazewell and Lenc-Smith the bosses have raised the stakes by using the cops and courts to try and stop the pickets. On January 12 two Lenc-Smith strikers were arrested on trumped-up charges of harassing an applicant for a job at the struck plant. They have a court hearing on February 22.

A couple of weeks later on February 1, two Tazewell strikers were arrested for allegedly harassing two workers leaving the plant. Both the company and the city of Pekin filed injunctions against the strikers and their supporters.

Helen Meyers is a member of UAW Local 719. Cappy Kidd, also a member of UAW Local 719, contributed to this article.

BY HARVEY McARTHUR

CHICAGO — Chanting, "We want justice!" 125 Lenc-Smith strikers and supporters rallied and marched through downtown Chicago February 3. Marchers carried dozens of hand-lettered signs: "We want a fair

contract," "No wage cuts!," "Today it's us, tomorrow it could be you," "Slavery Time is Over!" They distributed flyers explaining the reasons for their seven-month strike.

The strikers, members of International Union of Electronic Workers (IUE) Local 1199, who make video game cabinets organized the protest in front of the annual meeting of shareholders of Lenc-Smith's parent corporation, WMS. The march was covered by the Spanish-language television station Channel 44.

The workers struck last July after Lenc-Smith demanded pay cuts of up to \$2.00 per hour. On January 13 Lenc-Smith announced it was locking out the workers, after they again rejected the company's demands.

"This is not just any strike," striker Grace Herrada told the rally, "but one where workers care enough to make sacrifices. We need to change the conditions of human life for everyone. This is a hard struggle, but we can do it!" she concluded to cheers. Speakers included IUE International official Thomas Rebman, Chicago Federation of Labor president Don Turner, Rev. Dr. Richard Bundy of the Chicago Interfaith Committee on Worker Issues, and Casa Atzlan executive director Carlos Arango.

Among the marchers was Terry Beebe, a member of UAW Local 2283 on strike at Tazewell Machine Works in Pekin, Illinois, who traveled to Chicago for the rally.

"What really bothers me," Beebe said after the rally, "is that they want to drop these workers to near minimum wage." He pointed to the police harassment and arrests of Lenc-Smith strikers, many of whom are immigrant workers. "If you live here and work here, as far as I'm concerned you are an American like me. You have rights!" he concluded.

Northwest contract would erode full-time jobs

BY MARY MARTIN

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A tentative contract has been presented to 18,000 unionists at Northwest Airlines by officials of the International Association of Machinists (IAM). They recommend approval in the ratification vote set for February 16. IAM members at Northwest overwhelmingly turned down the first contract offered last July.

Some union members say the new offer is worse. Louis Guy, a five-year ramp worker at Washington National Airport, told the *Militant*, "A central problem with this proposal is that it increases the percentage of part-time jobs allowed to up to 20 percent of the workforce. This is an attack on the union. All the airlines want to implement a mostly part-time workforce so they can lower the wage and benefits base and not have workers on the clock between flights. We should vote down the contract."

Protracted government-mediated negotiations between the IAM and Northwest Airlines began after the previous contract expired in October 1996. In early 1998 the union ranks mounted an effective campaign of resistance to defend themselves against forced overtime, speed up, and unsafe shortcuts being demanded by Northwest.

Machinist union members, as well as pilots organized in the Airline Pilots Association (ALPA) and flight attendants organized by the Teamsters union, carried out informational picketing events at airports across the country and found a sympathetic response from many passengers. After a 15-day strike in September, the Northwest pilots won a favorable contract. The flight attendants are still pressing for a contract.

After months of involvement in various protest actions related to the contract, some Northwest workers were surprised to see what the IAM officials listed as reasons for recommending approval of the proposed contract. These included "Eroded customer and financial standing due to the August 29, 1998 work stoppage"; "Changing membership demands due to the length of the current negotiation process"; and "Uncertain Asian markets."

The proposed agreement would include those who work in ground operations, customer service, clerical jobs, and as stock clerks. Not covered in the agreement are 10,000 mechanics, inspectors, cleaners, and custodians who were separated from the

IAM in a union representation election won by the Airline Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA) in November.

Mary Martin is a member of the IAM at Northwest Airlines.

Walfrido Moreno, partisan and defender of the Cuban revolution for over 40 years

BY ERNIE MAILHOT

MIAMI — Walfrido Moreno, president of the Alliance of Workers in the Cuban Community (ATC), a Miami-based Cuban-American group, died in Havana late in the evening January 31. Moreno, 83, was well known in South Florida and in Cuba as a tireless defender of the Cuban revolution and its leadership. Only days before his death from heart problems, Moreno had hosted a meeting at the southwest Miami offices of the ATC celebrating the 20th anniversary of the organization and the 40th anniversary of the Cuban revolution.

José Ramón Balaguer, a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, and Sergio Corrieri, president of the Cuban Institute for Friendship with the Peoples, were among those attending his funeral February 2. Andrés Gomez of the Antonio Maceo Brigade, a Miami-based organization of Cuban-Americans who support the revolution, and Rev. Raúl Suárez of the Martin Luther King Center in Havana spoke honoring Moreno's life and contributions.

Moreno moved to the United States from Cuba in the 1940s. During the struggle against the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in the 1950s, he was a founder in New York City of the July 26 Movement — the organization headed by Fidel Castro that led the revolutionary struggle in Cuba. Moreno participated in the preparations in Mexico for the *Granma* expedition.

In November 1956, Castro and 81 other fighters of the July 26 Movement left Mexico aboard the yacht *Granma* to initiate the revolutionary war in Cuba. By New Year's Day 1959, Batista's forces had been defeated by the columns of the Rebel Army. A government of workers and farmers came to power in Cuba, opening the door to the first socialist revolution in the Americas.

The ATC and the Antonio Maceo Brigade issued a press release about Moreno that pointed to the important role of the ATC under his leadership "in the crucial effort by the progressive sector of Cuban émigrés in the United States in defense of liberty, independence, and the revolutionary process of the Cuban people; for the unconditional lifting of the blockade imposed on Cuba by the United States; for the formulation and development of new and positive relations between Cuban emigrants in the United States and those in Cuba; and for the normalization of relations between the U.S. and Cuba. During his years as president, the ATC has maintained a close and fruitful working alliance with the Antonio Maceo Brigade and with Casa de las Américas in New York."

In recent years Moreno was often one of the first to call for public demonstrations in Miami in answer to attacks and threats by rightist groups in the Miami Cuban-American community. This included picket lines in defense of the right of Cuban musicians to appear in Miami and press conferences and rallies for the right to travel to Cuba and



Militant

Walfrido Moreno speaking at May 3, 1998, event in Miami celebrating 100-year struggle against U.S. imperialism waged by the peoples of Cuba, Puerto Rico, the United States, and elsewhere. Moreno was often among the first to call actions against U.S. attacks on Cuba's sovereignty.

against Washington's economic war against Cuba.

A meeting to celebrate the life of Walfrido Moreno is being planned in Miami.

Ernie Mailhot is a member of the International Association of Machinists Local 1126.

Unionists and farmers buy the 'Militant'

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Supporters of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* have kicked off a drive to introduce new readers and renew subscriptions to the socialist press. Workers in New York sold 36 copies of the *Militant* and 4 copies of *Perspectiva Mundial* at a February 7 rally of more than 1,000 people protesting the cop killing of Amadou Diallo.

Socialists sold 17 more copies of the paper at another demonstration of some 2,000 people two days later. A number of protesters snapped up copies when *Militant* supporters explained that the U.S. foreign policy of bombing Iraqi people and the killing of Diallo in the Bronx was the same. Other sales included five copies of the French-language title *Thomas Sankara Speaks*.

Participants in the sales campaign will get out to meet working farmers and build support for the March 2 rally in Washington, D.C., called by leaders of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association (BFAA). A "fairness hearing" is scheduled that day to approve the settlement of a lawsuit charging the U.S. Department of Agriculture with racist discrimination against farmers who are Black.

At a January 30 meeting of the BFAA in Durham, North Carolina, farmers and oth-

ers purchased eight new *Militant* subscriptions and two renewals. These sales results reflect the opportunities to engage in political discussions with working farmers fighting to defend their land.

Socialists will begin to keep on the lookout for gatherings of farmers throughout the United States and around the world, like the January 29 meeting in Cave City, Kentucky, where 350 tobacco farmers participated. Working farmers who grow tobacco are being squeezed by cuts in the amount of tobacco they are permitted to grow. A similar meeting in Hopkinsville, Kentucky, attracted about 200 people.

Below is a report of a recent sales team of socialist workers and Young Socialists who traveled throughout central Illinois to reach out to workers, farmers, and students.

BY JACOB PERASSO AND DAN FEIN

SPRINGFIELD, Illinois — From January 25-30 we talked to workers, farmers, and students in central Illinois about the different struggles by working people today and to get the *Militant* newspaper in their hands. At coal mine portals, factory plant gates, and college campuses, we sold 142 *Militants*, 1 copy of

Perspectiva Mundial, 6 *Militant* subscriptions and 5 *Pathfinder* pamphlets.

A miner who works at the Crown #3 mine in Farmersville — who recently struck alongside unionists at Crown #2 and the Industry mine against Freeman United company — and a couple workers striking against Lenc-Smith in Chicago came to a January 24 fund-raising forum in Chicago that launched the regional sales team.

The following morning, the team used the *Militant* to continue the discussion at the Crown #3 mine portal. Most of the miners who stopped to check out the paper said the company is trying to victimize workers inside and is arbitrarily cracking down on company rules since the strike. Several said the situation is tense between the company and union inside. Most of the nine miners who bought the *Militant* said they had read it before and some had their money out of their pockets when they saw us.

On January 26 the team sold *Militants* at the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW)-organized slaughterhouse in Beardstown, Illinois, at a nearby university and at the Industry coal mine.

Industry is a strip mine and one of the three mines owned by Freeman United that was recently on strike. A majority of the

roughly 45 miners who work there voted against the proposed contract. The contract was approved by a small majority.

One miner said he warned other unionists in the area that other companies will try to wrest similar concessions as Freeman did from the miners. He bought a *Militant* subscription. He said he had read the paper before and liked the coverage on their strike. A fellow unionist had encouraged him to subscribe during the strike, he said. Another 15 day-shift miners picked up copies of the *Militant*. A couple of workers were interested in going to a solidarity dinner organized by UAW Local 974 at Caterpillar for their union brothers on strike against Tazewell Machine Works in Pekin, Illinois.

The team attended a January 26 meeting on "Strategies to Weather Downturn in the Hog Market" sponsored by University of Illinois Cooperative Extension Service. Some 15 hog farmers turned out to discuss how to confront the deepening economic crisis hitting hog farmers who are forced to sell hogs for well below the cost of raising them. While the speakers at the meeting focused on how to cut expenses, some of the farmers present were looking for answers to combat the squeeze on working farmers.

After the meeting, team members talked to a few farmers. Dan Fein, a team member who is a meatpacker in Atlanta, explained to two farmers why a worker-farmer alliance needed to be formed. He said, "I work for Hormel who pays farmers too little for their hogs and also pays its employees too little. Small farmers and the workers have the same enemy. We are natural allies."

The next day the team drove to Decatur. At Milliken University two students bought subscriptions to the *Militant* and another bought a single copy. When the dean told us we had to leave, one young woman at the table said her student group would sponsor a table for us on our next visit.

We sold 21 papers to workers at the Caterpillar plant in East Peoria, and with our few remaining papers we headed to the Firestone plant in Bloomington. Twenty-two USWA members here were part of a solidarity rally in Quincy for Steelworkers on strike against Titan Tire. We sold all 12 copies 15 minutes before the day shift got off.

Threat to SWP campaign rights to be reviewed

BY AUTUMN KNOWLTON

OLYMPIA, Washington — The Washington State Public Disclosure Commission (PDC) decided January 26 to put off a decision on an appeal by the Socialist Workers 1998 State Campaign Committee of a 1998 ruling that threatens to undermine the campaign's right to keep the names of contributors confidential. Amid confusion and disagreement, the PDC voted for a "30-day study period" to review the provision before its February meeting.

Last year, the PDC formally granted the Socialist Workers Campaign an exemption from state laws requiring campaign committees to disclose the names of their contributors and vendors. However, the ruling asserted that the PDC had a right to review such records indirectly.

A section of the ruling reads, "The applicant shall make available its public disclosure reports for public inspection during the eight days before the election, but not its books of account; *except that, if the PDC determines a review of the applicant's books of account is necessary the records shall be made available to an independent third party mutually agreed to by the applicant and the PDC.*" [Italics added.]

Despite objections by the Socialist Work-

ers Campaign at that time, the PDC approved this measure. The campaign's lawyer filed an appeal with the PDC.

At the hearing on the appeal, individual Commissioners disagreed about the meaning of the "books of account." Questioning the entire audit provision, Commissioner Ron Meyers asked if "the PDC ought to have any way to look at that information at all."

Commissioner Ronda Cahill indicated she voted for the provision last year believing that this meant allowing a third party to review the coded receipt and check book records kept by the campaign, and not the actual names, addresses, and occupations of contributors and vendors. Under both the Federal Elections Commission (FEC) and PDC exemptions, Socialist Workers campaign committees are required to use codes for the names of contributors and vendors in order to maintain their confidentiality.

Mark Eide, a cooperating attorney with the American Civil Liberties Union of Washington State, represented the Socialist Workers Campaign. He outlined the chilling effects the PDC's provision would have on the campaign's contributors and on the campaign's ability to raise funds.

Eide pointed out that the FEC had granted an exemption from disclosing the names of

contributors and vendors to the Socialist Workers campaigns in federal elections based on court decisions upholding the rights to privacy, free speech, and voluntary association of minor parties who have demonstrated a history of harassment for their political views.

Eide said the PDC had for 10 years made similar findings of fact as the FEC in granting Socialist Workers campaigns exemptions from public disclosure. "What has happened," he asked the Commission, "to require this new provision today?"

In response, Susan Harris of the PDC staff, stated that the "independent third party review" she said "would be a mechanism in place to show that all the public disclosure laws have been adhered to." Harris emphasized that the third party should be able to audit all the records, including the names and addresses of contributors and vendors, and said that was the intent of the provision when the PDC staff proposed it last year.

At this point, Commissioner Gary Maehara made a motion to add that the audit by a third party be done in such a manner as to "maintain the confidentiality" of the contributors and vendors from the PDC. The commission approved this motion 3 to 1.

Eide asked the Commission to table the motion, even though it had been passed, to allow him and the PDC staff to discuss the language of this provision. The PDC, Eide said, was "one step down a slippery slope," because "once you set a precedent, then other agencies are going to start whittling away" at the exemption. The PDC then voted to rescind the motion by Maehara they had just approved, and to allow a 30-day "study period" before returning to this issue.

After the hearing, Scott Breen, representing the Socialist Workers Campaign, thanked Eide and the delegation that had attended the hearing. These included three members of the International Association of Machinists (IAM), a member of the Young Socialists, a railroad worker, and another supporter of the Seattle Committee to Defend Free Speech. Breen stated, "We need to step up the public pressure on the PDC. This fight for democratic rights is not over."

The Socialist Workers campaign is calling on trade unionists, civil libertarians, and supporters of democratic rights to send letters to the PDC supporting the right of the Socialist Workers 1998 campaign to an exemption without the audit provision. Send letters to Melissa Warheit, Executive Director, Public Disclosure Commission, P.O. Box 40908, Olympia, WA 98504-0908. Fax: 360-753-1112. Please send copies to the Socialist Workers campaign at 1405 E. Madison, Seattle, WA 98122.

Militant and *Perspectiva Mundial*
Renewal/Single Issue Circulation Drive
FEBRUARY 6-MARCH 7

	Sub renewal		Sales per week	
	Militant Goal	PM Goal	Militant Goal	PM Goal
Australia	4	1	20	
Canada				
Montreal	3	3		
Toronto	8	1		
Vancouver	7			
Canada Total	18	4		
Iceland	3		4	
New Zealand				
Auckland	5		25	
Christchurch	3		25	
N.Z. Total	8		50	
Sweden	3	1	23	
United Kingdom				
London	8	2	50	
Manchester	5		30	
UK Total	13	2	80	
United States				
Atlanta	7	3	55	4
Birmingham, AL	14	2	45	4
Boston	8	3	30	3
Chicago	15	5	60	8
Cleveland	4	1	40	
Des Moines	8	4	40	15
Detroit	10	2	50	
Houston	8	2	40	5
Los Angeles	20	8	80	8
Miami	10	4	30	5
New York	30	13	115	25
Newark, NJ	25	10	100	
Philadelphia	8	2	45	2
Pittsburgh	8	2	40	
San Francisco	13	8	70	15
Seattle	14	3	40	2
Twin Cities, MN	10	2	45	3
Washington, D.C.	15	4	40	3
U.S. Total	227	78	241	26
International Total	276	86	418	26

Pathfinder shop makes final CTP payment, auto workers give \$6,000 in bonuses to Capital Fund

BY DAVE PRINCE

This week, Pathfinder's printshop made the final payment of \$114,000 on the recently installed \$350,000 Agfa Galileo computer-to-plate equipment. This technology is essential to maintaining the printshop — and Pathfinder's ability to keep books working people need in print — by making it possible to sharply cut the costs and increase productivity in producing the books, while at the same time improving quality.

Achieving this decisive stage in the transformation of the Pathfinder shop was made possible by contributions from 117 people. The contributions, ranging from \$1,000 to \$50,000, came from windfalls such as bequests, trusts, and accident settlements, as well as other special circumstances.

The Capital Fund committee, made up of eight socialist workers across the United States who are organizing the fund appeal, is now focusing its attention on raising the additional \$200,000 toward the \$550,000 total goal. The \$200,000, is slated toward capital needs that must be deferred for the moment. The funds are essential now to meet operating expenses to cover a serious

conjunctural cash short fall, as shop workers work to reverse a drop in sales, cut costs by increasing productivity and reducing scrap on Pathfinder and other work and then regenerate the capital.

So far, \$41,000 has been raised toward the \$200,000. This includes a big boost to the fund from four socialist auto workers who pledged \$6,000 this week from profit sharing payments from the auto bosses — "blood money" from major concessions. John Sarge an auto worker in Detroit, reports, Socialists "working for the auto bosses are discussing how they can use this blood money (more true than ever after the recent explosion at the Ford complex in Dearborn, Michigan,) to expand the reach of the workers movement by raising contributions for Pathfinder's Capital Fund." In addition, two socialist workers in aerospace contributed \$1,000, also pooled from "profit sharing" checks. Contributing such bonuses to the needs of the workers movement is a long-standing tradition among communists in the unions.

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

Youth and the communist movement

Winning a new generation to norms and traditions of a proletarian party

In 1992, over the June 27-28 weekend, the communist movement in the United Kingdom held a special congress in Sheffield. It had been called to discuss and decide on a proposed fusion of the Communist League and three groups of young socialists in London, Manchester, and Sheffield. The proposal was part of a course that leaders of the communist movement in several countries, including in the United States, had discussed and begun implementing earlier in the year.

The weekend before the congress, the leaderships of the Communist League and young socialists groups met in London to discuss and adopt proposals to place before the delegates. An international leadership delegation participated in the London meeting, including Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes, who was asked to present the world political report to the upcoming congress and initiate discussion on the proposed fusion and political basis for it.

The following is Barnes's report, the summary of discussion on it, and a closing report to the congress. The congress adopted the proposals and the general line of the presentations.

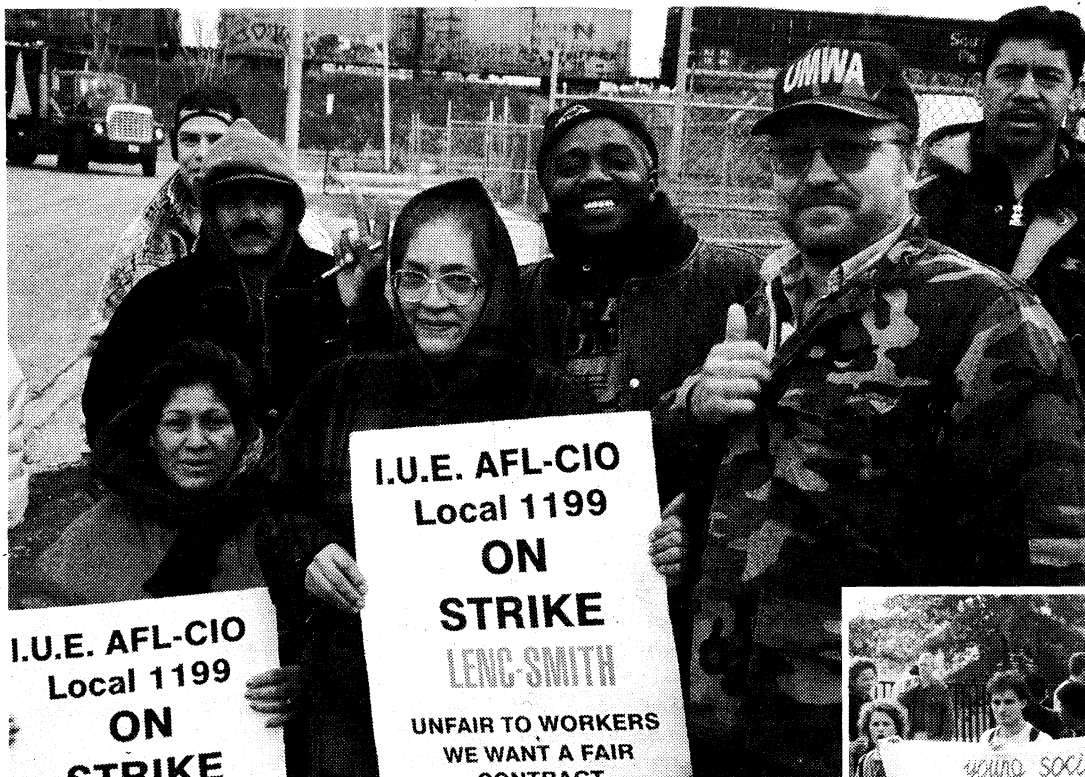
"Youth and the Communist Movement," is the closing talk in the forthcoming Pathfinder book, *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*, which will be released at the end of February. It is copyright © Pathfinder Press 1999 and reprinted by permission.

BY JACK BARNES

What the Communist League and the young socialists are engaged in here today is a political maneuver. It is the most important one the Communist League has engaged in since its founding in January 1988. This course is important not only to the fortunes of advancing communism here in the United Kingdom. It is an integral part of an international maneuver as well.

In several other countries where organized nuclei of communist workers exist, the same maneuver is being carried out. Those who have built the communist movement for some time are combining forces with new levies from a younger generation, many of whom came into politics as part of the resistance to imperialism's war against Iraq last year. Fighters from this new generation have a better chance today to be won to communism, not to a counterfeit of communism, than at any time in decades.

I use the term "maneuver" in the military sense — the movement of forces to place them in relationship to each other so that their organized strength, for carrying out a



Militant photos: Betsy Stone (above), Jonathan Silberman (right) Fusion of Communist League and three young socialists groups in 1992 brought "closer the launching of an independent communist youth organization, on an international and national level." Right, YS members in London protest U.S.-led economic war against Cuba, March 1995. International effort to win young forces to communist movement aimed to "increase the effectiveness of the work of our industrial union fractions on the job and in the labor movement." Above, miner on strike at Freeman United Coal (second from right) joins pickets against Lenc-Smith near Chicago, December 1998.



international communist youth organization on a new footing, and with a favorable relationship of forces vis-à-vis the Stalinist movement that could not have been realistically conceived of for more than half a century.

Fusion will strengthen turn party

In order to vote for the proposal before this congress in good conscience, delegates have to be convinced that it will strengthen the parties our world movement together set out to build some years ago.

We must be convinced, first of all, that the party that ensues from this step will be more proletarian than the formations that preceded it. Above all, we must be better equipped to function on the basis of the norms of a proletarian

common goal, is greater in their new deployment than it was before the maneuver. It is not a tactic in the narrow sense. It is not an attempt to rally our forces. It does not depend on any IOUs or promises of rapid growth. It simply aims to put the communist movement in a stronger position to confront the possibilities and opportunities for political activity that are before us. It should be done for purely objective reasons.

The proposal that this special congress was called to discuss and vote on is similar to the fusion carried out by the Communist League and Young Socialists in Canada several weeks ago. It is similar to the course decided on in March by a joint leadership meeting of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance in the United States. At that meeting and over the few months since then, the SWP has taken into membership former YSA members and other young socialists who had not previously joined the party.

This maneuver — this redeployment of the forces already gathered in the organizations of our movement — also puts us in a better position to seize any opportunities to fuse with clumps of young fighters who will come forward in the course of political struggles in the months and years ahead and can be won to communism. As this happens, these young fighters will grab the chance to build an

About this special issue...

Leading up to the 40th constitutional convention of the Socialist Workers Party, to be held April 1-4 in San Francisco, the *Militant* is printing several of the reports that SWP members and Young Socialists are discussing with workers, farmers, and youth engaged in various struggles who are interested in the broad political questions these documents address. Parallel to these discussions, SWP branches across the United States are holding regular weekly meetings to prepare for the convention. At the end of March, SWP members will vote on the political line of documents they have discussed and debated, and those votes will form the basis on which branch members elect convention delegates.

Last week's *Militant* ran the summary presentation by SWP national secretary Jack Barnes at the conclusion of the December 4-6 socialist conference in Los Angeles, California, that coincided with the Third National Convention of the Young Socialists. Published in a special *International Socialist Review* supplement, that talk, entitled "A Sea Change in Working-Class Politics," is the central line document that communist workers and youth will be selling widely and discussing with other working people over the next couple months. A good number of these vanguard militants are interested in attending the San Francisco convention and participating in conference activities surrounding it.

This week we are publishing another *ISR* supplement featuring "Youth and the Communist Movement," a June 1992 report discussed and adopted by a joint congress of the Communist League in the United Kingdom and three groups of young socialists in that country. The broad political themes dealt with in this report are even more relevant to the evolution of world politics and working-class struggles today than when it was presented more than six years ago.

At the end of this month, this talk will be published by Pathfinder Press along with the Los Angeles conference summary and three other reports in a new book entitled *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* by Jack Barnes. These documents — together with the 1990 SWP resolution, "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War," recently published in issue no. 11 of the Marxist magazine *New International*, and the party resolutions and reports contained in *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* — provide the political foundation of the discussions communist workers and youth are organizing as they prepare for the San Francisco party convention.

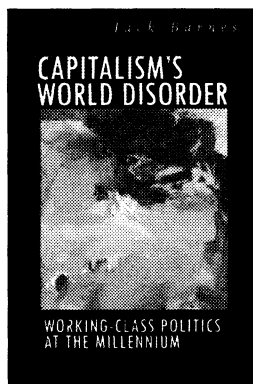
The convention and socialist conference will be held at the downtown San Francisco Hilton. For information, contact the SWP branch nearest you or communist league in your country (see page 20).

Available from Pathfinder, March 1999

Capitalism's World Disorder Working-Class Politics at the Millennium

JACK BARNES

- ❖ New Openings for Mass Work and the Struggle for a Proletarian Party
- ❖ Capitalist Deflation and Debt Slavery
- ❖ Stalinism versus Communism
- ❖ Buchaninism: What It Is and How to Fight It
- ❖ Washington Lets Yugoslavia Bleed
- ❖ The 'Bell Curve': the Scandal of Class Privilege
- ❖ Socialism and Lifetime Education
- ❖ Cuba's Socialist Revolution
- ❖ Youth and the Communist Movement



Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 20, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690. Fax: (212) 727-0150.



Militant/Nancy Cole (above)

Communist League and young socialists fused organizations out of conviction it would strengthen "the character of our movement as a campaign party" in the working class. Above, electrical worker in San Juan, Puerto Rico, checks out the socialist press during two-day general strike to protest the sell-off of the state-owned phone company, July 1998. Right, more than 40,000 coal miners and other trade unionists march in London to protest pit closures, October 1992.

party. We should be better able to engage in politics on the basis of the values and habits of discipline we have studied in *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party* by James P. Cannon and *In Defense of Marxism* by Leon Trotsky; norms codified in *The Organizational Character of the Socialist Workers Party* and explained by Farrell Dobbs and other veteran leaders of the communist movement. We should be more prepared to sustain a rhythm of political activity on the basis of these norms. We must be convinced that our propaganda institutions — the weekly *Militant Labor Forums*, sales of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* — all the ways of utilizing Pathfinder books and pamphlets, socialist election campaigns — will be more effective vehicles for our participation in the working-class movement. The goal is for the character of our movement as a campaign party to be strengthened.

Second, delegates must be convinced that carrying out the proposals before you here will increase the effectiveness of the work of our industrial union fractions on the job and in the labor movement. That it will make our parties more attractive to workers who are fighting and who are looking for an alternative course to prepare the labor movement to respond to the crisis the capitalists are imposing on our class. It will help make us look more like, and act more like, the worker-bolsheviks somebody would expect to see after he or she had just finished reading *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*.

Third, this fusion, if it is the correct next step, will give us the opportunity to deepen and extend the braiding together of generations of revolutionists in the communist

movement. Our capacity to do so is, and always will be, the only road to maintaining — which includes revitalizing — the revolutionary political continuity of a revolutionary workers organization.

Fourth, the fusion should give us new opportunities over time to regroup communist forces. We should be in a better position to attract political forces — both in the countries where we already function and elsewhere — in ways that would not be possible if we were not being strengthened by the integration of a new generation into our ranks and leaderships.

Finally, this maneuver should bring closer the launching of an independent communist youth organization, on an interna-

party.¹

Our world movement as a whole has gone through experiences similar to these over the past year and a half. Responding to these opportunities and challenges has prepared us to take new steps in a timely way along the road to relaunching strengthened communist youth organizations as opportunities arise and renewing the cadres and leaderships of turn parties.

This congress in the United Kingdom is part of that process. We will begin by discussing, debating, and exchanging ideas to achieve political clarification and to judge whether what we are proposing to do is objectively justified and the best option among those open to us.

This congress will then elect an authoritative leadership of a special kind. I say "of a special kind," because the leadership elected by a fusion congress must be different from one that comes out of an ordinary congress, where the makeup of the organization itself is not changed by the delegates' decisions. The leadership you elect this weekend will reflect the strengths of all four of the organizations that are coming into the fusion — the Communist League, and the Young Socialists groups in London, Manchester, and here in Sheffield — and it will be chosen on the basis of what these organizations have collectively

accomplished. The job of that leadership will be to fuse the forces of the new organization in practice, so they become a more organic whole. The task will be to lead them, through activity in the class struggle, toward fuller participation in the international communist movement.

On that basis, the next congress of the Communist League will be of a different kind and character from this one. It will be a gathering of an organization slightly stronger than the sum of the four in the room today.

Drive toward war, depression, and reaction

What is the assessment of the world political situation today that our international movement holds in common? Does it justify the maneuver we are discussing here? That is where we should begin.

First, we stand on the analysis and prognoses in "The Opening Guns of World War III." Washington's war against Iraq put a spotlight on the inevitable character of the drive toward conflict bred by sharpening interimperialist competition and the accelerated disintegration of the stability of the capitalist world order. It confirmed that the imperialist rulers are on a course toward stepped-up militarization, war drives, and military interventions whose logic — unless the working class is successful in its revolutionary struggle to take power from their hands — marches inexorably toward a world conflagration.

From the slaughter in Yugoslavia to heightened tensions in Asia; from U.S. imperialism's continuing threats against the Cuban revolution to the instability and expanding conflicts in the former Soviet Union — these are all evidence of the accuracy of the assessment presented in "The Opening Guns." We share a common understanding of the consequences of Washington's political defeat



tional and national level, that will draw in forces substantially larger and from different backgrounds than those of our movement today, and will fight alongside revolutionary communist youth organizations worldwide.

Building on our strengths

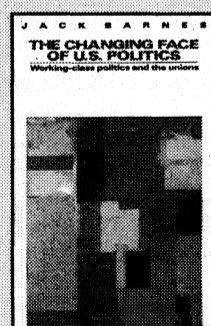
The steps being proposed here, like those decided by communist organizations in Canada and the United States, are possible because we can build on the strengths of what we have already accomplished. We must also have a clear recognition of our limits, of course. We must not pretend to be larger than we are, richer than we are, stronger than we are, or geographically spread out more than we are. We need to recognize our limitations, including those that result from the retreat of our class for much of the 1980s in face of the capitalists' escalating offensive, the labor officialdom's default in organizing resistance, and the defeats of popular revolutions in Grenada and Nicaragua.

So long as we do not ignore these limits, we can be confident there are substantial strengths in both the Communist League and young socialists that make the proposed fusion a registration and codification of a victory you have won. It is something you have worked for and earned. It is something that was not possible six months ago and could not have been planned one year ago.

Our world movement passed the test of the Gulf War; we proved ourselves as proletarian internationalist organizations. We have described this experience in some detail in "The Opening Guns of World War III" in *New Internationalist* no. 7, including some of the mistakes we made along the way. The Communist League here in the United Kingdom, like other components of our movement, responded as worker-bolsheviks as the shooting began. You refused to bend your knees before British imperialism, and you went deeper into your class. The three socialist youth groups here in Britain largely had their origins among fighters attracted to your campaign against imperialism and war and joined together with young members of the league in order to fight more effectively. So this test is one of the strengths we are building on in proposing a fusion of our forces at this congress.

That experience was not unique to the United Kingdom. In the United States, for example, a layer of youth was won to the Young Socialist Alliance during the Gulf War. The SWP collaborated with the youth leadership in carrying out a fusion of younger party members with the Young Socialist Alliance at the YSA convention in August 1991. This resulted in a somewhat larger youth organization with a slightly more experienced National Committee. That maneuver, in turn, prepared the leaderships of both organizations for the subsequent decision to dissolve the YSA and temporarily combine our forces in the

Available from Pathfinder



The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

JACK BARNES

A handbook for workers coming into the factories, mines, and mills, as they react to the uncertain life, turmoil, and brutality of capitalism today. It shows how millions of workers, as political resistance grows, will revolutionize themselves, their unions, and all of society. Also available in Spanish and French. \$19.95

Background to "The Changing Face of U.S. Politics" and "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War"

JACK BARNES, JOEL BRITTON, AND MARY-ALICE WATERS

Reports and resolutions of the Socialist Workers Party on trade union policy, proletarian leadership versus clique functioning, the poison of race baiting in the workers movement, and the membership norms of the revolutionary party. An Education for Socialists booklet. \$7.00

Available from bookstores listed on page 20, or write Pathfinder.

coming out of the Gulf War. The leaderships of our organizations worked together in hammering out this analysis, and the cadres in each of our organizations have discussed and adopted it at previous national gatherings.

Second, we stand on the analysis of "What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold," the political resolution adopted in 1988 at an international conference held in the United States.² At the time we adopted that resolution, of course, nobody could have predicted the concrete timing of events that would further complicate the shape of the capitalists' crisis: the rapid collapse of the Stalinist apparatuses in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union; the price the German imperialist rulers would pay for formal reunification of the country and its impact on capitalist Europe and the world; the Iraq war and its consequences; and the results of the worst destabilization of the international monetary system since the 1930s.

We now recognize that by the opening years of this decade, the capitalist world had already entered depression conditions. International finance capital cannot and will not escape from this deflation of growth rates, despite ups and downs in the business cycle, short of big class battles in which it is able to defeat the working class. But the capitalist rulers cannot and will not inflict such defeats without the working class first having the chance to fight, to win, and to establish workers and farmers governments that can open a new chapter in human history.

What is precluded today is a massive, self-propelling expansion of capital that makes possible substantial concessions to a broad layer of the working class, heading off such class battles in coming years. To the contrary, the capitalists are taking, not giving. Somewhere along this road — which they have come to hope is eternal — they will be surprised, and then panicked, when the labor movement stiffens its resistance. We cannot predict the timing, evolution, and character of the crises that will give rise to such battles, or their initial outcome. That those battles are coming, however, and that the working class will have a chance to fight them and win, is a fact.

Third, we stand on our assessment of the importance of



Militant/Dave Wulp

Passing the test of intransigent opposition to U.S.-organized slaughter in Iraq made the communist movement in United States, Canada, Britain, and elsewhere stronger. Above, demonstration in Salt Lake City, Utah, protesting Washington's preparation for Gulf War, December 1990.

the growing manifestations of Bonapartism — and its most radical and virulent form, fascism — that are developing once again in the imperialist countries. In the United States we are seeing the heat lightning of the Patrick Buchanan campaign in the Republican primaries this year. Then came the sudden appearance, for the first time in half a century, of a true Bonapartist figure in U.S. presidential politics — H. Ross Perot. This is the beginning of the breakdown of long-established patterns of bourgeois politics that we see to varying degrees in all imperialist countries. It is ultimately a thrust toward other forms of Bonapartism — all partaking of the "popular" radical response of the far right, appealing to growing layers of demoralized and panicked members of the middle class, and to layers of youth, women, and working people as well.

This sharpening political polarization and rising class tensions — in face of the growing economic crisis of the capitalist system, inter-imperialist conflicts, and war threats we have analyzed — will mark our political lives and the lives of all communist organizations in the years ahead. That is the world this congress and our entire international movement must understand, explain clearly to co-workers and fighting youth, and on that basis prepare for deepening involvement in politics and class battles.

World politics in the 1990s

If we look at the unfolding slaughter in Yugoslavia, we will see many elements of the world we are describing. The most difficult things to come to grips with in discussing Yugoslavia are not the theoretical questions; we have

²That resolution appears in issue no. 10 of *New Internationalist*, along with "Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War," the resolution adopted by the Socialist Workers Party at a convention and international conference in August 1994.

adopted reports on those questions and written about them well.³ The most difficult thing is to acknowledge the reality of a murderous war, the scope and horror of which has not been seen in continental Europe for decades. Even more difficult to accept is the fact this war is not an aberration, but instead a foreshadowing of the direction of world politics today.

Most bourgeois commentators would have us believe that the slaughter in Yugoslavia signifies a new rise of nationalism — or as they often prefer saying, a new rise of "tribalism." Outside a few white enclaves in "the West," they imply, world civilization is threatening to break down along lines of "age-old ethnic hatreds." The truth is the opposite. The slaughter in Yugoslavia is the product of the breakdown of the capitalist world order; it is the product of intensifying conflicts among rival capitalist classes in the imperialist countries and would-be capitalists in the deformed workers states. These conflicts, in which exploiting layers demagogically don national garb to defend their narrow class interests, will increasingly mark world politics.

What is happening in Yugoslavia also bloodily demonstrates the fact that Stalinist leaderships cannot unite toilers from different national origins on a lasting basis to open up a broadening federation of soviet republics working together to build socialism. Several years after the October 1917 revolution in Russia, the Bolsheviks under the leadership of Lenin formed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as a voluntary federation of workers and peasants republics. The Bolsheviks in Lenin's time were a revolutionary workers vanguard that fought uncompromisingly for the right of oppressed nations to self-determination, for the complete equality of nations and nationalities, and against every vestige of national privilege, arrogance, and chauvinism. They took the lead in placing that internationalist perspective at the heart of the program and practice of the Communist International. As part of the political counterrevolution carried out by the petty-bourgeois social caste whose spokesman was Joseph Stalin, however, this proletarian internationalist course gave way to the return of Great Russian chauvinism, now dressed up as the "new Soviet nation" and "Soviet man."⁴

The federated Yugoslav workers state that the imperialists and rival Stalinist gangs are now trying to tear apart was a gigantic accomplishment of the Yugoslav revolution of 1942-46. Workers and peasants who were Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, and from other nationalities forged unity to oust the Nazi

³ See *The Truth about Yugoslavia: Why Working People Should Oppose Intervention* by George Fyson, Argiris Malapanis, and Jonathan Silberman (Pathfinder, 1993).

⁴ The historic communist position on these questions is explained in *The Right of Nations to Self-Determination and Questions of National Policy and Proletarian Internationalism*, both by V.I. Lenin (Moscow: Progress Publishers); and *Workers of the World and Oppressed Peoples, Unite!*, the proceedings of the Second Congress of the Communist International (Pathfinder, 1991). Lenin's battle against the first efforts to reverse this communist course are traced in *Lenin's Final Fight: Speeches and Writings, 1922-23* (Pathfinder, 1995). Leon Trotsky, the most prominent Bolshevik active in the leadership of the October revolution who fought to continue Lenin's course, recounted the social and political factors that made possible the Stalinist counterrevolution, including on the national question, in his classic 1936 work, *The Revolution Betrayed: What Is the Soviet Union and Where Is It Going?* All these titles are available from Pathfinder.

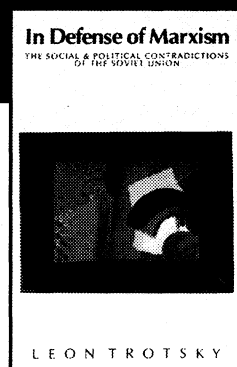


Sans papiers — immigrants "without papers" — many of them from Africa, demand right to remain in France. "Every time we hear the word 'refugee,' in any language, we should always translate it in our minds as 'fellow worker.' The Bolsheviks in Lenin's time fought uncompromisingly for the right of oppressed nations to self-determination, for the complete equality of nations and nationalities, and against every vestige of national privilege, arrogance, and chauvinism."

occupation forces and their local collaborators, carry out a radical land reform, and expropriate the capitalist exploiters. It was truly one of the great revolutions of this century, a proletarian socialist revolution.

The Stalinist leadership of the Yugoslav Communist Party, headed by Josip Broz (known by his *nom de guerre* Tito), however, blocked the toilers of different nationalities from building on their conquests and solidly cementing the federation together. The socialist revolution in Yugoslavia was deformed from birth. Nonetheless, substantial layers of toilers in Yugoslavia — whether Bosnian, Serb, or Croat, whether Christian or Muslim in their current beliefs or family origins — have continued even today to demonstrate their will to resist the horrors thrust on them by the rival bureaucratic gangs that emerged from the crumbling Stalinist apparatus.

The consequences of the bloodbath in Yugoslavia also provide further confirmation that refugees are increasingly becoming actors in world politics today. Every time we hear the word "refugee," in any language, we should always translate it in our minds as "fellow worker." It is not enough for class-conscious workers to reject the chauvinist portrayal of refugees as pariahs. Above all, we must resist turning refugees simply into victims, rather than potential soldiers in the battalions of the international working class. We take communist politics to these fellow workers, and we fight alongside them for their rights, their dignity, and the common interests of working people the world over.



In Defense of Marxism: The Social and Political Contradictions of the Soviet Union

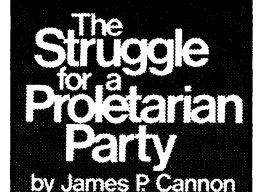
LEONTROTSKY

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The Struggle for a Proletarian Party

JAMES P. CANNON

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The slaughter in Yugoslavia shows every sign of deepening and drawing in other countries. There is already a United Nations intervention force there — so-called “peace-keeping” troops — for the first time ever in Europe. We cannot predict whether the war will expand, or foresee the forms an escalation might take. Nor do we know how long the current imperialist “peace-keeping” will take; we do know the longer it takes, the more likely it is to turn into “peacebreaking.” Our job as communist workers is to demand a halt to the imperialist intervention and fight every attempt to deepen it. We need to keep speaking the truth about the stake workers have in this struggle, and to support the toilers throughout the Yugoslav workers state who are trying to defend their social conquests and bring the butchery to an end.

Sharpening interimperialist rivalry

The war in Yugoslavia sharpens interimperialist conflicts. It sharpens the divisions between the United States and Europe, as well as divisions within Europe itself.

Margaret Thatcher — “retired” against her will as prime minister of the United Kingdom, but also freed from some of the diplomatic niceties required while serving at that post — is wagging a finger at her successor John Major, warning that the dream of a stable, prosperous, reunified, and peaceful Germany at the heart of Europe is a lie. Major’s signature of the Maastricht treaty last year, outlining plans for greater European economic and political integration, including a common currency, endangers Britain’s capitalist rulers, Thatcher scolds. “A reunited Germany cannot and won’t subordinate its national interests in economic or in foreign policy to those of the [European] community indefinitely,” she warned in a widely publicized speech in the Netherlands last month. “Germany’s power is a problem — as much for the Germans as for the rest of Europe.”

Major’s cabinet ministers reacted furiously to Thatcher’s thinly veiled accusation that the current Tory government is leading the United Kingdom down the primrose path. Thatcher is “a spent force,” one minister told reporters, and another disdained her speech as “the cry of the unemployed.”

Trying to maintain a “special relationship” with Washington is becoming more necessary than ever for the British bourgeoisie, and not just for them alone. The capitalist rulers in Scandinavia and elsewhere are also sidling up to the Yankees, hoping somehow to protect their relative positions and profits in face of Bonn’s economic strength in Europe. At the very same time, however, U.S. capitalism itself shows declining capacity for self-sustaining economic expansion and is becoming more and more dependent on its massive military might to offset its own mounting weaknesses.

The ruling families of Germany and Japan are confronting the need to be able to use their armed forces once again to intervene abroad to defend their class interests against those of their rivals. As they take steps forward in doing so, however, they are meeting opposition both at home and abroad. As Japanese troops were dispatched to Cambodia this year under UN auspices, the specter of the imperial army of Japan once again acting as “peacekeepers” in Asia has sparked debate throughout the region. In fact, that controversy has so far made the debate in Eu-



Students in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, July 1992 protest chauvinist war waged against Muslim population in Bosnia by Serbian regime and its local terror squads. Washington and other imperialists competed to intervene, first with UN “peacekeepers” and, in 1995, with U.S.-led NATO occupation force. Imperialists’ aim in carving up Yugoslavia, shown at left, is to lay basis to destroy workers state.



rope over the use of German troops abroad — with the dispatch of a ship and three planes as part of the UN operation in Yugoslavia — seem mild by comparison.

For Bonn and Tokyo to try to justify rebuilding their armies for deployment abroad, the rulers will have to wage a political fight at home as well. Workers and youth will resist these plans, as they press on other fronts to turn back assaults on the economic and social needs of the working class. A few days ago, for example, a leading public opinion pollster in Germany re-

ported to explain? Not only because they show how the U.S. rulers and their government lie, and how the big-business press covers up for them. That is true, and something that cannot be explained too often. But there is a more important reason as well.

According to the U.S. rulers, the war against Iraq proved that no government or people can stand up against U.S. military power today and win. That may have been possible as recently as the Vietnam War, so the story goes, but not now — not in the days of “smart bombs” and other high-tech weapons. But the outcome of the Gulf War was not determined by U.S. technology or firepower. The war ended with the refusal by the bourgeois regime of Saddam Hussein to organize a fight, leaving Iraqi soldiers

“Our job is to demand a halt to the imperialist intervention, to speak the truth about the stake workers have in this struggle, and to support the toilers throughout the Yugoslav workers state who are trying to defend their social conquests and bring the butchery to an end.”

ported to a military seminar in Berlin that 42 percent of those questioned recently could not think of any good reason Germany should have an army at all — 42 percent! And an additional 11 percent were undecided.

Whether in North America, Europe, or Asia and the Pacific, working people over time will move into action against the devastating consequences of capitalist militarism and the rulers’ drive toward World War III. In order to succeed, these struggles cannot be “we in Britain” against “them in Germany” or “we in the United States” against “them in Japan.” There is a “we” and a “they” — but it is a “we” of the working class and a “they” of the capitalist class. This “we” and “they,” moreover, have irreconcilable class interests. Either the workers of the world will unite to fight against the oppressive social and political conditions that will increasingly bear down on all of us, or the working class in each country will be torn apart and defeated by our respective capitalist rulers one by one.

It is the outcome of this struggle that will decide whether or not the march toward a third world war and its unthinkable consequences will become inevitable once again — as it had earlier in this century, by 1939 — or will be stopped this time by the advance of the world socialist revolution.

Operation Desert Sham

Each month that passes since the end of the Iraq war in late February 1991, the more the myth of unqualified military success of high-tech U.S. weaponry continues to erode. The U.S. rulers have a harder and harder time suppressing the truth. Not only was the outcome of the war a political fiasco for U.S. imperialism, for the reasons we explained in “The Opening Guns of World War III.” It was also far from being the astounding display of unbeatable modern military prowess the U.S. rulers pretended. “Operation Desert Sham” is no longer an underground term, even among bourgeois journalists in the United States.

and the civilian population alike defenseless for several weeks in face of murderous and indiscriminate U.S. bombing raids, rocket attacks, and the final horrendous slaughter on the road to Basra.

⁵ In a November 1993 television documentary, Moshe Arens, Israeli defense minister during the Gulf War, said the number of successful Patriot interceptions was “minuscule and is in fact meaningless.” While U.S. Department of Defense officials reduced their initial claims to perhaps a 40 percent success rate against Scuds aimed at Israel, congressional investigators and an MIT study agreed with the conclusion of Israeli officials that the Patriot may not have scored more than one clean hit.

⁶ In 1996, a study by the U.S. government’s General Accounting Office (GAO) concluded that the Pentagon and military contractors made claims for the pinpoint precision of Stealth fighter jets, Tomahawk land-attack missiles, and laser-guided “smart bombs” during the Gulf War that “were overstated, misleading, inconsistent with the best available data, or unverifiable.” The GAO found that Washington’s vaunted “smart bombs” did not necessarily perform better than those with no electronic guidance systems. In an April 28, 1996, letter to the GAO, the Department of Defense did not dispute the findings and said it “acknowledges the shortcomings” of these weapons, adding, however, that it was making improvements.

The most sustained bombing campaign against the Iraqi people since the 1991 Gulf War was launched by the Clinton administration with four days of air strikes in mid-December 1998. Over the next two months, as the editorial work on this book was being completed, Washington, assisted by the Labour Party government in London, carried out regular, often daily, air and missile assaults against Iraqi planes, anti-aircraft batteries, and other targets, devastating neighborhoods in Basra and other parts of the country. This was the fourth round of air assaults against Iraq since the beginning of the Clinton administration. Attacks already under way during his inauguration in January 1992, ordered by the Bush White House, were hailed by Clinton. The Democratic administration renewed the aggression in July 1993 and September, 1996.

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Imperialists cannot inflict the massive defeats necessary to restore capitalist social relations in workers states without taking on the working class directly. Above, 1997 rebellion in Vlore, Albania, against U.S.-backed procapitalist regime of Sali Berisha.

Such refusal to organize resistance will *not* be the norm in the battles imperialism will have to fight, however. The U.S. rulers know that. There is only one thing, for example, that continues to prevent Washington from launching an invasion aimed at destroying the socialist revolution in Cuba. Cuban working people are both prepared and determined to defend their revolution, and the U.S. rulers fear the destabilizing political ramifications at home of the enormous casualties they know U.S. invading troops would rapidly and inevitably sustain.

All of us, both in the United Kingdom and the United States, also have a much better idea after the Gulf War of what "friendly fire" really means, even if we were acquainted with the term before.⁷ There was an important moment during the Vietnam War when a young U.S. soldier from a farm family in Iowa was killed and his family simply tried to get his body back and find out how he died. After months of fighting their way through deliberately evasive and misleading information from the Pentagon, they were told their son had been killed by "friendly fire." It was the strangest term his family, and millions of others in the United States, had ever heard — how could the GI have died by friendly fire? This incident was a turning point, one that brought new forces, wider layers of the people in the United States, into the fight against the U.S. war in Vietnam.

There will be many more families of workers and farmers in uniform in the United States who will learn what the imperialists mean by "friendly fire." They will also learn about the class character of the officer corps and why the communist movement says that working people are used as "cannon fodder" by the imperialists in their wars.

Asia, Hong Kong, and China

The consequences of slowing capital accumulation and sharpening interimperialist conflict are also at work throughout Asia and the Pacific — from Japan, to Australia and New Zealand, to Korea, Southeast Asia, and the

⁷ Of the 24 British soldiers killed in combat, 9 — more than one-third — died as a result of "friendly fire" from U.S. aircraft. Washington rejected requests by the families of these soldiers that the U.S. pilots involved in this incident testify at a May 1992 inquest into the deaths in Oxford in the United Kingdom. According to Pentagon figures, 35 of the 146 U.S. soldiers killed in action during the Gulf War — nearly one-quarter — were victims of "friendly fire."

Indian subcontinent. And there, too, capitalism is expanding the size of the working class, whose prospects are ever more tightly linked to those of workers around the world.

We should never underestimate how attractive the Chinese revolution remains to hundreds of millions of toilers, especially to peoples of color long oppressed and exploited by imperialism. Despite the crimes of its Stalinist misleadership, China stands as an example of a people — more than a billion strong, abused by both European and Asian imperialist powers for more than a century — who carried out a powerful revolution, swept aside the landlord and capitalist exploiters, and restored their national sovereignty and dignity.

Today, more and more toilers in China are being drawn out of the countryside and into factories, mines, and mills owned by the state and increasingly also by foreign and domestic capital. As this process unfolds, the breakdown of Stalinist apparatuses that we have seen in Europe and



Working people and youth in Hong Kong celebrate end of British colonial rule and return of island to Chinese sovereignty, July 1, 1997. Right, popular outpouring in Canton greets victorious Red Army, 1949. "Never underestimate how attractive the Chinese revolution remains to hundreds of millions of toilers, especially to peoples of color long oppressed and exploited by imperialism. Despite the crimes of its Stalinist misleadership, China stands as an example of a people who carried out a powerful revolution, swept aside the landlord and capitalist exploiters, and restored their national sovereignty and dignity."

(Wall Street is happy to get a little more elbow room vis-à-vis its British rivals in Hong Kong, too. After all, the Yankees figure, for the past nine years the Hong Kong dollar has been pegged to Uncle Sam's currency, not sterling, so why not grab all they can?)

What is really going on is not simply that the People's Republic of China is about to gobble up Hong Kong. What is happening instead is the "Hong Kong-ization" of southern China. What is developing in China today is an accelerated expansion of capitalist methods and penetration by international finance capital — the growing sway of the law of value in southern China especially, as well as Shanghai and other coastal areas.

Many of you have probably read newspaper reports about the so-called Special Economic Zones in southern China, where much of the imperialist investment is concentrated. These zones are located in huge, and growing, population centers. The Shenzhen and other Special Economic Zones in Guangdong [Canton] Province and the Pearl River Delta, around Hong Kong, are in an area with about 80 million people. Companies based in Hong Kong are estimated already to employ as many as 3 million factory workers in this region.

Among Deng Xiaoping's pithy sayings of late was one this past January, during a visit to Guangdong. In another twenty years, Deng said, the province would become the "Fifth Small Dragon" of Asia, joining Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea, and Hong Kong itself. Think of the depth of the political bankruptcy! The main spokesperson of a supposedly socialist country says the goal they are pursuing — and are well along the road to achieving — is to become more like Singapore, Taiwan, South Korea, and Hong Kong.

But that is the goal of the dominant wing of the bourgeois-minded bureaucratic caste in China. Desperately poor peasants are being drawn from the countryside and into the cities, where to survive they are forced to work long hours, under extreme speedup, for minimal wages in both state- and capitalist-owned factories. In the medium term, these conditions will permit a relatively rapid economic expansion.

The Tories did not send Chris Patten, the former party chairman, to be the new governor of Hong Kong as a throwaway. The imperialists are already fighting over which of them will get the biggest shares of investment in China — and British capital is already losing out to its rivals in Tokyo and on Wall Street, and even to capitalists in Taiwan and Singapore. Hong Kong capital itself accounts for well over half of all foreign investment in



China.⁹ The southern and central coastal areas of China are further advanced in the introduction of capitalist methods and foreign capital than some Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe or the Soviet Union were by the end of the 1980s.

⁸ At midnight, July 1, 1997, Hong Kong returned to Chinese sovereignty, under terms of a 1984 agreement between the governments of China and the United Kingdom. Hundreds of thousands in Hong Kong, the Chinese mainland, and immigrant Chinese communities in New York City and elsewhere took to the streets that week to celebrate the end of more than 150 years of British colonial rule. The representatives of the British and U.S. governments to the July 1 turnover ceremonies boycotted the installation of Hong Kong's new Provisional Legislature, claiming they could not in good conscience seem to approve a body appointed by the Chinese government. London ruled Hong Kong with no elected legislature of any kind until 1985. The first full direct elections to the Crown-imposed Legislative Council were held in 1995.

⁹ In 1996 Hong Kong still accounted for nearly 40 percent of all foreign capital investment in China. The next largest amounts of capital came from the United States and Singapore (around 9 percent each); Taiwan and Japan (around 7 percent each); and south Korea (nearly 6 percent).

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the former USSR will inevitably shake the deformed Chinese workers state as well. It will take time, but class tensions and conflicts are already growing in China's cities and workplaces, as well as in the countryside. And when the day comes that a young and rapidly growing working class enters into combat in larger battalions, the Stalinists will find that their bloody suppression of the Tiananmen Square youth rebellion in 1989 cannot be endlessly repeated. The struggles that are coming, whatever their tempo and exact forms, will be larger and more explosive than anything in China since the revolution itself.

Hong Kong should be of special interest to us, as we meet here in the home base of the declining British Empire. With London's impending return of that territory to China in 1997, the Tories are coming under hypocritical criticism from other imperialist powers for denying the people of Hong Kong the opportunity for "democracy."⁸ But democracy had nothing to do with the scramble by European, U.S., and Japanese capitalists for more than a century to establish their domination over the enormous Chinese market and source of cheap labor and raw materials. The Crown simply held on a little longer than its rivals to the little hunk of sovereign Chinese territory it stole more than 150 years ago.

In 1991 there was nearly \$5 billion of new foreign investment in China, for example. This year, at the rate of the first three months, it will be in the range of \$10 billion. China is becoming a much bigger market for foreign capitalist investment than the Soviet Union and all of Eastern Europe combined.¹⁰ Just last month Beijing announced that still another Special Economic Zone, the sixth, will be opened. This one will not be in southern China, but in the north in Manchuria, the border region between Russia and North Korea, widening the area opened to imperialism.

The Japanese, U.S., and other capitalists investing in China think they have died and gone to heaven. They have most of the rights of capitalists, but the state "handles" the workers for them. The state, including the Communist Party and its functionaries, makes sure the workers do not get out of line on the job, do not strike — do not do much except work very hard, for very long hours, for very little pay. It seems like a dream!

Of course, the dream will not last. As capitalist exploitation increases throughout China, so do strikes, peasant protests, and attacks on bosses.

A few weeks ago, for example, the *New York Times* ran an article headlined, "Capitalist-Style Layoffs Ignite Sabotage and Strikes in China." The home of a Chinese bank director, a "reformer," had been firebombed after he had fired numerous workers. In another case, a factory boss known for "Western-style management" had been run over by a truck, and workers at the plant rejected the government's proposal to honor him as a "martyr" for reform. The article cited spreading wildcat strikes, sabotage, and smashing of machinery across China. The *Times* reporter noted that these "incidents suggest that opposition to fundamental changes is increasingly coming not only from octogenarian Communist hard-liners but also from many ordinary blue-collar workers."¹¹

Ignore the correspondent's imaginary bloc between angry workers and senile Stalinists. The resistance reported in the article is real, however. Workers in China will conduct more fights like these, and they will eventually not only link up with dissatisfied peasants but also win support from young people attracted to the working class as the force that can revitalize society. That will be the real bloc. It will be forged through enormous class battles, and as that happens growing numbers of fighters will be open to the ideas of the communist movement.

In preparing for what is coming in Asia, we should remember that there is a big difference between the position

¹⁰ In 1996 China was the recipient of \$45.3 billion of foreign direct investment. That accounted for some 40 percent of all investment in plant and equipment that year in the Third World combined, and was a billion dollars more than the total foreign direct investment in Eastern Europe and the former USSR as a whole for 1990-96. In face of the currency crisis that swept across Asia beginning in 1997, the propertied classes slowed their export of capital to China, which had rapidly accelerated up to that point in the 1990s. In both 1997 and 1998 the inflow of foreign direct investment into China stagnated at roughly \$45 billion each year.

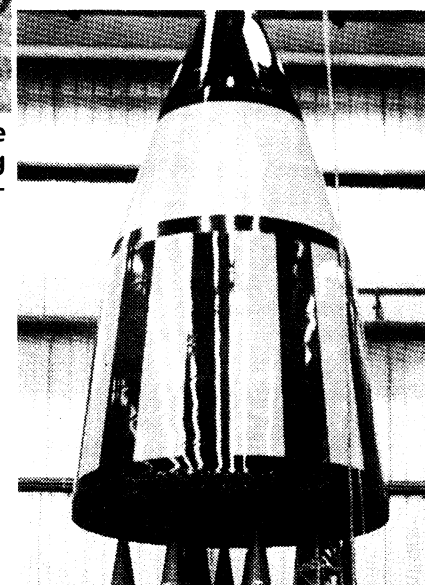
¹¹ In July 1997 the *China Market Economic News*, a Chinese government publication, reported that labor disputes were up 59 percent in the first half of 1997 compared to the same period in 1996, continuing an upward trend. "Our nation is now in a period of numerous labor disputes and they are ever more complicated and varied, with new situations emerging in an endless stream," the newspaper said.



"There will be both shifting alliances with Washington and growing conflicts with it, as the U.S. rulers tenaciously hold on to their military foothold in Europe as part of maintaining their dominance in the world imperialist system." Above, U.S. soldiers in Yugoslavia, January 1996, part of NATO occupation force. Right, a Pentagon nuclear MX missile warhead.

hat to nuclear cutbacks, announcing plans to remove tactical nuclear warheads from aboard ships and aircraft — tactical weapons that British armed forces never had a realistic way of using. At the same time, however, London is expanding undersea nuclear weapons by installing more accurate, multiwarhead Trident II missiles on British submarines. Paris, for its part, is building five new submarines, armed with new multiwarhead missiles that will double the size of its nuclear force.

What Bush is really pushing Yeltsin to concede, in exchange for promised economic aid, is Moscow's agreement to set aside the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty, allowing Washington the option to deploy a ground-based antiballistic missile system. The U.S. rulers intend to place themselves in a



of United States imperialism in that part of the world and its position in Europe. In the wake of the U.S. victory in World War II, U.S. imperialism engineered the NATO alliance as the codification of its permanent European presence. Ever since the war, Washington has been the dominant "European" power. As inter-imperialist conflict and class struggles intensify across capitalist Europe, as well as in Central and Eastern Europe, those battles take place with the reality of the U.S.-dominated NATO existing cheek and jowl with the European Community and various military alliances among the European ruling classes themselves. According to the interests of each national ruling class, there will be both shifting alliances with Washington and growing conflicts with it, as the U.S. rulers tenaciously hold on to their military foothold in Europe as part of maintaining their dominance in the world imperialist system.

In Asia, on the other hand, Washington still has to bring its power to bear under conditions more comparable to the 1920s and 1930s. U.S. forces intervene militarily in the region, of course, and some 100,000 U.S. troops are stationed in Japan, Korea, and aboard warships afloat in the Pacific. But U.S. imperialism is not integrated as the dominant force in any Asian military alliance with other powers. That makes U.S. armed intervention in Asia less "legitimate" and thus more explosive, and the reactions to such aggression across the region will be explosive as well.¹²

The United States ruling class is armed to the teeth and will not back off being the world's top cop — with the world's mightiest conventional and strategic nuclear arsenal in its holster. Washington is and will remain both an Atlantic and a Pacific power, and it will react to defend U.S. capitalist interests wherever, and by whomever, those interests are endangered. But it will pay the consequences.

Myth of nuclear disarmament

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

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

Here in the United Kingdom, and in France as well, the imperialist governments are strengthening their nuclear arsenals, for example. Prime Minister John Major tips his

¹² An article in the July 13, 1996, issue of the London financial weekly the *Economist* pointed out: "The Americans have said they will keep about 100,000 fighting men in the Asia-Pacific area, the same number as they propose to keep in Europe. But the 100,000 in Asia are much less securely dug in than their comrades in Europe. For a start, the 20,000 American marines stationed on the Japanese island of Okinawa [are] not well loved by the locals these days. . . . The Americans have already given up their bases in Philippines. And after next year their warships will no longer find a welcome in Hong Kong. If and when Korea waves the boys good-bye, that promised 100,000-man presence in the Asian-Pacific region will look pretty hazy. The real American front line may one day be no farther west than Hawaii."

This scenario glosses over the Pentagon's determination to maintain a strong U.S. military presence in Asia, as well as that of some of Washington's more vulnerable allied capitalist regimes in the region. The *Economist*, however, does highlight some of Washington's strategic weaknesses in the Pacific, as seen from the vantage point of its junior European ally and rival, British imperialism.

stronger position against all those powers that are continuing to build up their nuclear arsenals, and against all those that will acquire them in the coming decades. That is what the talks with Yeltsin are all about, not the destruction of nuclear weapons on the road to a more peaceful world.¹³

There will be more armed conflict and spreading wars in coming years. More governments in every part of the world will get their hands not only on nuclear weapons but also on ballistic missile delivery systems. At the same time, however, the working class and other toilers who have to fight and die on behalf of the interests of the exploiters will be a powerful source of resistance to such wars and preparations for war. We will have the opportunity to take power out of the hands of the capitalist rulers who are responsible for war, and for the nuclear threat that continues to hang over humanity.

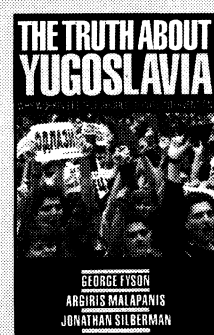
During the war drive and bloody onslaught against Iraq, communist workers learned in practice how we can fight to defend space in the working class and labor movement to campaign against imperialism and war. We did so even during the stage when the capitalist rulers are always most successful in mounting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

¹³ In January 1999 the Clinton administration announced plans to spend nearly \$7 billion over six years to build a long-range antiballistic missile (ABM) system, similar to the "Star Wars" program pressed by the Reagan White House in the 1980s. Implementation of Clinton's plan would mark a substantial escalation of strategic weaponry, placing Washington in a position to launch a nuclear first strike for the first time since the development by the Soviet Union of a hydrogen bomb and intercontinental missiles. Constructing the planned U.S. antiballistic missile system would abrogate the 1972 ABM agreement signed by Washington and Moscow, under which both governments are currently bound not to develop such a system.

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

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

The Truth about Yugoslavia



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"There is a mass psychology most of us have not seen in our political lifetimes — a widespread belief among layers of people that what is needed is a charismatic individual in high office who has the will to impose change, whatever it may be." Bonapartist figures like Ross Perot, above right, grease skids for incipient fascist forces such as those appealed to by Patrick Buchanan, center. Perot and Buchanan are pictured here waging "America First" campaign against North American Free Trade Agreement in 1993.

Bonapartism and the working class

The United States today is gripped by what bourgeois commentators consider a most peculiar phenomenon. Newspaper columnists, TV talk-show pundits, and academic "experts" talk about it more and more these days. They do not know what words to use to describe it — "a peculiar unease," "a mini-panic." Why, they ask, is unrest and insecurity mounting unevenly but seeming inexorably among so many millions of people?

But there is no mystery. For some fifteen years even before U.S. capitalism entered its current depression conditions, the experience of a growing majority of working people, and increasingly of worse-off middle-class layers as well, has been that economic and social conditions keep getting worse and worse. The conviction is deepening among millions that no one knows where it is all heading. Under these circumstances, small but significant sections of the population do feel panic. Many of them for the first time start looking for radical answers to the problems they face, problems they are convinced the two big-business parties have neither the will nor the capacity to resolve.

The most perceptive comment on the Perot candidacy in the major U.S. press was in the *Wall Street Journal* about ten days ago. You did not even need to read the article; the headline said it all. "Ross's Army: Meet Perot's Fans: They Crave Change, Not Specific Proposals." That was the main headline. The subhead continued: "They Span Political Spectrum, Shrug Off His Positions." That is, before Perot's backers began supporting him, they may have called themselves either a Democrat or a Republican,

"Increasing space to practice politics in the working class and labor movement is the most important single political fact for the communist movement today."

a liberal or a conservative or a moderate. But now they simply crave change, and they glory in his lack of specific proposals.

This is a mass psychology most of us have not seen in our political lifetimes — a widespread belief among layers of people that what is needed is not this or that particular solution, but a charismatic individual in high office who also has the will to impose change, whatever it may be. The conflicting class interests that underlie the rising social crisis get covered up in capitalist society; the fact that the mounting economic and social problems faced by millions are class questions is kept hidden. Nothing that happens in U.S. politics today openly takes the form of class politics.

Politically, fighting workers are the last remaining liberals in the United States today. As the bipartisan axis of social policy has kept shifting to the right over the past twenty years, most self-proclaimed liberals have become less and less liberals of the New Deal/Fair Deal variety. But fighting workers still talk like liberals, because it is the only politics they know. There is no politics except bourgeois politics in the United States on any mass level, and there has not been for decades.

We should never be fooled by this political reality into concluding that workers in the United States are somehow committed to bourgeois liberalism, however; they are not. Any more than we should be fooled into thinking that the working class here in Britain has moved to the right because many workers vote Conservative when the Tories promise lower taxes. No, it is just that as the Labour Party acts more and more openly as a bourgeois party, workers — if they go to the polls at all — vote under normal conditions for what they hope may at least improve their immediate situation. Both examples underline the absence of any genuinely independent political voice of

the working class, either in the United States or the United Kingdom.

Nowhere in the world today, in fact, does the working class have a political voice powerful enough to be heard on any mass scale (with the exception of revolutionary Cuba, that is). Many organizations speak in the name of the working class — social democratic and Stalinist parties, centrist formations, union officialdoms. But none of them speaks for the interests of the working class. These voices pretending to speak for labor, pretending to speak for the traditions of socialism, actually speak as lieutenants of the capitalist rulers in decline, who are squeezing the working class.

This political misleadership, this lack of any clear working-class political alternative or program, tosses layers of workers into the same pot with hundreds of thousands, and eventually millions, from the middle classes who find the radical solutions they are looking for among dema-



Militant/Argiris Malapanis
March in Korean community in Los Angeles in May 1992 demanding cops who beat Rodney King, a Black worker, be brought to justice. After acquittal of the cops "the rulers were not able to whip up divisions on the job. In workplace after workplace, working people talked about these events, argued about them, and sometimes had heated disagreements. But workers with different viewpoints could say what they thought. This is the last thing anyone could have learned about from reading the race-baiting big-business press, however."

gogic voices on the far right of bourgeois politics.

Space for politics in working class

Although workers place no independent class stamp on the initial manifestations of this radicalization, opportunities do start growing under these conditions for the working class to begin to act in its own interests. These changes are virtually invisible to those outside the working class, however. Only from within the factories and the

unions are these changing opportunities evident. But this increasing space to practice politics in the working class and labor movement is the most important single political

fact for the communist movement today.

In the United States, this lesson was driven home to us once again recently by the explosion in the streets of Los Angeles after the acquittal of the cops who beat Rodney King. What was most striking, especially in the Los Angeles area itself, was that among workers on the job, there were no physical confrontations. The rulers were not able to whip up those kinds of divisions. Instead, in workplace after workplace, working people talked about these events, argued about them, and sometimes had heated disagreements. But workers with different viewpoints could say what they thought. This is the last thing anyone could have learned about from reading the race-baiting big-business press, however.

Communist workers had similar experiences during the Gulf War, as I mentioned earlier. But it is not just under these kinds of pressure-cooker conditions that we find space for politics in the working class. That is simply one of the payoffs for the work we do, day in and day out, talking socialism on the job with fellow workers and seeking to draw them into political discussions and activity.

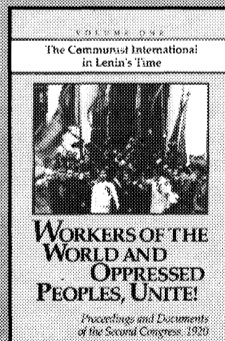
This space to do politics in the working class explains why no previous presidential campaign of the Socialist Workers Party has had the kinds of opportunities open to the ticket of James Warren and Estelle DeBates this year to bring the socialist alternative — to bring real class politics — to workers in factories and at plant gates across the country. We did not even have such opportunities in 1948 when Farrell Dobbs, the SWP presidential candidate that year, was still known by fighting workers for the role he played in leading the CIO industrial union

movement in the Midwest.

The communist workers movement today has only one way to test whether our assessment of the political situation and what we are doing is right or wrong. It is not by polls or election results. The test for us is whether or not the space on the job and in the unions to discuss politics, to take initiatives, and to gain a hearing for the communist point of view stays open or begins to narrow in face of today's rising class tensions and polarization. If we are right, then that space will not close down, but will instead open up, with whatever ebbs and flows.

As workers begin finding ways to fight back against the capitalist offensive, as waves of strikes and other struggles begin to accelerate, this political space will expand. The bourgeoisie cannot simply take back this space, nor can the liberals, the Stalinists, the social democrats, or the union officialdom. This space within the working class and unions can only be taken back by the bosses and their labor lieutenants through class battles in which big defeats are inflicted on the working class. Each advance

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The Communist International in Lenin's Time

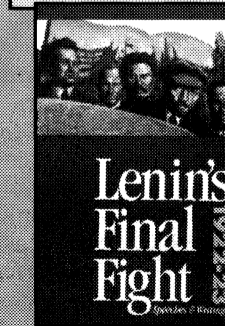
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V.I. LENIN

In the early 1920s Lenin waged a political battle in the leadership of the Communist Party of the USSR to maintain the course that had enabled the workers and peasants to overthrow the tsarist empire, carry out the first successful socialist revolution, and begin building a world communist movement. The issues posed in his political fight remain at the heart of world politics today. Also available in Spanish. \$19.95

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and victory by workers in these battles, on the other hand, will expand that space and strengthen the prospects for independent working-class political action and organization.

Cop brutality, racist assaults, frame-ups, attacks on workers' social wage and conditions on and off the job — these attacks go on here in the United Kingdom, in the United States, and across the capitalist world. But the resistance against these attacks and the politicization of working people through our collective efforts to push them back — this too grows. But anybody trying to follow politics just by reading the bourgeois press, or to engage in politics outside the branch and union fraction structures of a proletarian party, will never know what is happening in the working class.

Reaction cannot succeed without a fight

Given the shape world capitalism is in, the ruling propertied families no longer have the option of postponing the deepening conflicts engendered by their system with social policies and concessions to broad layers of the working class. They cannot adopt new legislation that significantly expands the social wage and buffers class tensions for an extended period of time. Their declining profit rates and intensifying competition drive them in exactly the opposite direction. There is only one way the rulers can try to resolve the crisis of their social system — by taking on the working class and labor movement in battle and defeating us.

In periods of a great expansion of the world capitalist economy, such as the quarter century from the late 1940s through the early 1970s, the rulers promote a particular kind of social differentiation in the working class, economically and socially. On the basis of a real, even if modest, rise in the living standards of tens of millions of workers, the rulers maintain their domination short of a decisive fight. Wide disparities continue to exist in the working class, but the class-collaborationist labor officialdom is able to keep resistance in check by appealing to a broad enough layer whose conditions are slowly improving. That alternative is not open to the capitalists today, however, so the labor officialdom is less able than at any time in several decades to beg crumbs from the bosses' table.

Last week, I had the opportunity to be an invited guest at a joint leadership meeting in London of the Central Committee of the Communist League and the three young socialist groups that discussed and adopted the proposals before this congress. One of the young socialists at that leadership meeting asked the question: Can fascism conquer rapidly in the deformed workers states where Stalinist apparatuses have crumbled? Is that possible in Yugoslavia, for example? Is it possible in Russia or Ukraine? It was a useful question.

The answer, I believe, is no. Fascism cannot conquer there, any more than it can conquer here in the United Kingdom or any other imperialist country, until massive class battles have been fought, in the course of which the working class will have the chance to put its stamp on the outcome. Fascist reaction has never conquered on the basis of its own strength — not once in history. In every case where fascism has conquered, it has only done so following a betrayal of ascending workers struggles and mass working-class movements that were capable, with revolutionary leadership, of resolving the capitalist crisis in the interests of the toiling majority. Fascism has only triumphed in the wake of demoralization from such betrayals, which have driven the hard-pressed middle layers in society against the working class and into the arms of



Militant/Celia Pugh

Protests against racist attack on immigrants at Tower Hamlets in East London, October 1993. "Cop brutality, racist assaults, frame-ups, attacks on workers' social wage and conditions on and off the job — these attacks go on here in the United Kingdom, in the United States, and across the capitalist world. But the resistance against these attacks and the politicization of working people through our collective efforts to push them back — this too grows."

reaction. Such betrayals always deepen divisions within the working class and labor movement, as well.

Under those conditions, following class battles in which the workers are misled into defeats, the fascists then conquer with little effort. That is what happened in Italy at the opening of the 1920s, following the social democrats' betrayal of a wave of strikes and factory occupations. That is what happened in Germany in the early 1930s, as the Stalinists' factionalism and ultraleftism combined with the social democrats' ongoing treachery to block a powerfully organized working class from mobilizing united resistance to the Nazis' rise to power. That is what happened in Spain in the latter 1930s, when the Stalinists murdered revolutionary-minded workers and poor farmers and — aided once again by social democrats and various centrist forces, including the anarchists — destroyed any prospects for a victorious proletarian revolution. Fascism conquered in Europe on the corpses of these defeated revolutions.

Whether fascism will once again conquer in the future depends on one thing and one thing alone: whether a proletarian combat party — with a leadership that is genuinely revolutionary, genuinely communist, and genuinely working-class — can be built in time.

Better prospects for communism today

When I brought greetings from the Socialist Workers Party to the fusion congress in Canada last month, I made a remark that, to my surprise, has sparked some controversy since it was reported in the *Militant* newspaper. The article, I thought, paraphrased what I recall saying quite accurately. "Barnes stressed the fact that individuals in all parts of the world," the article reported, "are more open to being reached by the ideas of communist politics now than at any time since the opening years of the Russian revolution" — and, I would add, the first five years of the Communist International, up to sometime in the mid-1920s.

There is a sense in which this assessment has to be true if other things we are saying are true — and if there is a realistic possibility of successfully advancing along the course we are discussing here. Perhaps a good rewrite person on the city desk could have made the sentence less open to misunderstanding by phrasing it, "Barnes stressed that individuals in all parts of the world face fewer obstacles within the working-class movement to being reached by the ideas of communist politics" and so on. But this assessment is true, in my opinion. It's true even if the Marxist movement in the late twenties, in the mid- and late thirties, and in the forties just after World War II was capable for brief periods of mobilizing larger forces than we are currently capable of doing. The difference between those periods and today are marginal historically, since in each of the earlier cases the overwhelming majority of revolutionary-minded workers and youth who reached out for communist ideas actually ended up grasping a counterfeit that politically destroyed them as fighters and revolutionists.

Since the latter half of the 1920s, Stalinism has been the biggest obstacle to building a communist movement in the course of large class battles. Once the privileged bureaucratic caste was con-

solidated — once the Stalinists laid claim to the mantle of the Russian revolution on the basis of holding state power in the Soviet Union and dominating the Communist International — there was no way to build a mass revolutionary vanguard that could lead the working class to challenge for power until that obstacle began to be broken up.

Ever since then, the biggest problem confronting revolutionists within the working-class movement has not been that weak people, political cowards, or corrupt individuals have been attracted to Stalinist organizations. The problem has been that revolutionary-minded workers, peasants, and youth looking for communist answers — the best and most self-sacrificing representatives of their generations — ended up joining Stalinist organizations. They ended up internalizing ways of carrying out politics that are the counterrevolutionary opposite of communism. That was what happened to the overwhelming majority of such fighters; only small numbers somehow found their way to the communist movement.

But today that obstacle has crumbled. The Stalinists still exist and have political influence, of course. But they are no longer a force with state power in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, with the attendant massive resources. They find it more difficult to misrepresent themselves as the continuity of the Bolshevik-led Russian revolution and mislead fighters on the basis of that spurious political authority. As a result, the Stalinist lie that there is a way of building *national socialism* has also begun to crumble. The lie that socialism can be built by bureaucrats, social engineers, and a massive police apparatus has been weakened. And the lie of both the Stalinists and social democrats that socialism can be advanced in alliance with one or another wing of the bourgeoisie has been undermined.

As the apparatuses whose very existence depended on perpetuating such lies have begun to crack, the possibilities have opened up as never before in the past seven decades for workers and fighting youth to find their way to genuine communist ideas. That is the political conclusion our movement draws in preparing for the class battles that lie ahead for labor and our allies.

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Youth and the workers movement

Recoiling from this world we have been describing, growing numbers of young people have begun radicalizing to a degree we have not seen for some years. They cannot and will not simply accept the horrors capitalism is multiplying in its decline, and they are looking for answers. Our world movement is bending every fiber and nerve to respond and attract these young fighters toward the working class.

Experience teaches us that as youth begin to politicize, they do not begin by demanding a winning strategy, or a guarantee of victories. The politicization of youth begins with their unwillingness to accept what is presented to them as the way the world has to be. "That's just the way things are." Young people simply reject that answer so often heard at home, in school, and all around them in bourgeois society — and so often acquiesced in by elders who are just plumb tuckered out. Young rebels want to say no to injustice, to racism, to antiwoman bigotry, to immigrant scapegoating, to cops, to reaction in all its forms. They want to say no to all brutality and corruption, in the deepest sense of those words.

Growing numbers of young people sense the devastating social consequences of a protracted world depression. They sense that racism and chauvinism are somehow inseparably connected with the workings of the system itself. They awake to the reality that those with wealth and power cannot be counted on to stop short of resorting to fascist terror to suppress resistance to injustice. They feel the social forces dominating the existing order marching toward broader and more horrible wars.

Even if young fighters are not yet politically equipped to think it out to the end, they sense that there have been important changes in the Black population, in the immigrant population, and among women compared to what they have heard about and read about from the past. They sense that these oppressed layers and allies of the working class have greater social weight than the last time there was a broad social and political radicalization in the industrially advanced countries in which the weight of the working class was decisive — during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Young people identify with the struggles against racist discrimination, anti-immigrant chauvinism, and women's second-class status. They are attracted to political fights, whether in the countries where they live or elsewhere, and want to understand what these struggles are really about. They want to learn about and discuss the most basic ideas about how capitalist society operates — to discover the underlying social forces and most basic class dynamics.

From Pathfinder

Socialism on Trial

JAMES P. CANNON

The basic ideas of socialism, explained in testimony during the frame-up trial of 18 leaders of the Minneapolis Teamsters union and the Socialist Workers Party charged with sedition during World War II. \$15.95



The Communist Manifesto

KARL MARX,
FREDERICK ENGELS

"Now and then the workers are victorious, but only for a time," write Karl Marx and Frederick Engels in the communist movement's founding programmatic document. "The real fruit of their battles lies, not in the immediate result, but in the ever-expanding union of the workers. This union is helped

on by the improved means of communication that are created by modern industry and that places workers of different localities in contact with one another." Also in Spanish. \$3.95

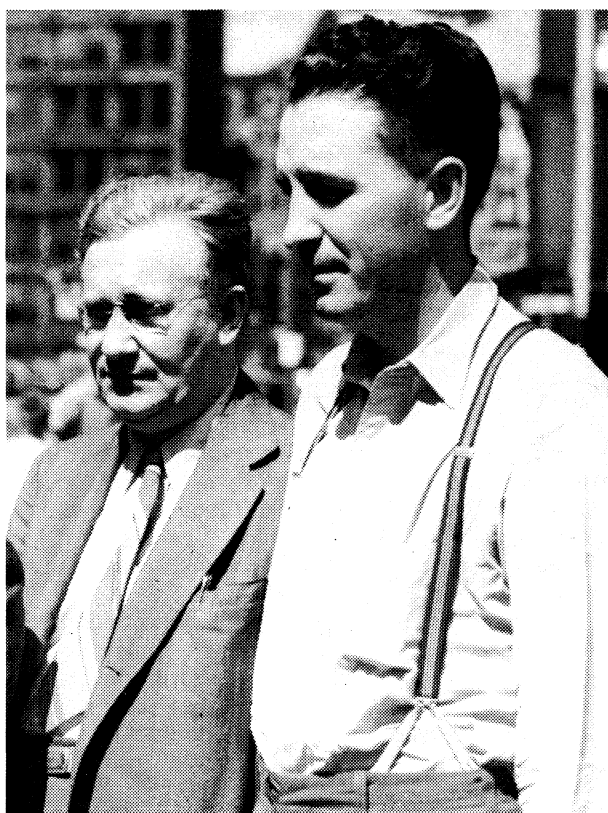
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German imperialism has been weakened by the attempt to absorb the workers state in the East. Workers in both eastern and western Germany are fighting unemployment and attempts to roll back social gains, linking up in struggle. Above, workers rally in 1993 with signs reading, "Work and bread" and "In every workplace, struggle."

Some of you have read the four-volume series by Farrell Dobbs on the fight to build the Teamsters union and a class-struggle leadership of the labor movement in the United States in the 1930s, as well as his two books on the forging of a communist movement in the United States, *Revolutionary Continuity*.¹⁴ If so, you will remember that at the opening of the first book in both series, Farrell describes his own political evolution as a young person. Only a year or so before Farrell was leading more workers in combat in a revolutionary manner than any other strike

¹⁴The four volumes in the Teamster series are *Teamster Rebellion*, *Teamster Power*, *Teamster Politics*, and *Teamster Bureaucracy*. The two volumes of *Revolutionary Continuity: Marxist Leadership in the United States* are subtitled, "The Early Years: 1848-1917" and "Birth of the Communist Movement, 1918-1922." All six books are published by Pathfinder.



Militant SWP leaders Farrell Dobbs (right) and James P. Cannon, late 1930s. Less than a year after joining the communist movement at the age of 27, Dobbs "was leading more workers in combat in a revolutionary manner than any other strike leader of the decade."

leader of the decade, he was a young worker who did not know whether to vote Democrat or Republican in the 1932 elections and ended up casting his ballot for Herbert Hoover. Just a year earlier, Farrell recounts, he had run across H.G. Wells's *History of the World* in the Omaha public library and read it line by line, hoping to find some ideas on what the world of the Great Depression was all about and where it had come from. Farrell says he read it twice before giving up on discovering anything in it that helped. If he had found the Communist Manifesto, not H.G. Wells, at the library instead, then he might have picked it up first and gotten some answers that began making sense.

We should not be surprised when young people and other fighters pick up the Communist Manifesto off a literature table, or select it from the shelf at a Pathfinder bookstore, or borrow it from a co-worker or a friend. We should not be surprised when prisoners or individuals fighting frame-up charges get interested in reading *Socialism on Trial* by James P. Cannon — part of the trial record of revolutionists framed up at the beginning of World War II for organizing working-class opposition to the coming slaughter — in order to get an initial understanding of what the entire capitalist system is all about.

Many young people dislike who they are becoming in this world. The entire system is set up to corrupt us, to make "I," "me," "mine" all we care about. I do not believe any young person becomes a revolutionist without part of the decision involving a rejection of this me-centered approach to life. Young people aspire to some higher values than cutthroat competition to "look out for number one." They cannot stand the person they are going to become if they do not do something different, if they do not change themselves as they work with others to change the world.

The revolutionary workers movement does not promise anything to young people except the chance to do just that. We make that one promise. We say we are convinced that the communist movement is the most effective way to organize together to fight to remake the world — by building a revolutionary working-class movement and, in the process, transforming ourselves and each other.

Ideas, a class, and a tradition

Young fighters are ultimately attracted to a class. Whether they know it or not initially, they are attracted to the social weight and potential strength of the working class, its struggles, and its organizations.

Youth must also be offered a tradition. Without a political tradition, there is no chance whatsoever of building a working-class movement. Moreover, young people have to find living carriers of that tradition, fighters whose experience draws from more than one generation of working-class struggle. Youth have to find others like themselves from previous generations whom they can join with in building a common movement.

Just being a radical, just being against the bourgeoisie, just negating bourgeois values is no more likely to lead somebody to communism than to fascism. We should think about the political implications of this fact. It is only finding the working-class movement, and finding the human beings who carry its tradition, that leads rebel youth in the direction of communism.

Communists sometimes underestimate, or even disparage, the importance of tradition. But we should never do so. Proletarian tradition is the opposite of maudlin sentimentality. We should never forget that revolutionists only have a tradition today because workers who came before us fought so hard, for so many decades to maintain it.

The Stalinists severed that tradition in the mass workers movement more than sixty years ago. The continuity of organized, liv-

ing forces whose traditions in the workers movement went back over interlinked generations to Marx and Engels and to the Bolsheviks and Communist International in Lenin's time — that revolutionary continuity was maintained only by a force that had marginal weight in the labor movement through most of those decades. Not long after World War II, that political continuity was completely severed in the Soviet Union, even on the level of tiny groups or individual cadres; nobody was left to carry on the fight, and no new generation of communists has yet come forward. Without such traditions, without a braiding of revolutionary generations, there is no communism and cannot be.

The largest and most established parties around the world that had historic links to the Soviet Union and called themselves communist ceased well over half a century ago to be communist in any way. Given this reality, the prospect over time that the Marxist tradition — and any living bearers of it — would also be obliterated was the greatest historic threat facing the working class.

This is why communists explain that if all the libraries in the world were suddenly to burn down tomorrow, the class rule of the bourgeoisie would not be shaken — it wouldn't even be felt, except for the loss of some technical and scientific manuals, perhaps. Social ideas are not a necessity for the bourgeoisie. The exploiting classes have no ideas, need no ideas, and use no ideas. Until they are overthrown, the law of value serves them and saves them. The rulers have state power, and they use it ruthlessly to maintain the capitalist property relations upon which their wealth and prerogatives depend. They have a monopoly over land and the means of production. What they call ideas are just the rationalizations of that monopoly against any challenges by thinking workers and youth — their class ideology. Without a single library, the capitalists would keep on exploiting workers and farmers, producing profits, using the armed power of the state against working people at home and abroad — and generating "ideas," and professors and writers and preachers to package those "ideas."

To the workers movement, on the other hand, the ideas of a living class tradition are a matter of life or death. They are the political generalizations of the efforts of the workers movement to learn from our experience in the battle to eliminate capitalism, so we can make fewer mistakes in the battles to come. It is to these ideas, to the working class, and to a living communist tradition carried by generations of fighters from that class that revolutionary youth can be and will be won. This is the only road along which science and the forces of production can be kept from becoming hellish forces of destruction.

Students, youth, and a turn party

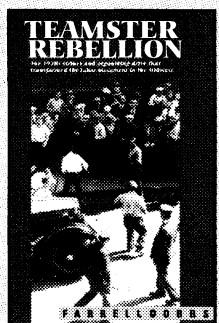
As we attract young forces to us, some will be students. Being a student is not an occupation; it is a temporary condition. Students are not a class. The length of time someone is a student is very brief.

In winning students to the communist movement, it is important for us to remember that when they end their formal studies, or whether they graduate from whatever school they are enrolled in, is their decision to make. One way or another, the decision to get a job will be upon them very quickly: the need for food, shelter, transportation —

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The author was the central organizer of these labor battles during the rise of the CIO, and subsequently national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party.

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that takes care of the whole thing. It's not a party decision; it's an individual decision, one which the party takes no position on. A party of industrial workers that openly says what kind of organization we are out to build will only gain by the recruitment of student youth.

Since the dissolution of the Young Socialist Alliance in the United States, several of the students who have joined the SWP said they had previously been uncomfortable in doing so, because they weren't sure what the party's attitude was toward recruiting students. Since they had picked up conflicting attitudes from different party members, these comrades just stayed in the YSA in sort of a holding pattern. So it's important to get this clarified. The SWP, of course, wants to recruit revolutionary-minded students. We want to recruit young people whose experience in our movement convinces both them and the party that they agree with our political goals. That's the way we will win them to the perspective of getting into an industrial union fraction once they — and they alone — decide to stop going to school. By explicit decision, this is the one exception the party makes to our norm that individuals being considered for membership by a branch agree to join the jobs committee and get into a union fraction. By confidently asking these former YSA members to join the party, and explaining why we thought they would strengthen a turn party, we were able to recruit them.

Today is not the first time the communist movement has addressed the question of winning students, and we have done so under widely varying conditions. It was Lenin who explained this the best, recognizing it also as a serious theoretical question of importance in building a communist movement. Lenin, moreover, was operating in a time and place in which virtually all university students, unlike today, were from families in the propertied or middle classes; only the tiniest handfuls were from working-class or modest peasant backgrounds. But Lenin was outraged by those in the Marxist movement in Russia who sought to rationalize abstention from political activity among students by portraying them as a homogenous social class with interests hostile to the toilers. Students are in a period of transition in their lives, he explained. They "are not cut off from the rest of society and therefore always and inevitably reflect the political groupings of society as a whole."¹⁵

Without the renewal and braiding together of generations, through which the tradition of the communist workers movement can be maintained and applied in living class politics, no proletarian party can survive. A shrinking organization, with an aging membership, might formally retain a communist program, but without the recruitment and political integration of youth its character as a disciplined workers party will wither away. A communist organization must have a spread of generations linked together as a living revolutionary movement.

"We need young forces," Lenin insistently wrote from exile to party leaders in Russia during the opening days of the 1905 revolution. "The youth — the students, and still more so the young workers — will decide the issue of the whole struggle. Get rid of all the old habits of immobility, of respect for rank, and so on. . . . Do not fear their lack of training, do not tremble at their inexperience and lack of development. . . . Either you create new, young, fresh, en-

¹⁵ "The Tasks of the Revolutionary Youth" in Lenin's *Collected Works*, vol. 7 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965), p. 49.

ergetic, battle organizations everywhere for revolutionary . . . work of all varieties among all strata, or you will go under wearing the halo of 'committee' bureaucrats."¹⁶
Coming out of the retreat in working-class political ac-



Militant/Floyd Fowler

Workers on strike at Continental General Tire in Charlotte, North Carolina, talk with Militant supporters at union hall, January 1999.

tivity of the 1950s, the Socialist Workers Party in the United States confronted the problem of a "missing generation." Relatively few students or young workers had been recruited since the late 1940s. The party remained proletarian in outlook, in our organizational norms and habits of political conduct, and in our social composition — the majority of party members in most branches were still industrial workers. But we had been forced to retreat from our structure of national union fractions.

By the early 1960s youth were beginning to be recruited to the newly formed Young Socialist Alliance, and — largely through the YSA — to the SWP as well. We won young fighters from civil rights struggles, then from activity in defense of the Cuban revolution, and then at an accelerating pace from the anti-Vietnam War movement and battles for Black rights, Chicano rights, and women's equality. As we did so, however, the SWP was initially not yet strong enough to rebuild itself as a party structured around industrial union fractions. That required some further changes in the objective situation, combined with step-by-step leadership preparations for the turn to industry beginning in the late 1960s. This is all described in some detail in *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*.

Today, the SWP and other organizations in our world movement are more fortunate in this regard. If we are right about the world we are discussing at this congress, then we will have a structure of both party branches and union fractions in place as opportunities increase to win students and young workers to the communist movement. As we act on the proposals before us here, and continue building parties along the lines presented in *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*, drawing young forces toward us, including students, will strengthen the proletarian character of our parties, the turn, and our industrial union fractions.

Auxiliary organizations

The maneuver our entire world movement is confronting is a necessary step along the road to relaunching communist youth organizations. This has been an important aspect of building the international Marxist movement throughout this century.

Youth organizations are among the political formations that Lenin referred to as "auxiliary organizations" of the communist party. I have always liked that term, because it is precise and political — and not sentimental. A communist workers party, once it reaches a certain size, begins to

¹⁶ "Letter to Bogdanov and Gusev," in *Collected Works*, vol. 8, p. 146.

build women's organizations, peasants' and rural toilers' associations, organizations of trade unionists, writers' groups, and youth organizations. Without these auxiliary organizations — that is what they were called by the Communist International in Lenin's day — a communist party would never be able to lead the workers and their oppressed and toiling allies to take power, hold it, and use it.

Auxiliary groups organize independently of the communist party, but they are programmatically subordinated to it. They take their political lead from the communist party. They are different in this way from various united front or other mass organizations that communists also participate in. Auxiliary organizations help the communist movement transform its institutions into stronger ones that reach more deeply into our class and its allies.

Within this broader context, Lenin called attention to the particular character and tasks of communist youth organizations. "Necessarily, the youth must come to socialism in a different way, by other paths, in other forms, under other circumstances than their fathers," Lenin wrote in 1916. "Incidentally, this is why we must be decidedly in favor of the organizational independence of the Youth League, not only because the opportunists fear this independence, but because of the very nature of the case; for unless they have complete independence the youth will be unable either to train good Socialists from their midst, or to prepare themselves to lead socialism forward."

"We stand for complete independence of the Youth Leagues, but also," Lenin added, "for complete freedom for comradely criticism of their errors. We must not flatter the youth."¹⁷

Communist youth organizations are historically the first auxiliary organization that a communist party becomes strong enough to help build and sustain politically. This does not happen along a straight line, however. Over the more than sixty-year history of the Socialist Workers Party, for example, there have been periods when we have had no youth organizations of any kind; periods when particular branches have launched youth committees; and periods when we have had national youth organizations such as the YSA. There is no smooth history. There are no



"We need young forces. The youth — the students, and still more so the young workers — will decide the issue of the whole struggle," Lenin wrote in 1905. Above, Executive Committee of the Communist Youth International, Berlin, 1920.

rules that can be applied by rote.

If building independent communist youth organizations is our goal, then why are we now proposing a fusion of the Communist League and socialist youth groups here in the United Kingdom? Why was the Young Socialist Alliance dissolved earlier this year in the United States, and the Young Socialists groups in Canada a few weeks ago? That is a question anyone with common sense would ask, and we have to be able to answer it.

The answer is that the combined forces of our parties and youth, considered as a common movement, are simply not strong enough today to organize as separate entities that can advance together in a sustainable way. We cannot do it because of the blows our class took in the

¹⁷ "The Youth International," in *Collected Works*, vol. 23, p. 164. This article, and others cited in this article, are also available in *Lenin on Youth* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1967). See also the "Theses on the Youth Movement," adopted by the Executive Committee of the Communist International in August 1920, printed in *Workers of the World and Oppressed Peoples Unite!* pp. 999-1001, part of Pathfinder's series *The Communist International in Lenin's Time*.

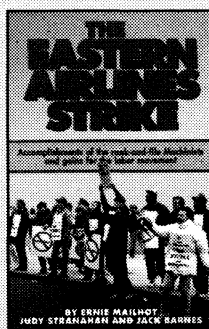
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1980s, and their registration in the declining size and rising average age of our parties. And if our parties are not strong enough to help sustain politically viable youth organizations right now, then for certain the youth groups themselves are not strong enough to do so. Instead, the road to putting both our parties and the youth into the best position to rebuild youth organizations is a fusion of our forces. That is the conclusion both party and youth leaderships have come to in North America this year, and I believe it is true here in the United Kingdom too. Anyway, that is the decision this congress has been called to discuss and vote on.

The question before us is not whether our parties and the youth groups, taken separately, can be reformed and strengthened. Is there something else we could do, some preferable alternative? Can our parties somehow, on our own steam, achieve the modest renewal and reinforcement that is the goal of this fusion? Can the youth organization? That is a political judgment of organizations — not a judgment of individual cadres. Our movement is made up of capable, intelligent, hard-working, and self-sacrificing revolutionaries. If that were not the case, then fusing our forces would not accomplish anything.

Our problem is not one of political capacity, understanding, or will. It is a matter of making an objective assessment of the strength of our organizations *today* — not a few years ago, and we hope not a few years from now. At present, however, we cannot do what our parties need without the fusion, nor can we help the young fighters in and around our movement take the next steps toward a viable communist youth organization.

First, we need to draw on our common forces, including our younger members, to give some new life to all the institutions of the communist

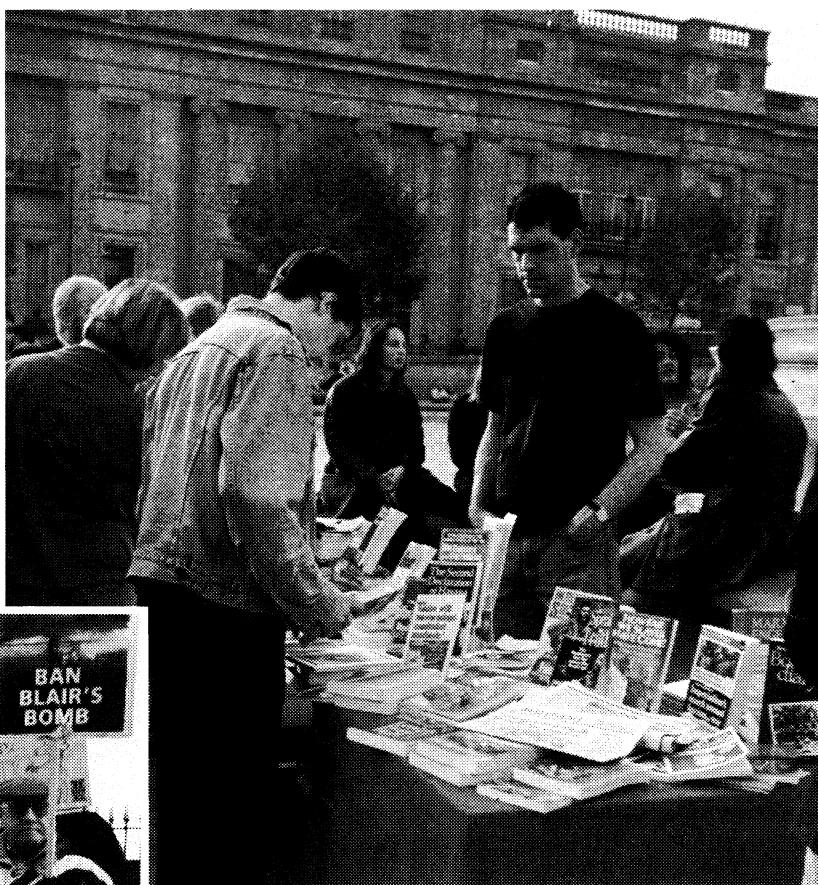
movement. These institutions are built by the party, not by a youth organization. But they are the political property of the movement as a whole to be used in winning fighters to communism, and they are open to other fighters who want to use them as well.

To the degree the fusion is a success, we will reinvigorate our weekly sales of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and *New International*, and of Pathfinder books and pamphlets through our bookstores, street tables, and sales on the job. More workers and youth will start coming to the weekly Militant Labor Forums and dropping by Pathfinder bookstores to browse, talk politics, and pick up another title or two. Our socialist election campaigns will become more timely and politically focused, and we will involve more young people in our weekly plant-gate sales teams. This is the road along which our combined forces can take the next steps in strengthening these proletarian institutions, enabling us more effectively to carry out revolutionary propaganda and educational work according to the rhythms of a turn party, and to recruit.

The fusion gives us the best chance to renew the party's character as a campaigning party. It puts us on a better footing to be more timely in our response to political developments, to take initiatives, to reach out to work with others around common goals, and to take our communist arsenal to fighters on the streets and picket lines who are looking for and need these political ideas. When young

With this common perspective, moreover, we will be able to collaborate more effectively as a common international movement. We will be stronger than simply the sum of our parts. We will be a bigger help politically to other revolutionaries around the world who want to work with us, discuss politics, and mount a better organized and more powerful challenge to imperialist oppression and capitalist exploitation in all its forms. So, the international stakes of the fusion are bigger than the fortunes of revolutionaries here in the United Kingdom or in other countries where our world movement currently has organizations. Other political forces, other young fighters have a direct stake in what we do as well.

If this course is the correct one, then in addition to attracting individual young



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Communist movement must "reinvigorate our weekly sales of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and *New International*, and of Pathfinder books and pamphlets through our bookstores, street tables, and sales on the job." Above, selling revolutionary literature at demonstration in London protesting embargo on Cuba, October 1995. Left, protest in London against December 1998 bombing of Iraq by U.S. and British warplanes.



people to the communist movement, our strengthened organizations should also be better able to converge politically with some "clumps" of young fighters. We should be able to fight alongside them, to share experiences and ideas with them. We are no longer blocked off from reaching many young fighters today by the sheer weight of some massive bureaucratic force, such as the Stalinists. Our capacity to attract even one or two small groups of young revolutionaries to the communist movement over the next year or so will enhance possibilities for further gains and broader convergence.

If we do not see all these dimensions of the fusion perspective, then the importance of the decision you are discussing here at this congress is diluted. Above all, we would miss how important *you* and *your deeds* are in making possible this next step forward.

The election of leadership

At the conclusion of this congress, delegates will elect a leadership. The formalities will be very important. The motion placed before you by the joint meeting of the Communist League and young socialists leaderships last weekend is that the congress elect a twelve-person Central Committee, five of whom must have been members of the young socialists organizations taking part in this fusion.

Electing a Central Committee is ordinarily quite a simple task. The criteria are straightforward. First, we consider

capacities in building *those three organizations*, so we could all reach this stage in strengthening the communist movement in Britain. That, and that alone, must be the criterion for choosing those five; otherwise this is not a fusion.

I repeat, a fusion is a very formal affair. We can allow ourselves to be informal about many things; we are small and know each other quite well. But in electing a leadership at this congress, too much informality would lead to damaging mistakes. In doing so, we do not have to exaggerate anything. We know that the three young socialist groups are small, and that many of their members are also members of the Communist League. But if the fusion is possible because of the strengths of the organizations coming into it, then we have to add the criterion of leadership in the young socialists to those we would ordinarily consider in electing a Central Committee.

Farrell Dobbs often said that if a communist organization gets down to just two generations in its cadre, it is within a couple years of extinction. If it spans three generations, it still has a chance. If it has four, then it can start cookin'.

The communist movement in the United Kingdom is lucky in this regard. In your active cadre you have individuals from the generation that became communists during World War II and the great labor upsurge that followed it, and also from the time of the Korean War a few years later, in the early 1950s. You have a few comrades of the generation that became communists and built our movement in the 1960s and early 1970s, the years of the Cuban revolution, the international movement against the war in Vietnam, and new struggles for equality by women and Blacks. You have a substantially larger number who came to our movement in the late 1970s and the 1980s, under the impact of the Nicaraguan and Grenadan revolutions, with the new impulse that gave to Cuba, and to the rising struggle in South Africa; those were also the years when we began the steady course of rebuilding our industrial union fractions and transforming the work of the party in that process. In a very real way, the Communist League was forged out of the political struggle to respond to those challenges as a proletarian internationalist party.

And now the communist movement in Britain has another generation, the one that has brought us to this special congress, these opportunities, and this set of decisions. It is the political generation that has built the young socialist groups. We are taking another step here in braiding the initial forces of this newest generation with the rest.

Two conflicting world views

There are only two conflicting views of the world today that are of basic interest or importance.

According to one view, there is no question that since the events of 1989–90, the "West" is well along the way to conquering the "East." Recognizing that there will inevitably be some difficulties, the proponents of this view believe that capitalism will triumph in all the workers states where the Stalinist regimes have crumbled; capital will pre-

"We need to get on a better footing to be more timely in response to political developments, to reach out to work with others around common goals, and to take our communist arsenal to fighters on the streets and picket lines."

workers watch us go into action, we want them to see others like themselves. They need to see a party in tune with what they are experiencing, feeling, and trying to figure out.

That is the kind of party that can recruit and can collaborate with and help build a communist youth organization when the time comes. This is the road both to stronger, more proletarian parties and to an international communist youth movement. And this road is open to us because of the strengths of each of the organizations represented here today — the Communist League and the three young socialist groups. It is open to us because the leaderships of these organizations have demonstrated the capacity to see this opportunity and act on it.

which comrades, as part of a disciplined cadre that functions collectively, have taken the lead most consistently since the last congress in advancing the work of the turn party in the United Kingdom. Second, we work to ensure that the leadership reflects the generations that make up the party in order to move forward together on the basis of a shared communist tradition. We take many other concrete factors into account, but all of them relate in one way or another to these two criteria. Here, too, *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* is our best guide.

If delegates adopt the proposals that are before this congress, however, you will have to weigh an additional factor. You will have to decide which five members of the young socialists demonstrated the greatest leadership

vail worldwide. American "restructuring" and "cost-cutting" will sweep the world. Some go as far as saying that this triumph of what they call "democratic capitalism," or "liberal democracy," represents "The End of History." Much will change in centuries to come, they say, and there may even still be wars, but humanity has at last settled on the global social system that will prevail through the ages.

To this communists counterpose our world view. What capitalism has in store is not a long wave of economic expansion and political democracy, but worldwide depression, deepening social crisis and the rise of Bonapartism, increasing interimperialist conflicts, and the march toward fascism and World War III. Moreover, what disintegrated in Central and Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union was not socialism; these Stalinist regimes were the transmission belts within the workers movement of capitalist values and pressures against the toilers in those horribly deformed workers states and worldwide. What the future holds is growing resistance by working people to the pressures and conflicts generated by capitalism. That struggle will bring the workers of the world together to fight for their interests, which are the interests of the great majority of humankind.

According to the first view, there is a new rise of nationalism worldwide that has begun to dominate politics and will continue to do so in the decades ahead. Ethnic and religious conflicts, including the specter of "Islamic fundamentalism" in the "East," will tear peoples apart and lead to new horrors around the globe.

To that communists counterpose our view: the soviet alternative, *soviet power* — such as the world witnessed during the opening years of the Russian revolution. The historic line of march of our class is to build a socialist world, in which people of all national origins, languages, and skin colors work together — as free men and women — in a world without borders, nationalities, or "ethnic" identities.

According to the first view, the working class is finished as a factor for revolutionary change in the world. Socialism is finished; communism is finished. The rulers do not even have to worry about them anymore, and the toiling majority should now place this chapter behind them.

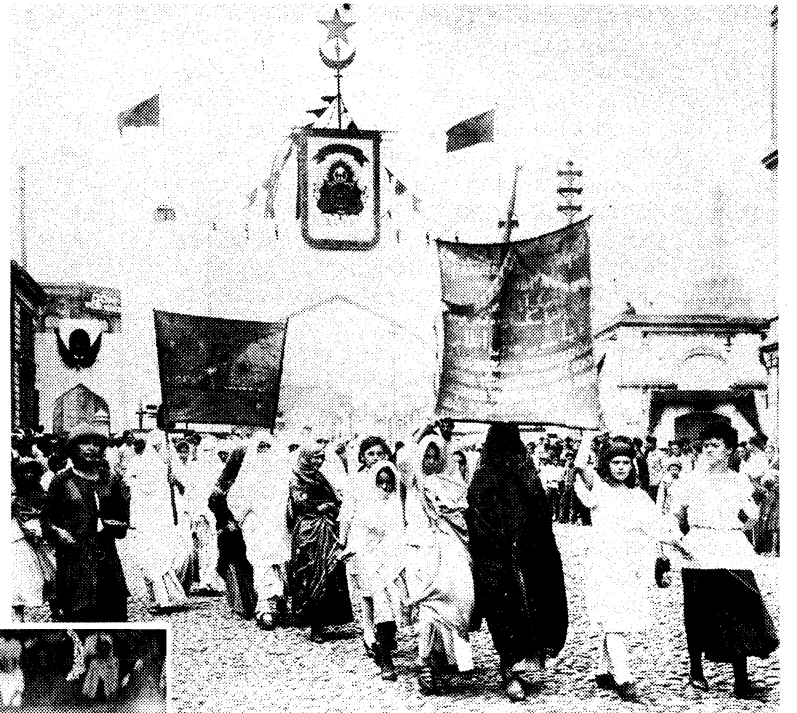
To that communists counterpose our conviction that the workers' fight for socialism is nowhere close to having been resolved. Although we are still in the very early stages, the working class is moving toward big class battles in the decades ahead, in the course of which workers will have the best chance in history to conquer power and establish workers and farmers governments. There is no guarantee that the working class will succeed in this round, but we will have our chance on a world scale to overturn capitalist social relations once and for all and open a socialist future.

Above all, the outcome will be shaped by what worker-bolsheviks do *today* to utilize the space that exists to carry out communist politics. That will determine whether we have the kind of disciplined workers parties, whose cadres have internalized the necessary proletarian norms and values, that can respond and grow rapidly in face of explosive political developments.

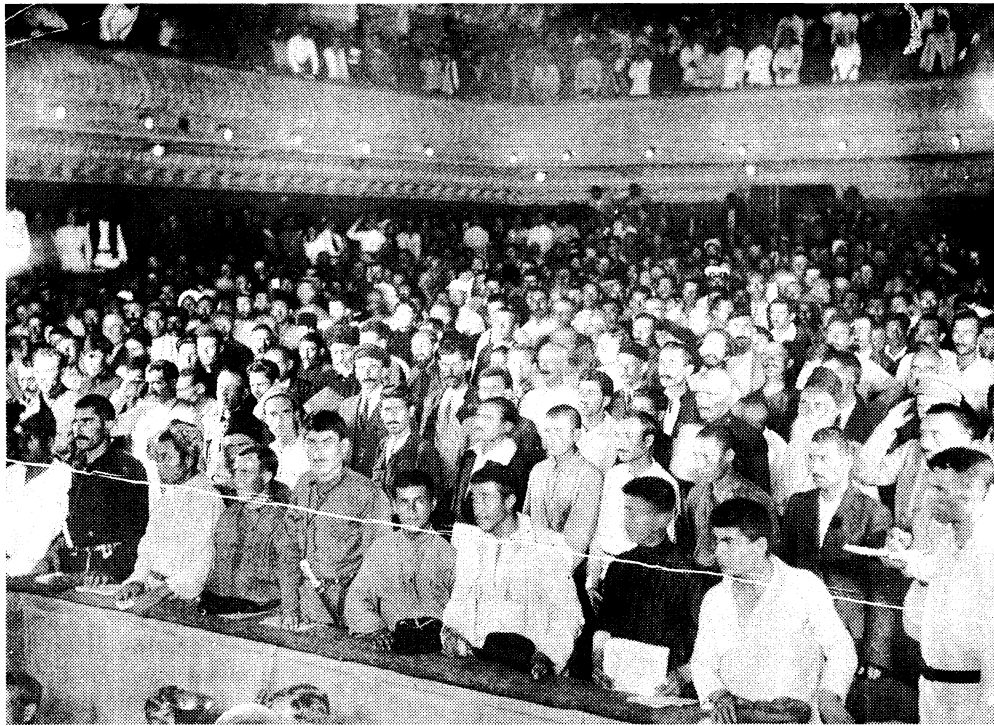
Surely, this was the glory of the Bolshevik Party under Lenin's leadership long before 1917. Almost no one in the international bourgeoisie, or in the increasingly bankrupt leadership of the world Socialist movement of that time, thought that this small political current in Russia would ever amount to anything. But it never occurred to the Bolsheviks that they were doing anything else but preparing

to lead the workers and peasants to storm heaven, as Marx said of the Paris Communards of 1871, and to emerge victorious. The Bolsheviks did not rely on any apparatus anywhere in the world for assistance; they based themselves on political and financial support from factory workers and other toilers in Russia.

After the October 1917 revolution, the Bolsheviks were looked at around the world as if they were men and women from nowhere. But the Bolsheviks themselves knew that this was far from the truth. Because they knew something that no one in the bourgeoisie in Russia or anywhere else knew or was interested in. The Bolsheviks knew what was happening in the working class in Russia. They knew that nothing had been settled — not by tsarist repression, not by the defeat of the 1905 revolution, not by the capitalist profits that were accompanying the industrial transformation of Russia. They were solidly based among worker-



Politicians and big-business press hypocritically point to ethnic and religious conflicts, as well as "Islamic fundamentalism," as biggest source of war danger today. "Communists counterpose our view: the soviet alternative, *soviet power* — such as the world witnessed during the opening years of the Russian revolution." Left, Congress of the Peoples of the East in Baku, Azerbaijan, in September 1920. Above, demonstration of Baku Women's Union, August 1920. On banner at right, Azerbaijani text reads: "Long live the world revolution"; Russian text links "liberation of women" with "liberation of the world's toilers."



bolsheviks in the factories — politically trained cadres who used the space they had in the working class. They knew

their class would have its chance.

So when the revolutionary crisis broke out in early 1917 under the devastating strains of the imperialist slaughter, the Bolsheviks were able within months to take the leadership of millions of workers and peasants in struggle and lead them to the conquest of power.

There was no guarantee for the Bolsheviks then, and there is none for us now. But it can be done. It was done in Russia, and the way the Bolsheviks did it is what we seek to emulate.

SUMMARY

The following is the summary presentation on the congress discussion of the world political report.

Greater openings for the communist movement

The issues before our world movement have been joined in the discussion at this congress on two levels: our political analysis, and the fusion maneuver itself and its political and organizational implications. I will try to respond on both levels, so the questions and decisions before the delegates are as clear as possible.

One comrade disagreed with the statement in the report, reaffirming what I said at the fusion convention in Canada last month, that "individuals in all parts of the world are more open to being reached by the ideas of communist politics now than at any time since the opening years of the Russian revolution." This question is important, because it has practical implications for the work of our movement. In particular, it has direct consequences for the amount of resources and leadership effort we put into the production of Pathfinder books and pamphlets and the other propaganda weapons our world movement produces — *New International*, the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*.

Using the leverage of Pathfinder books

In assessing what the Pathfinder arsenal helps open up for the communist movement worldwide, I find the mechanical concept of *leverage* to be a useful one. That is, when we apply our weight to that lever, it gives us the ability to exert greater force than our size and strength alone would allow. Through Pathfinder books and pamphlets and the *New International* magazine, we reach more fighters, young people, and workers around the world who can be attracted to Marxist ideas than communists have been able to do for many decades.

Properly understood, propaganda work is what the communist movement does, almost exclusively, at this stage in the class struggle. That is how we advance our goal of building combat parties that are proletarian in composition and in their organizational norms and structure. We distribute our books, pamphlets, magazines, and newspapers as widely as possible, and we try to attract fighters toward us through our bookstores, weekly forums, election campaigns, and other institutions. The protest actions we participate in together with others are propaganda too. That is all they can be at this stage in the class struggle. That is the character of the actions we helped build during the Gulf War. That is what we are doing when

we organize demonstrations against cop brutality, or in defense of abortion clinics, or to oppose U.S. policy toward Cuba, or even an action in solidarity with a strike in most cases.

Communist organizations do not yet have any social weight in the unions or mass movement anywhere in the world, and we have not had for decades. Opportunities for experience in class combat and mass working-class action are still very limited, not just for communists but for other fighters and revolutionists in most parts of the world. In years ahead, moreover, when worker-bolsheviks will be in the thick of leading millions in disciplined mass class combat, communist parties will continue campaigning and propagandizing, only on a much larger scale.

In the report, I said our ability to reach fighters with communist ideas was greater today than at any time "since the opening years of the Russian revolution," not "since 1917." The latter would not be correct, since there were great revolutionary openings for communists in countries around the world during the first decade following the revolution. But this was already beginning to change by the mid-1920s, and there was a qualitative shift by at least the end of 1928.

What happened during the subsequent sixty-four years is certainly no revelation to the communist movement. We know that history very well. After the first levies of revolutionists who came to our movement in 1928 and 1929 out of the Communist parties in the United States and other countries as they were becoming Stalinized, we never once broke off a significant current, even a small one, from the Stalinist movement.

Our movement can point with pride to many accomplishments over these years, including our leadership role in class combat in the Teamsters struggles of the mid- and late 1930s. Despite those achievements, however, for every fighter our movement won to the communist tradition, the Stalinists attracted a hundred, five hundred, a thousand to block that tradition and undermine it. They did so in the most damaging way — from inside the workers movement, using the power of the existing fact in Russia and its red glow to politically corrupt fighters. And all this was done in the name of communism.

Not only was a massive murder machine consolidated in the Soviet Union based on a broad, petty-bourgeois

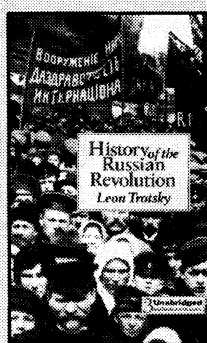
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social layer, but it also laid claim to the legacy of Marxism, its literature, history, and traditions. This Stalinist apparatus turned the overwhelming majority of potential communists in the working-class and national liberation movements into *pseudocommunists* who believed they *were* communists, and who believed one of their duties to be the physical marginalization, if not the murder, of apostate communists. Moscow and the leaderships subservient to it convinced fighters and revolutionists that their biggest enemy was the small minority who fought to continue a communist course. And the Stalinists organized their cadres to support — and participate in — the persecution and prosecution of communists and other revolutionists for decades.

During the discussion, a comrade described what it is like to have a Stalinist for a shop steward. While I am sure that is true, we should also keep it in perspective. In the old days, if a Stalinist shop steward saw a worker in an auto plant talking to one of us, that worker would be punished for stepping out of line. Something would happen the very next day, and that co-worker would not talk to us again. That was common; every communist who lived through that period had to confront it. The Stalinists — in the United States, in Britain, all over the world — broke up meetings, beat up workers selling communist literature, assaulted picket lines, and organized assassinations of revolutionists and other fighters.

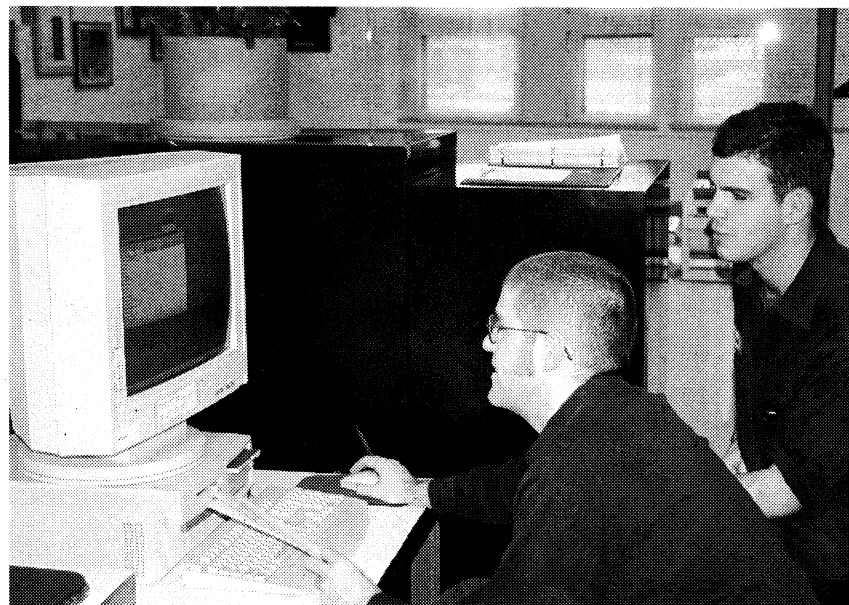
The strength of Stalinism gave social democracy a new lease on life as well. The Stalinists and social democrats always claim to hate each other. On one level, they do; they ultimately served different masters — the parasitic regime in Moscow, on the one hand, and the imperialist ruling classes, on the other. For a few years in the late 1920s and early 1930s the Stalinists called the social democrats “social fascists.” The social democrats decried “totalitarian communism.” Notwithstanding, the Stalinists and social democrats have come together many times in “popular fronts” to make sure the working class stays under the thumb of the capitalist state and does not threaten the international status quo. They compete for union posts, but are also quick to make common cause against the ranks whenever necessary. Together, Stalinism and social democracy reinforce the scope of class collaborationism in the labor movement and the officialdom’s charade as socialists.

Under these conditions, which dominated international working-class politics for the better part of a century, our movement was never able to win any substantial group of fighters away from Stalinism to communism. Whether they remained in those parties or simply dropped away from the workers movement over time, they were destroyed as principled working-class fighters and revolutionists. The impossibility of winning significant forces away from the Stalinist parties was not something our founding cadres had initially anticipated, and it was the biggest disappointment in the history of our movement. The Stalinist murder machine had hijacked the Soviet government and Communist Party, and Stalinism came to be seen as the ideology upholding the banner of communism. That was the great obstacle that communists faced. That is what it took us the longest to understand and come to grips with objectively after 1928–29.

It reminds me of what Malcolm X confronted after he broke with the Nation of Islam in early 1964, taking a small layer of his closest associates with him. What was Malcolm X’s biggest disappointment after that? It was discovering that he could not carve anything further out of the cadres of the Nation of Islam, even a month after he left it. As that became clear, he began looking in other directions.

The qualitative enormity of the Stalinist obstacle to the influence of the communist movement and our ideas is now behind us, however. *That is what has changed.* Yes, the Stalinists are still around in large numbers, and will continue to be. But shorn of any linkage to state power falsely endowed with historical authority, the material basis of Stalinist organizations, the trough from which they fed, has now substantially dried up. They have been irreversibly weakened. And this decline of Stalinism weakens social democracy and a number of ultraleft and centrist currents in the workers movement as well.

We are seeing a differentiation and transformation of various Stalinist formations. The Communist parties in France, Greece, and Portugal, for example, remain relatively traditional Stalinist parties, although with declining memberships and peripheries to varying degrees. Their leaders are still the same thugs they always were, but they



Militant photos by Megan Arney
 “Individuals in all parts of the world are more open to being reached by the ideas of communist politics now than at any time since the opening years of the Russian revolution.” That fact has practical implications for work of communist movement, including resources devoted to keeping in print Pathfinder books. Above, Young Socialists Paul Pederson, right, and Aaron Armstrong prepare digital files for new computer-to-plate equipment in Pathfinder’s printshop, which cuts labor time in producing books. Left, Janet Post in bindery finishes *Malcolm X on Afro-American History* to fill immediate orders.

cannot get away with nearly as much today because of the sharply changed relationship of class forces. Other Stalinist formations, like the majority of the former Communist Party in Italy, have become virtually indistinguishable from other class-collaborationist political forces.

You know about this differentiation firsthand, from the evolution of the much smaller Stalinist outfits here in Britain. There used to be a magazine called *Marxism Today*, whose editors a year or so ago decided to declare “Marxism Never!” and go out of business. It had already become little more than a pink-Thatcherite monthly, and last year the organization associated with it changed its name from the Communist Party of Great Britain to the Democratic Left. Then you have the Stalinists here who continue to put out the *Morning Star* newspaper and whose hopes were dashed by the failure of the abortive coup in Moscow last August. These currents may be at loggerheads with each other, but both become more indistinguishable from other centrist forces that practice class collaborationism here in the United Kingdom.

In the United States, the Communist Party USA remains the same slavish Stalinist, class-collaborationist organization it has been since the late 1920s. At the end of last year, shaken by the collapse of the Stalinist apparatus in the Soviet Union, it underwent a split. A current including such prominent CPUSA figures as Kendra Alexander, Herbert Aptheker, Charlene Mitchell, and Angela Davis is now outside the party, and has recently announced the formation of a “network” called the Committees of Correspondence. Yes, a “network,” not even a party-in-becoming. They honestly disclaim any such effort. They have retained most of the CPUSA’s politics, but none of its weight as an organization. They bring with them their political tutelage in corruption, but not any firepower. The prognosis for the organization is shaky.

A historic shift

In recent years, our movement has gained some initial experience in taking political advantage of these new openings. We have participated in conferences and book fairs around the world, including some that communists would have been excluded from only a few years ago. A leadership delegation from our movement in the United States, for example, is participating this month in an Americas regional conference of the World Federation of Democratic Youth (WFDY), held in Colombia. Young socialists from here in Britain, from Sweden, and from the United States will be going to Greece next month to participate in a conference of youth from throughout the Balkans, also organized by WFDY.

Only a few years ago, it would have been inconceivable that young socialists from our movement would be accepted into membership in the World Federation of Democratic Youth by majority vote, as they were earlier this year. Because although not every WFDY affiliate was a Stalinist organization, WFDY itself, from its founding in 1945, was part of the world Stalinist apparatus, as were the big majority of its member organizations. What has happened in WFDY over the past year or so is the product of the paroxysm that Stalinism has experienced.

This is only one example, and not the most important, of the new opportunities communists face in today’s world. We have greater openings to approach fighters of all kinds with communist ideas — from activists de-

fending abortion clinics in Buffalo, New York, to workers and rebel youth in northern Ireland. Each of the two WFDY-related trips I just mentioned are combined with other opportunities. The leadership delegation to Latin America also participated in a conference on Che Guevara in Argentina, involving representatives of political organizations from throughout the region. The youth delegation to Greece will go from there to Yugoslavia, where they will talk to young people, workers, and soldiers; sell *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* and other revolutionary literature; write articles for the *Militant*; and help equip youth and others to oppose imperialist intervention there more effectively.

What the communist movement can accomplish, even at our current size and strength, cannot be predetermined in some absolute terms. What we can accomplish is always relative to our leverage within the vanguard of the working class, and the size and activity of that vanguard. It is always relative to the strength or weakness of historic obstacles that make it difficult to get communist ideas to the working class. Being right on all the fundamental questions of world politics is not enough, in and of itself; we have been right since 1928 and before. Nor is there any guarantee of success for communists just because the working class and its allies are in a fighting mood. Stalinism has dealt many of its biggest blows during big class battles and in the midst of historic revolutionary developments.

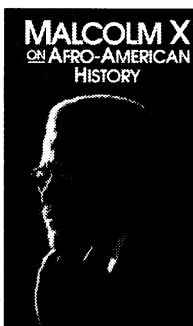
Stalinism has deep historical roots in the most important working-class struggles of this century. It has affected broad social and political forces. We are not asking delegates to vote on historical assessments here. What we are insisting on, however, is that revolutionary politicians need to recognize that, because of the weakening of Stalinism’s weight, our propaganda weapons give communists the greatest relative political leverage and widest potential audience we have had in some six decades.

Revolutionary-minded workers and youth, who even five years ago would have been attracted in much larger numbers to the Stalinists, are today more open to communist ideas. More of them have a chance to at least consider these ideas before they are either convinced of a counterfeit, or end up rejecting communism because of what has

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Participants in 14th World Festival of Youth and Students, held in Cuba in August 1997, at meeting with Cuban Brig. Gen. Harry Villegas (Pombo), who fought with Che Guevara in Bolivia.

been done in its name. We can now get books like *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*, issues of *New Internationalist* magazine, and other Marxist literature published and distributed by Pathfinder into the hands of a broad range of fighters and revolutionists we meet and are working with around the world.

If the world communist movement does not recognize the enormity of that historic change — and act accordingly — then we cannot make the right decisions on our party-building priorities and allocation of leadership time and resources.

Strengthening proletarian parties through the fusion

One delegate suggested that in carrying out this fusion, the Communist League needs “to recover the turn.” While I agree with what I took to be the point, I do not think “recover” is the right word. Better, it seems to me, is to say that the fusion will put the League on a firmer footing to reverse the slippage that has occurred in the turn,

“More revolutionary-minded workers and youth today have a chance to consider communist ideas without being won to a counterfeit of communism.”

and in the structures of the turn. It will put the League on a firmer footing to function as a party of worker-bolsheviks building both branches and industrial union fractions that, through their interconnected activity, reinforce each other and advance communist propaganda work in ways that would otherwise not be possible.

That certainly is our goal in the United States. By combining the forces of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance this spring, we are now in position to take on the task of strengthening the leadership structures and political functioning of our national industrial union fractions as well as our branches.

I suspect that each of the communist leagues can make progress along these lines, so long as we recognize that nothing we are doing makes it possible right now to deepen the turn. Deepening the turn will take changes in the objective situation — changes that enable us to build a different kind of union fractions, ones that are more directly engaged in class combat, that are a growing part of a broader, developing rank-and-file vanguard of the labor movement. That is not possible now anywhere there are communist leagues.

But *strengthening* the turn is an essential part of what we are doing in making the fusion. That is one of the central tasks this congress must discuss and that the Central Committee you elect must begin leading.

Leadership is taken, not given

Another delegate disagreed with the proposal before the congress that five of the twelve members elected to the Central Committee be members of the three youth organizations taking part in the fusion. This comrade said the proposal seemed contrary to our movement’s norm that leadership is not given, it must be taken.

In electing the Central Committee, of course, the congress will have to decide whether there are at least five comrades among the members of the young socialists who have taken leadership. Did their leadership help advance the progress that will be measured at this congress in

strengthening the forces of the communist movement here in Britain?

“Yes” was the answer given by comrades at the leadership gathering last week that adopted the proposals before you; now it is the job of the delegates to decide. But if your answer is also “yes,” then you are not *giving* anybody a place on the Central Committee; you are *recognizing* the leadership that five cadres have *taken* in building the young socialists. You are not putting some young people on the Central Committee to gain experience; communists never elect anybody to the leadership just because they are young. Instead, you are recognizing the political leadership that made a new, strengthened organization possible, and electing a Central Committee that reflects it.

The young socialists are a formation that has had an organized political life and activity. They elected leadership committees. They went through political experiences, made some mistakes, registered some achievements. Together, the party and youth leaderships came to the conclusion that the communist movement here in the United Kingdom is not strong enough to sustain an independent

communist youth organization right now. Leaders of the young socialists helped take the initiative in these discussions.

So, the congress has to decide how to weigh these factors. If delegates conclude that electing a Central Committee in the normal way would yield a stronger leadership, then that in itself is evidence that the fusion is at least premature. But if you are truly bringing together the experiences of independent organizations — with each bringing its strengths into a common organization — then the fusion is justified and the proposed formalities for the leadership election are necessary.

The same delegate who raised this objection to the leadership proposal also was concerned that for the first time we seem to be introducing quotas on the Central Committee. The comrade is right, of course, that the communist movement has never had quotas in electing the leadership — except in one case, *when there is a fusion*. Then the communist movement has *always* had quotas. Because if you do not have quotas in that case, then you do not have a fusion!

During the discussion a comrade referred to the Bolsheviks’ fusion in 1917 with Leon Trotsky’s organization, the Mezhrayontsi. That is a good example. That fusion, like others in the history of the communist movement, was accompanied by a quota in the newly elected Bolshevik Central Committee.¹⁸ Following that fusion, Lenin was confident that at the next party congress, there would be an undiffer-

¹⁸ The Mezhrayontsi (Russian for “Inter-District Committee”) was a revolutionary organization in Petrograd of some 4,000 members, whose most prominent leader was Leon Trotsky. Formed in 1913, it fused with the Bolsheviks at the July–August 1917 party congress. The congress suspended party rules on the membership duration of candidates for the Central Committee and placed Trotsky and two other Mezhrayontsi leaders directly onto the body.

entiated cadre of political equals, and the quotas would be over and done with. It never occurred to him that a former Mezhrayontsi member would receive any different treatment or consideration than a long-time Bolshevik. They would be treated on the merits of their record.

In that sense, the formalities of the election of the Central Committee at this congress will be the best test of the fusion. At the next Communist League convention, there will be no quotas. The party, strengthened by the fusion, will elect a Central Committee as you have done before, and you will do so from a cadre of political equals.

Youth work after the fusion

Communism is a movement, not just an organization, not just a party. As a result of the fusion, the communist movement here in the United Kingdom will take the form of the party alone for a while. But from day one, the movement will be better situated to carry out effective youth work than we have been for years.

This maneuver does not imply a long-term strategic perspective. We are making a judgment about what is timely *now*. We are making a judgment about what our movement can and should do *next*. Yes, we could improve this or that aspect of our work if we continued pretending we were strong enough to lead separate party and youth organizations. We would do so, however, at the cost of setting ourselves back politically. But if we carry out the proposals before this congress, as part of a course our whole world movement is tackling together, then we will be slightly stronger for it. That is all we claim for these proposals, but that’s enough!

Communists always do youth work, and always with an eye to making possible the formation of an independent socialist youth organization. Our fused organizations — here in the United Kingdom, in Canada, in the United States — will reach out into politics through our branches and union fractions to collaborate with young fighters and win them to the communist movement by the ones and twos. In addition, all of us must be alert to meeting clumps of young fighters, both in the countries where we currently have communist leagues and elsewhere. We must be alert to potential opportunities in youth formations that, while well short of being a communist youth organization, are at the same time substantially larger than any current communist youth organization.

Being alert to such opportunities — and at the same time on guard against mirages promising false opportunities — is not just a task of communist youth work. In all likelihood, for example, communists here in Britain at some time in the future are going to function to some extent inside the Labour Party. It is not foreordained that a broad rank-and-file vanguard emerging from an upsurge in class battles will flow through the channel of the Labour Party, of course. It would certainly be better if a mass revolutionary workers party were to develop directly, in opposition to the class-collaborationist perspectives of the Labour officialdom. Due to the structure, history, and realities of the labor movement in the United Kingdom, however, it is at least very likely that communists will be doing substantial political work inside the Labour Party for a period of time as part of a broader vanguard of fighting workers.

Anyway, if we are always practicing politics as part of the ranks, we will figure out what to do tactically as a real upsurge develops. We will be fighting alongside them in class battles, going with them through whatever forms and experiences those struggles take. We will function with fellow fighters like pros, not amateurs, in working-class politics.

None of us can say right now what openings we will find to work with larger numbers of young forces around the world. We have no way of anticipating the forms, and it is worse than useless to speculate or always be looking. If we just keep our eyes out for the fights and the fighters, then we will not miss the opportunities. We are the only international communist current in today’s world. If we work with other revolutionists as equals, and if we never make a fetish of forms, then we can be confident that our movement will be of special interest to workers and youth heading toward communism from other directions and other traditions.

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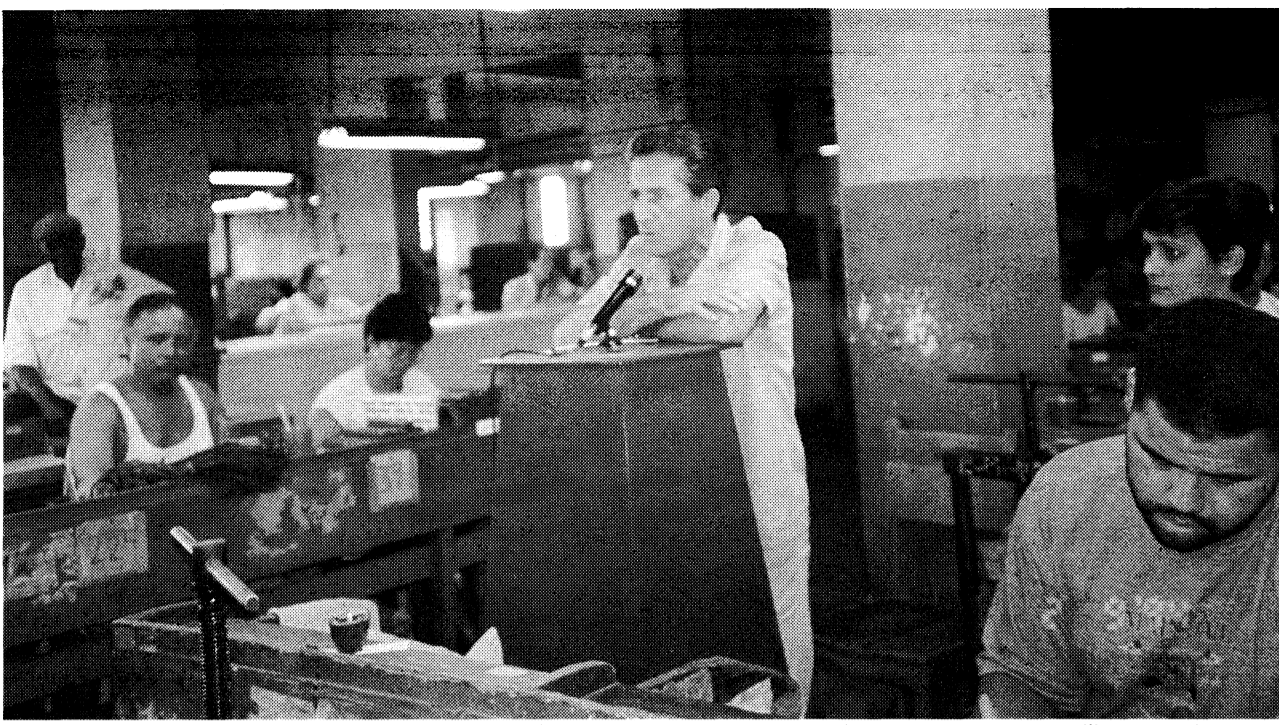
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"Workers parliament" at cigar factory near Havana, Cuba, February 1994, where workers discussed how to meet challenges of economic crisis, taking greater responsibility for production.

Militant/Martin Koppel

CLOSING REPORT

The following is the closing report at the fusion congress of the Communist League and young socialists groups.

The working-class line of march

After participating in the discussion at this congress, I am convinced our world movement is right to begin thinking about the next steps in party building with the communist movement as a whole, not with the party alone.

The fusion proposal before the delegates is not an organizational correction. The problem is not that the Communist League here in the United Kingdom made a mistake a year or so ago in helping to initiate the young socialists groups, and now you are rectifying that error. No, most of us are convinced, I think, that the experience of the young socialists groups and their recruitment to our movement have been an irreplaceable help in getting us to where we are today. A number of younger comrades have taken leadership in the communist movement through their work in the young socialists — as well as in the political discussion at this congress — and that advance will be registered in the Central Committee the delegates will elect later today.

As we have discussed here this weekend, the proposals you will be voting on soon are similar to those other communist leagues are carrying out. The concrete forms are different, and are the most complex in the Socialist Workers Party because it is the largest organization in our world movement. Fundamentally, however, what each of our organizations is doing stems from similar opportunities and weaknesses and has the same political goals.

The form the fusion has taken in the SWP will have gone through some initial tests by the beginning of next year. We will know by then how well we have done in involving some young people, and some groupings of young people, in campaigning with us for the SWP presidential ticket and other socialist candidates. We will have some more experience in working with youth in activities in defense of the Cuban revolution and in various social protest actions. We will be able to gauge our initial success in recruiting some new members, and, in the process, drawing more young people into the party leadership. As I reported earlier this weekend, a number of former Young Socialist Alliance members have already joined the party over the past month or so — a fact that, taken alone, is sufficient justification for this course.

The communist leagues here in the United Kingdom and in Canada will have similar openings and face similar tests in the months ahead. And comrades in New Zealand, in Sweden, in Australia, and in Iceland and France are also all discussing how to organize themselves most effectively to draw youth into the movement and continue strengthening the proletarian character of their organizations. Guests at this congress from all these organizations will take back experiences from it that will help them decide their next steps.

Each component of our world movement faces concrete challenges, and the decisions each of us makes will be specific to that particular situation. Our success in each case, however, depends on precisely the same criteria: to what degree we can fuse the experience and political continuity of the communist movement with a new generation, in order to braid together a stronger proletarian cadre and leadership.

A historic change in world politics

During the discussion earlier today, a delegate raised what he considered to be a contradiction — at least in the *Militant* coverage — between the analysis presented in the political report adopted by the fusion convention in Canada last month and the report I presented there, which we have already had quite a bit of discussion about this weekend.

At the Toronto gathering, Communist League leader Steve Penner explained why both the party and youth were too weak at this time to maintain separate organizations. In doing so, he reviewed some of the factors in world politics since the mid-1980s that have resulted in a

further retreat by the labor movement and taken a toll on small communist organizations as well. That report was briefly summarized in an article on the convention in the July 26 issue of the *Militant*, which is on sale here.

Isn't that assessment, a delegate asked earlier today, at odds with the statement that our movement now has openings to reach more people with communist ideas than at any time since the mid-1920s? I do not think so, and it seems useful in summarizing the congress to explain why.

The *Militant* article on the convention in Canada quoted the political report's reference to "the refusal of the union officialdom to lead workers in struggle," and the consequent weakening of union power to defend the class interests of working people as the employers have stiffened their offensive over the past decade. This seems like an accurate assessment to me, and I expect to many of you at this congress as well. The default, if not treachery, by the labor officialdom and its consequences for the working class are not a peculiarity of politics in Canada, but a fact of the class struggle throughout the imperialist world.

Don't we and other workers *feel* the impact of the growing weakness of strikes as a weapon in recent years? Don't we *feel* the results of the officialdom's refusal to organize effective labor solidarity when other workers go into a fight. Doesn't a strike today need to be substantially stronger than would have been necessary just seven or eight years ago to accomplish the same ends?

The report to the convention in Canada also cited "the absence of new revolutionary victories" anywhere in the world. That, too, is accurate. In fact, the two most recent victories — the workers and farmers governments in Grenada and Nicaragua — both had gone down to defeat by the end of the 1980s. Our movement understood the reasons for those defeats and drew the clearest political lessons from them. But those important political conquests did not soften the blow from these grave political setbacks.

Communists and other revolutionary-minded workers and youth, of course, still look to, learn from, and draw political inspiration from the socialist revolution in Cuba and its proletarian internationalist leadership. As irreplaceable as that living example remains, however, it is not the same (including for revolutionists in Cuba) as experiencing *the rise of a new socialist revolution* today. It is not the same as being able to follow — week by week, day by day — the titanic forces of the working class and other toilers carrying out a radical land reform, challenging all forms of discrimination, oppression, and exploitation, and, in the case of Cuba, overturning capitalist property relations.

That is how the Cuban revolution affected the generation that came to the communist movement at the end of the 1950s and early 1960s. That is how the Grenada and Nicaragua revolution brought a generation to the communist movement in the late 1970s and early 1980s. That is how the Russian revolution affected workers and youth for a decade after 1917. That is how even the Yugoslav and Chinese revolutions, with all the limitations of their Stalinist misleaderships, affected workers and toilers in the years after World War II.

The political report adopted by the comrades in Canada was correct in pointing to the objective factors we have

been describing here and how they have weighed on the fighting vanguard of the working class, including on its communist component. They do not, however, negate the political implications for communists of the two factors we have been concentrating on this weekend: the depression conditions of world capitalism today and its destabilizing logic; and the disintegration of the main transmission belt within the workers movement of imperialism's pressures and dog-eat-dog values, the Stalinist world machine.

For nearly sixty years, the communist movement has been determined to support in any way possible, participate in, and help lead a political revolution by the workers in the Soviet Union (and, following World War II, in the deformed workers states of Central and Eastern Europe). What do we mean by a "political revolution"? In his 1936 work *The Revolution Betrayed: What Is the Soviet Union and Where Is It Going?*, Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky explained that the revolution to overturn the bureaucratic caste "will not be social, like the October Revolution of 1917. It is not a question this time of changing the economic foundations of society, or of replacing certain forms of property with other forms. History has known elsewhere not only social revolutions which substituted the bourgeois for the feudal regime, but also political revolutions which, without destroying the economic foundations of society, swept out the old ruling upper crust (1830 and 1848 in France, February 1917 in Russia, etc.). The overthrow of the Bonapartist caste will, of course, have deep social consequences, but in itself it will be confined within the limits of political revolution."¹⁹

That is still what is needed in the deformed workers states in Russia and throughout Eastern Europe today, as well as in China. It took the events of the last several years, however, for our movement to fully absorb the consequences of the fact that communist continuity in the working class of these workers states had been completely broken at least by the 1960s if not earlier. The communist vanguard had been physically liquidated in the purge trials, labor camps, and post-World War II witch-hunts. The



Militant/Marcella FitzGerald

Pathfinder booth at 1995 International Book Fair in Tehran, Iran.

working class in these countries had been pushed out of independent political life for decades, and blocked off from struggles by workers in other parts of the world.

Given this vacuum of proletarian leadership, the breakup of the political apparatus of these Stalinist regimes necessarily had to come before the possibility of political revolution would again be on the agenda. That, in turn, meant the objective opening up of these workers states to greater dangers of capitalist restoration. But the belatedness of the political revolution because of the limits of the extension of the world revolution determined that this was the only way the working class in these countries could begin going through the kinds of experiences once again that can and will give rise to revolutionary currents and a new openness to communist ideas.

Imperialism's incapacity to resolve its deepening, late-twentieth-century crisis through economic and social concessions, as well as the breakup of the Stalinist apparatuses — both have become fact *before* large fighting currents of the working class have begun to be forged in battle. Before the vanguard of the workers movement has gone through the kind of class combat that makes it possible to begin growing in significant numbers, the consequences of both these historical realities are already having expanding political repercussions worldwide. Most important, however, remains the fact that communists can act in face of this new international capitalist disorder *before* the working class and labor movement has suffered a defeat by the exploiting classes anywhere in the world.

This is our appreciation of the relationship of forces in the world class struggle, as it has developed since the international stock market crash of 1987. The test of events since then convinces us that this world view is correct. Moreover, as a delegate pointed out here, big political shocks such as the Gulf War bring into sharper focus for

¹⁹ *The Revolution Betrayed*, p. 259.

working people and youth the much slower, cumulative effects of capitalism's depression conditions.

What is changing today is not that youth we work with are more capable, more courageous, or have more integrity than young people who were won to the Stalinist movement over the last sixty years. What has changed is the world.

As a result, fighters who go into action against the oppression and exploitation bred by capitalism can once again begin to converge with the historic line of march of the working class, rather than being diverted from

that course by a counterfeit of Marxism. Fighters all over the world, coming from different backgrounds and experiences, can discuss ideas on how to move forward with other revolutionists with no a priori exclusions; there is no longer an "Index" of books, magazines, and newspapers anyone is proscribed from buying and studying. All this means communists do not have the odds stacked against us from the outset, as during the radicalization of the 1930s and again in the 1960s.

Consider, for example, the political obstacles that faced the Black Panthers and many other fighters for Black rights in the sixties. Many young people with experience in civil rights struggles became convinced of the need to look for something beyond their initial aims. The victories registered in those battles accelerated the search by young militants for generalizing, universalizing strategies that addressed the roots of the oppression they were fighting and offered an effective way to fight and win. They reached for Marxism, they reached for communism — and most found Stalinism instead. And that is what happened to millions of workers, peasants, and youth all over the world.

Building a proletarian party in time

New advances in the class struggle, no matter how large or tumultuous, cannot transform centrist organizations — let alone Stalinist or social democratic currents — into disciplined communist parties capable of leading the working class and our allies to victory. If proletarian organizations — based in the industrial working class and unions, and part of a world communist movement — have not been built beforehand, then there will be no leadership capable of winning the fighting vanguard of the toilers and forging a mass revolutionary party in the heat of rising class battles. And there will be horribly costly defeats.

That has been the experience of the working class for at least a century, and it provides further reason to move forward along the course we are on. We can be more confident today than any time since the late 1920s that workers in battle can and will be won to the historic line of march of their class. We can collaborate as equals with fighters and revolutionists coming from many political origins.

Most protest actions communists participate in today are not called by us or by other revolutionary forces. We participate in these actions, fight alongside others for common goals, and exchange experiences and ideas with those attracted to these fights. We do so, moreover, without adapting to the political framework of the forces that initiate and lead these actions.

For worker-bolsheviks, the starting point is the working class, the labor movement, and the space that exists there for revolutionary political work — *if we use it*. If communists use the space open to us in the working class, and move out into politics *on that basis*, then every aspect of our party-building work will be strengthened.

Workers involved in fights on the job get attracted to young forces organizing protest actions against imperialist



Militant
Striking airline kitchen workers and supporters picket SkyChefs in London, January 1999. Socialist workers the world over prepare for sharpening of class struggle "by organizing communist parties along the lines described in *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*, *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party*, the *Communist Manifesto*, and other documents that make up the political continuity of the modern revolutionary workers movement."

war, in defense of abortion rights, and against racist abuse. It makes workers more interested in communist ideas, more interested in getting their hands on Pathfinder books, the *New Internationalist*, the *Militant*, and *Perspectiva Mundial*.

Students and other youth moving into political life, regardless of their class background, are attracted to workers' struggles and to the potential social and political power of the working-class and labor movement. That is the last thing communists need to worry about. Young fighters are attracted to a political party of workers with organized fractions in the trade unions. That has never been a problem in the modern revolutionary workers movement — not for the 150 years since the young Karl Marx and Frederick Engels were recruited to the world's first modern proletarian party, the Communist League, by a cadre of seasoned revolutionary workers from Germany and elsewhere in Europe.

Toward the end of his life, Engels recounted how, as a young radical democrat being won to communism, he had been profoundly affected by three of these workers' leaders whom he got to know and began collaborating with. "They were the first revolutionary proletarians whom I met," Engels recounted in 1885, "and however far apart our views were at that time in details — for I still owned, as against their narrow-minded egalitarian communism, a goodly dose of just as narrow-minded philosophical arrogance — I shall never forget the deep impression that these

you will elect later today, are important. These are the next steps that can be taken here in the United Kingdom, as part of a course being followed throughout our world movement, to lay the basis to rebuild communist youth organizations, strengthen our nuclei of proletarian parties, and strengthen their "turn" character.

We recognize that our small size and current lack of weight in the labor movement make it unlikely that our organizations will grow in some linear fashion into the leadership of mass struggles of the working class. These class battles will develop, in some cases much more rapidly than we can anticipate. Communists must be ready for all sorts of tactical maneuvers that no one can imagine today.

What can we do to prepare? On a tactical level, absolutely nothing. But we can and must prepare by being political, being proletarian, being internationalist to the core, and always being objective in our working relations with other fighters and revolutionists. We prepare by organizing communist parties along the lines described in *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*, *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party*, the *Communist Manifesto*, and other documents that make up the political continuity of the modern revolutionary workers movement.

20 "On the History of the Communist League" (1885), in Marx and Engels, *Collected Works*, vol. 26 (New York: International Publishers, 1990), p. 314.

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Unionists, farmers rally for Crown workers

Continued from front page events throughout the day.

The Crown workers are members of Paperworkers, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers Union (PACE) Local 4-227 (formerly the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers). They were locked out in February 1996 after refusing a contract that included deep concessions such as elimination of seniority and massive contracting out of jobs. To justify the lockout, the company claimed acts of sabotage had been committed. These slanders were widely reported in the press and the company called in the FBI. In spite of the company's offer of a reward, no evidence was ever uncovered of sabotage. The workers have stuck to their battle stations, fighting to make clear the real issue in the lockout is Crown's attempt to shove a union-busting contract down their throats.

In response, Crown filed a civil suit accusing more than a dozen union members again with sabotage. Local 4-227 member Dean Cook explained the facts of the fight at Crown as he opened up a rally at the union hall after everyone returned from the first of two picket lines. He stated "the suit could be an open door to invite the FBI back. We're in depositions now that the company could drag out and we won't even get into court for a year." In the weeks preceding the rally one union member, Phyllis Miller, was subjected to a six-hour session of questioning by the company's lawyers.

Carol Pareson, wife of locked-out Crown worker Paul Pareson, kicked off the speakers list stating, "During the last three years I've met some fantastic people and I know they're all smart enough not to have sabotaged something as volatile as a refinery," taking the risk of blowing themselves up.

Farmers struggle to keep their land

Eddie Slaughter of the BFAA explained the fight of Black farmers currently involved in a suit against the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for discrimination. "When I was invited here I said I need to find out more about this Crown fight and I found we're fighting the same people. They accused you of sabotage. The USDA is trying to do the same to us, charging us with misuse of funds."

Through a three-year fight the farmers won a court ruling that farmers who are Black could be considered a class in their lawsuit, based on decades discrimination by the USDA in providing loans and assistance. The government is currently pushing a con-

sent decree that they hope will end the fight by paying \$50,000 to most farmers in the suit and canceling some debts.

"It does make a difference what we do," Slaughter said. "When we first filed they laughed, but we filled the courtroom for every hearing. And when they moved us to the biggest courtroom we filled that too, and they're not laughing anymore."

"Our problem is the same, at Kaiser, Crown, the catfish workers. They want us all to fight our little battles. They use racism to keep us divided by design. They could not deal with us all together," he said. "Unity is a must; we wouldn't have gotten to the point we're at now without it." Slaughter urged everyone to join the farmers at a March 2 rally in Washington, D.C., "to demand a just settlement, not just a settlement."

A lively discussion developed as each speaker added their experiences. "What's the size of the average farm of Black farmers?" asked Kaiser worker Tom Howell from Spokane, Washington. He added, "In the Northwest we raise a lot of soft wheat. The government is using this as a political tool [in a war with foreign competitors]. They have driven the price down to where it costs farmers more to produce it than they can earn selling it."

Slaughter responded, "Yes, the same thing is happening to all farmers, to white farmers too. We're just losing land at a three-to-one ratio. We're hurting more, so we started hollering first."

Many in the crowd began discussing plans to attend the attend March 2 event.

'Tired of being sick and tired'

Joanne Hogan spoke on behalf of the Catfish Workers of America. On Nov. 16, 1998, Freshwater Farms in Belzoni, Mississippi, fired 68 workers, all of them Black and the majority of them women. They had protested working conditions that included a seven-minute time limit for restroom use, unsafe and unsanitary work conditions, racial discrimination, and a general hostile and degrading environment.

"We were sick and tired of being sick and tired," said Hogan, explaining they walked out that day to try to force management to negotiate some of these problems. The fired workers, she said, "have gotten very little help. The company called the unemployment office and said, 'Don't give them help,' and only recently did a few of the workers get some food stamps."

Hogan said that the 68 fired were the majority of the union membership, and she was a shop steward of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 1529. So far neither the company nor the union local will accept a grievance they prepared, but they are pursuing a way get this done. The fired workers formed the Catfish Workers of America, with the help of local activists from the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), to organize support for their struggle. Their effort includes a 12-page appeal, plus documentation of their grievances against the company, which they made available to rally participants.

Barbara Beln, who has worked in the catfish plant for more than seven years, told

these reporters they had just come from an appeal the day before at the unemployment office, fighting the company's attempts to deny them all compensation. They are currently awaiting the outcome of that hearing. She added, "Freshwater called up employers to urge them not to hire any of the 68 workers."

Prompted by the conditions described by Hogan and other catfish workers Willie Evans from the Titan strike, proposed raising "a generous donation. We could do it locally and also ask our unions to donate when we get back." The crowd took a collection on the spot of some \$400.

Kaiser, Titan fights

Tom Howell explained the fight of some 3,000 workers at Kaiser Aluminum plants in Spokane and Tacoma, Washington; Newark, Ohio; and Gramercy, Louisiana. About a dozen strikers have done two-week stints in Houston building support for their strike and picketing the headquarters of the Maxxam Corp., which owns Kaiser. "We're facing tycoons — ours is [Maxxam chief] Charles Hurwitz — who are out to take everything they can and leave us high and dry," he stated. Kaiser is demanding job cuts, contracting out, and ending seniority rights.

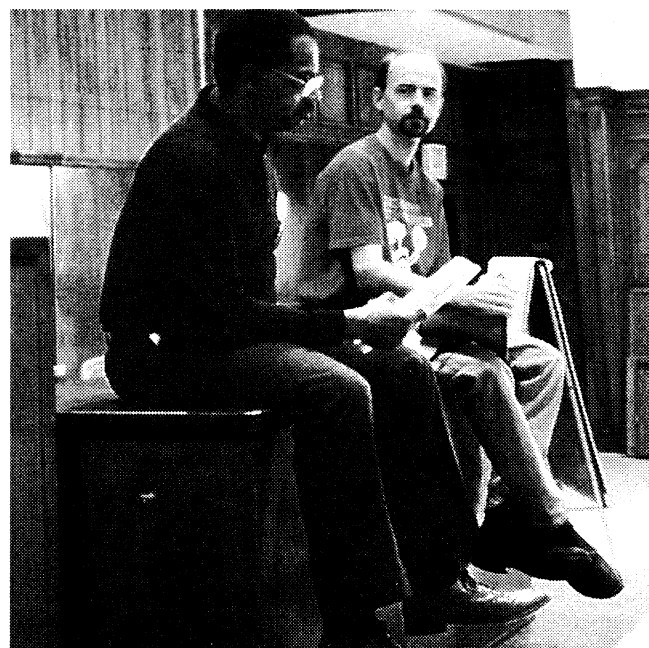
Evans described the strike against Titan Tire's plants in Des Moines, Iowa, and Natchez, Mississippi. Workers struck the Des Moines plant in May 1998. The Natchez workers were locked out September 4, and declared a strike September 15. Maurice Taylor, Titan's owner, is trying to impose deep concessions including gutting seniority and cutting pension and health-care benefits.

Dean Alexander and Jim Byrd, representatives of PACE, also addressed the crowd in the afternoon. Byrd read a letter to the rally from PACE president Boyd Young. PACE was formed in January from a merger of the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers union and the United Paperworkers International Union (see article on page 23).

Oil workers from a number of other locals around Houston and from the Beaumont/Port Arthur area also participated, along with official representatives of PACE from the district and international level. As well, members of the Machinists union, a union of seafaring engineers, postal workers, and Richard Shaw, of the Harris County AFL-CIO joined in the activities.

The morning and afternoon actions at the plant gate were the largest in the last year, though the members of 4-227 have maintained pickets throughout the three-year battle at Crown.

During the second session at around 4:00 p.m., a militant picket line was posted where workers usually have to cross a street from the parking lot to enter the plant. But the company had everyone park inside the re-



Militant/Mike Italie Eddie Slaughter of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association with locked-out Crown worker Dean Cook.

finery grounds that day to avoid having to pass by the pickets. A car caravan and picket line of Crown workers and supporters held up vehicles from leaving for some time. Cheers went up when the pickets succeeded in turning back a truck trying to make a delivery to the plant. Company guards had a heavy presence, including videotaping the picket line and car caravan.

Tom Boots, a locked-out Crown worker, commented on the spirited participation of steelworkers, catfish workers, and others. "For the first time the people inside saw that we are not alone," he said. "We are not just people begging for their jobs back."

Crown worker Belinda Case noted, "The workers who came, the conversations, and the general camaraderie" made it a great day. "It was we the workers who did it, and it was workers who came and shared their experiences. It was a great success."

In the February 7 *Pasadena Citizen*, a spokesperson for Crown griped that such rallies "only stir the rancor of union members and serve no useful purpose in resolving the issues — a resolution which can only come at the bargaining table."

Flyers for upcoming actions in support of many of the struggles represented were passed around, including for an event to honor the catfish workers. The Buffalo Fish Festival will be held April 10, sponsored by the Catfish Workers of America and the Mississippi Delta chapter of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference. For more information call (601) 247-1471 or (601) 247-3364.

Kaiser workers encouraged participation in actions at the federal courthouse in Houston at noon, February 16, where Maxxam is facing trial for its role in the largest savings and loan failure in Texas; and a picket the next day at one of Hurwitz's homes.

Laura Garza is a member of International Association of Machinists Local 969 in Houston. Roberto Guerrero is a member of the Young Socialists. Dave Ferguson contributed to this article.

CALENDAR

MARYLAND

Baltimore

Human Rights Abuses in South Armagh. Hear Maria Caraher, South Armagh Farmers & Residents Committee. Presented by Irish Northern Aid, Baltimore. Tue., Feb. 16, 7 p.m. *European Union, 4200 Belair Road. Admission: \$10. For more information, call (301) 847-0985.*

MICHIGAN

Detroit

Crisis Facing Working Farmers: Black Farmers Fight Discrimination. Speaker: Mattie Mae Mack, who serves on the Kentucky Governor's Commission to Save the Family Farmer and has been outspoken on farm issues for many years. Wed., Feb. 17. Daytime: 12 noon. Evening: 7 p.m. Auspices: Pan African Student Union. Cosponsors: Africana Studies Department, Women's Studies Program, Newman Catholic Center, Chicano-Boricua Studies, College of Urban, Labor and Metropolitan Affairs. *Hilberry Room C, Student Center, Wayne State University. For more information, call: (313) 869-8383 or (313) 365-6962. E-mail: dalva44125@aol.com*

River Rouge

Crisis Facing Working Farmers: Black Farmers Fight Discrimination. Speaker: Mattie Mae Mack. Tue., Feb. 16, 4 p.m. Auspices of USWA, Local 1299. *United Steel Workers of America (USWA) Union Hall, Local 1299, 11424 W. Jefferson. For more information: (313) 842-7270.*

AUSTRALIA

The Ban Is Lifted! Hear: Sinn Fein President Gerry Adams. Sydney, Mon., Feb. 22
Brisbane, Tue., Feb. 23
Melbourne, Thurs., Feb. 25
Sydney, Fri., Feb. 26
Sydney, Sat., Feb. 27
Perth, Sun., Feb. 28
Sponsored by Australian Aid for Ireland
For more information, call (2) 9636 9021.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Black History and the Fight for Black Liberation Today. Speaker: Rashad Ali, Socialist Workers candidate for state assembly in Oakland's 16th District. Fri., Feb. 19, 7:30 p.m. Dinner 6 p.m. 2546 W. Pico Blvd. Donation: \$5. Dinner: \$6. Tel: (213) 380-9460.

FLORIDA

Miami

The Rise and Fall of Radical Reconstruction. Fri., Feb. 19, 7:30 p.m. Dinner 6:30 p.m. Donation: \$6.

Miles of Smiles, Years of Struggles. Video showing on the history of the sleeping car porters union and a discussion on the role of Black workers in the labor movement. Fri., Feb. 26, 7:30 p.m. Donation: \$4.
Both events to be held at 137 N.E. 54th Street. Tel: (305) 756-1020.

ILLINOIS

Chicago

Defend José Solís. Speaker: Professor José Solís, Puerto Rican independence activist facing government frame-up charges. Sun., Feb. 21, 2

p.m. 1223 N. Milwaukee Ave. (At Division and Ashland. Division stop on the CTA blue line). Donation: \$4. Tel: (773) 342-1780.

IOWA

Des Moines

Malcolm X: Revolutionary Internationalist. Fri., Feb., 19, 7:30 p.m.
The Legacy of the Civil Rights Movement and the Black Farmers' Fight for Justice. Fri., Feb. 26, 7:30 p.m.
Both events to be held at 2724 Douglas. Donation: \$4. Tel: (515) 277-4600.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

Speak Out against Police Brutality! Panel discussion. Fri., Feb. 19, 7:30 p.m. Dinner: 6 p.m. 1906 South Street. Donation: \$5. Dinner \$5. Tel: (215) 546-8218.

BRITAIN

London

The Truth Must Be Told: An Eyewitness Account from the 1999 Bloody Sunday Demonstration in Derry. Fri., Feb. 19, 7 p.m. 47, The

Cut (tube Waterloo). Donation: £2. Tel: 0171 401 2409.

CANADA

Toronto

Malcolm X: A Documentary Video on the Life and Times of a Revolutionary Leader. Fri., Feb. 19, 7:30 p.m. 851 Bloor Street West (East of Ossington). Donation: \$4. Tel: (416) 533-4324.

Vancouver

The Nisga'a, the Musqueam, and the Makah: Defense of Native Rights. Speaker: Paul Kouri, Communist League. Fri., Feb. 19, 7:30 p.m. 3967 Main St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (604) 324-2671.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

Fiji Today: An Eyewitness Account. Speaker: Brendan Gleeson, Communist League. Fri., Feb., 19, 7 p.m. 203 Karangahape Road. Donation: \$3. Tel (9) 379-3075.

Christchurch

Oppose "Anti-Crime" Campaign. Speaker: Joan Shields, Communist League. Fri. Feb. 19. 199 High St. Tel: (3) 365 6055.

Join the discussion, come to Socialist Workers convention

"There is a... political hunger among workers and farmers — the fighting coalition that will make up the government that will carry humanity into a new world. It's a hunger for solidarity, for struggle; it's a hunger to learn from each other. A refusal to accept that the pattern of struggles today is decided by past defeats. ... Resisting indignity and isolation, the emerging pattern is taking shape. The vanguard of working people whose actions will define it is increased by every single fighter who reaches out to others and offers to fight." — Jack Barnes, "A Sea Change in Working-Class Politics"

Reports in this issue of the *Militant* paint a vivid picture of this shift in working-class politics. Refinery workers locked out in Texas, catfish workers demanding their dignity in Mississippi, farmers fighting for their land and against racist discrimination, striking auto workers in Illinois, and many others forging links of solidarity. Youth attracted to these fights and involved in social protests have been joining the Young Socialists.

A growing number of these fighters are among the readers of the *Militant*. We urge all of you to join in the discussion now under way leading up to the April 1-4 convention of the Socialist Workers Party in San Francisco, and to make plans now to attend and participate in the

conference activities surrounding it.

Last week's *Militant* devoted a special *International Socialist Review* supplement to the summary talk, quoted above, by SWP national secretary Jack Barnes to a conference in December 1998 sponsored jointly by the party and Young Socialists. The conference was held in conjunction with the third national convention of the Young Socialists. This week's issue includes "Youth and the Communist Movement," a June 1992 report discussed and adopted by a joint congress of the Communist League in the United Kingdom and three young socialist groups. Both talks will be published at the end of February as part of *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* by Jack Barnes.

These documents — together with the 1990 SWP resolution "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War," recently published in issue no. 11 of the Marxist magazine *New International*, and the party resolutions and reports contained in *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions* — provide the political foundation of the discussions communist workers and youth are organizing as they prepare for the SWP convention.

If you want to join the discussion, contact the SWP branch or Young Socialists chapter nearest you.

Kentucky farmer speaks out

The following column appeared in the January 29 issue of the *Meade County News Leader*, published in western Kentucky, under the headline "Local farmer speaks out." The author, Mattie Mack, is a leader of the Minority Farmers of Meade County and a participant in the class-action lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Agriculture for discrimination against farmers who are Black. In a phone interview, Mack said she will be going with a vanload of other farmers to Washington, D.C., March 2 for a rally protesting the inadequate terms of the settlement the USDA is offering to end the farmers' struggle. She will be speaking in Detroit February 16-17 about the farmers' fight to keep their land and end racist discrimination.

BY MATTIE MACK

I am Mattie Mack and I have been a farmer all of my life. It has gotten to the place where a farmer can't make a living on the farm. It's been a long time that the price of hogs and cattle have been so low and the grain market, such as corn, wheat, oats, barley, and soybeans are at an all time low. Let me tell you people, the old farmer is hurting really bad. They have loans and can't find a way to pay them back. It is rough out here!

When I raised my 4 children and 38 foster children, we could make a decent living on the farm. It wasn't this hard, but I tell the farmers that God will make a way somehow. I look and see how pretty the plants look out in the fields every spring of the year, and I say that God is doing his part of the work, and the farmer is doing his part of work.

Then when you go to sell the crops, that's where the problem lies. Something is going to have to be done about this. I thought we had tobacco under control, and the farmers and tobacco companies were going to work together. Then President Clinton gave his State of the Union Speech the other night. It looks real bad for the tobacco farmers. Tobacco has been good for us, it is the only crop we could depend on. That has been our lively hood over the years. It has paid our property taxes, insurance, educated our children, bought us trucks and tractors, black topped our road, and has provided us a pretty good Christmas each year. Working on a farm is hard work. Second Timothy, chapter 2, verse 6, "The Farmer who has done the hard work should have the first share of the harvest." We do good to get the last and that's not very much as you can see. Farming is an everyday job, no matter what the weather is we have to work. There are no days off for the farmers. Something has to be done.

Palestinians say: 'There's no peace'

Continued from back page

for weeks. Today each Israeli consumes on average 10 times more water than each Palestinian. And to add insult to injury they say it's because we are not civilized people."

Farraj and other farmers pointed out that while Palestinians in the occupied territories see their crops dry out for lack of water, settlers nearby have plenty to keep their pastures green and swimming pools full.

Settlements grow considerably

According to published Israeli statistics, the overall number of settlers in East Jerusalem, the Gaza Strip, and West Bank was about 320,000 at the end of 1997.

The number of Jews in Zionist settlements in the West Bank and Gaza grew to 170,000 last year from approximately 115,000 in 1993 — a 48 percent increase. The overall number of settlements, which are built exclusively for Jews, has remained the same, about 170 in these areas. But many have grown into cities, like the Ariel settlement in the Nablus area in northern West Bank that now houses 20,000 people. And often new settlements are linked with existing ones to keep their overall number deceptively low.

Settlement construction has flourished around Jerusalem. A ring of settlements on hilltops around the city are systematically being linked to cut off direct access to the West Bank. "The Zionist regime has pushed hard to alter the demographic facts on the ground to prevent us from declaring East Jerusalem the capital of a Palestinian state," said Mohammed Barakat, a minivan/taxi driver who lives in East Jerusalem. Last year, Tel Aviv claimed that the Jewish population of East Jerusalem surpassed for the first time the Palestinian population of 155,000.

Since the signing of the Oslo accord, Tel Aviv has confiscated 400,000 dunams (nearly 89,000 acres) of Palestinian land on the West Bank, according to Mohammed Abu Harthieh of the Palestinian organization Al Haq, based in Ramallah.

"The bulk of this activity took place under the former Labor Party regime of Yitzhak Rabin," said Haidar Abdel Shafi. "It's not just the 'extremists' in Likud who are re-

sponsible."

Much of the confiscated land has been slated for construction of the so-called bypass roads in the West Bank. This is entirely new since 1993. According to Al Haq, completed bypass roads are already 400 km (250 miles) long. Another 150 km are currently under construction. And the Israeli regime has announced plans to build another 350 km of such roads. This is a vast network in the West Bank, which is about 150 km long and 40 km wide.

The justification for the bypass roads is to allow settlers to commute from settlement to settlement and to have easy access to Israel as Tel Aviv has given up control of small portions of the West Bank. These roads bypass Palestinian-controlled cities. On some occasions, though, entire Palestinian villages are cut in two for such roads to pass through. For "security" reasons, Tel Aviv takes over 150 meters on each side along such roads, which cannot be cultivated or inhabited by Palestinians.

As Barakat and many others said, these are "apartheid" roads. They are reserved for Israeli citizens. Most Palestinians in the occupied territories, whose cars have different color plates than Israelis, can't use them. Or they have extreme restrictions on what portions they can use and when, ordered by the Israeli military.

This situation has provoked constant clashes with the settlers, many of whom are organized by rightist Zionist groups and are armed, often forming paramilitary units. According to Al Haq, 115 Palestinians have been killed by Israeli settlers in the occupied territories since 1993.

"This is the Netanyahu-Sharon dream of how to prevent an independent Palestinian state from coming into being," stated Barakat. Ariel Sharon, now Israeli foreign minister, and the most ardent proponent of the settlement policy, called on settlers to seize more land after Netanyahu signed the Wye agreement. "The trouble is they'll have to kill a lot of Palestinians to do it," Barakat said.

The next article will focus on Palestinian resistance to the Israeli occupation and attitudes among Palestinians towards the Palestinian National Authority.

Tension with Beijing

Continued from front page

tions by other means — from the former Soviet Union, to north Korea, and China.

On January 21 U.S. defense secretary William Cohen announced that the White House projects spending nearly \$7 billion for a national antiballistic missile system that would purportedly give it complete capability to destroy enemy missiles carrying nuclear warheads. This system would give the U.S. rulers first-strike nuclear capacity. Clinton administration officials have been publicly debating plans to include Seoul, Tokyo, and Taiwan under this nuclear shield.

Front-page articles in the big-business press on February 11 claimed that Beijing has deployed hundreds of missiles aimed at Taiwan in response to Washington's moves.

"Taiwan said Wednesday [February 10] that China had recently deployed more than 100 ballistic missiles in provinces facing this island nation of 21 million people," said an article in the *Washington Post*.

"Western diplomats, who corroborated the report, said the deployment more than tripled the number of missiles previously believed to be in that area," the *Post* continued. "The step constituted, they said, China's response to talk in Washington about placing parts of Asia, including Taiwan, under an American missile-defense umbrella.

"The U.S. proposals, which are so far only in the planning stages, are roiling the waters of American-Chinese relations and providing the most significant challenge to Washington's emerging security ties with the world's most populous nation since a face-off over Taiwan three years ago."

In 1996, Beijing staged military exercises off the coast of Taiwan, reaffirming its right to reunite with the island, a right acknowledged by Washington in 1972 following talks by then-U.S. president Richard Nixon and Chinese premier Chou En-lai. Taiwan is where the defeated forces of the reactionary Chang-Kai Chek regime fled after the victory of the Chinese revolution in 1949. Since then, the capitalist rulers of Taiwan have tried unsuccessfully to win international recognition of Taiwan as an independent nation. Three years ago, Taipei also staged military maneuvers in response to Beijing's moves and Washington sent a U.S. navy warship passing through the Taiwan Strait.

Last August the Clinton administration proposed bringing the militaries of Japan and south Korea into a scheme of land-, sea-, and air-based equipment designed to locate and destroy missiles based in China and north Korea. Tokyo has already agreed to join the so-called Theater Missile Defense (TMD) system.

Washington claims that the TMD is needed to protect its 45,000 troops stationed in Japan and the 37,000 GIs deployed in south Korea, as well as other regimes in Asia subservient to U.S. dictates.

U.S. government officials claim the system is specifically designed to counter military threats from "rogue" states such as the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK). Under the proposed system, however, Washington could deploy Patriot-3 missiles, radar, and other early warning equipment in Taiwan — a direct threat to the Chinese workers state.

Seeking to avoid a direct military confrontation with Beijing for now, White House officials have stated they want to maintain a "strategic dialogue" with China.

Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Sun Yuxi said at a news conference Washington's missile program would undermine regional security. It "will have a comprehensive and far reaching impact on the strategic balance and stability of the region and world at large in the 21st century." Sun said Clinton's planned national missile system violates the Anti-Ballistic Missile treaty signed by Washington and Moscow in 1972. The treaty presumed that neither state would launch nuclear-armed missiles against the other if it lacked the means to block retaliation. Sun said the ABM treaty "should be strictly complied with."

Washington has pressed to renegotiate the terms of the treaty with Moscow to take into account its proposed national missile system. Cohen said either government could pull out of the ABM treaty after giving six months' notice "if a party concludes it's in its supreme national interest."

At the same time, the major media in the United States have given ample space to Washington's campaign of military threats against the DPRK. The February 3 *New York Times* described north Korea as one of the "rogue states that could hit the United States with ballistic missiles with little or no warning."

During a meeting in late January with the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, Gen. John Tilleli, commander of the U.S. military in south Korea, said he expects some sort of "emergency" in the Korean peninsula this spring, according to the February 3 *Wall Street Journal*. Tilleli spoke of "the prospect of an escalating military confrontation between Pyongyang and Washington" that would "bring the Korean peninsula to the brink of war," the *Journal* stated.

"I can hardly overstate my concern about north Korea," CIA Director George Tenet told the Senate Armed Services Committee February 2. "The situation there has become more volatile and unpredictable."

Tenet claimed Pyongyang's economic problems would push it toward "risky brinkmanship with the U.S."

The Clinton administration has scheduled a meeting in Seoul in mid-February to discuss "the growing military threat from North Korea," the *New York Times* reported February 7. The meeting will include talks with Tokyo and the south Korean government on military cooperation, an alleged underground nuclear weapons facility in north Korea, and the DPRK's launching of a rocket that flew over Japan last August.

Oil, paperworkers union merger is a step backward

BY JIM ALTENBERG
AND JOHN BENSON

LAS VEGAS, Nevada — Several hundred delegates to special conventions of the Oil, Chemical, and Atomic Workers union (OCAW) and the United Paperworkers International Union (UPIU), held here January 4, voted overwhelmingly to merge the two unions into a single organization. The new union, the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers International Union (PACE), includes some 320,000 workers in the pulp and paper, oil, chemical, nuclear, pharmaceutical, corn-processing, auto parts, and appliance manufactur-

UNION TALK

ing industries.

The first convention of PACE took place at a joint meeting the following day. Boyd Young, the new union's president, stated that the merger was needed because, "Corporate America has merged and gone global over the last 20 years." Young, formerly the president of the UPIU, predicted that there would soon be only six or eight paper companies left. He attributed job losses in industry to the North American Free Trade Agreement and environmental regulations.

Young said merging like the bosses do would increase the union's size and "allow us to compete, to hold our own organization in the face of larger, more powerful unions" seeking to absorb the smaller ones. Top PACE officials promised that unlike in job slashing corporate mergers no former UPIU or OCAW staff person would lose his or her post. Young also expressed the hope that the merger would give the union more leverage within the Democratic Party.

AFL-CIO president John Sweeney also addressed the PACE gathering. The AFL-CIO has chartered 27 such mergers in the past five years, he said, and more will be put together. Sweeney urged the delegates to deepen their commitment to the Democrats, especially defending President William Clinton against the impeachment charges he faces, and proudly recounted his participation in the gala inaugural celebrations for Democratic California governor-elect, Gray Davis.

Mergers like that of the OCAW and UPIU are aimed at pooling declining dues dollars in hopes of maintaining union staffs and reversing the declining influence of union officials on capitalist politicians, particularly in the Democratic Party. This ties workers to the very capitalist system that is the driving force behind union busting, lockouts, and worsening safety conditions that are becoming more and more commonplace today. And it ties workers to the U.S. government's increasingly aggressive wars to defend big-

business interests around the world.

There was little discussion at either convention about the real problems facing workers in the oil, chemical, and paper industries. At the PACE gathering, however, following the speeches by Young and Sweeney, two delegates spoke who described struggles to defend themselves against the kind of assault many workers confront today.

Fights facing oil and paper workers

Robert Weygandt, president of the former UPIU Local 7815, told participants that workers at Seagrave Fire Apparatus, in Clintonville, Wisconsin, had been on strike since Oct. 9, 1998. They had rejected Seagrave's take-back contract proposals twice. "We have lost a lot of jobs," Weygandt said, "but we did what was right and just. Any of you could be next. We are going to try and get back and preserve the union."

Alvin Freeman, a convention delegate from the former OCAW Local 4-227 who is locked out at Crown Central Petroleum in Pasadena, Texas, described how workers there refused to agree to a union-busting contract three years ago. The company called in the FBI in hopes of bolstering false charges of sabotage leveled against the Crown workers. "In these United States, we've been put on [Attorney General Janet] Reno's list just because we are trying to organize. They are trying to jail someone because we said 'No. We won't take this.'"

Freeman urged PACE members to boycott Crown products, and to reach out to unions, churches, and neighborhoods to press for support. He called upon UPIU members to join the fight and announced upcoming support actions. Convention participants took up a collection for the two embattled locals.

Building industrial unions

The merger will do little to bring union power to bear on the struggles at Crown Petroleum and at Seagrave Fire Apparatus. In fact, the PACE merger is a step backward from the powerful industrial unions workers built in battle in the 1930s. These unions fought to organize workers in a given industry into one union.

Striking auto workers or steelworkers organized in this way could shut down production industrywide, bringing enormous pressure to bear against their bosses to meet workers' demands. Through coordinated actions of industrial unions — organizing drives, strikes, and street protests that reinforce one another — a powerful social movement of the working class can be built that has the capacity to face the capitalist offensive against labor today.

The PACE merger amalgamates workers

workers spend acquiring this knowledge generally results in a higher wage. (Although, as Mike's column rightly explained, the bulk of the differences in wages between different groups of workers come about as a result of other mechanisms, especially those stemming from the efforts of the bosses to divide the working class into groups that compete against each other.)

But, regarding the costs of training, in a society managed by and for the working people, Engels says, "these costs are borne by society, and to it therefore belong the fruits, the greater values produced by compound labor. The worker himself has no claim to extra pay."

Jim Miller
Seattle, Washington

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.

1,500 workers rally to back Quebec poultry strikers



Frédéric Gilbert

BY CARLOS CORNEJO
AND ANNETTE KOURI

JOLIETTE, Quebec — More than 1,500 people demonstrated here January 31 in solidarity with the 560 members of the National Confederation of Trade Unions (CSN) on strike at poultry plants in Joliette and nearby Berthierville that are owned by Olymel-Flamingo. Workers struck the plants October 28 refusing wage cuts of Can\$2.50 (US\$1.65) per hour and demanding better working conditions and pension benefits. Two days into the strike the company announced its decision to shut down the Joliette plant on January 31 and put a "for sale" sign on the plant gate.

The company now proposes to expand the

plant at Berthierville and integrate some of the workers from Joliette, but refuses to say how many. "We negotiated together, we went out together, we'll go in together." was the common theme expressed at the demonstration.

Steve Thériault, on strike at Joliette, said, "We haven't had a real increase for the last five years and now they want to cut \$2.50 an hour... I'm not ready to accept these kinds of concessions. If we accept them now, they'll come back later for the shirt off our backs." Workers from several towns in the area came to express their solidarity, including contingents of 30-40 workers from Bridgestone-Firestone and the Central Regional Hospital in Lanaudière.

in widely different industries in one organization, effectively diluting the centralized striking power of industrial union components of PACE.

The challenge remains for oil workers and paper workers to organize everyone working in those industries. As oil workers, these correspondents know firsthand that a huge number of workers in the oil fields and refineries are not organized in unions. It is a common practice in unionized refineries for the bosses to contract out large portions of maintenance work to nonunion outfits at lower pay and benefits. These workers are in a weaker position to enforce safe work practices. At some refineries, some full-time workers belong to the former OCAW, while others are members of the building trades craft unions. These divisions undermine our strength and weaken workers' ability to shut down production.

Through their actions, workers at Seagrave and Crown point toward a different strategy for the trade unions. These workers are seeking to use union power, on the picket line and in the street, to defend themselves against company takebacks. Their struggles point away from the dead end of chasing after capitalist politicians and bosses. Their determination, like that demonstrated by farmers fighting racist discrimination by the U.S. government and the United Mine Workers in their recent 98-day strike against Freeman United Coal, shows that working people today are willing to stand and fight.

Another key element in strengthening the labor movement is the capacity of unions to unite workers by championing the interests of the most oppressed workers in society.

While little or no opposition to the merger was voiced at the union conventions, where delegates were mostly union officials, there was some concern expressed about the composition of the top bodies of the new union. There were a number of Blacks and a small number of women among the convention delegations, yet of the 19 International officers of PACE who sat upon the dais at the PACE convention, only one was Black. There were no women. And the sole Black official, former OCAW vice president Calvin Moore, is about to retire.

This was not lost on Alvin Freeman from former OCAW Local 4-227. When Freeman, who is Black, spoke from the floor on the Crown struggle, he referred to earlier comments by PACE president Young on his own career as a UPIU official. Young had noted

that it was an extraordinary thing that a "small boy from east Texas could grow up to be president of this great union."

Freeman responded, "If you think it's difficult for a small boy from east Texas to grow up to be president of this union," he said, "you should try to be a small Black boy from east Texas speaking to this crowd." Pointing to the officers on the platform, he went on, "We'll deal with that panel in years to come."

A serious effort by oil and paper workers to confront the bosses over the increasingly long hours, job combinations, speedup, and layoffs will take a battle out of which many new fighters will be recruited into the ranks of the union. This is how organizing drives will open up. What's more, such a fight can inspire other sections of the trade unions and layers of the working class.

The merger is now a fact. Despite the step away from industrial unionism it represents, oil workers, paperworkers, auto parts workers, and all others in the union should welcome the chance to learn from and fight together with their new brothers and sisters in PACE.

Jim Altenberg is a member of PACE Local 5 in Martinez, California. John Benson is a member of PACE Local 675 in El Segundo, California.

Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay

BY LEON TROTSKY

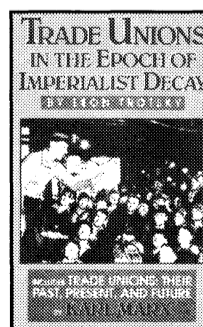
Featuring "Trade Unions: Their Past, Present, and Future"

BY KARL MARX

"Apart from their original purposes, the trades unions must now learn to act deliberately as organizing centers of the working class in the broad interest of its complete emancipation. . . . They must convince the world at large that their efforts, far from being narrow and selfish, aim at the emancipation of the down-trodden millions."

—Karl Marx, 1866. \$14.95

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 20.



Palestinians: 'There is no peace'

Economic, social conditions in West Bank and Gaza are worse since Oslo accord

(First in a series)

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS
AND RYAN KELLY

RAMALLAH, West Bank — "There is no peace," said Jamal Cafi, sitting on the steps of Birzeit University, on a hilltop outside this city, during the sunny morning of February 4. "We got nothing out of Wye Plantation or the Oslo accord."

Cafi, 25, a Palestinian student originally from Gaza, was referring to the agreement brokered by Washington and signed by Palestinian National Authority president Yasser Arafat and Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu at the Wye River Plantation in Maryland last October. The pact was supposed to reverse the refusal of Tel Aviv to implement many provisions of the peace accord the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Israeli regime signed in 1993 at Oslo, Norway. But the Israeli rulers have once again refused in the last three months to meet agreed-on deadlines for additional troop withdrawals from areas of the West Bank, release of Palestinian political prisoners, and other promises.

The Oslo accord was the product of several factors. First was the failure of the Israeli government to suppress the struggle of the Palestinian people for self-determination. The "peace process," though, was as much the result of the bourgeoisification of the PLO leadership — turning its eyes away from the ranks of the fighting Palestinian masses and relying more and more first on the Arab regimes in the region and then on accommodation with Washington in the struggle for a Palestinian homeland. The *intifada*, the five-year-long rebellion against the Israeli occupation in the West Bank and Gaza, was largely exhausted by the early 1990s. While drawing new generations into the struggle, that uprising did not forge a new leadership strong enough to provide a revolutionary alternative to the PLO apparatus.

Despite the setbacks that contributed to striking the 1993 deal with Tel Aviv, however, Palestinian resistance has remained unbroken in the last half decade. Cafi and many other students, for example, joined thousands of workers and other Palestinians in protests throughout the occupied territories in November and December against killings by Israeli troops, for the release of political prisoners, and against Washington's bombings of Iraq. This resistance is one of the main reasons behind the current crisis in the Israeli ruling class — manifested in the splintering of the governing Likud party and the early parliamentary elections the Netanyahu regime was forced to call in December.

Cafi's opinion on the Wye and Oslo accords was shared by a large majority of the dozens of workers, farmers, students, and other Palestinians interviewed by *Militant* reporters in the West Bank and Gaza during a week-long trip here February 1-8.

Economic and social conditions have deteriorated considerably for most Palestinians in the occupied territories since the Oslo accord. As Sami Swalhe, 36, a Palestinian worker who lives in a refugee camp in Gaza City and travels to Israel for construction jobs, put it, "We are worse off today than six years ago."

Crippling unemployment

Among the 2.5 million Palestinians in the occupied territories, about half a million are wage workers, including agricultural laborers. Joblessness now exceeds 40 percent in the West Bank and 55 percent in Gaza — a substantial increase compared to 1993 levels. These figures top 60 percent every time the Israeli regime imposes closures of the borders in the West Bank and Gaza. The closures require special permits to travel into



Above, 2,000 Palestinians in Ramallah protest Washington's bombing of Iraq December 17, defying orders from the Palestinian Authority to refrain from such demonstrations. Numerous such actions at the end of last year were part of persistent resistance to Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Right, Khalil Fatouni shows Palestinian family's house demolished by Israeli troops at Alzawaya village, near Nablus, so that "bypass" road for Zionist settlers can go through area.

Israel, which are virtually impossible to get for most Palestinian workers. These are in addition to general work permits for Israel, which are canceled during closures.

Since the Oslo accord, the Israeli occupiers have extended numerous borders inside the West Bank that they can shut down at will, preventing movement within the area.

The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) now has administrative and security control of all the major cities in the West Bank and most of the area of the Gaza strip. These areas, called "A," comprise only 2 percent of the land in the West Bank. Another 14 percent — "B" regions that are mostly the suburbs of cities under Palestinian command — is under joint PNA-Israeli control. "Joint" means the PNA must get approval by Israeli authorities for all projects there, from digging wells to repairing roads. The B areas were supposed to be turned over to Palestinian control under the Wye agreement, along with Israeli troop withdrawals from an additional 13 percent of West Bank territory. But Tel Aviv has not met its commitments, and has unilaterally suspended implementation until a new government is elected in May. The rest of the land in the West Bank, called "C," remains under complete Israeli control.

To get into an A area, one has to pass through first an Israeli and then a Palestinian military checkpoint. The Palestinian-controlled cities are thus surrounded by large areas where enemy troops reign.

This A-B-C division has provided a legal and physical framework for Israeli forces to confine Palestinians in the cities and villages where they live during closures. "We have allowed Israel to create a Bantustan-like system in the West Bank," said Haidar Abdel Shafi, head of the Red Crescent in Gaza, during a February 7 interview at his home in Gaza City. Bantustans, or rural "homelands," were isolated and impoverished areas where many blacks were confined under the racist apartheid regime in South Africa when not employed by white-owned mines or capitalist plantations.

Border closures often mean that farmers are not allowed to tend their crops or take animals for grazing on nearby hills. According to Rula Nesnas of the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee (PARC), closures in the last half decade reached a height of nearly 170 days per year in 1996 and 1997. Tel Aviv issues these military orders on the pretext of safeguarding Israeli "security." Their biggest impact is cutting off

Palestinian workers from jobs in Israel.

Since the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967, the little industry that has existed in these areas has been stunted from further development. And because of the unstable political conditions, virtually no foreign investors and only a handful of Palestinian businessmen have opened new production facilities in the PNA-controlled areas since the Oslo accord.

Hundreds of thousands of Palestinians depend on someone from their family working in Israel, usually on what they are referred to as "black jobs." These are physically demanding and lower-paid jobs in agriculture, construction, or house cleaning.

In the last six years, Tel Aviv has reduced the number of permits for Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza who can work in Israel from a height of 180,000 to 60,000 at the beginning of this year. The Israeli rulers have tried to replace Palestinians with Jewish immigrants from Russia or Ethiopia.

"But tens of thousands of Palestinians cross the borders every day and work in Israel illegally," said Ziyad Abbas, a Palestinian journalist in Bethlehem. Around Jerusalem, thousands of these workers can be seen walking over mountain paths well before dawn to avoid Israeli patrols. The journey to and from work often takes hours on foot. These workers leave at 3:00 a.m. or earlier and get home as late as 9:00 p.m. "Many Israeli employers have recently used the situation to get free labor," Abbas said. Palestinian organizations have documented hundreds of cases of workers without permits receiving false paychecks or being dismissed after a few days' work without pay. "One day these bosses will pay dearly for this."

Farmers can't make ends meet

Through the laws of the capitalist market, and the myriad special military and other regulations of the occupiers, Palestinian farmers have found themselves more and more shut out from being able to sell their products competitively. Outside the relatively fertile Jordan valley around Jericho, there is virtually no other place where Palestinian producers can make ends meet farming the land. And even in the Jordan valley, where most and the best of the land belongs to Israeli settlements, most Palestinian farmers have been reduced to subsistence farming, unable to compete with

cheaper Israeli produce. Productivity on Israeli farms is higher due to investments in technology and irrigation. Palestinians have been barred from. And many of the Israeli products are subsidized by the state to ensure penetration of the market.

"Confiscation of land and water has been one of the most precious prizes of the Israeli occupation," said Nadi Farraj, a farmer in Bethlehem and member of the Cooperative Society there. The co-op, with 800 members, owns a press for olive oil production, five tractors, and a bulldozer that are rented at a nominal fee by hundreds of farmers in the area.

Out of the 5.8 million dunams (1.3 million acres) of land in the West Bank and Gaza, the Israeli occupiers had



confiscated 3 million dunams, or 53 percent of the land, by the end of 1997. From the land still owned by Palestinians, 1.6 million dunams are cultivated largely in mountainous terrain. Two-thirds are planted with olive trees. The rest is used mostly for the production of wheat and barley, as well as grapes, bananas, and other fruit and vegetables.

"The policy of Israel has fostered dependence on them and is trying to drive us out of production," Farraj said. "Besides a few labor-intensive crops — like strawberries, eggplant, or flowers — which are cheaper to produce using low-paid Palestinian labor in places like Gaza, we have been prevented from any development in the agricultural sector. It's much cheaper today to buy Israeli barley or wheat than what it costs us to produce. Before the 1967 occupation, Palestinians had 37,000 cows in the West Bank. Now we have less than 8,000." All the red meat and most dairy products are imported from Israel. "And we have to buy fuel oil from Israel, rather than being able to import it from Iraq or Saudi Arabia at much cheaper prices."

Farraj and a number of other farmers pointed out that Tel Aviv has consciously kept the infrastructure of Palestinian rural areas underdeveloped. Of the 1,000 villages in the West Bank, for example, 400 are without electricity today and 340 without running water. "The only roads they repair are those used by Israeli settlers."

One of the toughest problems facing Palestinian farmers is the lack of water for irrigation. The Israeli regime has prevented Palestinians from digging new wells or fixing those that are damaged, while Zionist settlers are encouraged and aided to drill deep to tap water aqueducts. The occupiers have also installed meters on Palestinian wells, and farmers have to pay dearly for every liter of water they use above the assigned limit. "They steal most of our water," Farraj said. Throughout the West Bank, reserve water tanks dot most rooftops of Palestinian households, used when the central supply, controlled by Tel Aviv, is cut off. "Thirty-two percent of all water in Israel comes from the West Bank. At the same time, we go without running water in many villages and even in our cities, sometimes

Continued on Page 22