

THE MILITANT

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 64/NO. 9 MARCH 6, 2000

80,000 march to oppose U.S. Navy in Vieques

BY RON RICHARDS
AND ROLLANDE GIRARD

SAN JUAN, Puerto Rico—A huge crowd of working people and youth marched here February 21 to repudiate the deal between the U.S. president and Puerto Rican governor to reopen the Navy's bombing range on the island of Vieques.

Official police estimates put the action at 85,000, the largest action since 1993.

"I am one of those that never participates [in marches] but this is a just cause and I had to come today to be part of it," said Nathaniel Torres, a student. "Eventually they will have to go." For Torres and many others this was their first march.

U.S. president William Clinton and Puerto Rican governor Pedro Rosselló announced last month a plan to resume the coordinated naval-training exercises on and around Vieques that Washington says are crucial to its military preparedness. Rosselló is the leader of the New Progressive Party.

The pact provides for a referendum by the people of Vieques as to whether or not to continue the bombing after five years, with promises for the U.S. government to allocate up to \$90 million in improvements for residents.

Participants in the march had strong and clear answers for Washington and the Puerto Rican governor. Betty Quick, a retired teacher and commercial artist who joined the march, said, "Maybe Rosselló could have received a worse deal, but I do not see how. The Navy will control the referendum and the referendum only gives the people of Vieques a choice between bombing or more bombing. 'Get out now' is not a choice.

"Why do they need that anyway?" she asked. "So 'we' can conquer another 'enemy' like Panama, like Grenada, cause more deaths in the former Yugoslavia, or devastate Nicaragua. What do we need it for ex-



Militant/Ben Richards

Part of demonstration in Puerto Rico that condemned plan by U.S. president William Clinton and Puerto Rican governor Pedro Rosselló to resume naval exercises on Vieques.

cept to destroy third world countries."

Manuel de Hostos Febus, from Bayamón, wore a hat that indicated that he fought in the Korean War. He was joining a group of veterans from different wars who now oppose the U.S. Navy and its use of Puerto Rico's territories for bombing practice.

'Not selling our dignity'

"It's a patriotic issue," he said. "We don't want any more bombs. They want to buy us with their money," he continued, "with food stamps and a housing plan. But we are not selling ourselves or our dignity."

A student from the national college at Bayamón explained that he had just spent

two weeks in Vieques at camps set up by Puerto Ricans where the Navy bombs the island. "We want to send a clear message to the United States that we don't agree with this presidential order, and to send a message to the Navy that they should stop the bombing and leave," he said.

The city of San Juan was covered with posters reading: "Puerto Rico Vencerá: Fuera Marina [de] Vieques!" [Puerto Rico will win, U.S. Navy out of Vieques!] and "Marina=Muerte, Alto al Abuso! Fuera la Marina de Vieques!" [Navy=death, Stop the abuse! Navy out of Vieques!]

The march was called by religious fig-

Continued on Page 12

Big interest in books at fair in Cuba

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL,
MARY-ALICE WATERS,
AND MIKE BAUMANN

HAVANA, Cuba—"It's a world where there's more war and violence, and these books explain the world very clearly," said Yulexy Rego. He pointed to the example of NATO's 1999 war against Yugoslavia, spear-

'These books clearly explain the world,' said a participant of Pathfinder at the Havana event

headed by Washington's savage bombing of the country.

"Many, many people came to the Pathfinder stand because they wanted answers to their questions about these events," he remarked.

Rego, an English student at the Enrique José Varona Teaching Institute of Havana University, had good reason to make this assessment. He had spent three consecutive days helping staff the Pathfinder booth during the Ninth Havana International Book Fair, which drew throngs of workers, students, soldiers, professionals, and many oth-

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Truckers take their demands to Washington

BY MARY MARTIN
AND SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, D.C.—A convoy of some 250 trucks, with horns sounding, filled the Mall here February 22 as drivers demanded relief from sky-high fuel prices and a general increase in pay rates.

The action was one of many across North America by independent and contract truck drivers whose standards of living are being devastated. Many have been forced to simply park their trucks, unable to break even on their work.

As the truckers entered the city they were met with applause and thumbs up by many working people, including those who had to wait in their cars for long periods at intersections blocked by the passing trucks.

"There is no fuel shortage," said Rich Davie, of Summerville, Pennsylvania. "I know they've got fuel stored in Pennsylvania." Davie owns five trucks but says he can't afford to operate them all. "I went from making \$500 a week to \$100 per week per truck. I'm here because I want to see the [pay] rates raised."

At a brief rally held on the capitol grounds speeches were given by representatives of independent truck drivers' organizations. Afterwards the microphone was opened up to any driver who wanted to speak. One truck driver from Michigan received applause when he told the crowd, "Fuel prices are only part of the problem. The answer is in the [pay] rates. We need a 50 percent increase. That would allow drivers to earn a decent living working within the regulations on hours so they wouldn't fall asleep at the wheel, and thereby enhance safety." He added truckers needed a cost of living raise

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Reportback from Havana Book Fair Building the Communist Movement

Celebrate the publication of the Spanish translation of Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium, Che Guevara Talks to Young People and Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces

These new Pathfinder titles — plus some 350 others — were on sale at the Havana International Book Fair in Cuba February 9–15. A *Militant* reporting team covered the book fair, and volunteers from six countries staffed a Pathfinder booth.

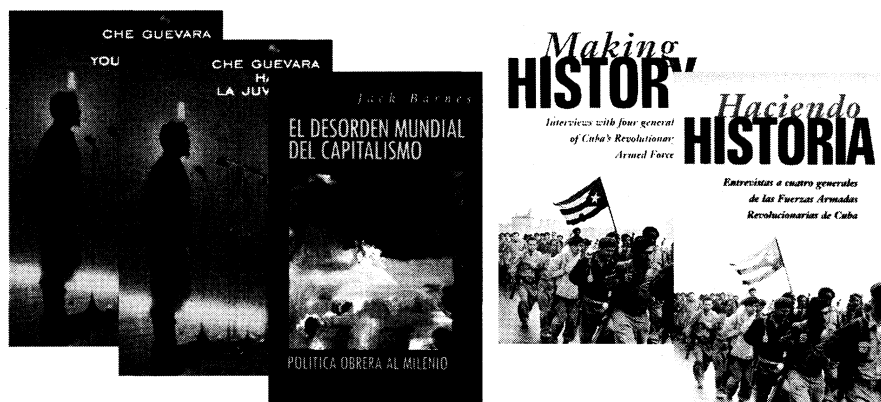
Come to a celebration of these books which are essential in responding to the new rise of resistance by workers and farmers today. Join efforts by revolutionary workers, young socialists, and their supporters to take the next essential steps in building the communist movement.

SPEAKERS

Mary-Alice Waters, President of Pathfinder Press and Editor of *Che Guevara Talks to Young People* and *Making History*
Samantha Kern, Organizer, National Executive Committee of the Young Socialists

Others to be announced

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NEW YORK

Sunday, March 5, 2:00 p.m. Location to be announced. Call (718) 399-7257 for more information.

SAN FRANCISCO

Sunday, March 13, 2:00 p.m. Location to be announced. Call (415) 282-6255 for more information.

Chinese protest Japanese denial of Nanking massacre -- page 7

Farm workers wage strike against anti-immigrant violence in Spain

BY LUIS MADRID

Immigrant farm workers in Spain's south-eastern province of Almeria went on strike for six days in response to a wave of anti-immigrant violence there. Workers voted February 13 to accept a settlement demanding the government pay compensation, rebuild housing, and reissue documentation destroyed during the racist rampage.

The attacks erupted in the town of El Ejido following the funeral of a Spanish woman reportedly killed by a Moroccan. The assaults by mobs, armed at times with bats and iron bars, were against foreign-born workers. Most are Moroccans, although many are from other African countries. The violence went virtually unchecked by the police. By the end of the fifth day of attacks, and after hundreds of immigrants had been injured, 42 people were arrested, 26 of them of African origin. During the riots, thousands of workers sought refuge in the foothills surrounding the town.

The rioters destroyed one mosque, vandalized grocery stores and restaurants, set fire to a number of shanties where immigrants live, and burned scores of vehicles. In the midst of the anti-immigrant assault, a mob of 200 racists raided the offices of the Progressive Women's Federation, destroyed computers, and burned files. Days later documents relating to immigrants in the area were stolen from the federation's offices. A similar attack took place against the headquarters of Almeria Acoge, an organization that assists immigrants in the province.

The immigrant workers responded by shutting down agricultural production in the area's 10,000 greenhouses. By February 9, the second day of the work stoppage, the overwhelming majority of the workers were on strike, preventing any picking of peppers and cucumbers in practically all the hothouses in the area. As part of their fight, the Association of Moroccan Immigrant Workers in Spain (ATIME) organized 14 roving picket squads, each made up by five strikers with a car and a cell phone. Workers picketed farms where they do not work to prevent victimization after the strike, and met twice a day to assess the fight.

The influx of immigrant workers into the country has picked up noticeably in the last

two decades. While only 2 percent of Spain's nearly 40 million inhabitants are foreign-born, the needs of the employers in city and countryside have spurred immigration.

The highly intensive labor required by hothouse agriculture, for instance, which developed in the country's southeast over the last quarter century, is largely supplied by immigrant workers. The wealth produced by these workers has made El Ejido one of three towns with the highest per capita income in the country, creating a vast gulf between the rich and poor in the area.

An informed vote

When the settlement proposal was drawn up, strike leaders distributed thousands of copies in Arabic, including to people hiding in the hills. Workers were able to read and discuss the document before voting. In addition to ATIME, other signers included representatives from Spain's two main trade union federations, other community and immigrant rights organizations, as well as the associations of employers, exporters, and other bosses. The regional government also agreed to oversee its implementation.

Passed by close to 100 percent, the settlement's main demands included emergency shelter for immigrants who suffered damages to their homes; immediate compensation to both foreign-born and Spanish nationals for all losses and damages resulting from the riots, including to religious sites, buildings, vehicles, shops, and hothouses; and immediate issuing of documentation for immigrants already in the province.

The key demands "are non-negotiable," explained Kamal Rahmouni. "The resettlement of those who were left homeless is of utmost urgency," added Rahmouni, one of the regional leaders of ATIME.

Juan Enciso, El Ejido's mayor and one of the main opponents of the settlement, insisted that prefabricated homes for some 300 workers near the hothouses be considered permanent dwellings and that workers be restricted to areas outside the city limits.

ATIME's president, Abdel Hamid Beyuki, denounced Enciso's stance as an attempt to create "a mini-apartheid." In fact, one of the farm workers' demands calls for "a program of social dwellings for immi-



Immigrant workers gather in fields of El Ejido, Spain, to protest racist mob assault.

grants as well as Spaniards, so that all social layers will benefit and the establishment of ghettos can be averted."

Whether or not workers will hold further actions will be decided after a meeting February 25 where progress on all of the key demands must be verified.

Pathfinder volunteers set new goal for 2000

BY TOM TOMASKO

The steering committee of the Pathfinder Reprint Project has worked up a new goal for the year 2000 in its effort to keep in print the books and pamphlets that Pathfinder publishes. That goal is to end the year with at least 50 percent of all Pathfinder's titles fully reprintable.

Pathfinder Press is a publishing house whose titles contain the main lessons of the modern working-class movement. The authors include the founding members of the communist movement, Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, to communist leaders today such as Fidel Castro.

About a year ago Pathfinder converted its publishing methods from outmoded, labor-intensive, and costly film and camera techniques to state-of-the-art computer-to-plate technology. The latter is cheaper, and less labor intensive. Although shop personnel

must learn new skills with the new technique, it cuts training and overall labor time dramatically. However, at the time of the changeover, only a handful of Pathfinder's 350 titles could be reprinted using the new technology. The majority of the books still exist as paper or film.

The Reprint Project was born out of the desire of supporters of the communist movement to as rapidly as possible covert all paper books to digital form. There are more than 100 volunteers in eight countries involved today.

Currently 25 percent of all titles are on compact discs and can be reprinted in a matter of hours. The steering committee, composed of four volunteers in San Francisco who organize the volunteers, believes it can increase this amount to 33 percent by July 1 and to more than 50 percent by Jan. 1, 2001. To do so the volunteers will have to achieve an average rate of production of eight books per month from January through June, and then increase the average to 10 a month in the last half of the year. The project averaged five books a month for November through January, peaking at nine in December.

The project successfully achieved a major milestone when it finished converting the text of all books and pamphlets into digital form at the end of 1999. This is the first step in creating an electronic copy of a book. Since this initial step is not a perfect process, as often typographical errors are introduced into the text, each book must be proofread—twice—for the quality we want to achieve. The team of 12 volunteers involved in this conversion have now moved on to other tasks, such as formatting, graph-

ics, and creating new indexes.

In January the project delivered five compact discs to Pathfinder: *Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* by Frederick Engels; *Fight against Fascism in the U.S.A.; Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution* by Leon Trotsky; *Selected Speeches of Fidel Castro*; and *February 1965: The Final Speeches* by Malcolm X.

The project is aiming to complete between six and nine more titles in February. Ten new people asked to join the effort in January and they will be put to work in February. Three weeks into February, 15 new people signed up. More are expected.

Tom Tomasko is a member of the Reprint Project steering committee.

THE MILITANT

Protest racist attacks

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Coal miners press fight to save jobs in Cape Breton

BY TONY DI FELICE
AND PETER DUCK

CAPE BRETON, Nova Scotia— "How can it make more economic sense to import coal from the United States to run that generating station when it's right across from this mine?" asked Kevin McDonald, a coal miner going into work on the afternoon shift here.

McDonald pointed to the Nova Scotia Power generating station in Point Aconi right next to the Prince mine where he works. Cape Breton coal miners, with a long and proud history of labor struggles in this country, are demanding the last operating coal mine remain open.

The closure of the mine and inadequate severance package offered by the company led a number of miners, members of the United Miners Workers of America (UMWA), to occupy the mine and wage a hunger strike in early January. A two-week wildcat strike involving hundreds of other miners soon spread to other sites.

Cape Breton Development Corp. (Devco) is a government-owned Crown corporation. It operates the Prince mine, the last coal mine here. The federal government in Ottawa announced last year it would get out of coal mining in Cape Breton and sell off Devco's assets, potentially tossing more than 1,700 people out of work.

One of the potential buyers, the Oxbow Corp., has made no assurances that it would keep 500 jobs in the industry, which the federal government had said there was the potential to keep, according to Steve Drake of the UMWA.

Last December Devco closed the last remaining mine in New Waterford, where coal has been mined since 1830.

The official jobless rate on the island has increased to 19.3 percent, as compared to the Canadian average of 6.8 percent.

Many of the miners say Oxbow will not keep the mine open since it can supply Nova Scotia Power more cheaply by shipping in coal from its other mines in the United States and Latin America.

The five-year contract Nova Scotia Power had with Devco to supply coal expired in December. The power company is presently buying most of the coal it needs internationally since Devco closed its Phelan mine that same month.

Devco claims it cannot compete in the international market with its coal and will have to shut down the Prince mine if no buyers are found.

This picture doesn't go over well with most Cape Bretoners, let alone coal miners. Bill Durdle, a retired coal miner in New

Waterford whose house is a stones throw away from the North Atlantic, said the company claims that sloppy work by the miners caused a series of roof falls in the Phelan mine. In fact, he pointed out, the problem was caused by Devco flooding the Lingan mine situated right above it.

Durdle, who is from a long line of coal miners and started working in the mines when he was 15 years old, said that when the mine is closed the only remaining industries in the area are lobster fishing and tourism, both seasonal employment. "Soon there will be only retired workers and those on social assistance in this area," he said.

In a new twist on who is to blame for this, the *Cape Breton Post* and the *Chronicle-Herald* report one company that stands to profit from the mine closings is Canada Steamship Lines. It is owned in trust by Canada's finance minister Paul Martin, and does business with Oxbow Minerals, a division of Oxbow Corp.

According to the *Herald*, "Canada Steamship Lines...has a million-tonne contract this year to deliver foreign coal to Nova Scotia Power. Some industry experts peg the value of the contract at about \$4 million."

The mine occupation and strike were



Militant/Tony Di Felice

Retired miner Bill Durdle throws shovelful of coal into stove that he uses to heat up his and his mother's home. Durdle was hired as a coal miner when he was 15 years old.

ended when the unions and the federal government agreed to form a "joint restructuring committee" to look into the workers' demands. If no agreement is reached, it will then go to arbitration.

Just prior to this arrangement the government mobilized 185 Royal Canadian Mounted Police, some brought in from outside, as a show of force in response to the strike.

Few of the miners think that the fight is over. At the very least they want Devco to agree to a retirement plan for all those employed by the company. The present plan leaves out many workers, some with 20 to 25 years with the company.

Tony Di Felice from Toronto and Peter Duck from Vancouver are members of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union.

Saskatchewan farmers protest, demand that Ottawa increase gov't assistance

BY BEVERLY BERNARDO

REGINA, Saskatchewan— "There's no money to put the crops in," said Gerald Fay, a farmer from Emerald, Saskatchewan, participating in a sit-in in the cafeteria at the provincial legislature here February 11. The protest began on February 7 when approximately 150 farmers from throughout Saskatchewan rallied at the legislature to demand the provincial government use money from its reserve fund—currently valued at about \$400 million—to trigger the release of more money from the federal government in Ottawa.

When Premier Roy Romanow of the New Democratic Party government refused to put any more money on the table, more than 30 farmers bunked down in the legislature's cafeteria. "He's expecting everybody here to go home today and go home with nothing. We're not giving up," said Joanne Brochu, a Colonsay farmer who helped organize the protest.

In addition, two women participating in

the sit-in began a hunger strike. Lillian Kurtz, a Stockholm-area farmer, began to fast at 8:00 a.m. February 7. She was joined six hours later by Diane Cropp from Gerald. Going on a hunger strike "is my way of saying: Pay attention, I'm not going to die quickly," Cropp said. She also explained that she had gotten the idea from seeing coverage on the hunger strike by striking Cape Breton coal miners occupying the Prince mine in Nova Scotia on Canada's east coast in order to win an improved pension plan for the mine's 1,100 workers.

As word of the sit-in began to spread, more farmers from all over Saskatchewan arrived to participate. Darcy Koppelchuk, a Canora-area farmer, was driving his taxi—his off-farm job—when he heard the news. He left later that afternoon to join the protesters sleeping on the cafeteria's cement floor.

Worst crisis since the 1930s

Over the past year and a half, Saskatchewan farmers have organized a series of protests to demand aid. In November 1998, 1,000 farmers rallied in Rosedale; in March and June of 1999 rallies of at least 1,000 were organized in Regina. At the beginning of August farmers organized roadblocks in different parts of the province. On August 17 a tractorcade of some 1,000 farmers tied up the streets of Regina. Most recently, more than 3,500 farmers rallied in Saskatoon January 29 demanding aid from both the federal and provincial governments.

These actions have been organized by several ad-hoc groups because of the failure of the traditional farm organizations to organize a response to the deepening crisis farmers are facing.

These groups include the Pro-West Rally Group formed a year ago, formerly called the Bengough Rally Group, which organized last summer's protests, and the Saskatchewan Rally Group, formed in October. The latter is demanding \$3 billion in aid for the province's farmers.

The Saskatchewan Federation of Labor has called on the federal government to immediately provide at least \$1 billion in disaster relief to Saskatchewan farm families. Members of the Saskatchewan Rally Group are currently in Ottawa pressing the federal government for more aid. Protesters at the February 7 rally carried signs giving the group's efforts "100% support."

Figures released by the federal ministry of agriculture this January reveal the depth of the catastrophe farmers are facing. Agri-

culture and Agri-Food Canada estimates realized net income for Saskatchewan farmers for 1999 will be \$96 million, down from the five-year average of \$740 million—an 87 per cent drop. Federal agriculture minister Lyle Vancilief's department had predicted in October that net farm income would be between \$300 and \$400 million. These were the figures used by Prime Minister Jean Chretien to justify turning down requests for aid from Premier Romanow last fall.

For years farmers have been told they should diversify in order to survive. In addition to growing many different crops and raising livestock, many farmers have jobs off the farm. Gerald Faye said he "rents out his cement mixer and does just about anything he can to make a dollar, but it's still not enough to make a living."

Farmers are angry at the fact that the only money the provincial government has said it might pay to farmers is the \$114 million it will get by withdrawing from the federal Agricultural Income Disaster Assistance program. This would amount to approximately \$2,000 for each of the province's 55,000 farmers. "Two thousand dollars might buy a few groceries and pay a repair bill but it certainly isn't going to address the seriousness of the problem," said Arlynn Kurtz, a sit-in leader.

Some farmers brought their children to the protest. Ashley MacKenzie, age 12 from Langenburg, and April Heck, age 9 from Penzance, said they hoped that the protests "make a difference by opening the eyes of people from the city about what's happening to farmers." Ashley said she would like to take over her dad's farm but is not sure about the future "because the prices we get are too low to cover our costs."

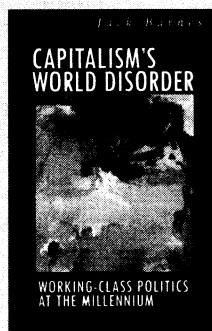
Not all protesters were confident of getting a positive response from working people in the city. "I work in the city, and people aren't that supportive. They say, 'Aren't farmers businessmen? If they can't be successful, they should just go under,'" said Charlene Lang from Colonsay.

But protesters are determined to stay until they get results. "I'm not leaving here until we get something," Glen Glidden from the Raymore area told the *Regina Leader-Post*. "Once we're in here, we decided not to leave. We've got to get some sort of movement," said Louis Le Blanc.

Beverly Bernardo is a laid-off member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union in Vancouver. Annette Kouri contributed to this article.

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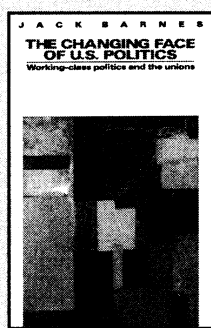
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This column is written and edited by the Young Socialists (YS), an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for

socialism. For more information about the YS write to: Young Socialists, 3284 23rd St., San Francisco, CA 94110. Tel: (415) 824-1429.

Email: 105162.605@compuserve.com Reprinted below is an article titled "Youth in Canada step-up the resistance to capitalism in North America." It appeared in

the *Other Press*, the "autonomous student newspaper" of Douglass College in New Westminster, British Columbia.

BY ZAHRA JAMAL

Blood was fuming, anxiety was riding high, and minds became more and more disturbed when members of the working class community attended the Militant Labour Forum at Pathfinders Bookstore in East Vancouver on January 14.



uation, Krcmar-Grkavac insists that "it's not about what the elite can do to help us." To him, it makes sense if business owners cut down on labour. "They are doing what they want to do to stay in power," says Krcmar-Grkavac, which is why he, along with Kouri, insists on a revolution as profound as Cuba's.

Many people think converting our economy to a socialist system is an unnecessary, radical change. However, members of the forum have many good reasons for why change is necessary. Are our working conditions really fair if a Member of Parliament, who has worked for only two terms, can receive pension, while a miner who has worked for forty-eight years can not? Isn't there something wrong with having to protest for the right to strike, like the postal workers did a few years ago?

They were joined by Vuk Krcmar-Grkavac, a leading member of the Young Socialist Party who pledges his support to the resistance of capitalism in North America.

The forum addressed recent labour movements, like those held by Cape Breton coal miners, B.C Rail workers, and workers at Kaiser Aluminum in Tacoma and Spokane.

What surprises many of the workers from these protests, and continues to surprise other labour movements across North America, is the support they have from growing numbers of youth. In Nova Scotia, for example, about 1000 Glace Bay high school students rallied their support for the Cape Breton miners after Ottawa decided to shut the mine down, unemploying over 1000 workers. Barely a third of those laid-off were eligible for pension according to the compensation package Ottawa presented last winter.

"Youth today have sense," says speaker John Naubert, from the U.S Socialist Worker's Party. "They know labour has the potential to transform society and its problems."

Speaker Brian Hauk from the International Association of Machinists identifies with the situation of working youths. After being laid off fifteen times in the

past ten years, he expressed the anxiety of living from paycheck to paycheck. "Will we even be able to make down payments on a house if it's already getting harder to make a living?" he asked.

Among Hauk's concerns was the alarming rate at which factories and other businesses are shutting down, leaving many people unemployed. Another member of the forum, Lieff Gutthiudasmitt, was amazed that economists labeled this era as an economic boom for North America. "Wherever this boom is heading," he warns, "it isn't looking very good."

Coordinator of the forum, Annette Kouri, sees Cuba's Socialist system as a prominent example of how the Canadian and U.S. economy should run. "It's a revolution in which young, working people hold all the power," says Kouri. "Politics in Canada should be controlled by the working majority," agrees Krcmar-Grkavac, since "the whole economy depends on their labour."

The Young Socialist Party agrees that our government, along with many Canadian business owners, has no intention of empathizing with the working class. When the OP asked what the "haves" could do to help the sit-

"What bothers me the most is that the government always blames us," says a Cape Breton miner. "When it's not us, it's geology. Who was it that promised me twelve years ago that this mine would last fifty years? It wasn't Mother Nature in that suit."

Pathfinders Bookstore holds weekly forums, welcome to everyone who wants to learn/discuss political or social questions. Registration is by donation.

The bookstore itself offers a wide range of books on political leaders, like Malcom-X or Leon Trotsky, and issues such as women's liberation.

Students interested in learning more about the Young Socialist Party can contact Vuk Krcmar-Grkavac at the bookstore. Phone No.: 872-8343 Address: 4321 Fraser St.

Protests in Lebanon hit U.S. support of Israeli bombings

BY GEORGES MEHRABIAN

ATHENS—"Over 10,000 people filled the streets of Beirut to protest the bombings of Lebanon by Israeli forces," said Hadi Bekdash.

"This is the third day of mass actions

shaking the city. The day before yesterday 3,000 students marched to the U.S. embassy. Today we marched to the CNN offices. People are very angry!" said Bekdash, a member of the organizing committee for the marches, in a phone interview February 19.



Protesters fleeing from demonstration in Beirut February 17 after being attacked by Lebanese army and cops armed with tear gas and high-pressure water hoses.

"We have targeted the U.S. embassy and CNN because we hold the American government responsible for the destruction caused by the Israelis," he said. Three electric power plants were destroyed, plunging more than half the country into darkness. Twenty Lebanese were wounded by Israeli air raids February 8.

The raids were in retaliation for seven Israeli soldiers being killed in ambushes in Israeli-occupied southern Lebanon, carried out by Lebanese fighters for national sovereignty organized by the political party Hezbollah.

Israeli foreign minister David Levy has threatened to "set the soil of Lebanon on fire." Israeli forces have occupied parts of south Lebanon for more than 20 years. In 1982, a massive Zionist invasion made its way to Beirut and entered the capital, opening the way for the massacre of several thousand Palestinian and Lebanese toilers.

"The U.S. government had the arrogance to blame the resistance fighters for these bombings," said Bekdash. "That is why we are demanding the expulsion of the U.S. ambassador from Lebanon. Our protests are also a clear sign of solidarity with the resistance fighters in the south. We are all demanding the immediate and unconditional withdrawal of all Israeli troops from Lebanon."

The protest marches were initiated by student associations from the American University of Beirut, the Lebanese University, and other universities. They were joined by the General Confederation of Lebanese Trade Unions as well as by Hezbollah, Progressive Socialist Party, Communist Party, People's Movement, and the Association for the Fulfillment of Land and Humanity. Some banners carried by the marchers proclaimed in Hebrew, "This land is ours."

Protests at both the U.S. embassy and at the CNN offices were attacked by units of the riot police, who beat a number of dem-

onstrators, sending 40 to the hospital with broken limbs. Many police units refused to charge the demonstrators, Bekdash said, showing "how unpopular the Israeli occupation is."

Reflecting the popular pressure, Lebanese prime minister Salim Hoss met with the demonstrators and told them, "We are all the resistance."

Likewise, Egyptian president Hosni Mubarak saw it necessary to carry out a surprise visit to Lebanon February 19, the first by an Egyptian president. A joint communiqué issued by Mubarak and Lebanese president Emile Lahoud expresses support for the right of the Hezbollah guerrillas to fight the Israeli occupation, stating, "The resistance is a result, not a cause, of the occupation."

Meanwhile, according to the Israeli daily *Haaretz*, Washington is starting to back off from its initial support to the bombings, with its ambassador telling Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak that continued attacks on Lebanese villages could harm the peace process.

Tel Aviv's continued war and occupation in Lebanon is increasingly unpopular among working people in and out of uniform in Israel itself. According to the *Washington Post*, a current poll found 57 percent want Israel out of Lebanon now.

The same article quotes several Israeli soldiers in Lebanon. One said he is "no longer ashamed to say we are afraid. Every one of us understands we can die at any moment." Another soldier said, "There are too many losses. Every day is more difficult," while yet another is quoted, "You have to understand. We will not win this war." CNN World News reported February 20 that protests have been set up by the group 4 Mothers at the Israeli prime minister's office demanding the withdrawal of the troops.

Barak has promised to withdraw from Lebanon by July of this year.

Truckers, San Juan marchers buy book

With less than a month to go in the campaign to promote *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*, socialist workers are beginning to use the new Spanish edition of the book. Rollande Girard reports from Puerto Rico that she and other participants in the campaign who took part in the February 21 march in San Juan found real interest in the new title and other Pathfinder books.

"We sold six copies of *El desorden mundial del capitalismo*," said Ron Richards who helped get around socialist literature at the event. Marchers also bought two copies of Pathfinder's newest title, *Che Guevara habla a la juventud*, published simultaneously in English as *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*. The second biggest seller was the Spanish edition of *Puerto Rico: Independence is a Necessity*, which features interviews with veteran independence fighter Rafael Cancel Miranda, of which five copies were sold, said Richards. "We sold \$300 worth of socialist literature in total, including 16 single copies of *Perspectiva Mundial* and an introductory subscription to this socialist monthly."

Capitalism's World Disorder contains speeches by Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes. These presentations contain the experiences and discussions of vanguard workers through the fast-moving political changes of the late '80s and the 1990s.

In Atlanta a student who had been politically active in Korea bought a copy at a farewell meeting February 11 for a group of six farmers heading to revolutionary Cuba on a fact-finding trip. All told, \$110 worth of literature was sold at that meeting, including four copies of *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*.

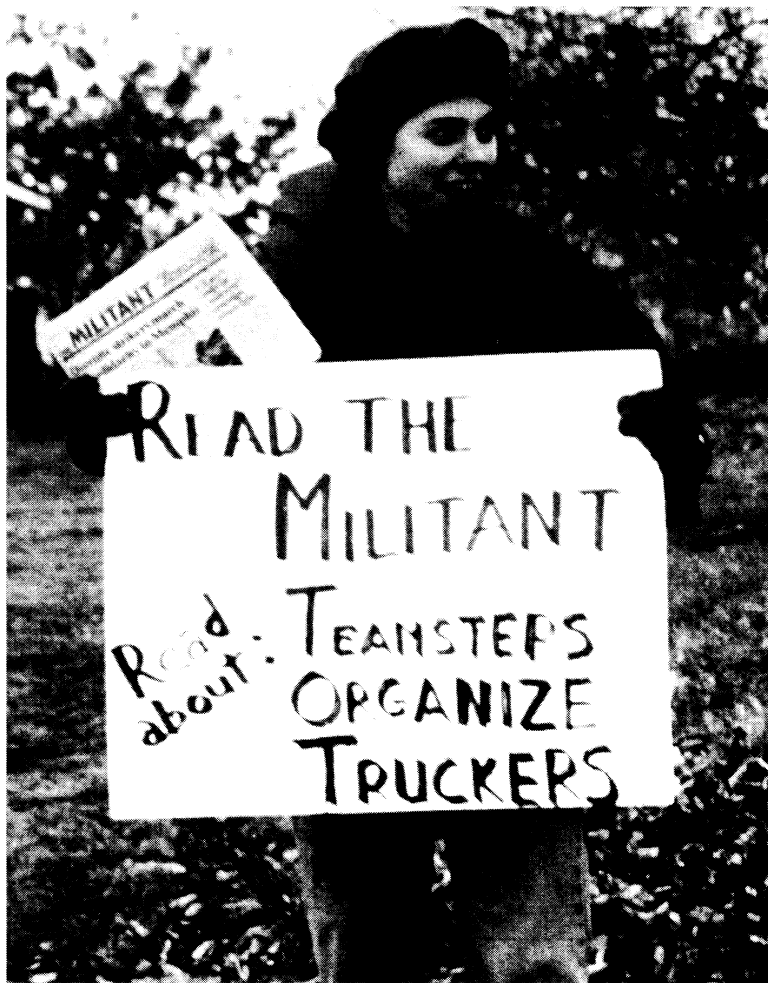
The *Capitalism's World Disorder* campaign scored some real successes in the last

third of 1999. Socialist workers in a number of industrial unions led the effort politically and by example, in several cases surpassing their goals. This same kind of effort over the next several weeks can help get the book into the hands of fighters in many countries who are responding to the capitalist world crisis and growing polarization and conflicts that are unfolding. Socialist workers in the United Steelworkers of America are setting the pace. Ray Parsons, a member of the committee that directs their political and union-building work, reported that nationally they have adopted a goal of 45 for the remainder of the campaign, including 23 to individuals and 22 placed in commercial outlets. The *Militant* looks forward to hearing of other goals and plans over the next week.



BY DON HAMMOND

SILER CITY, North Carolina—Supporters of the *Militant* and Pathfinder interviewed people who had come out to oppose a racist, anti-immigrant rally here on February 19. About 100 people took part in or came to support the action in front of the town hall, and about 120 were there to protest it. Many opponents of the rally said that community leaders and the police had urged people, especially Latinos,



Militant
Supporter of *Militant* brings socialist literature to miners at coal port in Cape Breton, Nova Scotia.

to stay away. Despite this, people came from all over the region to register their opposition. This included many youth, Black and white, and a very small number of Latinos. Some had come because of "concerns"

about immigration, but were shocked by the openly racist nature of the rally. The main speaker was David Duke, a former grand wizard of the Ku Klux Klan. Duke gave a viciously racist talk for nearly an hour including anti-immigrant, anti-Black, and anti-Semitic material. He was followed by a speaker, originally from South Africa, who declared he knew what it was like to have one's country taken over by "aliens." The rally wound up with a Buchanan supporter urging people to sign the Reform Party petitions to get on the ballot.

Nine *Militants* and a copy of *Perspectiva Mundial* were sold to people in the crowd. After the rally we visited stores in the area that sell Mexican groceries, videos, music, and clothes, showing the Pathfinder catalog and a few sample books. None of the stores sold books, but one proprietor bought *El desorden mundial del capitalismo*, and another bought *Nueva Internacional no. 4* and *Che Guevara and the Fight for Socialism Today* for himself.

Supporters also went door-to-door in one of the city's working-class neighborhoods. Residents we spoke to were clearly opposed to the rally. One Latino woman said she

stayed away because she had been told there would be violence. A Black worker told us he did not go because showing up would give credence to the racists. A young white woman said she had grown up in the neighborhood. Some of her family were members of the Klan but she had no time for them. She said the neighborhood had become increasingly mixed, first Black and white and now more Latino. She said she mixes socially with all her neighbors and said everyone had the right to come there and get a job. We sold another copy of *El desorden mundial del capitalismo*, 3 *Militants*, and 3 copies of *Perspectiva Mundial*.



BY MARY MARTIN

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Among the more than three hundred truck drivers who protested fuel price increases at the February 22 protest here, some 82 purchased copies of the *Militant*. Many appreciated its headline coverage of the drivers' protest actions in Miami. In addition, one bought a copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder*.

Sam Manuel, a railroad worker and United Transportation Union member who sold the book, said, "We talked about the truckers' protest and then at length about broader politics and what is facing working people. He looked through the book for some time and decided to take it home." Manuel said the truck driver also expressed interest in speaking to other workers in the city at a public forum on the issues facing the truck drivers.

Clinton rejects moratorium on death penalty

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

U.S. president William Clinton firmly rejected a call by Wisconsin Sen. Russell Feingold to institute a moratorium on the federal death penalty. While giving lukewarm approval to the decision by Illinois governor George Ryan to pass a moratorium on executions in that state in late January, the Democratic president asserted, "In the federal cases I don't believe it is called for."

Overwhelming evidence of wrongful executions, and public pressure in the form of protest actions, formed part of the picture that moved the pro-death penalty governor to describe the situation in Illinois as "a shameful record of convicting innocent people and putting them on death row."

Feingold urged Clinton to institute the moratorium on federal executions until it could be determined that no one had been wrongly sentenced. Clinton instead used the bourgeois arguments, put forward by

Feingold and others, that the main problem associated with the executions is poor legal representation of defendants. Instead of a moratorium, he said he was "favorably disposed" toward a bill by Vermont Sen. Patrick Leahy that would require states to pay for "better" legal defenses for those accused of so-called capital crimes, and ostensibly to ensure that death row inmates can pursue claims of innocence if new evidence comes to light.

Far from ending the death penalty, the U.S. Supreme Court just last November gave the green light to the first federal execution since 1963 for an alleged killer and drug smuggler. In 1999, under the Clinton administration, a record-breaking 98 prisoners in the United States were put to death.

The debate on capital punishment is percolating in ruling-class circles and the big-business press all over the country. Philadelphia became the eighth and largest mu-

nicipality to urge a halt in executions February 10. Besides Pennsylvania, legislatures in Maryland, Alabama, New Jersey, Washington state, and Oklahoma are also considering moratoriums.

While a number of state governments are moving towards or discussing moratoriums, others are killing people at a record rate. Texas governor and Republican presidential hopeful George W. Bush led the charge with 118 put to death in five years. Since capital punishment was reinstated in 1976, one-third of the 612 executions have occurred in Texas. In January, seven of the 12 executions were there. Bush justifies the fact that innocent men and women have been executed with reactionary, anticrime demagoguery. "In this imperfect world citizens are required to take certain risks in exchange for relative safety," said the superrich, hand-picked presidential candidate. "Putting a murderer away for life just isn't good enough," he said. "As long as the murderer lives, there is always a chance, no matter how small, that he will strike again."

Texas has no system of public defenders, which led Amnesty International to conclude the state's clemency process fails to provide any genuine opportunity for death row inmates to seek and obtain sentence reductions.

In Washington, D.C., Attorney General Janet Reno is seeking the death penalty in an alleged Starbuck's triple killing. This has sparked debate in the U.S. capital where executions have not taken place in nearly 30 years. Washington's city council repealed the death penalty in 1981 and it was voted down again in 1993 in a U.S. Congress-imposed referendum. Federal prosecutors are also seeking the death penalty in Los Angeles, where a man alleged to be a white supremacist is being charged with shooting five people in a day care center and killing a mail carrier. Buford Furrow, the accused, was formerly a patient in a mental hospital.

Some 38 states now carry out state-sponsored executions. Despite the enormous obstacles death row prisoners must overcome to exonerate themselves, during the period in which the 600-plus prisoners were executed, 81 were able to prove their innocence, some in the final hours before their scheduled death.

Ny International to be celebrated

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Supporters of Pathfinder Press in Sweden will celebrate on March 4 the publication of the third issue of the Swedish-language *Ny International*. Entitled "USA-imperialismen har förlorat kalla kriget" (U.S. imperialism has lost the Cold War), the magazine rolled off the presses at Pathfinder in New York in early February.

The meeting will discuss how, in the decade since the preparation in English of the magazine's central article, events have confirmed its analysis. "The title reflected the view of a small minority in the working-class vanguard at that time," said Catharina Tirsén in a February 22 interview. Tirsén is the editor of *Ny International*. "In Kosova today we see how the self-proclaimed victory of the imperialist powers in Europe and North America brings them into more direct conflict with the working people of Eastern Europe—and into increasingly open conflict with each other."

"Around 16 people in Sweden volunteered their time to bring this book to press," said Tirsén. These volunteers were organized to translate, proofread, and format the book.

Several of these people participate in the international reprint project. This involves more than 150 volunteers around the world in a long-term effort to transform Pathfinder's books and pamphlets into digital files. "We are hoping that more volunteers will step forward after this event," said Tirsén.

"One of the people who made *Ny International* possible will speak," she said, as well as a representative of the Young Socialists. The magazine includes the "Young Socialists Manifesto."

"The feature article in this book describes major struggles by airline workers and miners at the end of the 1980s. Today we see working people in Sweden regaining the confidence to collectively defend their rights," she said.

The Pathfinder bookstore, located at Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St Eriksplan) in Stockholm, will host the event. The store, which will celebrate its 10th anniversary the same day, will be open all day, with a 4:00 p.m. reception to begin the proceedings. For more information, call (08) 31 69 33, or e-mail 100416.2362@compuserve.com.

UPS told: hire 2,000

An arbitrator ruled on February 16 that United Parcel Service (UPS), the world's largest parcel carrier, must hire 2,000 more workers within three months. The decision is the fruit of a 15-day nationwide strike by 185,000 drivers and other workers organized by the Teamsters union in August of 1997. In the contract that ended the strike, UPS agreed to turn 10,000 part-time jobs into new full-time positions over the five-year life of the contract, on condition that shipping volume lost during the dispute was regained.

When the company refused to create the 2,000 jobs due in 1997, the Teamsters filed a grievance on which the arbitrator just ruled. The decision on another grievance filed on identical terms for 1998 is still pending.

Rightists defend anti-gay legislation in UK

BY DEBBIE DELANGE
AND TONY HUNT

LONDON—The Labour government of Anthony Blair ran into an unanticipated right-wing ideological offensive when it moved to repeal a piece of anti-gay legislation.

The proposal to end the law, known as Section 28, was heavily defeated in the second chamber of Parliament, the House of Lords, February 7. Section 28 prohibits the "promotion" of homosexuality in schools or "promot[ing] the teaching...of the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretended family relationship."

While no one has been prosecuted under this law, its supporters justify the undemocratic legislation under the banner of defending "the family" and preventing children being taught the idea that heterosexual and homosexual relationships are "morally equivalent." This includes right-wing big business newspapers, religious leaders, the Conservative Party, at least one Labour Member of Parliament (MP), and a prominent capitalist in Scotland.

The law, Clause 28 of the 1986 Local Government Act, was implemented under the Conservative administration of Margaret Thatcher.

The right-wing campaign is part of the culture war, the goal of which is to divide working people by making gays, Blacks, immigrant workers, asylum seekers, single mothers, or other sections of working people scapegoats for the effects of the capitalist

crisis. As with other anti-gay laws and actions, their goal is to make homosexuals a section of humanity with fewer rights, while underpinning the oppression of women under the banner of "family values." Supporters of Section 28 are acting from weakness however, given the progress being made towards democratic rights for homosexuals and the decline in anti-gay prejudice.

The government, caught by surprise by the right-wing response, announced guidelines February 7 for sex education in schools that stressed the "importance of marriage" and "family life."

The House of Lords voted the same day to retain Section 28 in England and Wales. Fifteen Labour members of the House of Lords voted for the amendment. The new Scottish parliament will vote separately.

Victories against discrimination

The House of Lords vote took place in the context of victories for democratic rights for homosexuals. The House of Commons voted February 10 to lower the age of consent for gay men from 18 to 16, the same as it is for heterosexuals in England, Scotland, and Wales, and to 17 in occupied Northern Ireland. While the Conservative opposition has an official policy of opposing the repeal of Section 28, its members of parliament were allowed to vote as they saw fit on the age of consent question.

Last October, the United Kingdom's highest court of appeal, based in the House

of Lords, ruled in favor of a man under threat of eviction by a housing association after his male companion died. The "Law Lords" ruled that surviving partners in same-sex relationships will be able to inherit a housing tenancy when one person dies, giving them the same rights as heterosexuals. More recently, the government has lifted the ban on gays entering the military.

The opposition to repeal Section 28 came from Norman Tebbit, a former Conservative cabinet minister and now a member of the House of Lords. Ending the law, he said, would lead to "arguing in schools for the equivalence of homosexual and heterosexual relationships." *The Sun* said, "No one outside the pink lobby wants children to be taught that homosexuality is a natural foundation for family life. Tolerance of gay private lives is one thing. Allowing schools to promote homosexuality is NOT on voters' agendas." The *Daily Mail* argued that Section 28 was necessary to prevent "gay propaganda," and "the fashionable nostrums of gay equality" being taught in schools.

George Carey, the leader of the Church of England, is among top church officials who have come out in favor of the reactionary law. Others were Jonathan Sacks, a prominent representative of the Jewish faith; the Muslim Council of Britain; and the president of the National Council of Hindu Temples. Carey said he opposed "prejudice against anyone on the basis of sexual orientation" but resisted "placing homosexual relationships on an equal footing with marriage."

Labour MP Peter Kilfoyle, who recently resigned as defense minister, sought to portray the issue as of no concern to working people. He demagogically dismissed it as a "chattering class" issue without indicating what his view was.

Sharp debate in Scotland

Opposition to repeal of Section 28 has had its sharpest expression in Scotland. Thomas Winning, the head of the Roman Catholic church in Scotland, denounced the moves of the Scottish Executive in a vitriolic statement, which received wide publicity. In it he attacked the view that homosexual "behavior" was "wholesome and healthy when it is far from it." Winning demanded the Labour First Minister in Scotland, Donald Dewar, make a public statement of his attitude to homosexuality. The heads of all the major Christian churches in Scotland, including Winning, have also signed a statement against the abolition of Section 28. Opponents of abolition have formed a "Keep the Clause" campaign that has won the support of the richest capitalist in Scotland, Brian Souter, who is a rail and bus company baron. He pledged £500,000 to fund

what he calls "the fight for the family lobby." According to the newspaper *Scotland on Sunday*, Souter "is convinced that any repeal of section 28 will inevitably lead to public acceptance of homosexuality and the breakdown of what he regards as true family values."

In a January 30 interview with the paper he called for "statutory protection of the family" and said he would personally lead street protests against the government to maintain Section 28. In the Scottish parliament debate a Conservative motion to scrap the proposed repeal of Section 28 was defeated by an Executive amendment 88 votes to 18.

Articles run by the *Daily Mail* highlighted the fact that the maintenance of the oppression of women and the institution of the family, both vital to capitalist rule, are at the heart of the right-wing campaign against gays. In its women's section the newspaper posed whether women were "responsible for the soaring rates of marital breakdown in Britain today." Vanessa Lloyd Platt, "Britain's leading female divorce lawyer" according to the *Mail*, argued that women's "aggression" was to blame for family breakup.

The weak position of the right wing was illustrated by opinion poll findings published in the *Daily Telegraph*. The paper was forced to admit that "the margin in favour of retaining Section 28 is smaller than might have been expected," with 51 per cent in favor of retention while 43 per cent supported abolition. Meanwhile, 72 percent of people aged 18–34 viewed homosexual and heterosexual relationships as "of equal value." Reluctantly the *Telegraph* concluded, "most people in Britain clearly regard homosexuality—and even the existence of same-sex couples—as being a matter for private morality rather than public concern."

Right-wing newspapers are now aiming their fire on further possible changes in the law that would grant other limited extensions of civil rights to gays.

Protest scores stabbing attack

BY BETSY McDONALD

TUCSON, Arizona—Outraged at the stabbing of a 20-year-old University of Arizona student, 1,000 defiant men, women, and children marched and rallied at the campus mall here February 13.

The crowd was young and loud, carrying homemade signs, beating aluminum garbage can lids, and singing and chanting. Popular chants were "Hey, hey, ho, ho, Homophobia's got to go," and "Arizona proud and free, marching against bigotry."

Still in pain, the stabbing victim, a philosophy junior who asked to remain unidentified, told the huge gathering, "With all my fear, with all my sadness, I do not become a victim. I become a man."

One week earlier, while sitting outside the Rainbow Planet Coffee House, he was stabbed in the back by a man who shouted, "Jesus hates fags," and "I just killed a f—ing faggot." Gary Grayson was arrested and charged with aggravated assault.

The *Arizona Daily Wildcat* student newspaper described Grayson as being out of his mind. Instead, organizers of the march saw this crime as a consequence of anti-gay speech and legislation both here and nationally.

David Robinson of the University of Arizona English Department cited the California Knight Initiative, which aims to ban same-sex marriages. Legislation has also been proposed by Arizona state Rep. Jean McGrath requiring explicit notice in the college catalog of any course with homosexual content. Robinson called for Grayson to be tried for attempted murder instead of aggravated assault.

Three television stations covered the march. On ABC's Channel 9 Young Socialist Willie Cotton, in a short clip, linked resistance to violence against Blacks, gays, and undocumented workers on the border.

Mexican peasants halt cops' attack



Mexican riot police in the central square of Tepatepec, a rural town in northern Mexico. Townspeople overpowered the 60 cops as they conducted an early morning raid on an occupation by students of a local teachers college. The cops were paraded through the town, and then released after most of the 150 students who had been arrested were freed. The students, who are the offspring of peasants in the area, are demanding an increase in funding for the school.

Des Moines rally backs new trial for Mumia Abu-Jamal

BY EDWIN FRUIT

DES MOINES, Iowa—More than 60 people, mostly young, rallied at the state capitol building February 12 to demand a new trial for Mumia Abu-Jamal.

Abu-Jamal is a Black journalist who has been on death row in Pennsylvania since 1982, framed up on charges of killing a Philadelphia cop. Death warrants signed by Gov. Thomas Ridge in both 1995 and 1999 were stayed due to widespread political pro-

tests and legal appeals.

In Iowa, several coalitions have been organized to expose the frame-up. These include the Grinnell Coalition in Defense of Mumia Abu-Jamal, the Drake Coalition to Save Mumia, and the Iowa City Committee to Save Mumia. The action here grew out of a march and rally attended by members of the different coalitions last November in Iowa City. The Drake University coalition formed last

fall and several of its meetings were attended by more than 30 students.

At the rally, Paul Ford, a leader of the Grinnell College coalition, gave an overview of the case. He said a federal appeals judge is deciding whether or not evidence that has come out since the 1982 trial provides grounds for granting a new trial. This includes witnesses who changed their testimony and ballistic evidence that was not presented at the original trial.

Adam Larsen, a student at Roosevelt high school here, explained that Abu-Jamal has been in jail since two years before Larsen was born. He said he received a leaflet on a campus from other activists and decided it was time to get involved and take part in the fight against injustice.

Sean Parson, a student from Drake, pointed out that several states have now put moratoriums on the death penalty, with more and more evidence of innocent people being put to death and of the racial inequities in how the death penalty is administered.

Other speakers were from the Latino Leadership Project in Grinnell, St. Paul's Methodist Church in Des Moines, and the Socialist Workers Party. Besides Grinnell, Drake, and the University of Iowa, others who attended were from Roosevelt, Valley, Central Campus, and Indianola high schools, and Des Moines Area Community College.

Edwin Fruit is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1149.

Nader announces campaign for president

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Ralph Nader announced February 21 that he would seek the presidential nomination of the Green Party. Nader is a liberal political figure, best known as a consumer rights advocate. In 1996 he ran for president on the Green ticket.

Nader's 1996 campaign was marked by nationalist themes. The North American Free Trade Association treaty means "we're exporting jobs—probably about 350,000 to 400,000" to Mexico, he said. He complimented rightist politician Patrick Buchanan, now vying for the Reform Party presidential nomination, saying he has "learned a lot in the last few years about corporate power." At the same time, Nader presented his campaign as a "pull to the left" for the Democratic Party.

According to the February 21 Green Party news release announcing Nader's bid, in

1996 he "received nearly 700,000 votes and finished in fourth place, although limiting his campaign spending to under \$5,000. In 2000, the Nader campaign intends to raise \$5 million dollars."

The campaign will have similar themes to the effort of four years ago. Nader says he will concentrate on "democracy, concentrated corporate power and the excessive disparities of wealth." The Green Party's press release states that "Nader's advisors claim that his campaign will help turn out the vote and could assist the Democrats in taking back Congress." Nader will invoke "the message of last year's Seattle demonstrations against the WTO," reads the statement. Those demonstrations were led by union officials and liberal and environmental activists, who put forward economic nationalist slogans that drew favorable comment from Buchanan.

Chinese protest Japanese denial of Nanjing massacre

BY JIM ALTENBERG

SAN FRANCISCO—Around 500 students, government officials, and a few survivors of the Nanjing massacre gathered at a war memorial in Nanjing (formerly Nanking), China, January 24 to protest a rightist conference held at the International Peace Center in Osaka, Japan.

The conference promoted the lie that the horrific 1937 "Rape of Nanking" never took place.

In December 1937, after weeks of shelling and air raids, Japanese forces overran the Chinese defenses around Nanking, the seat of Chiang Kai-shek's Nationalist government. Over the next few weeks, Japanese soldiers slaughtered as many as 300,000 civilians and soldiers, and looted and burned their homes. Thousands of Chinese women were raped and murdered. The massacre has gone down in history as the Rape of Nanking.

Faced with economic depression and growing competition over markets in Asia, the imperialist government of Japan had expanded its six-year-long occupation of Manchuria into a full-scale invasion of China earlier in 1937. The goal was to turn the country into a colony.

Occupation of China

The Japanese capitalist class sought to reserve for themselves the wealth produced by tens of millions of Chinese workers and peasants, while excluding their imperialist rivals in the United States, France, and Britain. Japan's military forces quickly seized a large part of China, and began to govern through terror and repression. The occupation, which lasted until Japan's defeat in World War II in 1945, was widely known for its utter brutality toward the Chinese

people. The memory of those years runs deep in China even today, more than half a century later.

"History cannot be denied by anyone. The massacre will never be forgotten," Luo Zhongyang, a witness to the 1937 events, told *China Daily*. "Even after I die there is still my son."

Estimates of Chinese deaths during the occupation run as high as 19 million. Hundreds of thousands of Chinese were forced to work in Japanese-established factories and farms. Chinese prisoners were subjected to barbaric tortures performed as so-called "medical experiments" while thousands more were simply executed.

A hard-fought war of resistance to the Japanese occupiers and their Chinese collaborators was waged by Chinese workers and peasants, which ultimately led to the victory of the Chinese revolution in 1949.

The reactionary conference in Osaka drew protests from the Chinese government as well. The events "have seriously hurt the Chinese people's feelings and disturbed the normal development of Sino-Japanese relations," said Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Zhu Bangzao. China called upon the Japanese government to shut the conference down. Japanese antiwar activists picketed outside the Peace Center, carrying banners stating "The past, not forgotten, will serve as a guide for the future."

Seek to use Japanese military

In recent years the Japanese capitalist rulers have stepped up a campaign to win public support for the use of Japanese military forces to back their imperialist aims throughout Asia. Despite a constitution that formally bars offensive capabilities, Japan boasts the



Protest in Shanghai on Sept. 26, 1931, against Japanese occupation of Manchuria.

fourth largest armed forces in the world.

While seeking to dispel fears about renewed Japanese militarism, many call for Japan to "share risk with America in defense of common security goals," and point to the Chinese and North Korean workers states as a threat.

Debate over the Rape of Nanking, the campaign for compensation of the so-called "comfort women"—Korean women forced into prostitution for Japanese soldiers during World War II—and the brutality of Japan's occupation of China and Korea has intensified as Japan's rulers prepare to again defend their interests with force. The effort to deny or prettify some of the most terrible atrocities of human history is aimed at obscuring the reality of imperialist war.

Yasuhiko Yoshida's Group to Rectify One-Sided War Exhibitions was a sponsor of the January 25 "Verification of the Rape of Nanking: The Biggest Lie of the 20th Century" conference. He charges that only the "Chinese side" of the story has been told.

Yoshida questioned whether civilians were killed at all in Nanjing. Shudo Higashinakano, a professor at Tokyo's Asia University and a scheduled speaker at the meeting, told reporters, "People think by analogy that because Germans committed a Holocaust, that Japanese must have done something like that too."

In a related development, the Japanese Supreme Court upheld the conviction of Shiro Azuma, a Japanese war veteran and witness to the Nanjing massacre, on charges of tarnishing the reputation of Japanese soldiers named in his diary. Azuma has spoken out widely about what took place.

Last year, rightist forces in Japan produced "Pride, An Instant in a Lifetime," which is a movie covering up the atrocities committed by Japanese forces in China and bolstering the reputation of World War II general Hideki Tojo. A play was performed January 25 denying that the Nanjing massacre had occurred.

Over the past two decades, numerous government officials, including top-ranking cabinet ministers, have helped cover up the true history of Japanese imperialism. Ishihara Shintaro, a leading member of Japan's ruling Liberal Democratic Party and current governor of Tokyo, told *Playboy* in 1990 that the Nanjing massacre was a "story made up by the Chinese" that has "tarnished the image of Japan."

'Just part of war'

Fujio Masayuki, minister of education in 1986, said the number of victims at Nanjing was exaggerated, and anyway, it was "just a part of war." He also said that Korea had willingly accepted Japanese colonization and was partly responsible for its own annexation by Japan in 1910.

While these and other ministers ultimately lost their posts in the wake of such comments, Hashimoto Ryutaro, minister in 1995 for international trade and industry, became the country's prime minister despite his public statements that Japan had harbored no aggressive intentions toward China during World War II. Sharp debates over the presentation of the Nanjing massacre in university and school textbooks have taken place for years.

National referendum voted down in Zimbabwe

BY GREG McCARTAN

The defeat in a national referendum this past week of a proposed new constitution in Zimbabwe highlights the growing economic crisis in the country and the land hunger that still dominates the class struggle there.

Two main aspects of the proposal were a strengthening of the power of the presidency and giving the government the constitutional right to seize white-owned farms for land redistribution, without compensation.

Zimbabwe's president Robert Mugabe campaigned for passage of the measure. He has been head of state since 1980 after an insurgency that he in part led resulted in a negotiated end to white minority rule in 1979 in what was then Rhodesia.

The referendum was overwhelmingly voted down in the cities, by a margin of 70 percent in Bulawayo and by three-quarters of the voters in the nation's capital of Harare.

But it passed in six of the 10 predominantly rural provinces.

Two main groups campaigned against the measure. One is the opposition Movement for a Democratic Change, headed by Morgan Tsvangirai. This group is allied with the National Constitutional Assembly—the originators of the drive for a new constitution—which came out against the proposal when the government stacked a commission, which included the proposal to give Mugabe the right to dissolve parliament without cause, among other autocratic powers.

The other force was the Commercial Farmers Union, representing 4,000 mostly white farmers in the country. Among the country's population of 12.5 million, fewer than 2 percent, or 70,000, are white. But they control, as they have for decades, 70 percent of the land. Millions of peasants are crowded onto patches of the worst land.

When Britain negotiated an end to white minority rule in the "Lancaster House

Agreement" in 1979, they forced a constitutional provision outlawing the confiscation of white farms. That constitution remains in place today.

Zimbabwe faces an increasingly difficult economic situation. Inflation is well over 60 percent, unemployment remains high, and fuel shortages are common. The International Monetary Fund, the hand at the throat of semicolonial countries for Washington and other imperialist powers, cut off funds to the country when it was disclosed that the government had underreported the cost of maintaining 7,000 troops in the Congo where they are a key part of defending the government of Laurent Kabila.

Zimbabwe has been under serious threats from imperialist powers every time the proposal to redistribute the land has been raised. The IMF contends the measure would harm exports. According to the World Bank, agricultural products account for 40 percent of export earnings.

Cohen debates missile plan with Europeans

BY CARL-ERIK ISACSSON

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—"My fear is we will see European nations construct a new bureaucracy," U.S. defense secretary William Cohen bluntly told a high-level transatlantic security conference in Munich, Germany, February 5-6.

Cohen said the European Union (EU) could not field a 60,000-strong crisis reaction force by 2003, as decided in Helsinki last December, if the member states continue to cut military spending. He acknowledged they could save money by downsizing Cold War military structures, but unless the savings are spent on new rapid deployment forces "we will not see the capabilities talked about so passionately," Cohen warned the EU.

Expressing skepticism about the EU's plans, Cohen listed their deficiencies in logistics, intelligence, command and control, and midair refueling revealed in the NATO war against Yugoslavia. These are shortcomings EU leaders are well aware of and

are spurring the drive to joint military commitments. Javier Solana, former NATO secretary and now foreign and security policy coordinator for the EU, responded, "Putting practical military strength at the top of our agenda should reassure our North American allies. We are doing what they have urged us to do for decades."

But facts point in another direction. Germany, the state with the biggest share of the EU's economy, spends 1.3 percent of its gross domestic product on the military, down from 1.6 percent in 1997 and well below the 3.4 percent of the United States.

Washington's plans to build a national antimissile shield was criticized at the Munich meeting by representatives of EU governments and by Russia and China for destabilizing world security. Cohen tried to ease the criticism and underscored the strong bipartisan support the plan has in Washington. Berlin demanded that Washington not move ahead unilaterally with its missile defense system because such a sys-

tem "would have a major impact" on NATO.

EU member states fear that the missile defense system will fuel an arms race with Russia and China without necessarily fulfilling its declared purpose as a shield against "rogue states," which is Washington's official motivation for it.

One of Russia's top generals, Leonid Ivashov, accused Washington at the conference of spinning "a fairy tale" in justifying the missile defense as essentially against rogue state missiles. He said the system was aimed "primarily against Russian and Chinese missiles."

Wang Guangya, China's vice foreign minister, argued that with missile defense the United States could shield itself from China's small nuclear arsenal of some 27 long-range missiles and allow Washington, if it wanted, to encourage Taiwan's independence.

Carl-Erik Isacsson is a member of the Metalworkers Union in Södertälje Sweden.

NEW INTERNATIONAL NO. 11

U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War

by Jack Barnes

The Communist Strategy of Party Building Today

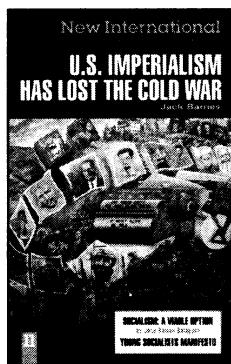
by Mary-Alice Waters

Socialism: A Viable Option

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Young Socialists Manifesto

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Record turnout for book fair in Havana

Continued from front page
ers throughout the week of February 9–15.

One of the books Rego purchased for himself was *El desorden mundial del capitalismo*, the newly published translation of *Capitalism's World Disorder* by Jack Barnes. Dozens of other fairgoers did likewise. It was the most popular new title at the Pathfinder booth.

Largest Havana book fair ever

This year's Havana International Book Fair was the largest ever. A record 200,000 people flocked to this cultural event, held at the historic San Carlos de la Cabaña fortress. A festival atmosphere prevailed, as thousands of families and people of all ages crowded around bookstalls and food stands, lined up to purchase books, or strolled through the grassy outdoor areas and 18th century cobblestone paths.

Shuttle buses, running frequently, brought tens of thousands to the fair from numerous points around Havana, easing transportation problems for working people.

A total of 15,000 titles from 600 publishing institutions were exhibited. Of the 31 countries represented, publishers from Mexico, Spain, France, Germany, and Italy had the largest presence. There were also exhibitors from Argentina, Canada, Colombia, Chile, Guatemala, Iran, Japan, Panama, Peru, Puerto Rico, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and Venezuela. Publishing houses from several English-speaking Caribbean nations shared a booth, as did those from 11 African countries. Unlike previous years, no Russian publishers participated.

The book fair registered the visible expansion in book publishing in Cuba the last two years—part of the continuing recovery from the economic crisis, compounded by the U.S. trade embargo, that was brought on by the collapse of favorable trade relations and aid from the former Soviet bloc at the beginning of the 1990s.

Recovery in Cuban publishing

Some 300 new Cuban titles were on display, both books and a number of new magazines. Ediciones Unión, the publishing house of the Union of Cuban Writers and

The Pathfinder booth was a center for non-stop discussion. "Everyone had ideas and wanted to discuss politics—especially world and U.S. politics," said Young Socialists leader Samantha Kern, on the far left below. At right YS leader Örgmundur Jónsson from Iceland talks about the books.

Militant/Jonathan Silberman (r), Ron Poulsen



Artists (UNEAC), alone published 60 new titles in 1999. Last year the number of books printed in Cuba was triple the number published in 1993, at the low point of the economic crisis.

Almost 1,000 titles were on sale in Cuban pesos. Sales in pesos, and a smaller amount of books sold in dollars, represented twice the amount sold at the previous fair in 1998. This is the result of the increasing number of Cubans, especially in the capital, who have access to dollars, through remittances from relatives abroad or through jobs where they receive part of their salaries, bonuses, or tips in dollars. This is especially true in tourist-related employment.

Thousands lined up every day at the areas that sold books in pesos. Huge lines formed at the special pavilion for children's

books, which are in high demand because of their scarcity at bookstores. Best-sellers included *The Adventures of Pinocchio*, beautifully illustrated by Cuban artist Roberto Fabelo, and *Black Stories for Children of All Colors* by Niurki Pérez.

A wide array of titles by Cuban publishers were on display, such as collections of poetry by Nicolás Guillén and short stories by José Soler Puig, both of Cuba. Political books published here included authors ranging from communist leader Ernesto Che Guevara to Antonio Gramsci, Noam Chomsky, and Cuban-American journalist Luis Ortega, an opponent of the U.S. embargo who does not support the revolution.

Among the most popular books were a new crop of firsthand accounts by Rebel Army combatants in the Cuban revolution-

ary war that brought down the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in 1959. These included *Descamisado* (Shirtless) by Gen. Enrique Acevedo; and *Rebelde* (Rebel) by Gen. Fernando Vecino Alegret, now minister of higher education.

300 books launched

Meetings to launch 300 new titles and reprints were a feature of each day of the book fair. One of the best-attended was for *El segundo frente del Che en el Congo: historia del Batallón Patricio Lumumba* (Che's second Congo front: history of the Patrice Lumumba Battalion) by Jorge Risquet, a member of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party. The book, published by Casa Editora Abril of the Union of Young Communists (UJC), tells the story of the 160 Cuban internationalist volunteer combatants, headed by Risquet, who were deployed in Congo-Brazzaville (now Republic of the Congo) in 1965 to back up the column of 120 Cuban combatants led by Che Guevara in neighboring Congo-Leopoldville (formerly Zaire, now Democratic Republic of the Congo).

Guevara's column fought alongside Congolese revolutionaries seeking to free their country from a pro-imperialist regime imposed after the 1961 U.S.-backed assassination of President Patrice Lumumba, who had led the country's successful independence struggle against Belgian colonial rule.

"This book could only come out now that Che's Congo diary has been published," said Risquet in his talk. Guevara's book was published for the first time in 1999 under the title *Pasajes de la guerra revolucionaria: Congo* (Episodes of the Congo revolutionary war).

"Che's column in the Congo was the beginning of a larger undertaking" to link up with fighters against colonial and imperialist rule in sub-Saharan Africa, Risquet stated. While the Cuban contingent did not achieve its immediate military objective, he added, it was vindicated by the victories of the liberation struggle over the following decades—the defeat of Portuguese colonial rule in Angola and Mozambique, the independence of Namibia, and the end of the apartheid regime in South Africa.

Also speaking at the event was Víctor Dreke, second-in-command in Guevara's Congo column. Several other participants in that combat mission were present, along with many other members of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR) of Cuba.

Other political books launched at special meetings that week included *Barbarroja* (Redbeard) by Manuel Piñero; *Gobierno revolucionario cubano: génesis y primeros pasos* (The Cuban Revolutionary Government: Origins and First Steps) by Luis Buch, who served as secretary of the Council of Ministers from January 1959 to March 1962; and *Otra vez* (Once again), a previously unpublished diary by Che Guevara of his second trip through Latin America as a radicalizing youth in the mid-1950s. Meetings were held to launch two Pathfinder titles: *Che Guevara Talks to Young People* (see last week's issue) and *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces*.

Nonstop political discussions

One indicator of the ferment of political discussion and hunger for books in Cuba was the enthusiastic response to the Pathfinder booth, which was jammed with visitors every day. The international team of volunteers who staffed the booth—from

Continued on page 10

Book fair meeting launches 'Making History'

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

HAVANA, Cuba—One of the highlights of the February 9–15 Havana International Book Fair was the meeting to launch *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces*. The Spanish-language edition of the book, by Editora Política, the publishing house of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, came off the presses just in time for the fair. New York-based Pathfinder Press produced the English edition.

Speaking about the new title were Irida Aguirrechu of Editora Política, who was responsible for the Spanish edition; Mary-Alice Waters, editor of *Making History* and president of Pathfinder Press; and Brig. Gen. José Ramón Fernández, who was the field commander of the Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR) of Cuba in 1961 at the Bay of Pigs, where a U.S.-organized invasion by counterrevolutionary mercenaries was crushed in 72 hours (see talk by Waters on facing page). Fernández is today a vice-president of the executive committee of Cuba's Council of Ministers.

Aguirrechu talked about the four Cuban generals interviewed in the book. In addition to Fernández, they are: Div. Gen. Enrique Carreras, considered "the father of revolutionary Cuba's air force"; Div. Gen. Néstor López Cuba, who at the time of his death last October was in charge of political education in the FAR; and Brig. Gen. Harry Villegas, better known as Pombo, who fought at the side of Cuban revolutionary leader Ernesto Che Guevara in Cuba, the Congo, and Bolivia.

The interviewers, she said, are leaders and cadres of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party: SWP national secretary Jack Barnes, Waters, and Martín Koppel, editor of *Perspectiva Mundial* magazine.

Aguirrechu noted that Pathfinder had worked rapidly to bring out the book in time for the Guadalajara Book Fair and to sell in Seattle during the protests around the World Trade Organization summit, which took in late November and early December "It has already been circulating and defending the Cuban revolution, thanks to the work of the comrades of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States," she said. Nearly 1,200 copies had already been sold by the opening of the book fair. A second printing in January, which was launched at the Havana meeting, includes a new preface by Commander of the Revolution Juan Almeida.

Both Spanish and English editions of the book, with a virtually identical design, also contain an introduction by Waters, 20 pages of photos, maps, a glossary, a list of further reading, and an index.

Waters talked about the political changes taking place in the United States today and explained why vanguard workers and farmers involved in broadening struggles, as well as revolutionary-minded youth attracted to them, need *Making History* as they seek answers to explain today's world and examples of how to fight. Especially important is the example of how Cuban workers and farmers made a socialist revolution and have stood down U.S. imperialism for more than four decades.

Through the lives and experiences of the four generals, she said, readers can see the capacity of ordinary working people to change the world and themselves; the leadership strength and consistency exemplified by the generals; and why young people must combine their audacity with "discipline and knowledge of the hard-won lessons of revolutionary struggle by previous generations."

In his brief remarks, Fernández said he felt confident he could speak for all those

interviewed in expressing his pleasure with the publication of *Making History*.

He emphasized that reading and studying the lessons of the Cuban revolution is "essential for the education of the new generations that did not have the opportunity to go through the experiences of the battles" that led to the victory and consolidation of the Cuban revolution.

Fernández told one story of how López Cuba, wounded in battle and hospitalized during the fighting at the Bay of Pigs, slipped out of the hospital to rejoin the front lines.

He quoted the remark made by Raúl Castro, minister of the FAR, referring to the Rebel Army combatants and others who made the revolution: "We have been capable of making history, but not of writing it." Now, he said, this living history is more accessible through books such as *Making History*.

At the end of the meeting, dozens of people lined up to buy the book. All 120 copies of the Spanish-language edition put on sale were gone in less than an hour. Some 73 copies of the English edition were sold at the meeting and from the Pathfinder table during the book fair. Fernández was surrounded by young people and others who asked him to autograph their copies of *Making History*.

Two other books published by Editora Política were introduced at the meeting. Mayra Mendoza, a teacher in Santa Clara, presented her new book *Para vivir como tú vives* (To live the way you live), a collection of anecdotes about the life of Che Guevara. Also launched was *Confiamos en el porvenir* (We have confidence in the future), a compilation of speeches by Cuban president Fidel Castro at Ibero-American summit meetings.

‘Making History’ shows caliber of men and women who made Cuban revolution

Book is for workers, farmers, youth who want to learn to fight more effectively

The following is the presentation by Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press, at a meeting to celebrate the publication of *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces*, published by Pathfinder, and the Spanish-language edition of the book, *Haciendo Historia*, published by the Cuban publishing house Editora Política. The event was held February 13 in conjunction with the Havana International Book Fair.

Waters is editor of *Making History* and the author of its introduction. Iraida Aguirrechu of Editora Política also spoke at the meeting, as well as Cuban Brig. Gen. José Ramón Fernández, one of the four generals interviewed in the book.

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BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

On behalf of Pathfinder, a thank you to the compañeros of Editora Política for the opportunity to participate in this event here today. Even more, I would like to thank them for the collaboration that made this valuable book possible and contributed so much to the quality, not only of the edition in English, but also the impressive edition in Spanish.

On behalf of the interviewers, I want to say what an enjoyable assignment it was to work with each of the generals we had the pleasure to interview, and to thank them for the time and effort they contributed to the preparation of this book. It is they who are the real authors of this book.

It is not every day that one has the opportunity to get to know such competent revolutionary leaders of the international working class.

Other comrades here today will speak about the importance of *Haciendo Historia* for you in Cuba. I would like to add a few words about the importance of this book in the United States.

Less than one month ago, almost 50,000 workers, farmers, and young people from high schools and universities all over the South gathered in Columbia, South Carolina, to march and demand that the flag of the old Southern slavocracy, which flies over the capitol building of that state, come down. It is the flag of racist resistance to the advances won by Black people in the United States these last decades. The mood of that demonstration—the largest ever to take place in the South of the United States—was jubilant and determined.

Barely a few days later, a battle exploded in the port of Charleston, which is also in South Carolina. Hundreds of dock workers, Black and white, among them many who had participated in the march on Columbia, mobilized on the wharves to defend their trade union and prevent the bosses from bringing in scab labor. Faced with an attack by 600 antiriot police, they defended themselves with vigor.

I begin with this example because it so graphically represents the profound changes that are beginning to mark the struggles by working people in the United States today.

The brutal economic offensive that ravages the lives and futures of millions throughout Latin America and the rest of the Third World has had a parallel course within the United States.

‘Deadly intensification of labor’

The capitalist economic boom during much of the last 18 years has brought with it a deadly intensification of labor, threatening life and limb for millions of workers. Hours of work are longer, in some cases up to 10 or 12 hours a day. Average wages in many basic industries such as mining and meatpacking are a fraction of what they were two decades ago. Declining commodity prices, which the Cuban people suffer from also, are driving small family farmers off their land at an accelerated rate. Inroads toward devastating the social security system have begun during the last eight years of the Clinton administration, the fuller dev-



Photos: Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Left: Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press, and Iraida Aguirrechu of the Cuban publishing house Editora Política speak at February 13 event launching *Making History* and its Spanish-language counterpart *Haciendo Historia*. José Ramón Fernández, one of four generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces interviewed in the book (inset), also spoke. Below, Fernández (second from right) with commander-in-chief Fidel Castro in 1961 during the battle at the Bay of Pigs that dealt a stunning defeat to the U.S.-organized invasion of the island. Fernández was Cuba's field commander in that battle. Bottom left: Aguirrechu holds up the companion titles.

Verde Olivo; inset Militant/Jonathan Silberman



astating consequences of which will begin to unfold only with the next economic downturn.

Racist, anti-immigrant, and semifascist currents are gaining ground among certain middle-class layers, fearful of their future. And Washington's bipartisan consensus on questions of foreign policy, which has marked the half century since the end of World War II, has come to an end, with debilitating and destabilizing consequences for them.

‘New mood of resistance’

Under these conditions, a new mood of resistance and struggle is developing among working people in the United States, and a new vanguard is beginning to emerge out of the labor battles and struggles by working farmers to keep their land. Working people, tested in struggle, are beginning to know and trust each other. They are beginning to take measure of their collective strength, to gain confidence, to extend the hand of solidarity from one struggle to the next. To come together and look for ways forward. And this is new.

As this process unfolds, a new generation of young people, drawn toward these struggles, is awakening to political consciousness and action, and fighters of all ages are increasingly open to new ideas, looking for answers to explain the world in which we live.

Just as important, they are looking for examples of how to fight back successfully against the most powerful ruling class the oppressed and exploited of the world have ever had to take on and defeat.

That is why the example of the Cuban Revolution becomes more important every day in this changing world. And that is why this book, which comes at such an opportune moment, will be a weapon in the hands of a fighting vanguard of workers, farmers, and young people who want to deepen their concrete understanding of this powerful revolution and understand how it has been able to face down Yankee imperialism for more than 40 years.

Through these interviews, one sees the capacities of ordinary men and women to grow and change as they come together in struggle, take on the greatest of challenges, confront the greatest of dangers, establish the first free territory of the Americas, and change the course of history. That is why it is such a powerful political weapon.

We see the kind of leadership strength and consistency that is necessary to accomplish what the Cuban people have achieved over these decades. Through the words of the generals, we appreciate the qualities of Fidel and Raúl even more than before. But we also see the depth and breadth and richness, in human-political terms, of the revolutionary leadership in Cuba. As a worker in the city of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania—a center of the steel industry in the United States—told me, he was struck by two things: the political caliber of the leaders of the FAR, and also their humanity. Both are qualities that workers in the United States know from their own experiences are absent from the officer corps of the imperialist armies, but are indispensable to the fighting vanguard of the oppressed and exploited.

Through these interviews we see better how a revolutionary leadership is tested and forged in combat, not once, but over and over again. And we appreciate the place of the Rebel Army not only in military terms, but in the broadest political leadership sense.

We see the internationalism of the Cuban Revolution, without which the revolution itself would die.

Reading this book, young people, especially, gain confidence in their own capacities, in the fact that revolutions by necessity are the work of youth. But to be victorious, they must also learn to combine their energy, lack of fear of consequences, and unfettered spirit with discipline and knowledge of the hard-won lessons of revolutionary struggle by previous generations.

Most of all, there are thousands of increasingly class-conscious, combative, and confident workers, farmers, and youth in the United States who will read this book because they want to learn how to fight more effectively. Because they believe that if the Cuban Revolution and its Revolutionary Armed Forces are so hated by the rulers of the United States, it is because Washington fears their powerful example.

Those readers will not be disappointed.

It is to their future struggles and victories that this book is dedicated.

Meetings to celebrate new Pathfinder titles

BY STEVE CLARK

NEW YORK—The four new branches of the Socialist Workers Party here and in northern New Jersey, together with chapters of the Young Socialists in this area, are organizing a meeting on Sunday afternoon, March 5, to celebrate the books launched by Pathfinder Press during the Havana International Book Fair in mid-February.

Those books are the Spanish-language translation of *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*, by Jack Barnes, as well as *Che Guevara Talks to Young People* and *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces* (both in English and Spanish).

SWP members and Young Socialists in the San Francisco Bay Area will organize a celebration Sunday, March 12.

At the report-back meetings, speakers just returned from the book fair will describe discussions with working people and youth in Cuba about shifts in the U.S. class struggle, and how they used *Capitalism's World Disorder* to elaborate on these points. They will explain the effort by socialists across North America this spring to go back to those who've bought this book over the past year and introduce them to *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*:

Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions—and to organize classes for young people and others to study that handbook that has guided the work of the SWP for a quarter century.

The New York celebration will coincide with a meeting that same weekend of the Young Socialists National Committee, as well as meetings of the elected steering committees of SWP members active in four industrial unions.

The East Coast and West Coast meetings will also be a tribute to supporters of the communist movement who are organizing volunteers around the world to convert all of Pathfinder's books and pamphlets into digital form, so they can be kept in print in a more readable and cost-effective way. Over the past month, 25 new volunteers have joined some 150 already involved in the Pathfinder Reprint Project. Supporters will be actively signing up new volunteers.

The availability of so many new titles for the Havana book fair, as well as an ongoing pipeline of reprints, is the product of efforts by volunteers in Pathfinder's print shop.

Funds will be raised to help finance new bindery stitching equipment for the print shop. The communist movement has launched a Capital Fund to raise \$200,000 by the end of April.

Book fair in Havana

Continued from Page 8

Australia, Canada, France, Iceland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom—was engaged virtually nonstop in political discussions. A number of people were already partisans of Pathfinder from previous book fairs or other political events.

"It was like nothing else I've experienced," remarked Samantha Kern, who was part of the *Militant* reporting team at the Havana book fair. Kern, a member of the National Executive Committee of the Young Socialists in the United States, said she was struck by the level of political consciousness of many working people and youth she spoke with. "Everyone had ideas and wanted to discuss politics—especially world and U.S. politics."

Many came over to ask what communists in the United States and other imperialist countries thought of the events surrounding the World Trade Organization (WTO) summit in Seattle last December. The pictures they had seen of Seattle cops attacking demonstrators with clubs and tear gas stunned many.

They were equally interested to learn how communist workers and Young Socialists in the United States had gone to the protests, armed with *Capitalism's World Disorder* and other political weapons, to seek out those interested in a revolutionary working-class perspective, in contrast with the protectionist, pro-capitalist solutions offered by union officials and organizers of the anti-WTO demonstrations.

Interest in U.S. farm, labor protests

One youth, Leonid Leyva, bought a copy of the Spanish-language edition of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* by Jack Barnes. When he returned the next day he was about 100 pages into the book, which presents the political views of the U.S. Socialist Workers Party from the perspective of building communist parties of workers in the United States and other imperialist countries. "This Jack Barnes is clear in explaining what's in the interests of the working class on every question," he commented.

That week a group of six farmers from Georgia, Florida, and New Jersey arrived for a fact-finding trip of Cuba, and many here saw the prominent coverage of their press conference. Few had been aware of the ongoing struggle for land in the United States led by farmers who are Black, and this drew them toward Pathfinder books such as *Capitalism's World Disorder* that explain how working people in city and countryside who are in the vanguard of various struggles are beginning to link up with each other throughout the country.

Likewise, they were impressed by a dramatic front-page picture in the *Militant* of the battle that erupted January 20 on the docks of Charleston, South Carolina, when hundreds of dockworkers marched to the waterfront to defend their union and stood up to an assault by riot police.

By far the most asked-for book at the Pathfinder stall was *Habla Malcolm X* (Malcolm X Speaks). Many had read an out-of-print Cuban edition of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* or had seen the Spike Lee film, and were hungry to read the actual words of the U.S.-born revolutionary leader.

Midaly Jimenez, an English student, was interested in Pathfinder's titles on the fight against women's oppression, such as *Woman's Evolution* and *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women*. "I want to learn more about how women are fighting for equality in other countries," she said.

Claudio Burgos, a Young Socialist in Stockholm and one of the Pathfinder volunteers, reported that many expressed keen interest when he explained that Sweden, far from "socialist," is an imperialist power, and when they learned about working-class resistance there to growing attacks on their social rights.

Others came looking for books explaining the rise of incipient fascist currents in many imperialist countries, from Patrick Buchanan in the United States to Jörg Haider in Austria. When Manuel Barcia, who works for the city of Havana, saw Leon Trotsky's *The Struggle against Fascism in Germany*, he declared, "That book is extremely relevant right now."



Militant/Jonathan Silberman
Michael Baumann and Ron Poulsen (2nd and 3rd from right) discuss Pathfinder's titles at the Havana book fair. New titles, from *Making History* to *Capitalism's World Disorder* in Spanish, attracted intense interest among the many who stopped to talk.

A common question was whether communists in the United States face government repression. Pathfinder volunteers answered this question with the aid of an attractive display of photos titled "Pathfinder around the world" showing communist workers and Young Socialists selling revolutionary literature at plant gates and mine portals, picket lines, and political actions in the United States and other countries.

A tobacco worker, curious about the communist movement in the United States, was particularly interested in books on display by Farrell Dobbs, a longtime leader of the Socialist Workers Party and central leader of the Teamsters union battles of the 1930s.

Discussions about the case of Elián González, on which sentiment here is unanimously one of outrage over Washington's refusal to return the Cuban child, usually led to questions about U.S. politics. The explanation offered by the communist workers at the Pathfinder booth—that U.S. foreign policy against Cuba comes not from the in-

fluence of a handful of reactionary Cuban-American businessmen but from class hostility to the Cuban socialist revolution by the U.S. billionaire families represented by Washington—made a lot of sense to many.

So did the description of how the U.S. government is using this case to try to polish the image of the hated immigration police while establishing precedents that will be used to deny rights to working people caught in the net of *migra* cops.

A construction worker who is a member of the Blas Roca voluntary work contingent was drawn to the latest issue of the Marxist magazine *Nueva Internacional*, "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War." To many like him, the title rang true. A not infrequent comment was: "Yes, it's true, a decade after the collapse of the Soviet Union, it's more obvious that the imperialists didn't win. And here in Cuba, our revolution has survived."

Scores of people who came up to the Pathfinder booth, seeking an explanation for the collapse of the regimes and parties in Russia and Eastern Europe, asked for *The Revolution Betrayed* or *In Defense of Marxism* by Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky. Some had already read books by Trotsky, obtaining them either from one of the several area libraries that have received donations of Pathfinder titles, or from friends or co-workers who have circulated them hand-to-hand. Another popular title was *Lenin's Final Fight*, which documents the Bolshevik leader's last political struggle to maintain the course of the October 1917 revolution.

Questions about socialism

Not all who visited the Pathfinder booth were committed supporters of the Cuban revolution. Some expressed skepticism about socialism as a way forward.

Heidi, a University of Havana student, said she wondered whether the economic and social problems Cuba is facing today are inherent in socialism or not. She pointed to the social differentiation on the island accelerated by the influence of the capitalist market. Irelia Batista said, "My parents are revolutionaries and they took part in the revolution. But I can't just automatically accept what they say. I have to be convinced. Is the Cuban press exaggerating when it describes social problems in the United States?"

They both came to the Pathfinder stall looking for answers, and appreciated books that helped them view the Cuban revolution in the context of today's world.

Moussa, one of almost 30 youths from Burkina Faso going to college in Cuba, went for a French-language edition of speeches by Thomas Sankara, leader of the 1983-87 revolution in that West African country. "Sankara was the best leader out of Africa in recent times," he said.

At the conclusion of the Havana book fair, Ögmundur Jónsson, a YS member in Reykjavik, Iceland, who was part of the Pathfinder team, commented, "I can see better both the importance of Pathfinder books in the world and of the Young Socialists. It's harder to appreciate this in Iceland itself. We met so many people in Cuba who said they need Pathfinder books."

YS member Claudio Burgos of Stockholm added, "Yes, I learned a lot too. After all the political discussions of the last week, I realize I have to read and study more, so I can give clear communist explanation to these questions."

Buchanan advances as Ventura exits Reform Party

BY DOUG JENNESS

ST. PAUL, Minnesota—Following Minnesota governor Jesse Ventura's split from the national Reform Party on February 11, party activists in Minnesota have been debating whether to stay with the national party or set up an independent party in Minnesota. A special convention has been called for March 4 to decide this matter.

In the context of this discussion, Patrick Buchanan, the ultrarightist who is seeking to be the party's standard-bearer in the presi-

dential elections, has come to Minnesota to win support. At a news conference February 18 Buchanan said that even if the Minnesota organization severs ties with the national party he will fight to get on the Minnesota ballot as the Reform Party candidate. Buchanan, who broke from the Republican Party last year to seek the Reform Party nomination, stated, "I believe he [Ventura] has run away from...a good fight for the people of Minnesota...on ideas and issues."

One of the reasons Ventura gave for his

rupture with the national party was that Buchanan "is virtually unopposed in the quest for the Reform Party nomination."

"In Minnesota," he said, "we cannot maintain our socially moderate identity while a right-winger heads our national ticket." The Minnesota governor charged Buchanan with being "an antiabortion extremist and unrealistic isolationist," and accused him of links to Louisiana Ku Klux Klan leader David Duke.

Buchanan called this an "unjustified smear." "We do not seek [Duke's] endorsement and...we do not want it," he said. He defended his positions against abortion rights and for U.S. trade protectionism.

Real estate tycoon Donald Trump, who had been testing the waters for the Reform Party nomination with Ventura's blessing, ended his bid after Ventura's secession.

The day after Ventura left the national Reform Party, the party's national committee met in Nashville and dumped the party chairman Jack Gargan, a Ventura ally who was elected chair at the party's national convention last July. The raucous meeting in Nashville replaced Gargan with Pat Choate, who was Ross Perot's running mate in the 1996 presidential race.

Up until this meeting Choate was national chair of Buchanan's presidential campaign but resigned from this position after his election to the top party post. A federal judge in Virginia has ordered Gargan to give the court control of \$2.5 million in federal matching funds until it can determine who is at the party's helm.

Following the Nashville meeting some party leaders have initiated an effort to draft Perot into a third try for president. This move is aimed at countering Buchanan's effort to be the party's presidential candidate. In a statement reported by the Associated Press, Buchanan said Perot "would be a formidable challenger for the nomination" but pledged to go ahead with his campaign.

Earlier in the month Buchanan defended Austrian fascist Jörg Haider, saying that he does "not see any threat to Europe or the world or anywhere form Mr. Haider or that coalition government sitting in Vienna."

Demonstrations in France the same day drew around 20,000 people in a number of cities. In Paris, 9,000 people marched both condemning rightist organizations in that country and raising anti-Haider slogans.

People's Party chancellor Wolfgang Schüssel dismissed the protests. "I expect that once again, there will be another emotional outpouring at the weekend with big demonstrations, where the old leftists...young people and the Internet generation can get out and let off steam. Then things will at some point return to normal," he said.

Haider responded to the actions, saying, "Left socialist circles are misusing" the youth by paying them to participate in what he termed an "idiotic" demonstration, calling it a form of "street-violence."

Showing what is in store for working people under the new government, Lorenz Fritz, secretary-general of the employers' organization, the Federation of Austrian industry, said he looked forward to changes. "Under the old system of Social Partnership we earned the money and they [the unions] allocated it," Fritz said, adding that the "old system is breaking down and a new one is being put in place. It is high risk and it can fail. But it has to be done."

Hoping the response from working people will be minimal, Fritz said that the bosses in Austria "have measured strikes in seconds until now. This is abnormal. We will measure them in minutes in the future."

Mass rebuff to fascist party in Austria

BY BIRGITTA ISACSSON

Tens of thousands poured into Vienna February 19 to protest the new coalition government in Austria of the conservative Peoples Party and the fascist Freedom Party. Estimates of the crowd ranged from 150,000 to 250,000—by any measure the largest demonstration in the city since 1993.

Demonstrators carried homemade signs, including "Stop den rassismus, stop den faschismus" (Stop racism, stop fascism), with many showing portraits of Freedom Party leader Jörg Haider and Adolf Hitler. The rally was held February 19 at the Heldenplatz in front of Vienna's Hofburg Palace, where Hitler addressed his supporters after German imperialism invaded Austria in 1938. Anti-Haider protests in 1993 drew 300,000 people.

Daily protests

Antigovernment rallies are taking place almost daily in Vienna. Thousands of students from 40 different schools turned out February 18 and were threatened with reprimands from the school authorities. "Fight against racism and social austerity measures," was one of the banners.

The Social Democratic Party, the Green Party, many unions, human rights organizations, religious leaders, prominent artists, and pensioners' groups backed the February 19 action. People also came from Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, and the Netherlands.

Truckers take their demands to Washington

Continued from front page
at least every five years.

"This [protest] should have been done years ago," commented Lloyd Moore, a trucker who hauls steel for Bethlehem Steel Corp. A contract driver from Atlanta, Craig Clark, said he heard about the protest on the radio after he dropped off his shipment in Baltimore and decided to join in. "I'm being affected by the higher fuel prices, because although the company pays for the fuel they lowered my wages."



BY LAUREN HART

CHARLESTON, South Carolina—Instead of their usual day's work of moving cargo from the port to the railroad and other destinations, nearly 100 port truck drivers here formed a slow-moving procession with their rigs past the three local port terminals February 18. Their main demands were for compensation for rising fuel prices, payment for waiting time and work they perform at the ports, and the right to have a union.

As the convoy went through the Black community in downtown Charleston and then along the highway, residents and workers passing by waved, blew their horns, and put their fists in the air in solidarity.

"We need some kind of representation," said Robert Bates at a rally before the caravan. "We want to unionize—that's the only route left." Bates, a port truck driver for 23 years, is the president of the United Container Movers Association of Charleston (UCMA).

The drivers want to affiliate with the Teamsters union. But the government and shipping companies claim owner-operators are "independent contractors." Bates argued, "We're mislabeled employees" and have a right to join together in a union.

Drivers were eager to explain the issues in their fight. "Fuel prices and anything associated with trucks continues to rise, but

the wages of a truck driver stay dirt cheap. You can't afford to feed your family," said Arnold Heywood.

The price of diesel fuel has shot up by as much as 60 percent in the last month, but drivers have received at best a surcharge from the companies they work for of just 5-10 percent to compensate. Bill Saab, who hauls containers between the rail yards and ports, said his monthly fuel bill has risen by \$300.

"This is historic," said Bates, referring to the day's protests nationwide. "It's the dawn of a new era for truckers."



BY RACHELE FRUIT

MIAMI—Truckers at the Port of Miami ended a two-week strike over the February 19-20 weekend that "crippled the region's crucial cargo industry," according to the Miami *Herald*. The drivers are lease owner-operators who are fighting for higher rates to compensate for their increased costs, such as diesel fuel, as well as an end to the fraudulent insurance rates that the trucking companies charge the drivers.

Esther and Pedro Estrada, activists in the organization Support Trucking Group, explained in an interview, "Although promises were made by some of the shipping bosses on Friday, such as a 15 percent rate increase per trip, nothing was put in writing, and by Monday, they had already begun to back down, saying that customers would not want to pay more, and that it would be bad for business."

Several hundred dump truck drivers, who are independent owner-operators, are still conducting their walkout, according to the Estradas.



BY TED LEONARD

BOSTON—Thirty-five tractor trailer owner-operators who work at the Boston



Truckers mount action on the border between Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Across Canada and the United States, drivers are organizing to protest low incomes, the high cost of diesel fuel, and toll road fees.

port convoyed from the International Brotherhood of Teamsters Local 25 union hall in Charlestown to downtown Boston February 16. They were protesting the recent skyrocketing of diesel fuel prices and highlighted the organizing drive being conducted by drivers at the Boston port.

That morning U.S. secretary of energy William Richardson conducted a "Northeast Heating Oil Summit" at Faneuil Hall. Joining the secretary on a panel to discuss why home heating oil prices skyrocketed were the governors of New Hampshire and Massachusetts, four members of Congress, oil industry representatives, and consumer advocates. George Cashman, president of Teamsters Local 25 in Boston and director of the Teamsters Port Division, also spoke. Seventy-five percent of the homes that are heated by oil in the United States are on the Eastern Seaboard from Maine to Virginia. Heating oil prices reached record highs

shortly after a cold snap in December. Responding to a proposal to set up a reserve of heating oil for New England to control big swings in the supply in the region, a speaker from Cargill Industry explained, "By setting up a government cartel, you will take the incentive out of shipping the product."

The representative from Morgan Stanley said the run-up in prices was a result of the "global market" where "the highest bidder gets the oil." He said OPEC is the problem and that "the Saudis are sitting on extra barrels." He told Richardson, "you must do something about it," and warned that Saddam Hussein will acquire renewed influence in the world with Iraqi oil.

The spokesperson from the New England Gas Association pointed out heating oil prices are coming down. Currently it is \$1.56 a gallon, down from the \$2.04 at the beginning of the month, but up from last year's 79 cents. He said, encouragingly, "The free market system is working."

A spokesperson for the Plymouth Council on Aging said, "People are having to choose between food, medicine or fuel."



BY JOHN STEELE

TORONTO—Thousands of truckers in Ontario, Quebec, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia have begun a protest against the high cost of diesel fuel, toll road fees, and low wages.

"Between 80 and 90 percent of this country's productivity travels by truck and we will bring the entire economy to a halt if necessary to get what we want," said Oshawa trucker Paul Bourgeois at a meeting of 1,000 angry truckers February 20.

In Ontario the protest is being organized by the National Truck Association, formed three weeks ago by a group of independent truck drivers. The truckers vowed to keep their rigs at home till the government meets their demands. They have organized huge slow-moving convoys on the highways around Toronto, tying up traffic.

Three hundred truckers used their 18-wheelers to blockade the Nova Scotia-New Brunswick boundary and voted to defy an interim court injunction initiated by the Nova Scotia government against the blockade. The protest stretched for four kilometers.

"The spontaneous protest spread to Newfoundland where a dozen rigs were parked at a weigh station outside St. John's. In Quebec about 70 trucks blocked lanes on two highways and a provincial road near the Ontario border.

Mary Martin is a member of the International Association of Machinists; Sam Manuel belongs to the United Transportation Union; Ted Leonard is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees; John Steele is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 175. Andrea Morell, a member of the UTU, contributed to this article.

Damning evidence, cops' contrived testimony mark Diallo murder trial

BY GLOVA SCOTT
AND MIKE GALATI

NEWYORK—The trial of four New York cops who killed Amadou Diallo ended this week in Albany, where it had been moved to provide a better jury pool for the cops.

Despite a lackluster prosecution, and the specter of both the prosecution and defense proposing lesser charges at the closing, some damning testimony was allowed to be heard.

Diallo, a 22-year-old Black worker from Guinea, was returning home to his apartment when four white New York cops gunned him down in a hail of 41 bullets. He was unarmed. His killing sparked massive street protests, including daily actions at police headquarters where some 1,200 people were arrested in acts of civil disobedience over the course of several months. There have been daily demonstrations outside the courtroom during the trial.

Of the 10 witnesses called, not one heard any of the undercover cops identify themselves before they opened fire on Diallo. The one eyewitness called by the defense

testified that not only did the cops not identify who they were, but they kept firing even after Diallo had fallen to the ground mortally wounded. She was then declared a hostile witness by the defense.

The cops, in rehearsed testimony, blamed Diallo for acting suspiciously. Sean Carroll said Diallo would "peek out" of the apartment building then "slink back" in, saying the he may have been a lookout for robbers. Carroll claimed Diallo "just didn't want to listen" to the officers' polite requests to talk. When Diallo pulled his wallet from his pocket, Carroll claimed, "All I could see was the top slide of a black gun."

The killer cried on the stand, claiming he held Diallo, saying, "Don't die." Carroll was one of two cops who fired 16 shots.

Kenneth Boss, who fired five of the 41 shots, told the jury that Diallo was in a "combat stance" and that he, the cop, said to himself, "Oh, my God, I'm going to die."

Edward McMellon testified that as he approached Diallo before the shooting he said, "Sir, please, New York police. We need a word with you." Other cops repeated simi-

lar language that many—from lawyers, court officers, Diallo's neighbors on Wheeling Avenue, and other working people—found hard to believe.

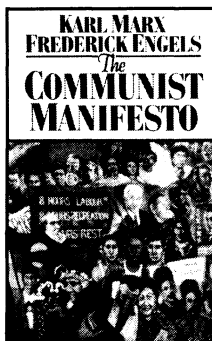
After the cops finished telling their stories to the jury, the prosecution carried out a lackluster cross examination. They also chose not to cross examine the defense's last witness—a so-called police tactical expert who claimed that the shooting of Diallo was in accordance with police training.

One particularly glaring omission in the Bronx district attorney's prosecution was not raising the issue of race, a key factor in the entire incident. When the defense rested its case, the prosecutors asked that the jury be given the option of convicting the four cops on lesser charges than murder, including manslaughter or criminally negligent homicide. This means that if found guilty the cops may spend little or no time in jail.

In a further blow to the fight for justice for Diallo, Judge Joseph Teresi ruled that he will instruct the jury that the law allows on-duty police to use deadly physical force if they think their lives are in danger. He has also said that he will tell the jury that cops making an arrest have less of a duty to try to retreat before resorting to lethal violence than ordinary people do.

The four cops were members of the Street Crime Unit set up by the city government here. This unit is composed overwhelmingly of white plainclothes officers, who in the words of the *New York Times*, would "roam in unmarked cars searching for crimes and suspected robbers, rapists, and gunmen." In a concession to the earlier protests, the police agreed to add minorities to the squad and made the unit wear uniforms. The *Times* noted the unit "has been widely accused of stopping an inordinate number of Black and Hispanic citizens, many of whom tell of abuses by officers who might be mistaken for street toughs."

Glova Scott is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees. Mike Galati is a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers.



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Unionists build affirmative action march

BY MIKE ITALIE
AND ANGEL LARISCY

MIAMI—Support continues to grow for a March 7 massive march on Tallahassee, Florida, to defend affirmative action. In south Florida more than 30 buses of trade unionists, workers, students, and others are planning to make an all-night trip to the capital for the action. At the same time, officials of the state's university system voted to move ahead with the plan to scrap affirmative action programs.

Unions are playing a central role in organizing buses to the march. At a February 21 planning meeting of the Jobs with Justice Task Force in Miami, it was reported that the International Longshoremen's Association as well as the AFL-CIO are sending three buses to Tallahassee. The American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees has reserved eight buses, one of which is being set aside for youth. Other unions sending buses from south Florida include the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees, Teamsters Local 769, and the Service Employees International Union.

Reporting for the youth committee, Stanley Jean said that students will be attending from Florida International University, Miami-Dade Community College, and other schools. Twelve students from the Haitian Society at St. Thomas University are working out how they can attend.

Protests erupted across the state in the past weeks in reaction to Florida governor John Ellis Bush's executive order called One Florida, which prohibits race or gender from being a consideration in government hiring and contracting, or in admission to state uni-

versities. At three public hearings in the state, thousands turned out to voice their opposition to the plan. Rallies have also been held in cities and on campuses.

On February 17 the Florida state university system's board of regents voted unanimously to eliminate race and gender as considerations for admission of college applicants at the 10 public universities in the state. In an effort to counter charges that ending affirmative action will result in fewer Blacks and women going to state schools, Bush's One Florida plan makes a promise that the top 20 percent of seniors in each high school who fulfill course load and other requirements—the so called "Talented 20"—can gain entrance to the state's universities.

The day before the board of regents meeting, Bush retreated from including all state government agencies in the plan to erase affirmative actions measures in contracting. Fifteen agencies will scrap the use of race and gender considerations instead of all of them.

Bush claims that these agencies will report directly to him and that under his guidance greater diversity in state contracts will be achieved.

Supporters of affirmative action are turning out in other cities in the South. More than 200 students rallied in Athens, Georgia, on February 16 at the Tate student center at the University of Georgia. The university's weak affirmative action program is under attack from a lawsuit by former applicants. They claim they were unconstitutionally denied admission, charging they would have been accepted if they were Black. Only 6 percent of this year's freshman class of 4,200 is African-American.



Unionists and students at January rally in Tallahassee to support affirmative action

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

ALABAMA

Birmingham

Is Biology a Women's Destiny? Speaker: Kristin Meriam, Socialist Workers Party and member of United Steel Workers of America Local 12014. Fri., March 3, 7:30 p.m.

Defend Affirmative Action! Reportback from Tallahassee. Speaker: Ardy Blandford, Socialist Workers Party and member of United Auto Workers Local 1155. Fri., March 10, 7:30 p.m. Dinner 6:30 p.m. Both events to be held at 2232 Magnolia Ave. Donation: \$4. Tel: (205) 323-3079.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

What Happened to the Peace Process: The Struggle for a United Independent Ireland. Speaker: Gary Cohen, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., March 3, 7:30 p.m. Codman Square, 683 Washington St., Dorchester. Donation: \$4. Tel: (617) 282-2254.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

Protest Renewed Bombing of Vieques; Oppose New Agreement between the U.S. and the Governor of Puerto Rico. Panel discussion. Fri., March 3, 7:30 p.m. Dinner 6:00 p.m. 711 E. Passyunk Ave. (Two blocks below South and 5th Sts.). Tel: (215) 627-1237.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

Farmers Fight for Land and Justice—Eyewitness Report from the Resistance in Canada. Sat., March 4, 7:30 p.m. 2533 16th Ave. S. Donation: \$4. Tel: (206) 323-1755.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

The Cuban Revolution in Today's World: Report Back from Havana Book Fair. Slide show and talk by Ron Poulsen, just returned from Cuba. Fri., March 3, 7:00 p.m. First floor, 176 Redfern St., Redfern. Donation: \$4. Tel: 9690-1533.

CANADA

Toronto

Report from Cuba: Che Guevara's Example for Youth Today. Fri., March 3, 7:30 p.m. 851 Bloor St. West. Donation: \$5. Tel: (416) 533-4324.

NEW ZEALAND

Christchurch

Advancing the Fight for Maori Rights. Sat., March 4, 7:00 p.m. Gloucester Arcade, 129 Gloucester St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (3) 365-6055.

80,000 march to oppose U.S. navy

continued from front page

ures, led by San Juan archbishop Roberto González. People were asked to bring no political emblems, only white flags to symbolize peace for Vieques. It was a silent march with no chants, but protest songs were playing loud. Many people carried Puerto Rican flags or wore the flag as head scarves, hats, pins and sashes. A majority of marchers wore white T-shirts with slogans such as: "Marchemos por Vieques" [We walk for Vieques], which was the official T-shirt, and "My nation is not for rent or for sale," or "Ni una bomba más!" [Not one more bomb!]. From afar the crowd looked like a sea of white.

There also were many priests, nuns, and monks in their full religious garb.

Hoping to use the issue of Vieques to win support in the November elections, the opposition Popular Democratic Party (PPD) backed the march, which was led off by San Juan mayor Sila Calderón and Archbishop González.

In those municipalities controlled by the PPD, municipal vehicles were used to trans-

port marchers and provide water and medical services.

The Puerto Rican Port Authority turned down requests to increase ferry service between Vieques and the main island so that more residents of Vieques could attend the march.

As the contingent from Vieques arrived to join the march, the crowd welcomed them as heroes. People yelled, "We are with you, you are not alone!"

The march went down the Las Americas expressway, which had been blocked off by police, to Hiram Bithorn stadium.

Patty Thompson contributed to this article.

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CALENDAR

CONNECTICUT

Groton

Massive Rally—Peace for Vieques. In front of the Navy base in Groton. Car caravans will depart from New Jersey, New York, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, and other states. Sat., March 4, 12:00 noon. For more information, call (860) 342-0512 or visit the web site: www.viequeslibre.org

FLORIDA

Tallahassee

Mass Demonstration in Support of Affirmative Action. Tues., March 7, 11:00 a.m. Assemble at the Capitol. Bus transportation available through Elite Bus Tours. Call (305) 757-9700 for reservations. Airline transportation, group rates available through Great Adventure Travel (305) 858-4347.

OHIO

Mansfield

Join Locked-Out USWA Local 169 Members at a Noon Rally. Sat., March 25. Town Square. For more information, call Local 169, (419) 522-9375.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Rally for Rural America. Tues., March 21. Sponsored by the National Farmers Union.

Only labor movement can defeat fascists

The excerpt below is taken from the discussion period following “The Vote for Ross Perot and Patrick Buchanan’s ‘Culture War,’” a talk given at a New York City Militant Labor Forum on Nov. 7, 1992, four days after the U.S. presidential elections. Last week the *Militant* published the first part of this section, in which Jack Barnes explains that fascism is not a form of capitalist rule, but “a movement set in motion...in order to maintain capitalist rule.” The entire talk appears in the pages of *Capitalism’s World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* & 1999 Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY JACK BARNES

Once fascist movements come to power, they use the state and forms of capitalist economic planning to bolster the strongest components of the bourgeoisie against smaller rival capitalists and against the toilers. Historically, these governments are short-lived. They become more and more bureaucratized, corrupt, and brittle. But a horrible logic is played out—a drive toward war, a monstrously brutal crushing and atomization of the labor movement, a drastic reduction in the value of labor power, crimes such

from the pages of *Capitalism’s World Disorder*

as the scapegoating and extermination of the Jews in Germany and others that challenge language to describe. This is how a declining capitalism, in an unplanned and pragmatic manner, attempts to restabilize itself.

Fascism born out of capitalist crisis

Without understanding what fascism is, workers are disarmed in figuring out how to fight it. It is an inevitable product of the crisis of *capitalism*. Regardless of anyone’s individual intentions, fascism is bred by the workings of the capitalist system. That is what happened in the 1920s and 1930s, and that is what we see the initial seeds of today.

A rising fascist movement will divide the bourgeoisie. Some capitalists and bourgeois politicians will be slower than others to throw their backing behind fascist movements; some never will. Revolutionary-minded workers will fight alongside anyone, including bourgeois forces, in concrete actions to resist particular fascist assaults on democratic rights and to defend workers’ space to organize and practice politics. But anybody who tells workers we can stop fascism by giving political support to one or another wing of the capitalists is setting our

class up for the slaughter—that is the lesson from the class struggle in this century. Crisis-ridden capitalism will generate victorious fascist movements if the working class does not organize to stop it by advancing along a line of march aimed uncompromisingly at making a socialist revolution and overturning capitalist rule.

That is why the workers movement must offer a fighting perspective, present clear political answers that radically break with the capitalist status quo, and set a courageous example for farmers and others outside the working class who become radicalized by the capitalist crisis. We will compete with the fascists for the allegiance of millions of toilers and people of modest means in the middle layers who are being crushed under the pressures of capitalism in decay.

The workers vanguard must chart a course to mobilize and lead the working class and our allies to take power. Along the way, the labor movement will have to defend our organizations and those of other oppressed layers against fascist thuggery and murderous violence.

How to fight fascism

Back in the early 1970s, at the height of the youth radicalization engendered by the Vietnamese resistance to U.S. imperialism, some petty-bourgeois ultraleft groups, in Europe especially, adopted a stance of “crushing fascism in the egg.” But a small group of socialists cannot organize to physically smash equally tiny groups of fascists and think they have contributed to stopping fascism. In fact, they will have actually done the opposite by disorienting potentially valuable cadres within the communist youth movement, miseducating them to believe fascist movements can be defeated by small armed groups *outside* the main battalions of the workers movement. As we argued against ultraleft currents in our own movement at the time, “Our egg can’t crush their egg.”

Fascist movements will be bred and rebred by capitalism in crisis, and workers cannot defeat them by going “egg on egg.” Nor—and this is the other side of the same coin—can fascist forces be defeated by calling on the bourgeois state to ban their speech and writings, or curtail their right to organize. At various times opportunist, centrist, and other petty-bourgeois currents in the workers movement all combine ultraleft adventures with a dependence on the cops, courts, and parties of the capitalist rulers in the name of the fight against fascism.

Communist workers defend our meetings, our meeting halls, our demonstrations and picket lines, as well as those of other workers and farmers who come under attack. But the workers movement will begin to deal devastating blows to the fascists only as experience is gained in real class combat, as picket squads are transformed into defense organizations, as we take the moral high



High school students gathered in Vienna’s main square on February 18 to protest formation of the new Austrian government involving rightist Freedom Party of Jörg Haider. It was one of many mobilizations rejecting the party’s racist policies.

ground in defense of all workers’ rights, and as a mass communist party is forged in revolutionary struggle.

Fascism is nowhere close to conquering anywhere in the world right now. What we are seeing today—and this is new—is the development of nuclei of incipient fascist movements in more and more countries, including here in the United States. They are finding ways of legitimizing themselves in bourgeois politics. In parts of Europe, some of these fascist outfits have carried out violent mobilizations in the streets, especially against immigrants. Because of the nationalist, class-collaborationist character of the labor misleadership throughout the imperialist world, the workers movement has been blunted from effectively explaining the dangerous logic of these incipient fascist currents or responding in a timely and vigorous way to their reactionary acts. All this is part of the battle ahead of class-conscious workers.

Before fascism triumphs anywhere, however, the capitalist economic and social crisis must first have accelerated to the point that intolerable pressures and tensions are hammering broad sections of the middle classes in particular. And before fascist organizations begin enlisting enraged petty-bourgeois cadres by the tens and then hundreds of thousands, the labor movement itself must be engaged in a sustained fightback against assaults by the exploiters. The revolutionary workers movement will already be rallying masses of toilers and

impoverished middle-class layers to our banner and actually beginning to threaten capitalist rule. Only then does the ruling class increasingly turn to the fascist movement for help.

Under these conditions, the working class will have the opportunity once again—as on numerous occasions during the two decades between the first and second world wars—to stop the march toward fascism and war by taking power out of the hands of the capitalists. If proletarian combat parties have not been built that are capable of leading the workers and farmers in making a socialist revolution, however, then the effort will fail, horrible disappointment in the potential of the working-class movement will set in, and the fascists can and will make their own bid for power. Never in this century has a fascist movement conquered and taken the reins of government except under these conditions—*after* the working-class movement has first had a chance at victory and been *defeated*.

We are not currently at that stage in the class struggle anywhere in the world. But that is what communist workers must be preparing for right now, as we carry out our political work and develop the habits and discipline of proletarian functioning. Otherwise, labor will have no tested and competent revolutionary leadership as mass working-class combat begins to unfold—as it will, with explosive rhythms and a pace that neither we nor the exploiters can foresee.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



March 7, 1975

DECATUR, Ga.—Ninety-eight Black people, mostly Columbia High School students, were carted off to jail Feb. 20 for attempting to go to their classes. Two days earlier, 200 of the 700 Black students at Columbia had been suspended from school for protesting racism by school officials in suburban De Kalb County, which is adjacent to Atlanta.

After the students sat down in the hallways to protest arbitrary cancellation of a Black History Week assembly, they were pushed out of the school by administrators and detectives, then suspended for leaving school!

The suspended students and many parents have held three singing, chanting civil rights marches to demand readmission to Columbia High School. “Black students have rights” and “Dr. Hinson jails children” were among the signs carried by 150 students and parents seven miles from Columbia High to the De Kalb County courthouse Feb. 22. Dr. Hinson is the De Kalb school superintendent.

Three years ago, the Blacks who first moved into this area were confronted by racist administrators demanding that they bring deeds to their homes before they could enroll their children at Columbia. Once admitted to school, the Black students were

faced with constant humiliation and segregation within the building.



March 6, 1950

DETROIT, Feb. 26—A grimly determined audience of 500 gathered at the Greater King Solomon Baptist Church here today in an emergency meeting called by NAACP leaders to counteract renewed activities by rabid anti-Negro forces, KKK elements, segregationists, etc.

In the recent period there have again been cross burnings in Detroit. One was burned on Feb. 10 on the property of Mr. and Mrs. James Waterman, Negroes. One week later an organization calling itself the “Greater Detroit Neighbors Association, Unit 5,” held a meeting at Sportsman’s Hall with the obvious intent of organizing a campaign of terror against white people who sell their homes to Negroes, and Negroes who buy them.

The NAACP will demand a hearing before the Housing Commission and the Mayor, at which they and a committee representing labor organizations and churches will demand action to protect Negro homeowners and whites who want to sell their homes to Negroes. Several speakers said that mass mobilizations and action would be necessary.

Steelworkers strong in Duluth strike

BY MAGGIE TROWE
AND DENNIS DRAKE

DULUTH, Minnesota—“Basically, the company is trying to break the union,” said Earl Otis, 35, a member of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 1028 on strike against ME International. The nearly six-month-long strike is solid, reported Otis and other strikers, and none of the 143 union members have crossed the picket line. One issue that concerns Otis is that MEI wants to be able to fire a worker after they are laid off a year. “They could go after someone they don’t like,” Otis explained, “and lay them off for a year to get rid of them.”

ME International, which is owned by the Charlotte, North Carolina-based GS Industries (GSI), produces cast liners for the mining industry, including in Minnesota’s Mesabi Iron Range. GSI has plants in Kansas City, Kansas; Georgetown, South Carolina; and a twin plant of the Duluth operation in Tempe, Arizona. Only the workers in Duluth are on strike.

Strike pickets are under 24-hour surveillance by Vance Security guards. The security cops have spied on workers in their homes. Since the beginning of the strike, workers have received letters from MEI management urging them to return to work.

The strike is receiving support from many

quarters. A busload of miners from the Iron Range visited last month. Members of the Airline Mechanics Fraternal Association local at Northwest Airlines in Duluth adopted an MEI striker over the Christmas holidays and raised \$1,000. In December, the Duluth Religion-Labor Network organized a candlelight prayer vigil of 200 people at the picket line. A local fitness club is offering free membership to strikers’ spouses during the strike. Many other unions in the Duluth area have contributed funds or services.

Early one week in January the workers organized mass picketing at the gates at a time when about 40 scabs entered the plant to work. Following this, MEI attorneys asked for a court injunction limiting pickets to five, but a judge postponed ruling on the request for 90 days, which many strikers consider a victory.

Since the walkout began the union has organized a potluck dinner for strikers and their families every other Thursday where the status of the strike is discussed.

Negotiations will resume February 24-25, according to the Local 1028 website (www.local1028.allhere.com).

Maggie Trowe is a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers union.

Betty Lou Beets, Ricky Ray Rector

Like William Clinton before him, Gov. George Bush returned to Texas February 24 to preside over the execution of Betty Lou Beets. In 1992 then governor Clinton flew back to Arkansas in the middle of the U.S. presidential elections to be present for the execution of Ricky Ray Rector. Clinton's election campaign strategists later said this move helped turn the tide in his quest for the presidency. Bush hopes for the same.

Earlier in the week Bush rejected a personal appeal by Beets, sentenced to death for killing her husband. Beets asked for consideration of the fact that her actions were a desperate response to physical violence against her by her spouse.

Rector was a mentally disabled man, who Clinton used to help stamp his administration as one of "law and order."

Earlier this week Clinton rejected any consideration of a moratorium on the federal death penalty, claiming, like Bush has done for Texas, that all death row inmates prosecuted under federal jurisdiction have received a fair trial.

These twin actions speak volumes about the character of the capitalist system, the brutalities it visits on working people, and the morals of the Democratic and Republican party politicians who run the government in the interests of the ruling rich.

There is a little rift in the ruling class on the death penalty. For example, in a stunning admission, Illinois state

official Gov. George Ryan said that frame-ups and denial of a fair trial for working people is not uncommon. The move by Ryan is primarily part of a debate about how to clean up their act in order to more aggressively continue to use capital punishment.

Republican politicians like Ryan, as well as their Democratic cohorts, posture for moratoriums on death penalties based on the idea that with more attention and better lawyers, workers tried in court who face capital punishment can get a fair trial. *Militant* readers can take this opening to help push forward the fight to abolish the death penalty. The working-class and its allies will never get justice in the courtroom under capitalism. The courts are ruling-class institutions made to defend the property and interests of the wealthy exploiters against the proletariat.

Pro-death penalty forces like Bush often appeal to emotions and the desire to be "safe" from crime and criminals. They argue that the death penalty is a deterrent of violent crimes. Does the death penalty discourage violent crimes? Maybe, maybe not. But one thing is for sure: within this oppressive setup of capitalism, the death penalty is a weapon of terror against working people. That's why working people and their allies should demand:

Not one more execution!
Release all prisoners from Death Row!
Abolish the death penalty!

Protest U.S. attack on Cuba

Washington has launched an outrageous attack against Cuba with its spying charges and threats to arrest a Cuban diplomat. This is a dangerous sharpening of U.S.-Cuba relations, which have been marked by more than four decades of unrelenting threats, aggression, and imperialist warmongering by Washington.

This escalation by the U.S. government should be taken seriously, discussed by working people, and protested by all who defend Cuba's national sovereignty and oppose the attempts by Washington to overturn the revolution there.

This past week the U.S. government arrested Mariano Faget, an official of the Immigration and Naturalization Service in Miami, and charged him with espionage on behalf of the Cuban government. They then demanded Cuban diplomat José Imperatori, who works at the Cuban Interests Section in Washington, D.C., leave the United States for his association with Faget.

The action has been met with energetic protest by the Cuban government and people. They have decided so far

to refuse to obey the expulsion order, stating personnel at the Interests Section are barred by direct order from Cuban president Fidel Castro from engaging in spy activity.

Castro said in a statement: "If we asked the U.S. Interests Section in Cuba to withdraw all those officers who actively participate in illegal and very undiplomatic actions, then practically very few—or none—would be left in that mission." This is true, and points to the kind of response Cuba may be forced to make in response to the U.S. government's hostile act.

In a high-level response from State Department spokesperson James P. Rubin, Washington reiterated its demand that the diplomat "depart the country by 1:30 p.m. on Saturday." The *New York Times* reported that Rubin said after that time Imperatori would lose diplomatic privileges and immunities and become subject to the laws of the United States.

Working people and fighting youth around the world can join in condemning Washington's moves and demanding normalization of relations with Cuba.

Immediate gas/oil price relief!

The criminal squeeze being put on working people with sky-high gas and diesel prices, and the killer hikes in the cost of heating oil, must end. From independent truck drivers, to farmers and fishermen, the devastation of livelihoods at the hands of the energy monopolies is a concern for all who work and labor for a living. Responsibility for deaths resulting from a sharp spike in fuel oil prices, as people are forced to turn off the heat in the middle of winter, must be placed at the door of the government and profit-hungry corporations.

The labor movement can take the lead by placing demands on the federal government to take immediate action to remedy this crisis. It can also bring the power of the unions behind future actions by truckers and advance the fight for unionization of all truck drivers in the country. The struggle for a union must include a big increase

in wages, as well as forcing companies to pay rates to truckers that cover costs.

Demands to place on the Clinton administration should include:

- End taxes on gas and oil at the pump. This is part of the fight to abolish all taxes on working people and institute a steep, mandatory income tax on the rich. Winning this immediate demand would bring substantial relief.
- Make the massive federal oil and gas reserves immediately available to any trucker, farmer, or person in need. This would force a sharp decline in the monopoly prices charged by the oil companies.
- Open the books and secret records of the energy companies to public scrutiny. We can't afford to let the government and companies hide behind the lies of shortages and low profits.

Jail the cops who killed Diallo

The brutes in blue who killed Amadou Diallo in a hail of 41 bullets should be locked away for a long time. The cops' cynical performance during their trial crying crocodile tears to win sympathy should be denounced.

Most working people and youth, especially Blacks and other oppressed nationalities who face daily indignities and brutality from the cops, were not fooled by their courtroom theatrics. The role of cops is to serve the wealthy class, to protect their property, and mete out punishment on the streets. The four cops on trial were members of the nearly all-white Street Crimes Unit of the New York police department. Their slogan matches their attitude: "we own the night."

Diallo's death was the natural outcome of what the Democratic and Republican parties organize on a local, state, and national level. It flowed from their drive to "clean up the streets," and convince working people and middle-class layers to turn a blind eye to cop brutality in exchange

for a reduction in "crime." But for most workers, the "anticrime" measures mean more police brutality and landing in prison at an ever higher rate. More than two million human beings are now behind bars in the United States.

The thousands of protesters who came into the streets to win justice for Diallo are an example of the kind of action needed to push back the unrelenting brutality and harassment dished out by the police against working people all over the world everyday.

Mexican peasants also took direct action, arming themselves and rounding up the real criminals: the men in blue. It was an example of independent action in their own class interests. Their actions give a glimpse of how it is possible—and why it is necessary—for working people and farmers to wage a revolutionary struggle to take power out of the hands of the wealthy minority and replace the brutal, dog-eat-dog system of capitalism with one that serves humanity: socialism.

The weakness of capitalist rule in Iran

Militant reader Robert Dees in his letter to the editor last week asked for an explanation in class terms of the frictions in Iran between those the capitalist media calls "mullahs" and "reformers." I agree with him that these terms should be placed in quotation marks, because they say more about the views and prejudices of bourgeois writers than the unfolding politics in Iran. The reports in the big-business media can get a little strained on this point, since, after all, most of the "reformers" are also high-ranking Islamic clerics.

There are serious divisions in the ruling capitalist class in Iran which gets reflected in what may be loosely called a conservative and liberal wings—in Iranian press it is

DISCUSSION WITH OUR READERS

more common to call them right and left factions. The liberal wing, represented by President Mohammad Khatami, is seen by many workers and youth as responsive to their demands for more political space and democratic rights. In the recent elections to the Majles (Parliament) some 80 percent of those eligible to vote turned out and elected by a wide margin those they considered to be in favor of democratic rights. One 19-year old university student told a reporter at a pre-election rally that "the most important change that could happen is a more open political atmosphere—something to give us the space to breathe." For workers this also means space to organize and fight for the interests of all working people.

In speaking about "mullahs," the imperialist rulers and their mouthpieces express their class hatred of the Iranian people, who dared to rise up by the millions in a revolutionary struggle in 1979 and overthrew the hated regime of the shah of Iran, the Persian monarchy. That regime was brought to power in 1953 through a military coup organized by the U.S. government. It was armed and maintained by Washington as a centerpiece of defending imperialist interests in the region.

In the process of the revolution, workers and peasants gained pride and self-confidence. The inability of either imperialist military and economic pressure on Iran or the native capitalist class to push workers, peasants, and youth out of the political arena has become an obstacle to consolidating a stable capitalist regime there. In a country where 60 percent of the population is under the age of 20, millions of people are finding openings for discussion and organization. The open feuds between the ruling factions accelerate this process. In the recent elections these divisions opened the doors for thousands of independent candidate to get on the ballot.

To a large extent the capitalists and landowners who fled the country in 1979 have been unable to reclaim their property, despite backing from the legal system of the state. In this context when the capitalists talk of "reformers" they are looking for a bourgeois social layer that can rise to consolidate a stable pro-imperialist regime, widen contacts with the imperialist "west," and open up Iran for wider imperialist exploitation.

The frictions in Iran's ruling class have plagued the regime since its inception. It was a weak and fractured capitalist class that was able to cling onto power in the face of a national revolution where victory was insured by a sustained general strike of the entire working class. Workers and peasants, lacking a leadership that represented their historic interests, were prevented from establishing their own government.

Since the revolution capitalist industrialization has been taking place. But this development is marred and held back by the world capitalist economic crisis and imperialist pressure, leading to further class differentiation in the face of high unemployment, which stands officially at 20 percent. The refusal by the workers and peasants to subordinate their class interests to that of the law of value also puts a damper on the rise of a modern capitalist class. Strikes are illegal, but a tug of war constantly goes on. Workers have been able to win their demands at times using their numbers and their social prestige, gained through their general strike to save the revolution in 1978 and then their defense of it during the 80s in the war imposed by the capitalist regime in Baghdad.

So the conflict within the Iranian ruling class is how best to confront these challenges, cope with imperialist pressures, and create internal conditions and structures for dominance of capital over labor. During the revolutionary struggles coming out of World War II Stalinist misleaderships in the country helped the bourgeoisie stabilize its rule and defeat the struggles of workers and peasants for power. Today the toilers don't face that obstacle.

The inability to have a stable regime in the declining capitalist world system, and the resistance seen among the exploited and oppressed in Iran, and further openings of political space do not bode well for long-term imperialist domination either.

—MA'MUD SHIRVANI

Steelworkers build March 25 rally in Ohio

BY TONY PRINCE

MANSFIELD, Ohio—More than 600 members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 169 are responding to attacks by the company, courts, and police in their fight against the lockout imposed by Armco, now AK Steel, since the end of August.

Unionists are reaching out to the labor movement, building a March 25 noontime rally on the town square here. Steelworkers on strike at Titan Tire in Natchez, Mississippi, are already making plans to attend.

The bosses are going after the steelworkers through the courts and with probes by the FBI and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) agents.

Many workers went to trial in Richland County on fabricated charges after workers responded to company attempts to bring in a large number of strikebreakers last September. The charges were dismissed in county court, but the workers face similar charges in Mansfield municipal court.

Also, the company and employees of the strike-breaking outfit Securcorp are suing members of Local 169 and their supporters in connection with a September 10 confrontation—as well as the mayor of Mansfield, the police chief, and a local judge—for failing to better protect the company and their hired thugs during that incident. The company has a suit against Local 169 for alleged “concerted action” for refusing to work the sixth day of the week one day last summer before the lockout. Several ladles of molten steel had to be poured on the ground that day because no workers were available to process it.

In the meantime, the ATF police are ques-

tioning union members and their families under the pretext of investigating “strike-related violence.” Union activist Ray Delarwelle says two carloads of ATF agents came to his house when he was not home and questioned his 16-year-old son. “They pretty well ignore the First Amendment, and they’re destroying the Second Amendment,” he said. On February 9, ATF and FBI agents arrested a member of another USWA local on charges of calling AK Steel and threatening to bomb them.

Although many members of the union are now getting other jobs, as their unemployment benefits run out, and the pool of workers available to do outreach work is consequently smaller, the steelworkers continue to get the word out.

Several of them participated in a rally in Dayton, Ohio, February 10 in support of the Teamsters on strike against Overnite. In addition, Delarwelle said, “We’ve got two guys out today talking to a union in Toronto, Ohio, and tomorrow we’re going to speak to a union in Dayton.” That evening four of the steelworkers were heading up to Detroit for a fund-raising benefit for people arrested at the demonstrations against the World Trade Organization in Seattle last December.

Bonnie Rooks, who at 73 is the oldest active member of the local, raised \$1,300 for the embattled workers at the USWA women’s conference held earlier in the week in Pittsburgh. Rooks started at the mill in 1983, when she was 56.

“I was a brick mason’s helper on the brick gang for five years in the mill,” she said. “We carried 100 pound bags of mortar. But I’m used to hard work. My dad was a farmer.

He and I milked 21 cows every morning and every evening. I baled hay and did everything on the farm,” Rooks, who is a small and slender woman, explained. “I was making less than \$13 an hour in there,” she said, referring to the steel plant. “The scabs are making \$20 an hour with a free lunch and free pop. It’s a war. If we don’t stop it, we’re going to lose our unions.

“Other workers in the union hall expressed a similar determination to fight. Ray Delarwelle commented, “I don’t regret this. I wish this would have happened when I was young.”

Tony Prince is a member of Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees

Peruvian workers clash with police



Construction workers in Lima, Peru, demonstrated January 31 in front of the Social Security building demanding improvement of their benefits. The country is also going through a tense presidential election campaign scheduled for April, with President Alberto Fujimori running for a third term. Under new electoral laws, his opponents have limited access to the media to answer what they say are slanderous and abusive statements. Meanwhile, hundreds of landless families have stepped up land occupations south of Lima and in the north of Peru at an industrial park, encouraged by government promises they will receive land if they vote for Fujimori’s third term. Police and soldiers—using tear gas and aided by helicopters—attacked the peasants, who responded with rocks and sticks. The confrontation left four dead and dozens wounded.

Kannapolis workers adopt contract

BY LAUREN HART

KANNAPOLIS, North Carolina—Members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) here approved their first union contract February 10. The vote was over 90 percent in favor.

The 5,100 workers at the sprawling Fieldcrest Cannon mill complex in Kannapolis and neighboring Concord voted to join UNITE in June 1999, following 25 years of efforts to unionize the plants here. About 3,400 workers at Fieldcrest Cannon plants in Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, and Alabama that were already organized by UNITE are also covered under the contract. The plants are owned by Pillowtex, which bought Fieldcrest Cannon in 1997.

“We needed it—it’s been a long time coming,” said one worker going into the afternoon shift at Plant No. 1 here February 14.

Asked what she thought the most important thing was, Paris Coleman said, “The raise—I need a raise.” The three-year contract includes annual pay raises of 3 percent, beginning retroactive to Feb. 1, 2000.

Several workers said they were especially glad about the provision for sick days—a first both at the Kannapolis com-

plex and at the other Fieldcrest Cannon plants. Workers with between two and four years’ seniority will be able to take one paid sick day per year, and those with five years’ seniority will have two sick days annually.

Another worker said she thought the biggest improvement is that workers here will begin to be paid weekly, instead of every two weeks.

The contract calls for the company to greatly reduce the use of temporary workers, and for hiring those working “temporary” who have been employed for two years or more as regular Fieldcrest Cannon employees.

According to UNITE international representative Walter Szymanski, the company wanted to pass on increased health insurance costs to workers. The contract holds health premiums the same until July 1, 2000. A joint union-company committee is supposed to “explore options for reducing medical costs,” according to a contract summary, but there are no guarantees.

Other workers said the fact that the contract includes language saying workers will be “treated with dignity and respect” was an important gain. Robert Mobley, who has worked in the mill seven years, said, “It’s a beginning. It’s something to build on.”

Radio Canada strikers: ‘We’re stronger’

BY JOANNE PRITCHARD

MONTREAL—“I liked being out there” on the picket line, said Michèle Khruzam after Radio Canada workers returned to the job. “The experience is going to make us stronger for the next time around.”

Members of the Union of Technicians and Artisans of the French Network struck the government-owned company for five weeks and approved a new contract offer by the company by a 79 percent margin February 3.

On one of the main issues, “impartition” or contracting out, the company had wanted a free hand. The agreement limits what can be contracted out to the 5 percent that had

already been given up in the previous collective agreement and improves separation pay or retraining provisions for affected workers. The union also made gains for temporary workers, who make up 25 percent of the work force.

Technician Marc Doiron said he was disappointed with the wage increase but it was a tradeoff for gains on other issues. “I wasn’t personally affected by many of the issues, but was worth it. We’re better prepared for next time.”

Joanne Pritchard is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees.

— LETTERS —

Transit workers’ dispute

During discussions over our tentative contract agreement with New York City Transit I told coworkers at my shop that I intended to vote “no” on the offer. I got a mixed response, without any strong commitment either way. Those who opposed it said officials of our union, the Transport Workers Union (TWU), should have held out for more, that our several demonstrations and rallies had the bosses scared, and more could have been won. Those who planned to vote “yes” said the wage improvements were the best we could get or represented a real increase after years of wage freezes.

The wage improvements were unequally divided among TWU workers. While all work titles will get a percentage increase, maintainers got an extra \$1 per hour.

The argument union officials gave for that “bonus” was that in a

previous contract cleaners, who perform lower-paid car and shop cleaning, had gotten a similar increment. The sum of all these gains over a three-year contract would result in a wider gap between the highest- and lowest-paid workers. Cleaners and others also suffer under harsh disciplinary codes—certified by this contract—speedup, and continued unsafe and unhealthy work conditions. Furthermore, erosion of health care plans, which are little improved in this contract, impact on lower paid workers more than others.

Sixty-two percent of those who returned ballots are said to have voted for the contract. In the weeks leading up to the date when ballots were due, transit workers received memos from the union warning of the consequences of a “no” vote. The memos included a copy of a restraining order issued by the courts that threatened jail terms for unnamed and named transit union

officials who encouraged a strike, and a letter from the state governor offering a carrot or a club with respect to pension improvements.

At our rallies and demonstrations transit workers and their supporters, by their numbers and their discipline, showed the real face of the union and the potential for joint union activity. Efforts to divide transit workers from their brothers and sisters in other unions and the public as a whole were set back each time we got into the streets and showed who we really were.
George Alvarez-Bouse
New York, New York

Good Friday agreement

The world thought it had a peace arrangement in Ireland which would have guaranteed the human rights of all persons living under the new governing authority created by the Good Friday agreement of 1998 (GFA). Moreover, the population trends in the north of Ireland show

the Catholic nationalist population close to a voting majority (46 percent) and thus a peaceful transfer to Irish sovereignty might have been anticipated.

Unfortunately, the pretext used by the Unionists to destroy the GFA was successful. Although the Provisional Irish Republican Army has faithfully held to its cease-fire, David Trimble insisted upon the unilateral disarmament of this guerrilla army before the new institutions established by the GFA had shown that they were indeed working.

There are still paramilitary terrorist groups intimidating and harassing the nationalist population of the north as reports of violence about them attest. One need only cite the murder of civil rights attorney Rosemary Nelson who was murdered after the GFA was signed. David Trimble never demanded the immediate disarming of those sectarian terrorist gangs. It is regret-

table that the mentality of the Reverend Ian Paisley, and the unrelenting anti-Catholic bigotry which he and Orange/Unionism represent, has triumphed. What is even more regrettable is that the government of Prime Minister Tony Blair has, in effect, given its blessing to Paisleyism at precisely the moment the commission headed by Canadian General de Chastelain reported valuable progress on the central question of “disarmament by the Irish Republican Army.”
William Gartland
Rio, Wisconsin

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.

Unions in South Africa protest job losses

BY T. J. FIGUEROA

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa—In response to continued large-scale layoffs by the employing class, the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) has launched a campaign against job losses.

According to the union federation, more than 900,000 jobs have been abolished in the past decade here—as many as half a million of these since elections in 1994 that marked the end of apartheid rule. Official unemployment is put at 30–35 percent.

Spokespeople for capital and the big-business press blame rising joblessness on working-class militancy and the introduction of laws guaranteeing workers' rights by the African National Congress government. These laws make labor too expensive, they say, and scare off capital investment from abroad.

"COSATU's demands have helped destroy jobs. Yet each demand has been enacted by this parliament over our opposition. Now COSATU marches against unemployment—the very unemployment caused by the enactment of their demands," said

Tony Leon, leader of the Democratic Party, in the National Assembly in early February.

"You cannot accuse COSATU of destroying jobs," said Molohandoa Moloda, a worker in the Gauteng province health department. "Companies only want to invest where there is maximum profit, and in order to make more profit they don't want to pay workers a living wage. The problem is actually big companies that don't want to invest, not workers who are fighting for a share of the wealth."

Capitalist crisis in Africa

Although touted as "Africa's engine of growth" in many big-business papers, South Africa is wracked by the world capitalist economic crisis that is having devastating consequences across the continent.

The brutal imposition of the apartheid system of white minority rule, and the special relationship the regime had with imperialist powers such as the United States and Britain, resulted in development of aspects of the economy and social infrastructure beyond most other countries in Africa.

This was possible due to the superexploitation of the labor of millions of blacks who were driven off the land and into the mines, mills, and factories. Nearly all arable land was forcibly taken and turned over to whites.

Much of the country remained mired in semi-colonial conditions and dependent on labor-intensive mineral extraction, especially of gold whose price has fallen dramatically over the last decade.

With the overturning of the apartheid system in the early 1990s, tens of millions of workers have sought to use their hard-won rights to better miserable social conditions and low wages that marked apartheid.

Moloda's union, the National Education, Health, and Allied Workers Union, joined unions representing teachers and municipal workers in sponsoring a lunchtime picket in Johannesburg January 11. About 100 unionists took part in the action.

"It's about this Growth, Employment and Redistribution program," said Ngcwece Bonile, a small construction contractor, who decided to join the picket as he passed by.

The government's economic plan places a high priority on "fiscal discipline" and attracting private capital investment into the economy. "If government privatizes jobs our people cannot afford it. There is already too much poverty and too many people who are not working."

The lunchtime pickets are being sponsored by COSATU affiliates and are beginning on a small scale. They will build up toward a May Day rally, to be followed by a national strike if union demands are not met. These demands include forcing employers to consult unions prior to layoffs—or to negotiate them—and other labor law amendments. COSATU deputy general secretary Tony Ehrenreich told those on the picket line that unions also support the call for a minimum income grant for unemployed working people.

Some of the protests have taken on a protectionist character, with union officials supporting a "Buy South African" campaign.

In an interview with the *Sunday Independent* newspaper, Finance Minister Trevor Manuel of the ANC criticized COSATU's call for demonstrations. "I want someone to tell me how the government is going to create jobs. Workers can go on a general strike against the government day after day and you're not going to create jobs," he said. Instead, he argued, the conditions for small businesses to flourish needed to be created.

Joe Bogatsu, a member of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) at a steel fabrication company, joined more than 1,000 workers for an early February protest as part of the jobs campaign. He supported government efforts to attract investment from abroad, but said that "changing labor laws is going to bring only problems. They are going to retrench a lot of people. Lots of companies want to make people work temporary or on contract. They want to run away from the union. Government says it will try to create jobs. They talk but there is not much action."

Volkswagen walkout

Meanwhile, 1,300 NUMSA members were fired in early February from Volkswagen's auto assembly plant in Uitenhage, in the Eastern Cape province, after participating in a two-week strike that was ruled "illegal."

The workers walked off the job on January 20 after NUMSA officials suspended 13 shop stewards in the plant for "bringing the union into serious disrepute." About 4,000 people work in the factory's production areas, and assembly ground to a halt.

According to an article in the February 6 *Sunday Times*, the union's Eastern Cape regional secretary, Silumko Nondwangu, said the shop stewards had been "agitating" to nullify an agreement reached with VW on production of its A4 Golf model. The agreement would have forced workers to stagger their annual leave time, which he said was one of the stewards' major objections. He also said they had pushed for the liquidation of the workers' provident fund.

COSATU general secretary Zwelinzima Vavi urged the workers to end their strike. NUMSA officials accused walkout leaders of being opportunists, acting undemocratically outside of union structures. A central leader of the walkout, they said, was not employed at VW but was a NUMSA shop steward at another local factory.

After VW fired the workers en masse, NUMSA officials said they would try to win their jobs back. Meanwhile, several thousand people lined up to fill out job applications, and VW started hiring.

South African president Thabo Mbeki commented on the walkout during his speech opening parliament on February 4. "We must warn very strongly that illegal and unjustified strikes such as the one recently experienced at Volkswagen in Uitenhage cannot be tolerated."

"Jobs, a better life for our people in the context of a growing economy and our standing in the eyes of the investor community cannot be held hostage by elements pursuing selfish and antisocial purposes," he said.

SPEEA stands firm, Boeing worried

BY SCOTT BREEN

SEATTLE—The strike by more than 18,000 engineers and technical workers against the Boeing Company is lasting longer and having a greater impact on the company than the bosses expected. Now Boeing is gambling that they can outlast what the press refers to as a "white-collar" strike.

The strikers, however, remain united and are resolved to win. This is the first sustained strike against Boeing by the Society of Professional Engineering Employees in Aerospace (SPEEA).

As Al McMeel, a SPEEA member and an NC programmer at Boeing's Frederickson factory told the *Militant*, "Boeing's plans have backfired. They've made us stronger. We have more resolve now." SPEEA estimates that more than 90 percent of Boeing's engineers and technical workers are on strike, even though only 63 percent of SPEEA-covered workers are dues-paying members.

Boeing, the world's largest aerospace company, did not deliver a single commercial airliner the first week of the strike. Aircraft parts are piling up without engineers and technicians to certify them. Testing, production problems, and process changes requiring engineering approval are backing up, as are customer service requests for technical assistance, according to press reports.

Stung by the breadth and initial impact of the strike, Boeing lashed out against it. Boeing chairman and chief executive officer Philip Condit and Boeing president Harold Stonecipher held a news conference February 15 and gave press and radio interviews attacking the engineers and technical workers. Boeing also ran two full-page ads in the major daily newspapers here touting its two previous contract offers as an "outstanding wage package" and benefits "hard to beat."

Strikers were angered at the company's arrogance. "It was an insult to our intelligence," Gene Matthews said while doing picket duty at Boeing's Renton plant gate. Matthews, a 737 liaison engineer who's been at Boeing for 22 years, was responding to statements Condit and Stonecipher made that the strikers should read the proposals they had voted down. "The problem is," he said, "we did read the contract. That's why we voted it down."

In the press conference, Condit declared that Boeing will continue assembling jets without the striking technicians and engineers, and that "we can do it a long, long time."

SPEEA members rejected two previous contract offers by Boeing. The first one was defeated by a lopsided 98 percent in December. It contained major benefit takebacks, including charging SPEEA members a monthly 10 percent premium for



Carpenters on strike against Valley Manufactured Housing join SPEEA picket lines February 13 in show of solidarity in Everett, Washington.

medical coverage. Boeing removed the major benefit takeaways in its second contract offer, but it was still voted down by 51 percent of the engineers and by 61 percent of the technical workers.

The second contract was rejected by most workers because salary raises were inadequate. Boeing admits that its wages are substandard, and strikers are quick to point out the proposed raises were not guaranteed, but would be "merit-based" and decided by supervisors. In addition, some of the benefits in the second contract, such as life insurance, were less than in the current contract.

Boeing has pulled both offers off the table now. No new talks are scheduled, although a federal mediator has announced he will be returning to Seattle February 22.

The dispute is causing concern on Wall Street, as well. Boeing's stock has tumbled since the second contract was rejected, falling from \$44.63 a share to \$36.50 on February 18, a decline of 18 percent.

'We surprised Boeing'

Strikers interviewed on the picket line are clearly proud of their stand, and reflect the changed psychology that this section of Boeing's work force has undergone in the last four years.

Since 1995, Boeing has shed its "family" image to openly embrace a race for profits. This has resulted in mass layoffs, speed up, multibillion dollar mergers, cuts in research and development, and concerns that quality and safety are being jeopardized to increase Boeing's profit rate.

This has created growing dissatisfaction

among this heterogeneous work force, and produced a new militancy and willingness to act in concert. "We surprised Boeing; we surprised ourselves; we've surprised everybody!" with our unity and strike action, exclaimed Amy, a technician walking the picket line.

The strike is being closely followed by production workers at Boeing, members of the International Association of Machinists, who struck Boeing in 1995 for 69 days to fend off contract concessions.

Some individual IAM members join the picket lines after work, or bring coffee, food, firewood, or propane to the strikers. Some have begun to take collections from coworkers to donate to the strikers' relief fund, since SPEEA has no strike fund. Many are wearing "I support SPEEA" buttons or putting up signs on their tool boxes inside the factories. In some areas, "work to rule" campaigns are beginning.

This is putting increasing pressure on the officials of IAM District 751, which organizes the 30,000 Boeing production workers in the Puget Sound, to actively aid the struggle.

Leaving work on Friday, Jim Thoma, an assembly mechanic in Renton, said, "It's a war now." He planned to stop off at the picket line near his home in Everett and drop off some firewood. "I'm going to do everything I can to support them. And so should our union."

Scott Breen is a member of the International Association of Machinists Local 751 and works at Boeing.