

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Cuban artists: Culture is a weapon to defend revolution

— PAGES 8-9

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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U.S. hands off Iraq!

Protests are needed around the world against Washington's plans to launch a military assault on Iraq. Faced with a collapse of the UN snoop operation and growing frustration over their inability to impose their prerogatives in the region, the U.S. rulers have embarked on a course toward another bloody onslaught against the Iraqi people.

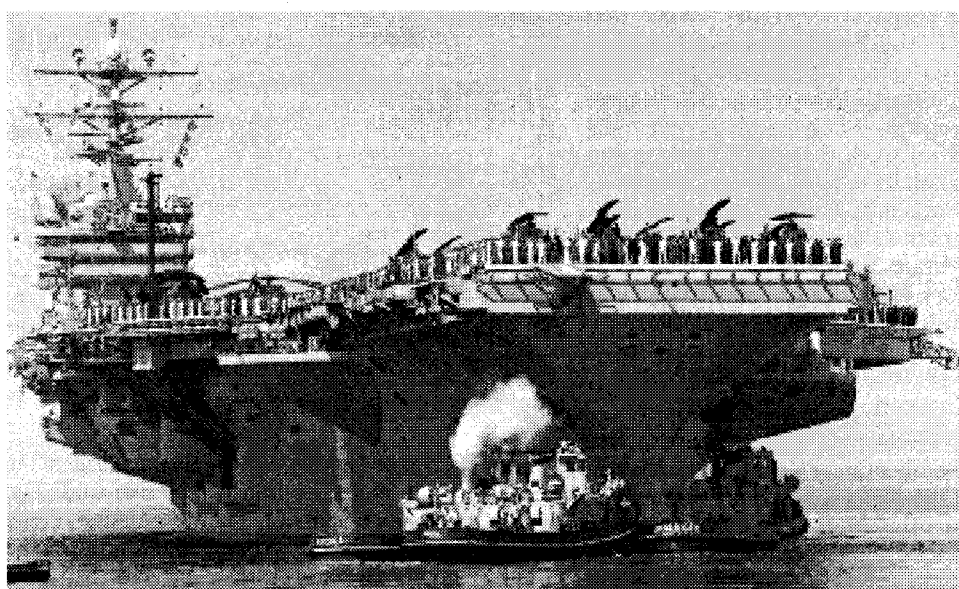
A year ago, U.S. war secretary William Cohen appeared on national television with a five-pound bag of sugar declaring that if

EDITORIAL

the sugar were anthrax it could kill half the population of Washington, D.C. This was part of U.S. president William Clinton's war preparations, claiming that Baghdad was preparing a "biological arsenal" to complement its allegedly hidden stockpile of chemical weapons. Months later, the U.S. government built up an armada of some 44,000 U.S. troops, 440 warplanes, and 34 warships in the Arab-Persian Gulf. Faced with opposition from many of its imperialist allies, Washington blinked and drew back from unleashing this enormous firepower.

Now confronted again with all the unresolved conflicts in the region, the Clinton Administration is pressing one more time for military action. U.S. imperialism's war moves against Iraq have nothing to do with containing or destroying alleged "weapons of mass destruction." It is Washington that is preparing to use its weapons of mass destruction to maim masses of Iraqi workers and peasants. Its goals are multiple: To over-

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Aircraft carrier *USS Eisenhower*, above, is part of U.S. armada in Arab-Persian Gulf region that the Clinton administration is preparing for a massive assault on Iraq.

Washington steps up war preparations against Iraq

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

The Clinton administration has escalated preparations for a military assault on Iraq, dispatching 129 more war planes and 4,000 additional troops to the Arab-Persian Gulf region. More than 230 United Nations personnel, including 103 "weapons inspection" agents, have left Iraq based on a strong recommendation from Wash-

ington that a military strike may be imminent.

"Time is running out," declared U.S. secretary of defense William Cohen, referring to the White House demand that Baghdad reverse its October 31 decision to end cooperation with the so-called UN inspectors or face bombing raids.

Cohen announced November 10 that the aircraft carrier *Enterprise* and other ships will speed up their arrival to the Arab-Persian Gulf to get there by November 23. They

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Hurricane Mitch toll: social, not natural, catastrophe

BY ERNIE MAILHOT

MIAMI — In the aftermath of Hurricane Mitch, workers and peasants in Central America are suffering one of the worst disasters in history. Jerry Jarrell, the National Hurricane Director here, said that Mitch could be the worst storm since 1780 when 22,000 people were killed in the Eastern Caribbean.

The death toll is so high due to the ex-

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Cuban gov't sets example in hurricane relief efforts

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL AND MARY-ALICE WATERS

HAVANA, Cuba — The revolutionary leadership of Cuba has called on governments around the world to offer immediate relief aid to Honduras, Nicaragua, and other Central American nations ravaged by the effects of Hurricane Mitch. Cuba has set an

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N. Carolina tire strikers win solidarity

BY JANICE LYNN

CHARLOTTE, North Carolina — On the 46th day of their strike, some 400 members and supporters of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 850 rallied in front of the Continental General Tire factory here November 5, vowing to remain united "one more day." Striker Rose Sanders declared, "I am so proud of my brothers and sisters for sticking together in solidarity."

Some 1,500 workers walked out at the tire plant over unfair labor practices, wages and pensions that are below industry standards, unfair downtime and incentive practices, outside contracting of union work, and the company's demand for concessions in work schedules, mandatory overtime, health insurance, and seniority. Strikers see this as a fight for dignity and respect.

"Three years ago in '95 we took a concession contract," Local 850 vice president Larry Murray told the *Militant*. "Now they are making money and all they are offering us is 35 cents over three years."

A letter from USWA Local 850 to Charlotte area friends and neighbors explains, "For nearly 20 years our members have been asked to make massive wage, benefit, and work rule sacrifices in order to save our plant. Again and again, we have agreed to concessions.... Despite all this, the Com-

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For more information, call the Young Socialists National Office (213) 387-3033, or contact YS members in your area (see numbers listed on page 12).

Young Socialists build convention at actions to free political prisoners

BY ALARIC DIRMEYER

SAN FRANCISCO — With the Young Socialists convention arriving quickly, YS members in San Francisco have begun to deepen our participation in mass work, including defending Mumia Abu-Jamal, and joining the fight for Puerto Rican independence and the freedom of Puerto Rican political prisoners held in U.S. jails, and building solidarity with labor struggles.

Close to 1,000 people gathered at the San Francisco Federal Building November 7 for a march demanding that the government grant Mumia Abu-Jamal a new trial and end capital punishment. Abu-Jamal, jailed on frame-up charges in Pennsylvania since 1982, is an outspoken opponent of the death penalty and of the massive prison system in the United States. Accused of killing a cop, Abu-Jamal sits on death row. His appeal for a new trial was turned down October 29 by Pennsylvania's State Supreme Court. The signing of his death warrant is imminent, unless the political price of doing so is made too high for the ruling class to risk paying.

The protesters marched to Jefferson Park, chanting "Free Mumia Abu-Jamal! Tear Down the Prisons, Wall by Wall." A rally was then held in the park, featuring a wide assortment of speakers and political viewpoints. Members of the Young Socialists and

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Actions demand: free Puerto Rican political prisoners — page 3

Brazil gov't plans drastic cuts to meet IMF 'bailout' demands

The Brazilian government on October 27 revealed its plan to cut the budget by 20 percent in order to receive a \$30-50 billion "bailout" package from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and imperialist banks, including those in the United States. Aspects of the austerity measures include: axing up to 30,000 government jobs and leaving 15,000 current job openings unfilled, imposing a 15 percent tax on pensions for retirees, raising the "pension contribution" deducted from government workers' pay from 11 to 15 percent, reinstituting a gas tax, and cutting free school lunches. The official announcement was held until after the Brazilian president, Fernando Enrique Cardoso, secured his reelection October 4. Foreign banks and investors have refused the Brazilian government's request to have the current debt rolled over in order to get a new capital injection.

Unions have opposed the austerity plan. In the last half year, the Movement of Landless Rural Workers has helped lead protests against the economic crisis that is affecting most of Brazil's 160 million residents.

These actions have included organized seizures of food and other goods, which are then redistributed to landless peasants. Reflecting the pressure of this resistance, opposition parties to the left of Cardoso won the state elections in three key states in the October vote.

Tel Aviv balks on 'peace' accord

The Israeli government on November 6 suspended all meetings and deliberations to ratify "peace accords" that would supposedly turn over 13 percent of West Bank lands, occupied by Israeli forces, to Palestinian hands. Israeli officials cited a recent car bomb at a market place in Jerusalem as the reason for halting negotiations.

Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu, before the Jerusalem explosion, was stalling negotiations by demanding that the Palestinian Authority, headed by Yasser Arafat, arrest 30 Palestinians Tel Aviv accuses in the deaths of 100 Israelis. Only 3 percent of the West Bank has been given back to full Palestinian control. Another 20-

25 percent is administratively run by the Palestinian Authority, but remains under control of Tel Aviv and its police forces.

Zimbabweans protest fuel prices

Protests erupted in Zimbabwe November 4 after the government there announced a 67 percent hike in gas prices several days earlier. Taxi cab and bus drivers began the action by blocking entrance routes into the capital city of Harare with their vehicles. Many toilers stayed away from work that day. Youth in the southern African country, as well as workers and others, joined the drivers in setting up barricades around Harare. Police attacked demonstrators with tear gas and batons and arrested some of the protesters.

Germany: antichoice law tanked

Germany's highest court in late October threw out a Bavarian law passed in 1996 that tried to limit women's access to abortion by putting a cap on the amount a doctor could earn for performing the procedure. The Constitutional Court, in a 5-to-3 vote against the law, pointed out that federal legislation passed in 1995 made the Bavarian law unconstitutional. The restrictive law was supposed to go into effect last year, but was blocked by the court pending its ruling.

Ankara hinders Iran oil pipeline

The Turkish government imposed new navigation rules on travel through the Bosphorus Strait November 6, trying to edge off adversaries in the race to extract Caspian Sea oil and sell it on world markets. The strait is the only way for oil tankers to get from the Black Sea to the Mediterranean. Tehran is moving to set up a pipeline for the oil running through Iran to the Black Sea. Already in place is a pipeline through Georgia.

Under the new regulations, Ankara can stop traffic when water currents are unfavorable, stop any ship on legal grounds, require ships to use local pilots, demand more



Map shows competing proposals for oil pipelines in Caspian Sea region

advanced notice for vessels traveling on the strait, and raise transit fees five-fold. The announcement of the new regulations came as final deals were being made between the governments of Turkey and Azerbaijan to construct a pipeline through those countries. Washington is backing Ankara's oil route. Oil moguls, including those from France, the United States, and Italy have invested in pipeline projects with Tehran.

Moscow can't pay foreign loans

"Either we have to take extraordinary measures for squeezing out this money from all spheres of the economy or agree on a restructuring of our debt," said First Deputy Prime Minister Yuri Maslyukov, referring to the \$3.5 billion debt Moscow owes to foreign lenders. "We are choosing the second path."

The Russian government has faced sizable, sustained protests by workers across the country over the last year, demanding back payment of wages and pensions. Former Russian prime minister Sergei Kiriyenko, who was fired in August following the ruble devaluation and the moratorium on repaying foreign loans, made a statement opposing Moscow's current moves. The 1999 foreign debt, totaling \$17.5 billion, is probably not going to be paid either. The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has withheld the next installment of its bailout package until Moscow presents a restructuring plan imperialist bankers want to see — stiffer collections of taxes and opening up more Russian markets for foreign capitalists to invest.

Meanwhile, U.S. agriculture secretary Dan Glickman announced a plan to send \$500 million worth of food aid to Russia. The 3.1 million metric ton package is ostensibly set up to aid Russians who face price hikes of up to 50 percent and the worst grain harvest

in 40 years. Only 100,000 tons of the entire package — which is considerably less than what the Russian government had requested — will reportedly be provided free. The remaining will be sold to Moscow on a new 20-year loan.

Puerto Rico: campus employees strike, demand closed union shop

"No one gets in here," vowed Carmen Santiago, a laboratory technician who is part of a blockade set up by University of Puerto Rico employees, demanding that all non-teaching employees hired be brought into the union.

The 3,200-strong Brotherhood of Exempt Non-Faculty Employees began their strike at 13 campuses in early November. About 1,200 workers are currently not in the union. Many professors honored the picket lines. At some campuses workers parked dozens of cars in front of campus entrances November 4 to block traffic.

— BRIAN TAYLOR

Calendar deadline

The 'Militant' welcomes announcements for upcoming events that would be of interest to our readers. Please send notice at least 10 days before the event. Items received by noon each Wednesday will appear in the issue printed the following day.

THE MILITANT

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Cuban youth speak at Montreal campuses

BY JOE YOUNG

MONTREAL — During the first week of their speaking tour in Canada that started on November 1, two young Cubans, Juan Carlos Frómata and Raiza Rodríguez, met with more than 200 students at five meetings on campuses in Montreal. In addition they addressed about 50 delegates at the regular monthly meeting of the Montreal council of the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN) and met with a group of eight garment workers.

On November 7, Frómata and Rodríguez spoke to a public meeting of 50 in Quebec City. And on November 9-10, they visited Drummondville, one hour east of Montreal, where they addressed a meeting of 60 at the city college and spoke to 80 students at the Marie-Rivier High School.

Juan Carlos Frómata de la Rosa, 31, is the coordinator of the Americas section of the Union of Young Communists (UJC). Raiza Rodríguez González, 22, is a member of the National Secretariat of the Federation of University Students (FEU) and a graduate student of sociology at the University of Havana. Their tour in Canada is organized by the Montreal-based Cuban Youth Tour Committee. The Quebec leg of the visit was endorsed by a broad range of student, trade union, solidarity, and other organizations, including the Quebec University Student Federation and the Quebec College Student Federation.

In their opening presentations Frómata and Rodríguez explained the crisis that was provoked in Cuba by the loss of trade on favorable terms with Eastern European countries and the Soviet Union. She outlined measures the revolutionary government has taken to confront shortages and boost production of industrial and agricultural goods that fell sharply in the early 1990s.

Sixty students attended an event at Edouard Montpetit College in Longueuil near Montreal. It was sponsored by the college student association, the Political Action Committee, the student newspaper *Le Mot-Dit*, and the teachers' trade union. A Cuban lunch was served after the meeting by the Student Committee of International Solidarity, which allowed participants to continue discussing with the two Cuban guests.

During the meeting, several participants asked about the importance of Ernesto Che Guevara for Cuban youth. Born in Argentina, Guevara joined the Rebel Army that led the successful war of liberation against the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in Cuba and became a central leader of the revolution. He held a number of important posts in the revolutionary government until 1965 before leaving Cuba to continue the revolutionary struggle first in the Congo and then Bolivia, where he was murdered by the Bolivian army in consultation with Washington after being wounded and captured in combat in 1967.

"We try to internationalize the image of Che for the youth of the world so that they can know someone who didn't just think of his country but also of ours," Rodríguez said.

At the Quebec City meeting, Rodríguez

said this was her first trip outside of Cuba and that "for me this is an international mission." This event was organized by the Quebec-Cuba Friendship Association and supported by the local CSN, the student mobilization committees of St. Foy and Limoilou colleges, the Young Socialists, and others.

A recurring question was on the impact of some of the economic steps that Cuba has had to take given the collapse of trade, in particular on tourism. At Edouard Montpetit College, Frómata said that Cuba has put a lot of emphasis in the development of tourism to get foreign currency, which is used by the government for importing medicines, oil, and other goods for social needs. "Tourism has had some very serious consequences," he stated. "A part of the population has tried to resolve their problems without working hard." Those who have access to foreign currency through tips at the hotels, remittances from relatives abroad, or other means have a much higher standard of living than many Cubans. "There is a minority who no longer have confidence in the revolutionary process. The economic crisis has given rise to social inequalities."

The UJC and other mass organizations are leading campaigns to politically counter the effects of the penetration of the capitalist market in Cuba. "We have succeeded in that the majority of workers in tourism give a part of their tips for social activities," Frómata said at the University of Montreal meeting. "In this way we raised more than a million dollars for the fight against cancer." Consciousness that collective solutions benefit society, rather than profit for the individual, is raised in the process.

At the University of Montreal meeting, which was attended by 45 students, one participant asked about discrimination toward women and gays. "On the institutional level there is no discrimination on the basis of sex," Frómata replied. "But prejudices persist in society. Our goal is to eliminate these

prejudices." In reference to a Cuban film that dealt candidly with antigay prejudices, *Strawberries and Chocolate*, he remarked, "At the beginning of the revolution we committed a lot of errors concerning attitudes toward homosexuals. The film was made in this context. Some people thought that homosexuals had ideological problems. It was an error of the social process."

From Drummondville, the tour will continue to Toronto and London, Ontario, and then on to Vancouver, British Columbia. For more information call the Cuban Youth Tour in Montreal at (514) 938-1480.

Joe Young is a member of the United Steelworkers of America and of the Cuban Youth Tour Committee in Montreal.

Students win some gains in France



In response to massive high school student mobilizations in mid-October calling for more teachers and better schools, French education minister Claude Allègre announced an addition to the government education budget, including hiring some teachers and other school personnel. This fell short of the students' demands, especially for lowering class sizes. The high school students coordinating committee in Lyon dubbed the measure "ridiculous" and the main high school teachers union, SNES, called it inadequate. The pro-Socialist Party youth group supported it and refused to back further protest actions. Above, students rally in Paris October 20, part of demonstrations totalling 280,000 that day nationwide.

Pennsylvania: Puerto Rican political prisoner says, 'real criminals are rulers, colonialism'

BY PETE SEIDMAN

LEWISBURG, Pennsylvania — Twenty-five people picketed outside the Federal Penitentiary here November 7 demanding freedom for Puerto Rican political prisoner Edwin Cortés and independence for Puerto Rico. Protesters traveled from Philadelphia, Cleveland, and Camden, New Jersey. It was the first in a series of protests scheduled at federal buildings in half a dozen cities and outside six prisons where fighters for Puerto Rican independence are serving sentences ranging from 15 to 105 years. These actions (see list on page 11) will build a December 10 rally at the United Nations.

Cortés was born in Chicago and became active in the struggle for Puerto Rican independence in high school. He helped form Latinos United, which advocated a Latin American Studies curriculum and cultural programs. He continued his political work while at the University of Illinois in Chicago, where he helped found the Union for Puerto Rican Students.

Cortés was arrested in 1983, accused by police of being a member of the Armed Forces of National Liberation (FALN), an alleged group the U.S. government claimed carried out bombings of government, business, and military sites. Along with fifteen other *independentistas* arrested between 1980 and 1983, he was charged with seditious conspiracy against the U.S. government.

Fourteen of those fighters are still in U.S. prisons, as well as two others convicted in the "Hartford 15" frame-up case. Cortés, who was 28 years old with two young children at the time of his imprisonment, was sentenced to 35 years in prison. Now 43, his scheduled release date is 2004.

Speakers at a rally at the prison gates included Inéz Ramos, a University of Pennsylvania student; Fermín Morales, Miriam Cortés, and Moises Cintrón from the Philadelphia, Camden, and Cleveland chapters of the National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Prisoners of War and Political Prisoners; Rev. Nozomi Ikuta, from the United Church of Christ in Cleveland; and Pete Seidman from the Socialist Workers Party.

The high point of the rally was the read-

ing of a message from Cortés that saluted the numerous actions this year that mark a rise in the struggle for Puerto Rican independence and urging support for the December 10 march on the United Nations.

"It is only proper that we end this centennial year with a protest at the United Nations condemning the 100th Anniversary of the Treaty of Paris, in which Spain gave Puerto Rico, like a piece of chattel, to the United States in violation of Puerto Rico's Autonomous Charter, as well as showing the hypocrisy of the 50th Anniversary of the signing of the Human Rights declaration while the Puerto Rican people are denied their fundamental human right to self-determination and independence," Cortés said. His statement also condemned the "grand jury conducting another witch-hunt in Chicago with the threat of incarceration" and the arrest of independence leaders "like José

Solís on the use of paid informers.

"The Puerto Rican political prisoners and prisoners of war are labeled as criminals and terrorists by the United States government," Cortés explained. "But our struggle for freedom will not end with such labels because we know that Nelson Mandela and the ANC [African National Congress], Yasser Arafat and the PLO [Palestine Liberation Organization], Gerry Adams and Sinn Féin, among many other national liberation movements were also labeled as criminals and terrorists, but today they are applauded as patriots.... The real criminals are the rulers of those nations that still subjugate other nations and the real crime is colonialism."

News of the protest spread through the penitentiary. A defense committee leader who met with the independentista during the protest reported that prisoners applauded Cortés when he entered the visiting area.

Cuban youth leader to tour Scandinavia

BY CATHARINA TIRSÉN

STOCKHOLM — Olga Díaz Ramos, a leader of the Union of Young Communists of Cuba (UJC) arrived in Copenhagen, Denmark, November 5 to begin a four-week tour of Sweden, Denmark, and Norway.

The Committee for Youth Exchange with Cuba has been working since late May to set up speaking engagements and raise money for Díaz tour in Sweden.

The student union and a number of other organizations at the University of Stockholm are sponsoring meetings with the Cuban youth leader. Díaz will also speak on the October 1962 "missile" crisis at the Telje gymnasium, a high school in Södertälje south of Stockholm. A study circle organized by Food Workers Union locals as well as organizers of a weekend seminar on international struggles have both invited Díaz to speak.

From Pathfinder

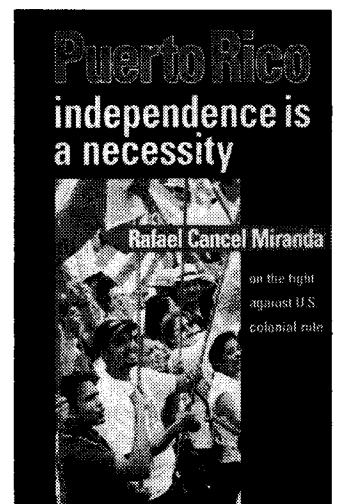
Puerto Rico: independence is a necessity

Rafael Cancel Miranda on the fight against U.S. colonial rule

In two interviews, a leader of Puerto Rico's independence struggle speaks on the brutal reality of U.S. colonial domination, the resurgence of the independence movement, the campaign to free 16 Puerto Rican Political prisoners, and the example of Cuba's socialist revolution for all those fighting for freedom. Rafael Cancel Miranda addresses, above all, the new generation joining this struggle.

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Big push will put fund over top

BY BROCK SATTER

NEWARK, New Jersey — A total of \$33,548 was collected around the world last week, more than double the amount collected in any previous week. This puts us in range to make our fund goal with one final push. Going into the last week, the *New International* fund stands at 72 percent. At total \$31,476 more is needed to meet the goal in full by November 15.

Supporters around the world have responded to the challenge of closing the gap. Two individuals, one from London, another from Ontario, sent in checks directly to New York, responding to the recent *Militant* articles explaining the importance of sustaining the Marxist magazine.

The large increase in contributions reflects the number of fund rallies that took place, a rise in the collection of outstanding pledges, and ongoing efforts to reach out broadly to class-struggle minded fighters among workers, farmers, and youth who can be won to the ideas of the *New International* and will see the necessity of such a publication to exist.

"Our November 7 *New International* fund celebration was a big success. It reflected what we have done to reach out," Birmingham fund director George Williams explained. "We have already collected above our goal of \$3,000 and there are still several workers and other supporters of the *New International* we want to talk to over the rest of the week to make a contribution.

We should be able to raise a few hundred

more for the fund."

The event in Birmingham featured Tom Leonard, veteran fighter in the maritime workers union and SWP leader; Ronald Martin, a young member of the International Brotherhood of Boilermakers Local 108; and Jamila Reese, a Young Socialists member in Birmingham. Among the nearly 30 people attending the event were two students from Vanderbilt University in Nashville, who had met supporters of *New International* who were part of a sales team visiting the campus the previous week.

Williams mentioned that one of his co-workers at Pemco, a UAW-organized plant that refurbishes airplanes, attended the event. "We went together to the picket lines at the strike in Peterbilt in Nashville a couple weeks ago." Participants at the event bought four copies of *New International*, including one by the worker at Pemco and one by the students from Vanderbilt. A total of \$1,800 was collected.

In Miami, \$690 was raised and additional pledges were made. Four workers from Haiti attended the event, including one person who supporters met while selling socialist literature door-to-door. In New York, 60 people attended an event featuring Mike Fitzsimmons, a member of the SWP's Trade Union Committee. Among those attending were four young people new to the *New International*. More than \$2,500 was collected at that meeting. In other cities, \$2,000 was collected at a fund rally in Seattle, and \$700 in St. Paul, Minnesota.

BY ARLENE RUBENSTEIN

ATLANTA, Georgia — Twenty-seven people attended the November 7 *New International* rally here, including four young workers and students who are interested in the upcoming national convention of the Young Socialists that will be taking place in Los Angeles in December. A total of \$1,195 was collected at the meeting, enabling Georgia supporters of the fund to reach their goal. They plan to continue to reach out for more contributions.

The platform at the event was shared by Doug Jenness, organizer of the SWP election campaign committee and its work with farmers, and Eddie Slaughter, a farmer from Buena Vista, Georgia who is a plaintiff in the class action suit by Black farmers against the United States Department of Agriculture. Slaughter, who also works for Weyerhaeuser, a giant pulp and paper corporation, described how the government and the corporations are working together to drive him and other Georgia farmers off of their land. "They take our land and then on top of that they call us a real dirty name — 'statistically insignificant,' one of the worst things I've ever been called." Slaughter reported on advances Black farmers have made in their fight.

Big camera goes, Pathfinder shop needs capital donations, volunteers

BY STEVE CLARK

"I have a big gallery process camera that was previously used by one of the Chicago newspapers," wrote Howard Mayhew in a letter to Socialist Workers Party organization secretary Ed Shaw in February 1964. "It may be adequate for the *Militant*."

As a well-known militant unionist and communist, Mayhew ended up on the employers' blacklist in the Chicago area during the McCarthy witch-hunt of the 1950s and was unable to hold down an industrial union job. To keep food on the table, Mayhew raised chickens and opened a small printshop in his basement, outfitted with the big camera and a press.

The SWP leadership welcomed Mayhew's offer to donate his camera and other printing equipment. What's more, in a July 22 letter to Mayhew, Shaw proposed that "you move to New York at your earliest convenience" to help make it possible to get more revolutionary literature into the hands of fighters being attracted to communism by the rising struggle for Black rights and the victory a few years earlier of the socialist revolution in Cuba. The only reservation in proposing this to Mayhew, Shaw added, was "that you may put yourself in a difficult position if the plan does not work out and you have to resume your own business."

Less than a month later, Mayhew set out for New York on a Greyhound bus. Keeping in mind the concerns raised as to his livelihood, Mayhew replied to Shaw: "I'll leave Chicago without unduly disturbing the prospects of returning to reestablish my source of income should that be necessary. However, I have the greatest confidence that an efficient party press can and will be established and that I will return only to arrange for the final moving to New York."

Mayhew was right. Thirty-four years later, the small operation he helped establish in 1964 has grown into a modern printshop and is still producing the *Militant* and revolutionary books and pamphlets for Pathfinder Press. But Mayhew's "big gallery process camera" — the 14-foot long, 5-foot high Robertson Photo-Mechanix vertical camera — remained a workaday part of the shop until just a few months ago.

Last week the electrical breaker that allowed the Robertson to get its juice was pulled out. Next week the big camera will be dismantled and removed from the shop.

Transformation of shop

The removal of the Robertson is particularly emblematic of the transformation now under way in the production of Pathfinder



Militant/Margrethe Siem

Dismantling Robertson camera, no longer needed with digital workflow. Volunteers and funds are needed to complete transformation of shop that prints Pathfinder books and *Militant*.

books and pamphlets. Volunteer workers in the printshop — just like those who used that vertical camera for more than three decades — are now organizing to produce communist literature with less labor, and at lower cost, using fully digital methods. And that means no more camera work.

Soon it will mean no more film. On November 21, the new Agfa Galileo computer-to-plate system will be delivered to the Pathfinder printshop. Scheduled to be up and running by mid-December, it will enable shop workers to take books that have been scanned, proofread, and formatted by some 140 supporters of the communist movement across North America and around the world and send them directly from electronic files to the printing plates — skipping film altogether. That way, more books can be produced and kept in print by a smaller shop — a shop of the size the communist movement has the resources to sustain.

Already this week, the new Agfa Apogee software and hardware — around which the workflow of workers operating the Galileo platesetter will be organized — was delivered and installed. Printshop cadres will gain experience using it over the next several weeks to go directly from electronic files to film, using the Avanta Image Setter installed several months ago. That earlier step of going directly to film has already eliminated the need for many hours of painstaking labor on each job. Using the Apogee system to produce film will provide valuable preparation to get the Galileo direct-to-plate system on line next month.

\$172,000 needed by January 1

With delivery of the new platesetter just a week away, stepped-up fundraising work to pay off the balance owed on this new equipment is essential.

A \$550,000 Capital Fund was launched October 18 at the San Francisco meeting to celebrate the life of veteran socialist Paul Montauk. This will cover the \$350,000 cost of the Galileo system and the \$200,000 remaining debt owed on three presses purchased in 1994. So far \$178,000 has been raised; \$172,000 more is needed by December 31 to pay for the CTP equipment.

The six members of the Capital Fund committee — Nan Bailey, Sam Manuel, Dave Prince, Norton Sandler, Maggie Trowe, and Jack Willey — are working with supporters of the project in a number of cities to make presentations on the fund to groups of supporters and individuals. Over the past week, \$4,000 was raised at meetings in Toronto, Canada, and Washington, D.C.

Follow-up work is needed in these and other cities where such events are being organized in order to meet with supporters who

\$115,000 New International Fund Drive

CITY/COUNTRY	GOAL	PAID	%
Canada			
Toronto	1,670	3,018	181%
Vancouver	550	761	138%
Montreal	665	600	90%
Canada Total	2,885	4,379	152%
New Zealand			
Auckland	1,500	1,257	84%
Christchurch	550	402	73%
N.Z. Total	2,050	1,659	81%
Sweden Total	1,250	920	74%
United States			
Atlanta	2,800	3,381	121%
Des Moines	2,500	2,623	105%
Detroit*	5,000	4,770	95%
Pittsburgh	4,000	3,640	91%
Seattle	8,500	7,340	86%
Birmingham	3,000	2,530	84%
Twin Cities, MN	7,000	5,785	83%
Philadelphia	4,000	3,265	82%
Miami	2,500	2,030	81%
Washington, D.C.	4,000	3,210	80%
Cleveland	4,000	2,777	69%
Newark	8,500	5,598	66%
New York	12,000	7,902	66%
San Francisco	11,000	7,115	65%
Houston	6,000	3,490	58%
Chicago	7,500	3,395	45%
Boston	4,700	2,111	45%
Los Angeles	9,000	2,995	33%
Other	0	930	0%
US Total	106,000	74,887	71%
United Kingdom			
Manchester	664	570	86%
London	1,660	803	48%
UK Total	2,324	1,373	59%
Australia Total	650	306	47%
Iceland Total	1,400	0	0%
INT'L TOTAL:	116,559	83,524	72%
SHOULD BE:	115,000	100,625	88%
*Raised goal			

are interested in expanding the reach of Pathfinder books and pamphlets but couldn't make it to the meeting. On the heels of a November 1 meeting in Chicago, for example, supporters there have set up a get-together in St. Louis on Saturday, November 14.

"We had underestimated how many people would be interested in a discussion on the rise in working-class resistance and the need to take this big new step to keep revolutionary books in print," reported Katy LeRougetel, a leader of the Communist League in Canada, following the recent Toronto meeting. "As we started talking with supporters, they had ideas of more people we should contact — in some cases people we haven't seen in quite a while.

"The struggles of unionists, Blacks, Quebecois independence fighters, and others are not going unnoticed," LeRougetel said, so it's important not to start from preconceptions about who is and who is not likely to contribute. Meetings are scheduled in Cleveland, Pittsburgh, Newark, New Jersey, and New York City, and more are in the works.

November 20–22 Red Weekend

In addition to contributions to the Capital Fund, volunteers are needed to participate in the Red Weekend being organized for Friday, November 20, through Sunday, November 22. The Galileo platesetter is being delivered that Saturday.

On Friday, November 20, a crew of 25–30 people is needed to take down walls on the first floor of the Pathfinder Building so the huge crates containing the CTP equipment can be put in place. Crews of 75–80 people will be needed Saturday and Sunday to rebuild the walls, do painting and other finishing work, and also help out with less strenuous tasks. Volunteers from Boston, Cleveland, Edmonton, Miami, Newark, New York, San Francisco, Santa Cruz, Toronto, and Vancouver are already working to prepare the site for the new equipment, or are scheduled to join crews next week.

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

Maggie Trowe of Des Moines, organizer of the "war room" setting up Capital Fund meetings, contributed to this article.

Nearly 1,700 new readers won to 'Militant' and 'Perspectiva Mundial'

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

"The last week of the sales drive we met briefly every night to assess how we were doing," said Chris Remple, a member of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) from Pittsburgh who was recently laid off. "We didn't drop everything we were doing, but we decided we were going to make our goal. We fought harder to convince those we met to buy subscriptions.

"We went to two solidarity rallies — one organized by the RMI Titanium strikers in Niles, Ohio, and the other called by unionists on strike for 19 months against Monarch Rubber Co. in Spenser, West Virginia, where 100 people participated. The Monarch strikers are determined to win their fight. Workers from other cities in the region came to their rally, including USWA members on strike against Kaiser Aluminum in Newark, Ohio; MSI strikers from Marietta, Ohio; and some retirees from Ravenswood, West Virginia, who bought two subscriptions to the *Militant*."

Remple said supporters in Pittsburgh also organized campus teams to Penn State, University of Pittsburgh, and Carnegie-Mellon University where they sold six *Militant* subscriptions and passed out leaflets to build the upcoming convention of the Young Socialists.

Socialist workers and members of the Young Socialists in Miami "set up two tables with books and copies of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* at a Puerto Rican parade in Pembroke Pines,

Mine Workers of America.

The last week of our campaign to win new readers coincided with meetings here celebrating the publication of a new book by Rev. Fred Shuttlesworth, who was a central leader of the civil rights movement in Birmingham in the 1960s. We participated in the meetings along with many other supporters of Black rights. Activists at these meetings purchased 11 copies of the *Militant*.

We ended the week with a rally for the New International Fund featuring longtime socialist Tom Leonard. Two students from Vanderbilt drove down for the event. Five participants at the rally bought copies of *NI* no. 11 and one of them, a fighter against police brutality, also purchased a *Militant* sub. On the final day of the drive we sold five copies of the *New Internationalist*, including two to members of the United Auto Workers and one to a Steelworker.



BY SHELTON McCRAINEY

A team of supporters of the Illinois Socialist Workers candidates visited the state's coal mining region days before the November 3 election. At the Monterrey mine portal near Carlinville, Illinois, many workers took brochures and five purchased issues of the *Militant* featuring the coverage of an October 11 rally in Virden, Illinois, to support the striking miners at Freeman United Coal Co. The Carlinville union local had donated \$5,000 to the relief fund at that rally, and miners told the socialist campaigners that they are collecting food for the strikers.

A driver for a package delivery company said as she bought the paper that one of her relatives is on strike against Freeman.

At the Peabody mine near Marissa, campaigners discovered the miners have been regularly working 10-12 hours a day. Several who stopped to take brochures mentioned a collection organized for the Freeman strikers at shift changes over the last several days. One said he was going to visit his friend who is now on strike.

"As long as it's not Republican," stated one miner as he stopped to talk to the candidate. When he was told, "It's not Democratic either," he responded by reaching into his pocket to buy the paper saying, "Well, that's all right too."

By the time it got dark, the team had exhausted its supply of campaign brochures and had sold 13 copies of the *Militant*. One miner invited Alyson Kennedy, Socialist

Workers candidate for U.S. Senate, to stop by his house to discuss the situation facing miners in the area further.

Workers at Anheuser-Busch in St. Louis took the opportunity of the team's visit to raise their opinions about their recent two-day strike. Anheuser-Busch had unilaterally imposed its "final offer," who's onerous conditions had sparked the walkout.

After he read the poster on the campaign table set up at the entrance of the parking garage that said, "Support Worker's Strikes: Freeman Coal, Titan Tire, Lenc-Smith — Socialist Workers Campaign" one worker burst out, "We can't even support our own!" and kept walking.

Many, however, stopped at the table to express pride in the action. Elaine Watson, a member of the International Association of Machinists in the plant, said the plant manager "learned a lot" from the strike. "They claim it ran at 100 percent but we all know it didn't."

John Davit, a Teamsters member who monitors packing machines, referred to the bosses' continuing maneuvers to impose new working conditions on the workforce. "When we went back in the plant manager called us all together and said 'hope there's no hard feelings.' Then we got to our work areas and discovered they had taken away all the stools." Brewery workers that day purchased 19 copies of the *Militant* and two signed up for trial subscriptions. The following afternoon shift change nine more papers were sold.

Union abbreviations key

AEEU — Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Workers Union; AMWU — Amalgamated Manufacturers Union; CAW — Canadian Autoworkers Union; EU — Engineers Union; MWU — Meat Workers Union; IAM — International Association of Machinists; OCAW — Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers; RMT — National Union of Rail, Maritime, and Transport Workers; TGWU — Transport and General Workers Union; UAW — United Auto Workers; UFGWU — United Food, Beverage, and General Workers Union; UFCW — United Food and Commercial Workers; UMWA — United Mine Workers of America; UNITE — Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees; USWA — United Steelworkers of America; UTU — United Transportation Union.

SUBSCRIPTION DRIVE September 12–November 8

MILITANT/PERSPECTIVA MUNDIAL/NEW INT'L

Country	Militant			PM		NI	
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
Sweden	16	17	106%	8	13	25	26
United States							
Miami	40	45	113%	20	17	40	41
Pittsburgh	40	45	113%	10	7	45	24
Atlanta	35	39	111%	12	13	40	44
Los Angeles	90	97	108%	45	23	70	74
Chicago	65	70	108%	25	25	58	75
Boston	35	37	106%	20	14	35	38
Houston	35	37	106%	10	7	43	43
New York	140	147	105%	60	63	140	148
Washington, D.C.	45	47	104%	20	20	45	50
Philadelphia	35	36	103%	8	6	30	33
Seattle	70	72	103%	20	14	70	55
Birmingham, AL	50	51	102%	6	6	40	42
Newark, NJ	120	122	102%	40	41	100	105
Detroit	45	42	93%	10	10	40	44
Santa Cruz	10	9	90%	5	6		
Des Moines	45	39	87%	25	18	35	39
San Francisco	95	66	69%	38	40	90	96
Cleveland	35	21	60%	10	5	30	24
Twin Cities, MN	65	39	60%	10	5	45	46
Other							9
U.S. total	1095	1061	97%	394	340	996	1030
United Kingdom							
London	40	41	103%	10	10	73	77
Manchester	24	19	79%	4	5	35	36
UK total	64	60	94%	14	15	108	113
New Zealand							
Auckland	28	31	111%	1	1	25	26
Christchurch	18	12	67%	1	0	15	15
N.Z. total	46	43	93%	2	1	40	41
Australia	16	14	88%	3	2	18	19
Canada							
Toronto	40	41	103%	5	6	50	62
Vancouver	40	35	88%	5	1	40	48
Montreal	25	13	52%	10	12	40	31
Canada total	105	89	85%	20	19	130	141
France	5	2	40%	3	3	31	28
Iceland	8	3	38%	1	0	4	4
Int'l totals	1355	1289	99%	445	393	1352	1402
Goal/Should be	1300	1300	100%	400	400	1300	1300

IN THE UNIONS

Country/Union	Militant		%	PM		NI	
	Goal	Sold		Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
Canada							
CAW	5	5	100%		0	6	5
USWA	5	4	80%		1	6	3
IAM	8	5	63%	2	0	9	2
Canada total	18	14	78%	2	1	21	10
United States							
UFCW	10	9	90%	13	8	11	8
IAM	65	50	77%	15	6	25	21
UAW	40	30	75%	5	3	20	20
USWA	31	22	71%	2	1	13	8
UTU	45	26	58%	3	1	40	23
OCAW	24	9	38%	4	0	12	10
UNITE	5	1	20%	7	8	5	1
U.S. total	220	147	67%	49	27	126	91
New Zealand							
MWU	1	1	100%			1	0
EU	4	3	75%			2	0
SFWU	2	0	0%				
N.Z. total	7	4	57%			3	0
United Kingdom							
RMT	5	4	80%			5	4
TGWU	5	2	40%			3	4
AEEU	4	1	25%			5	1
UK total	14	7	50%			13	9
Australia							
AMWU	3	1	33%			4	0
TCFU							
Australia total	3	1	33%			4	0
Sweden							
METAL	1	0	0%	1	0	1	0



Solidarity rally November 8 for United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 911 at Meijer. Participants purchased six subscriptions to the *Militant*.

Florida, where several thousands people were in attendance," wrote Shirley Peña. "We also built the November 14 action in Miami demanding the release of Puerto Rican political prisoner Antonio Camacho, who is currently being held at the Federal Detention Center in Miami. We used this opportunity to sell the Pathfinder pamphlet *Puerto Rico: independence is a necessity*, which contains two interviews with Rafael Cancel Miranda, a leader of the fight for independence of Puerto Rico. Seven people bought copies of the new pamphlet."

Supporters of the campaign to win 1,300 new readers to the *Militant* fell shy of this goal by just 11 subscriptions. The goal to win 400 new subscribers to *PM* fell short by seven, while the campaign sell 1,300 copies of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist* was surpassed by more than 100.

Now is a good time supporters of the socialist press to follow up on new subscribers, including the youth who may be interested in attending the upcoming YS convention in Los Angeles. Many new readers may want to purchase copies of *New Internationalist* and contribute to the New International Fund, which ends November 15. Some of the unionists who bought subscriptions to the socialist press may be interested in building an alliance with working farmers by helping to organize meetings for Black farmers who are fighting government discrimination. They may also want to publicly endorse the *Militant* and *PM*.



BY CINDY JAQUITH

Birmingham supporters finished out the weekend making all three of our goals in the circulation drive. The last week of the drive was a very exciting one — we traveled to coalfield communities and mine portals, campuses in both Alabama and Tennessee, and to many working-class communities.

We sent special teams to Birmingham Southern College, where we sold a subscription and several books; to Stillman College in Tuscaloosa, a Black school, where we sold another *Militant* sub; and to Vanderbilt University in Nashville, Tennessee, where campaigners sold six *Militant* subscriptions and two *NIs* along with \$100 of Pathfinder literature. A team returned later to Vanderbilt and sold another subscription and a copy of *New Internationalist*.

A two-day sales team to coal communities and mines in the area sold five copies of the *Militant* at the mine portals and a copy of *New Internationalist* no. 11 to a member of the United

Why Reform Party candidate won for Minnesota governor

BY DOUG JENNESS

ST. PAUL, Minnesota — A wide-ranging discussion has opened here attempting to explain why Jesse Ventura, the Reform Party candidate, is now governor-elect of Minnesota. Most people were not expecting that he would win against Hubert Horatio Humphrey III and Norman Coleman, the Democratic-Farmer Labor and Republican contenders respectively. Right up to the eve of the elections, three out of four of the state's main polling outfits were predicting that Humphrey would carry the state. And none predicted Ventura's victory, the first nationally for the Reform Party in any statewide contest.

In a voter turnout of more than 60 percent, well above the national average in this November's elections, Ventura scored 37 percent of the vote against Coleman's 34 percent and Humphrey's 28 percent. He carried all of the counties in the state's major metropolitan area of Minneapolis-St. Paul, running particularly strong in the northern suburbs.

No matter how much people seem surprised, the fact is Ventura's election didn't come out of the blue. The Reform Party is the continuation of the party established in Minnesota six years ago to support Texas billionaire Ross Perot for president. Perot won 19 percent of the vote nationally and 24 percent in Minnesota.

Since 1992 the Reform Party has been running campaigns for statewide office, and in 1994 and 1996, its standard-bearer for U.S. Senate, Dean Barkley, scored more than 5 percent of the vote, sufficient to meet the legal requirement for "major party" status. A major party in Minnesota receives media advantages not afforded "minor parties," such as inclusion in the main TV and radio debates, and is eligible for considerable sums of money from the state for campaigning.

Ventura, who was the honorary chairperson of Barkley's 1996 campaign, was selected to run for governor partly because of his popularity as talk-show host on a local radio station and for his earlier career as a professional wrestler. His radio broadcasts projected him as a hard-hitting radical "shock jock," taking swipes at big party politics and corruption. Ventura had also served a short term as mayor in the suburban town of Brooklyn Park.

Ventura's campaign was marked by two characteristics. Rather than concentrating on issues or programs that he would implement, he presented himself as someone who stands above partisan politics and will sign or veto legislation on the basis of whether he thinks it is good for Minnesotans rather than for a particular party. Thus, he tries to present himself as a champion of the "people."

"Serving the people, not the parties" is

the title of his Internet web page.

Secondly, like Perot, he portrayed himself as someone who is strong enough to break through legislative logjams and get things done. He cultivated the image of a tough, ordinary sort of guy by playing on his reputation as a wrestler known as Jesse "the Body" Ventura, as a Navy SEAL, and a former motorcycle gang member. When asked how he would deal with a state legislature dominated by the DFL and the Republicans, he simply flexed his biceps, and said, "This is how."

Insofar as he expresses himself on issues, Ventura is clearly anti-working class. He calls for ending public funding for child care for women on welfare, instituting the death penalty in Minnesota, and backing the recent erosion of workmen's compensation.

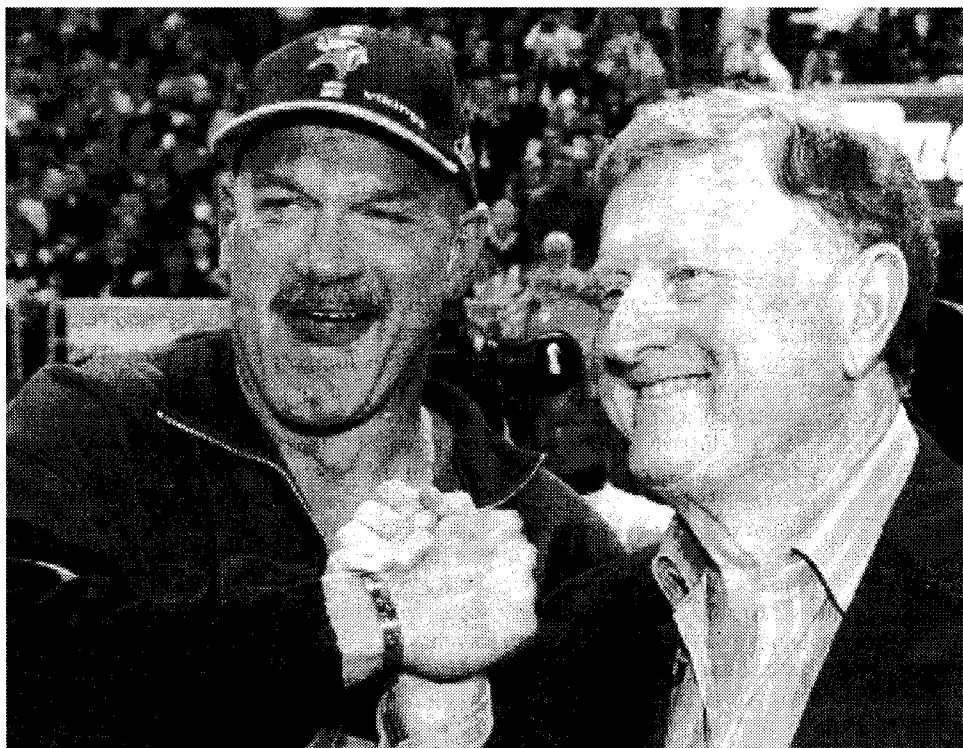
He says he opposes any additional taxes and using tax money to build a new athletic stadium. His Lieutenant Governor, Mae Schunk, is a longtime schoolteacher who calls for reducing class size without providing additional funds to local school districts. Ventura stated his support for keeping abortion legal and also called for decriminalizing of drugs and prostitution.

Ventura's vote came from people with a wide-range of backgrounds — from middle classes, professionals, farmers, and sections of the working class. Underlying his large vote is growing discontent with the Democratic and Republican parties, resentment over worsening conditions and reduced opportunities, and mounting insecurity in a capitalist system plagued by growing crisis. Many workers, lauding his victory, said that "he's different and that's what we need. Something different." Others responded favorably to his campaign slogan, "Retaliate in '98."

Tom Fiske, who ran for governor on the Socialist Workers Party ticket, explained that Ventura's victory "demonstrates the depth of alienation and distrust of the current two-party setup. It illustrates the growing political polarization taking place in the country. It is not a fluke," he said. "On the other hand," he added, Ventura's victory "will not help working people one tiny bit. Being radical or different or setting up a third, fourth, or fifth party isn't a sufficient answer for working people. Ventura and the Reform party are procapitalist," Fiske stated. "They attempt to cover up the sharp line between workers and bosses based on exploitation."

"We need organizations and perspectives that are based on struggle and recognize this unbridgeable gulf. We need organizations that raise demands that point the way forward for working people in our worldwide life and death fight against the employers and their government."

As governor Ventura will preside over a state government where the Republicans



Minnesota governor-elect Jesse Ventura (left) with Vikings football owner. Ventura plays up image as a tough guy who can stand up to politicians. His victory "will not help working people one bit," said Socialist Workers candidate for governor Tom Fiske.

have a majority in the state House of Representatives and the DFL, the Minnesota affiliate of the Democratic Party, controls the state Senate. The Reform Party has no members in the state legislature. The 12 candidates it ran for the House polled from 3 to 15 percent of the vote. This situation has aroused questions about whether Ventura is going to be able to implement the tough line he preached in his campaign speeches or whether he will end up accommodating himself to the DFL/Republican framework.

The main voices of big business are pressing him to take the latter course. Two days after the election the editors of the *Minneapolis-Star Tribune*, for example, stated,

"Before he can hope to succeed, Ventura must remake himself once again. His only chance of accomplishing his goal lies in winning the cooperation of the very government establishment he lambasted during the campaign. He can no longer be the clever critic. He must become an informed, conciliatory leader."

In his first personnel move, Ventura appears to be taking this course. He appointed as his transition chief of state, an aide to former DFL Congressman Timothy Penny and executive director of the University of Minnesota Board of Regents.

Gingrich resigns as House Speaker

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

Discarded by a majority in his own party and the U.S. ruling class as a spent vessel, House of Representatives Speaker Newton Gingrich, a Republican from Georgia, announced November 6 he will resign from his post in the House and quit Congress altogether when his term expires in early January.

Gingrich led his party in scoring a major victory in the 1994 elections, when the Republicans gained 52 seats and control of the House for the first time in four decades. He was identified as one of the foremost proponents of the Republicans's program at that time, the so-called Contract with America, that advocated cutbacks in social programs and undermining of democratic rights. The 1994 elections registered a further shift to the right of capitalist politics, as the working class was being battered — with the downsizing of factories, longer workdays for less pay, and chipping away at social gains such as funds for schools and health insurance — without a fight. Two years later, the Democratic administration of William Clinton codified this continuing bipartisan shift to the right by signing into law the "welfare

reform" bill that slashed federal cash aid for children of workers with very low income and approving "anticrime" and anti-immigrant bills.

The announcement by Gingrich he would quit his posts came three days after the November 3 elections, when the Republican party suffered a net loss of five seats in the House despite projections it would gain 10–20 seats. The elections confirmed a reversal, for now, of the previous trends in bourgeois politics: a shift to the left that has been obvious for more than a year.

In the weeks before the November 3 vote, politicians of both parties, especially the Democrats, tried to portray themselves as defenders of Social Security and of increasing funding for education. They demagogically distanced themselves from the earlier course of slashing the social wage. They were not unique. Some Republican congressmen, in their hunt for votes, went out of their way to paint themselves as the greatest supporters of funds for public works, like Rep. Bud Shuster of Pennsylvania.

Politicians of both parties went out of their way to convince working people and middle-class layers who are Black that they would defend their interests best. This was nothing but demagoguery, registering recognition of the new stirrings in the fight for Black freedom. Reflecting the shameless and racist attitudes towards working people who are Black among most bourgeois politicians and pundits, David Bositis, of the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies, was quoted in the "Week in Review" section of the Sunday, November 8, *New York Times*, saying: "There is no longer a problem with the Democratic Party being associated with black voters — none.... Before it was: 'We've got to divorce ourselves from the black community.' Now, it's no longer a problem. It's an asset."

Underneath this shift is the acceleration of working-class resistance to the belt-tightening demands of the bosses in most imperialist countries and the threat of a collapse of the world banking system or other major financial catastrophe.

Rep. Robert Livingston, a Republican from Louisiana, has emerged as the front runner in the race for House Speaker. The setback the Republicans suffered on November 3, also sparked a fray for the other major post in the House, that of majority leader. Rep. Richard Armey is being challenged by at least two of his colleagues for this post. Elections among the Republican caucus for these positions will be held November 18.

Young Socialists build convention in Bay Area

Continued from front page

the Socialist Workers Party staffed a literature table and mingled with the crowd, distributing information on the upcoming YS convention and the next day's demonstration for Puerto Rican political prisoners to most youth at the rally.

Scores of young people dropped by the table to discuss politics, the subjects ranging from how to free Abu-Jamal and jailed Native American rights fighter Leonard Peltier, to the real history of the Cuban revolution, and from the importance of the national liberation struggles in Puerto Rico and other exploited countries, to the revolutionary potential of the working class in the United States and other imperialist countries.

The next day there was a rally demanding the release of four Puerto Rican political prisoners who are women — Dylcia Pagán, Carmen Valentín, Alicia Rodríguez, and Ida Luz Rodríguez — held at the Dublin Federal Correctional Institution (FCI). This action was organized by Comité '98 and endorsed by the League of Filipino Students, Jericho '98, the Young Socialists, the Socialist Workers Party, and others. Close

to 100 fighters, young and old, gathered in pouring rain at the commuter train station for a short rally before marching to Dublin FCI. Undeterred by the unfavorable weather, the protesters chanted "Puerto Rico Must Be Free — Not another century," referring to the 100-year fight against Yankee imperialism waged by the peoples of Puerto Rico, the Philippines, Guam, and Cuba.

Upon arriving at Dublin FCI, the marchers were greeted by military police who said we could not enter the compound. In response, the group chanted "We're here, no fear, we want them free!" Threatened with arrest if the action didn't move, the organizers decided to hold the rally off to the side of the compound's entrance. Members of Comité '98 read statements issued from the prisoners inside. One statement by Carmen Valentín read, "We can never expect justice from the U.S. government. This country is guilty of the worst atrocities carried out against the world in the name of democracy." It continued, "It is a sad commentary that more and more rallies in the U.S. have to be held in front of prisons."

Members of the YS and SWP took ad-

vantage of the recently published pamphlet of interviews with *independentista* Rafael Cancel Miranda, *Puerto Rico: Independence is a Necessity*, selling four, with promises of five more at the next Comité '98 meeting. The young Puerto Rican fighters were interested in the YS's support for the Puerto Rican independence struggle and many looked over the YS convention flyer. The YS is also helping to build a similar demonstration at Lompoc Penitentiary on November 14, near Santa Barbara, where Adolfo Matos is being held.

YS members are also participating in and building weekly rallies by unionists in the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 2 who are fighting for a contract at the Marriott Hotel in San Francisco.

With continued work in these areas of politics, the YS can recruit fellow fighters to help build the anti-imperialist youth organization needed to advance the fights of working people and youth today. We bring our communist continuity and understanding of the necessity of self-determination to the fight for the independence of all oppressed nationalities and nations.

Radicalism, Bonapartism, and the Perot vote

The Nov. 3, 1998, election of Reform Party candidate James George Janos Ventura as governor of Minnesota highlights the rise in social polarization that gets reflected in bourgeois politics today. It was similar to the vote for Ross Perot in the 1992 presidential election. The Texas billionaire, running against both Republican George Bush and Democrat William Clinton, took 19 percent of the vote.

The following selection is a portion of a talk by Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes, titled, "The Vote for Ross Perot and Patrick Buchanan's 'Culture War': What the 1992 Elections Revealed." This talk was presented at a Militant Labor Forum in New York on Nov. 7, 1992, just four days after the U.S. presidential elections. It will be included in *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working Class Politics in the 21st Century* by Jack Barnes, scheduled for publication in December. It is copyright © 1998 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the Militant.

BY JACK BARNES

The history of this century teaches us that a deepening capitalist crisis starts breeding radical attitudes before it precipitates massive class battles. Before a broad working-class radicalization begins — with growing numbers of workers becoming more receptive to class-struggle proposals and communist ideas—radical attitudes begin get-

BOOK OF THE WEEK

ting a hearing in the middle class and among better-off layers of workers who aspire to become part of the middle class.

In a working-class radicalization, a vanguard of the labor movement begins to organize as a conscious *political* force, independent of the capitalist class and its parties. Prior to that, resistance by workers to the employers' offensive takes on a guerrilla character — a fight by a group of workers at a particular plant, a battle that explodes in a particular industry, resistance to a police attack in some city, and other partial struggles around specific abuses and demands.

But the working class currently has no class-conscious political voice, organization, or leadership of our own on any mass scale. The working class does not think and act like a class. So the political initiative today comes from currents on the right, which take advantage of their foothold within the structures of the bourgeois parties and other ruling-class institutions. Rightist forces tap into the loss of confidence in the government and suspicions about the rulers and their most prominent, established spokespeople. Nationalism, not communism; national socialism, not proletarian internationalism; not the historic line of march of a class, but the hatreds and resentment of a heterogeneous popular mass — these are the marks of this political development.

Because of the misleadership of the labor movement by the union officialdom and social democratic and Stalinist parties in the United States, the political monopoly of the capitalist Democratic and Republican parties was never really challenged by any substantial wing of the labor movement during the Great Depression and labor radicalization of the 1930s....

Behind the radicalization that is initially putting wind in the sails of the right, however, we can see fracture lines that tell us the two-party system the rulers put together before World War I is not immune to breakup. That is what this election signaled. We should never think that the only way the capitalist class can run things is through a two-party system; that is one of a number of ways they can do so.

The reflection of this emerging radicalism in this year's election campaign was more important than anything we saw with William Clinton and Albert Gore or with George Bush and Danforth Quayle. Everything those four said and did during the campaign could have been prerecorded on a videotape and played back on the nightly news; nobody would have known the difference. Once the October surprise had been scotched, everything else about the Bush-Clinton contest was like a choreographed

dance.

But an aspect of bourgeois electoral politics this year was not choreographed — the campaigns of Ross Perot and Patrick Buchanan. The vote for Perot earlier this week — 19 percent of the ballots cast — is the most significant *electoral* phenomena in the United States since just before World War I, when Theodore Roosevelt ran as an independent against the Democratic and Republican candidates in the 1912 elections. Roosevelt, who had been president from 1901 to 1909, had made his name as an officer in the Spanish-American War of 1898, which was the first military engagement by Washington as an emerging imperialist power. By that time, the U.S. capitalists' rivals in Britain and elsewhere in Europe already had a jump on them in colonial markets, and substantial sections of the U.S. ruling class were pressing Washington to begin acting more aggressively as a world military power. Starting with the Philippines, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Cuba — all either annexed or brought under Washington's heel during the Spanish-American War — growing layers of the U.S. ruling class were determined to push toward establishing their predominance in the world imperialist system that was coming into being. It was against that background that layers of the U.S. capitalist class backed Roosevelt's candidacy as an independent in 1912, and he ended up getting around 28 percent of the vote — more than the Republican incumbent. Although Roosevelt was not elected, the goals of those who pushed his candidacy were successful. The new Democratic president Woodrow Wilson went on to win reelection four years later and led the United States into World War I in 1917. Out of that slaughter, Wall Street and Washington emerged as world imperialism's leading power, whose fortunes would determine much of the course of the twentieth century.

Not a bizarre anomaly

Theodore Roosevelt is the only "third party" candidate in this century who polled a bigger percentage of votes than Perot. It is important to assess the Perot campaign accurately, or we will fall into the trap of accepting its portrayal by much of the bourgeois press as a bizarre anomaly. But this kind of political phenomenon — with its bizarre elements, for sure — is not abnormal for this stage of the curve of capitalist development. Thinking workers better get used to anticipating that radical demagogues will win support from many small businessmen, farmers, and other middle-class layers, as well as sectors of the working class. These social layers are attracted to a figure who comes along and seems to offer explanations and proposals radically different from those of politicians whom growing numbers consider incurably corrupt, ineffective, and self-serving.

Every sophisticated, liberal, coiffured newsreader on TV had written off Perot. Who, they asked, would take seriously a candidate like Perot who held a news conference to charge that a picture of his daughter was being circulated by George Bush to try to make her look immoral, and who then withdrew from the race for a while, citing that as one of the reasons? Who would take seriously a candidate who earlier during the campaign claimed to have been the target in the 1970s of an assassination plot organized by the Black Panthers and the Vietnamese government? When Perot re-entered the race this fall, these pundits said he could kiss good-bye his earlier expectations of 16 or 17 percent of the vote; he would be lucky to get 4 or 5 percent now, they said.

Conspiracy theories

But we should ask ourselves the question: how many millions of people in the United States believe Perot's charges? How many millions are beginning to believe that only conspiracies and plots by powerful forces who do not have the interests of "the country" at heart can explain what is happening to their lives and livelihoods, and the even bleaker future they foresee? How many millions see no explanation other than a spreading moral corruption in what they believe was once the greatest country in the world? How many "on the left" show the need to lean on conspiracy fantasies to explain the horrors of the rulers' march toward fascism and war?

When Ross Perot cried "Conspiracy!" he

increased his vote. (I might add that the only actual conspiracy that was even partially documented during this election campaign was one organized earlier by Perot himself using private detectives to break up the engagement of one of his daughters because he was not going to have her marry a Jew. A number of witnesses seem to substantiate that Perot used almost exactly the same kind of blackmail scheme against his younger daughter that he charged Bush with using against her older sister.)

The vote for Perot is the thing bourgeois pollsters were most wrong about this year. I do not usually pay much attention to opinion polls, since they rarely reveal much about what is really going on in politics and the class struggle. But the polls caught many of the trends in bourgeois politics pretty accurately this year. They were right about the shift after the Republican convention, when bourgeois public opinion swung decisively against Bush. They were right about how the Clinton-Bush race was turning out.

Why were the polls so wrong on the vote for Perot, then? I think they were wrong because a substantial number of people who intended to vote for Perot did not tell the truth when they were selected at random to be surveyed. Why? Because these people considered the pollsters — like reporters, news photographers, and most "professional politicians" — to be part of the conspiracy.

I watched the televised reports on Perot's huge rally in Long Beach, California, on Sunday night before the election. He stopped suddenly in the middle of a sentence and began shouting, "Look, look up there! There are seals! There are seals up in the rafters!" I figured, this is it — he's gone around the bend on nationwide TV. But then the camera panned the audience, and they were all cheering. Many of them knew exactly what he was talking about. He was pointing to members of the navy SEALs — the U.S. Navy's special forces, like the army's Green Berets. And then he explained to the whole audience, and to everyone watching on television, why he does not accept Secret Service protection. For his protection, Perot said, he counts on "our boys" who are trained to protect this country, to protect all of us. (Earlier this year, the New York daily *Newsday* reported that Perot has a "devoted following in the military, notably within the special-operations community.")

Perot told the crowd in Long Beach that he had watched videotapes of the televised presidential debates; he called attention to how many times his eyes blinked versus how many times Bush's and Clinton's eyes blinked. It sounds bizarre, doesn't it? But if you are prone to believe in conspiracy theories, then isn't eye-blinking a wonderful test of who is telling the truth? Watch their eyes blink! Then watch mine!

These things sound irrational to us. But

they get a hearing because millions are trying to find answers that can explain the irrationalities of capitalism. Millions want to know what can be done about the destabilizing consequences they fear for themselves and their families. In the absence of real explanations, the "theories" of a Perot can seem to solve the mystery of what is happening to the country, to the government, to the world, to jobs — to any semblance of security in their lives.

Why capitalism appears more corrupt

Perot taps into a conviction growing among millions of people that the established bourgeois politicians are incapable of addressing the social crisis. More and more people are open to the suggestion that these figures are at worst plotting conspiracies; at best they are immoral, not fit to be in office. Millions are convinced that the government is rotten; Washington and all it represents is morally degenerate; the parliamentary and democratic institutions under capitalism are cesspools where thieves and bureaucrats and maneuverers hide. And more and more believe that something radical must be done to break through this spreading corruption.

The ruling class and its political spokespeople today appear to be so much more corrupt, so scandal-ridden, because of capitalism's deepening and irresolvable problems. Actually, the propertied classes and their politicians are corrupt in all periods. They have always cheated each other and used the government to enrich themselves and their friends. Why else do "public servants" stay in government? The difference today is only that the scope of the social crisis makes it more difficult for the exploiters to hide what they have always become and what they have always ended up doing.

Even when the capitalist class was on the rise historically in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the executive branch of the government was always careful about what it said publicly, including in front of parliaments and congresses. Presidents, prime ministers, and their deputies lied continually. What changes in capitalism's decline, however, is the growing power of the executive branch. What changes is the executive power's need to hide more and more of what it must do to defend imperialist interests against working people at home and abroad, growing numbers of whom have won the right to be at least a part of the "political class."

The Watergate crisis surely had little to do with the episodes from which it got its name—the break-in at the Democrats' national committee office in the Watergate hotel, organized by the Nixon campaign committee's "offensive security" volunteers. No. Watergate registered the implications for the U.S. ruling class of Washington's

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Protests denounce anti-Muslim movie



Militant/Angel Lariscy

More than 200 people picketed AMC 8 Theaters in Miami November 7 to protest the portrayal of Muslims as terrorists in the new movie *The Siege*. The demonstration was called by the Islamic Council of North America and the Islamic Centers of South Florida. "I think it is important that people not stereotype different races, creeds, and nationalities," said Mahasin Shahid, one of many high school students to join the action. Similar protests took place across the United States.

'Culture is a weapon to defend our socialist

Below we reprint the document on "Culture and Society" presented at the congress of the Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (see box below). Translation and subheadings are by the *Militant*.

Our congress has justly been identified with the name of Juan Marinello, whose 100th anniversary we commemorate today. Bertolt Brecht, Federico García Lorca, or Paul Robeson could be singled out in a similar way. Beyond personalities, the year 1998 marks the anniversary of two far-reaching historic events that we cannot fail to mention: the 150th anniversary of the birth of the Communist Manifesto and the 100th anniversary of the U.S. intervention in the Cuban war of liberation. We'll come back to the first one. Regarding the second, as we well know, it was the visible beginning of modern imperialism, and for Cuba it meant we ceased being a colony of Spain only to become a U.S. colony, with this or that name, for six decades — until January 1, 1959. That date thus marks the winning of our independence and, simultaneously, the opening of the Cuban revolution. As history showed, neither could be won without the other.

About the Communist Manifesto, the least that can be said is that, 150 years after its first publication, the document remains startlingly relevant on basic questions. It recognizes developments such as the internationalization of capitalism and its devastating impact on all aspects of human existence, as well as the enormous differences between rich and poor. It demonstrates how capitalism, far from being an unchanging system (what would frivolously be called "the end of history"), is, to the contrary, subject to enormous crises and contains within it the seeds of its own destruction.

This text, a founding document in so many ways, is also, in a certain manner, a manifesto on globalization. Today, throughout the world, we are living with the consequences of what was seen and foreseen in its pages with great insight. Among these consequences was the subsequent rise of imperialism, which was analyzed and described by Lenin, and what has been called late capitalism, which is what exists today — marked by a predatory neoliberal globalization that many label "postmodern." In discussing culture and society, especially in Cuba (and from Cuba) in 1998, it is necessary to take up these questions.

A world order that destroys culture

We do not limit the concept of "culture" to arts and letters (although it is obvious



Goal in early years of the Bolshevik revolution "was that the development of all would be the precondition for the development of each, and vice versa. The goal was a free and just society, not a society of opulence." Above, Cuban peasants learn to read and write from student volunteer in 1961 literacy drive.

that, as writers and artists, we give these the place they deserve). For us, culture is the coherent, unified face of a society. In our case, it is above all a Cuban culture, tied, of course, to the culture of all humanity. This perspective reinforces the remarks made by comrade Fidel [Castro] at our last congress [in 1993], where he said that "above all we must save our culture." This is a point he has returned to on a number of occasions. For example, in the masterful presentation Fidel gave at the Autonomous University of Santo Domingo August 24, he stated:

"A terrible problem... we are facing is the assault on our national identities, a ruthless onslaught against our cultures such as we have never seen in history, the tendency toward a single, universal culture. Can such a world be conceived? It is not a world that combines the wealth and culture of many countries, but a world order that, by definition, destroys culture, a globalization that inexorably destroys culture. What is a homeland if not one's own culture? What is national identity if not one's own culture?"

This "terrible problem" is faced especially by all countries that today are often called the South. But it also affects countries of the North, which are experiencing an attempt to replace their rich and ancient cultures with a kind of modernization that has turned out to be no more than Americanization and banalization — from thought itself, to the media, to the fabric of everyday life. The

country that, more than a century ago, Martí¹ called "the American Rome," is acting like the old Roman Empire, only this time on a world scale. The problem is especially acute for our peoples. We are well aware of this in Cuba, which, for obvious reasons, is the focus of our attention here.

Since ours is a socialist revolution, we think it is of utmost importance to take into account the collapse experienced by the countries that called themselves communist in Eastern Europe, and to draw the lessons of their experiences. When the only such country was the Soviet Union, and it had not yet (or barely) gone through the traumas that would mark it so negatively, Antonio Gramsci wrote:

"Fighting for a new art would mean fighting to create new artists, which is an absurdity, since they cannot be created artificially. One must speak of the struggle for a new culture, that is, for a new moral life, that cannot but be intimately tied to a new intuition of life, until it becomes a new way of feeling and seeing reality and, as a result, a new world intimately fused with 'possible artists' and 'possible works of art.'"²

This struggle was evident in the opening years of the October [1917 Bolshevik] Revolution, which were characterized by an intense artistic ferment and renewal, which unfortunately was later stifled. During these early years (as now it appears clear to us), it was not a question of competing with capitalism on its own terrain. Rather, what was decisive was the "struggle for a new culture, that is, for a life with new moral values." The goal was that the development of all would be the precondition for the development of each, and vice versa. The goal was a free and just society, not a society of opulence. Competition with capitalism on its own terrain, accepting its rules of the game, would come later; it would affect everything, from the economic to many aspects of the spiritual, and would turn out to be fatal.

In his essay "Actually existing Marxism," where he took up the famous collapse of the so-called actually existing socialism in Europe, Fredric Jameson³ spoke of "the essentially cultural failures of communism," of its "failure to create a collective, specifically socialist, culture." And having considered the terrible situation such countries have ended up in, we are forced to draw conclusions from the sudden turn of events there.

'Compañero' vs. 'Señor'

Not long ago, some of us objected to the fact that some people have dropped the word *compañero*, indiscriminately substituting the word *señor* together with the corresponding feminine and plural form of each. This is not a discussion of some superficial matter. Giving that up is a (small but noticeable) part of what could become giving up

"a collective, specifically socialist, form of culture," a "way of life and a subjective practice" that our people have been forging in the heat of decades of revolution. These are cultural realities that we must defend if we don't want to suffer a disastrous transition (or regression) to capitalism. Our banner, on this and many similar fronts, must be: no concession to a return to the worst of pre-1959 Cuba, to neocolonized Cuba, with all the scourges of the past.

For this reason, we cannot help but be concerned about the inevitable presence in our country — the result of the concessions the revolution has had to make in order to survive — of small pockets of capitalism. While these may be, as we said, inevitable, that is not the case with things such as the construction of buildings that are caricatures of the vulgar structures that imperialism plants throughout the world, buildings that violate the norms of urban development and show no regard for the architectural values or the overall image of the cities, which are also part and parcel of our identity; the unnecessary or excessive introduction of English, sometimes at the expense of our language; the presentation, as works of art, of foreign and native works of abysmal quality; attitudes, open or hidden, that are susceptible to shallowness and to right-wing ideas that are in vogue — all under the guise of being up-to-date.

More examples can be added to the list, unfortunately. Claiming it is a question of satisfying tourists and visitors is a false argument, because the more our country appears less like itself, the more we will encourage tourists and visitors to go to the country we are making a caricature of. The fact that this country, as we well know, is the United States, particularly its Miami area, only makes things worse.

We cannot forget for a minute that our country has been and is blockaded (indeed, subjected to an economic war) by the United States for close to 40 years. Legislation such as the Torricelli and Helms-Burton laws proclaims the renewed intention of the government of that nation to destroy ours, with the pretext, also unacceptable, of doing so through the revolution; they resort to hypocritical fifth-column efforts like those that make up "Track II."⁴ Our culture is called on to play a central role in defeating their objectives. Thus, all attitudes that undermine our culture (wherever their source, and regardless of how aware one is of this fact) are anti-revolutionary attitudes.

Schools that stimulate culture

One of the institutions that should have the most weight in any transformation of society and culture is the schools. Being free, universal, and guided by socialist principles in our country, it is evident they must promote, from the earliest years, an education that not only opens the way to the revolution in science, technology, and information, but also points to the humanist dimension of knowledge and the need to dream

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¹ José Martí was the central leader of the struggle for Cuban independence from Spain in the late 19th century and is Cuba's national hero. He died in combat in 1895.

² Antonio Gramsci was a founder and central leader of the Italian Communist Party. He was arrested by Mussolini in 1926 and died in prison 11 years later.

³ Fredric Jameson is a professor at Duke University and the author of *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*.

⁴ The misnamed Cuban Democracy Act of 1992, often called the Torricelli law, and so-called Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act of 1996, or Helms-Burton law, both contained provisions often known as "Track I" and "Track II" of Washington's aggressive policies against the Cuban revolution. The first refers to the tightening of the U.S. economic embargo. "Track II" refers to provisions that — in the guise of promoting the "free flow of ideas" between the United States and Cuba — aim to corrupt and buy off Cuban academics and professionals.

Cuban writers and artists congress tackles pressures of capitalist market

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

HAVANA, Cuba — Some 320 delegates and several hundred guests from around the island took part in the sixth national congress of the Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (UNEAC), held here November 5-7. The event brought together musicians, writers, painters, photographers, architects, stage designers, film artists, dancers, and others. The delegates at the meeting, which received widespread public attention here, discussed some of the broad questions facing the Cuban revolution today as well as the pressing issues affecting Cuban artists — from guaranteeing artists' right to a livelihood to waging a political fight against the bourgeois ideas and values fostered by the pressures of the capitalist market.

The process leading up to the congress began eight months ago with a series of discussions by UNEAC members in the different provinces and in several commissions, which included representatives of the five associations UNEAC encompasses: plastic arts (sculpture and paint-

ing); theater; music; literature; and film, radio, and television. Out of these meetings several policy documents were drafted for discussion at the congress. These included a central report from the Organizing Committee as well as reports on: culture and society, culture and development, culture and tourism, culture and the community, the economics of culture, art instruction, and UNEAC's statutes.

The delegates met in plenary sessions and in commissions. Following discussion each of the draft reports was adopted and a new 150-member National Council and seven-member secretariat was elected. Carlos Martí, a prominent writer and poet who headed the organizing committee for the congress, was elected president of UNEAC.

Reprinted here is the document on "Culture and Society" read by Roberto Fernández Retamar to the UNEAC congress. Fernández Retamar is a prominent writer and president of the Cuban cultural institution Casa de las Américas.

revolution'

through art and literature — an education that is imbued with the demands for representation by the various groups that make up Cuban society, and that stimulates love for our culture. With regard to the latter, following the commendable example of what is already being done in relation to Martí's message, we must require our students to become familiar with the vast heritage of Cuba. Presenting the totality of our past and present culture in a step-by-step way, with programs organized by age, specialty, and level, would lead to an enriched view of who and what we are, and would provide a barrier against the very serious dangers of penetration and forgetting our past.

It is essential that we proclaim the importance of our authentic popular culture (which is so strong among us), appreciated in its true dimension. Only criticism that is unprejudiced, informed, and knowledgeable of the ground it covers is qualified to separate the wheat from the chaff; to redeem, as a worthy part of our culture, that which is deeply rooted in our foundations. We must break down the false wall between the elite and the masses, a porous division that it is healthy to cross in both directions on a daily basis. It is also necessary to fight to keep the dubious demands of the market from adulterating the products of popular culture, as they so frequently do.

It is our duty to defend both our cultural patrimony and our genuinely modern culture. Only with a superficial view could they be considered distant or even opposite realities. The first guarantees the continuation of the values, some attained over centuries, that have helped give us our distinguishing features; the second allows us to rise to the needs of the times we live in and constantly renews those features. But we insist it must be a genuinely modern culture, arising from our needs, not from attitudes that are simply copied.

This dialectic of traditional and modern leads us to underscore the kind of unity that we need — one forged out of a diversity, unity in the best sense of the term. It is not a question of repeating the same thing but of taking many enriching paths toward a common horizon that is constantly renewed. That unity requires strengthening the ties between generations (without minimizing the inevitable and positive differences) in order to develop a vigorous platform for our work.

Given the great difficulties we have confronted and continue to confront, it is even more necessary to stimulate our work as writers and artists. To stimulate it spiritually, of course, but also materially, providing income, wherever possible, both in national currency and hard currency, for those who must find ways inside the country to earn due remuneration for their labor.

As for those who, for various reasons, have settled outside the country, we must clearly distinguish between those who, wherever they may find themselves, maintain their ties to the country, and those who have broken those ties or hide them, chameleon-like. The latter are sometimes ideological fugitives, afraid of the harsh conditions that imperialism and the fall of European socialism have forced us to live under — they are the Alberto Lamar Schweyers and Raúl Maestris of today.⁵ Like them, they are full of vacuous words that cannot hide the openly reactionary and neo-annexationist character of their ideas, and are frequently well-paid, even if they are second- or third-rate talents. Nonetheless, no matter how far removed we may be politically from those who are hostile to the revolution, we can't mechanically reject their artistic and literary works, which, in spite of everything, may continue to belong to our culture and even enrich it.

A basic aspect of our work as creators of art and literature is the role of criticism they tend to play. And it is not only art and literature. In "Our America," José Martí wrote his memorable words: "People must live criticizing themselves, because criticism is health;

⁵ Alberto Lamar Schweyer and Raúl Maestri were liberal Cuban intellectuals in the 1920s and '30s who moved sharply to the right, becoming supporters of the pro-imperialist Machado dictatorship.



Federation of Cuban Women
"Our banner must be: no concession to a return to the worst of pre-1959 Cuba, to neocolonized Cuba, with all the scourges of the past." Above, volunteer work brigade, 1988. Brigades like this built needed child-care centers, housing, and medical centers across Cuba in conscious effort to put the resources of society to use meeting the needs of working people, particularly women and blacks, who face greatest legacy of discrimination from capitalist society.

but with a single heart and a single mind." Since works of art are not mere ornaments but rather ways of penetrating reality, they cannot abstain from criticizing that reality. Of course, it will be a criticism that is "healthy" when it is carried out "with a single heart and a single mind" — in our case, those of the nation and its indispensable revolutionary aspirations, which must be based on a correct combination of responsibility and boldness.

The role of criticism in much of our art and literature must find greater resonance in our mass media, even though there are notable exceptions that we are happy to applaud. Unfortunately, however, it remains largely true, as has already been said, that we still have a very provincial way of thinking when it comes to criticism and debate. In order to meet the standards of the dynamics of the Cuban revolution, we urgently need to rectify this situation, for the good of all.

Need to address sharpened inequalities

The pockets of capitalism that we have mentioned have created or sharpened inequalities, and, at the same time, have produced signs of regression in treating social relations. Sometimes, in imitating what happens in other countries, certain enterprises return to job distribution schemes that give preferential access to the better-paying jobs to "whites" over "blacks." Similarly, the image of our country that appears in certain shows and some of the media reflects very inadequately the multiracial character of our culture. It is only because of the survival of inherited prejudices together with a lack of imagination that, putting aside the original versions, many characters have to be "white." (Our dance groups often provide examples of a useful approach to this question).

To this, one can add a reluctance to openly discuss the question of racial prejudices, a basic question in a country of our characteristics and at a time of such scandalous and shameful racism in so many parts of the world. On the other hand, "white" racism tends to produce an equally unacceptable "black" racism. This question must urgently be taken up in a thorough way. It

requires constant attention, as it represents a vital strategic line for preserving our community.

Despite the fact that women have been the hardest-hit section of Cuban society during the special period, we are pleased to note that the number of women involved in literary and artistic activity has increased, with remarkable results. It is evident that there has also been an improvement in how homosexuality is viewed, and we are pleased to know that an outstanding role in this improvement has been played by works such as the film *Strawberry and Chocolate*,⁶ a valuable example of what criticism embodied in a work of art can do in helping to alter certain aspects of social reality. These changes in society must be accompanied by a continuous process of reflection, without which we would be unable to have a thorough understanding of their nature and confront their implications.

Understanding the approach we must take in face of this difficult contradiction is complex but unavoidable. If we don't follow the rules of the market, where will we get the resources to sustain cultural productions on a large scale? If we only follow those rules, what will we end up turning our culture into?

⁶ *Strawberry and Chocolate* is a popular, prize-winning film by renowned Cuban director Tomás Gutiérrez Alea.

To take just one example, the field of publishing, small printings and relatively high prices have reduced considerably the number of our readers, which used to be high. It can be said that our cultural periodicals, which have been playing an important role, are read by only a small minority in the country.

Our culture grew in a dialogue with the rest of the world. We must maintain and develop that dialectical relationship. Before the special period, this had been achieved to a substantial extent. Achieving it again is another challenge we have before us. Since we have referred to that basic concept of "Our America," let us remember that Martí advised grafting all cultures onto those of our republics, without forgetting that they must remain the guide. Among these cultures to be grafted, one can mention those of the Third World and those of the former socialist countries. As if by magic, the latter seem to have disappeared from our landscape, which is not exactly inspiring; meanwhile, we are flooded by U.S. products that are rarely the best.

Several of the preceding points, of course, are related to the difficult material conditions we are forced to endure. That does not exempt us from creating values that reinforce our sense of national identity, of our culture. Now, we carry out that task by confronting realities such as the persistent search for the dollar and the devaluation of our currency, even though it is undergoing a recovery. We have experienced the absurd refusal, in some places, to treat Cubans on an equal basis with foreigners, even if they pay with dollars.

Sooner or later, relations with the United States will be reestablished, since the blockade they have imposed on us is irrational and unsustainable. Are we prepared to face that challenge, as we have been in confronting the blockade? Starting now, we must develop a "Track III" to confront the threats of Track II and go on the offensive.

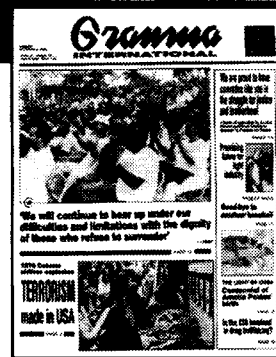
Going on the offensive seems a good point on which to end these thoughts, which of course could continue much more, and which will be enriched by the comments to follow. Redeeming the gains of the revolution and socialism, which are our pride, cannot be accomplished any other way but by moving forward. And by doing so with our feet planted in the present and our eyes on the future that we have the obligation to conquer. We, the writers and artists of Cuba, are conscious of our duty to help achieve this goal.

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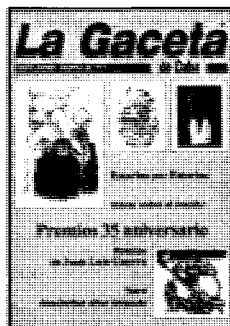
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Black farmer explains what's behind fight against U.S. gov't discrimination

BY STU SINGER

TILLERY, North Carolina — Eighty-year-old Matthew Grant farmed for more than 50 years in northeast North Carolina. His hard work and refusal to bow to the bankers, businessmen, and government officials trying to drive him out of farming and take his land are an example of the force behind the historic fight by Black farmers today. Grant's struggle makes concrete the reason why about 600 plaintiffs launched a class-action lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for discrimination in granting loans to farmers who are Black.

A *Militant* reporting and sales team accompanied Matthew and his son Gary Grant, one of the leaders of the Black farmers' fight against the government, into a court room in Jackson, North Carolina, in mid-October. The occasion was a hearing on the effort of the Meherrin Agricultural and Chemical Co. to renew a 1981 judgment against Matthew Grant. The case started with the company trying to collect a \$23,000 debt for seed, fertilizer, and chemicals Grant got on credit in 1979. Almost all farm suppliers run their own credit operations, typically charging 15 to 18 percent interest compounded monthly from the time the farmer needs the supplies to plant or harvest and repayable when the crop has been sold. Grant's 1979 crop was ruined by drought and he could not repay the bill to Meherrin.

He turned to the "lender of last resort," the USDA, which has programs in place, won by farmers over decades of struggle, to protect farmers in exactly these kinds of cases. But the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA) of the USDA turned Matthew Grant down, claiming that at the age of 61 he was too old to farm. Since white farmers older than him were readily given loans as a result of the same drought, this is one of the thousands of documented cases of racist discrimination by the government agency.

Their judgment about his age is quite a joke for Matthew and everyone who knows him. He continued as an active farmer for almost 20 more years, and has outlived most of the individuals who were fighting him in the early 1980s. The first day we talked to him he had to leave early to get new fuel

injectors to install in an old tractor.

Matthew showed us a copy of the 1981 court judgment against him. The court ordered him to pay \$23,054 plus 15 percent the first year and 8 percent a year after that, plus \$3,458 in lawyers fees, plus unspecified court costs.

Seventeen years later, the company wants \$35-\$40,000 in cash. But they know they can't collect that so they want title to land that Matthew Grant still owns — it was his father's original homestead, and although he has not been farming it, he rents it out.

In this year's hearing, the new company lawyer blamed some technical errors in the original judgment on the old age and illness of the company lawyer in 1981. But Gary Grant said that the original company lawyer, who dragged his father into court in 1981, "wasn't senile. He was just a racist bigot." Matthew added, "He was someone who just had no pity on anyone."

The passage of time poses a number of problems for the company and the court. Not only are the judge, court clerk, and original lawyer dead, but the court documents have been destroyed. The October 15 hearing amounted to a 20-minute session with the judge in his chambers, with Grant's lawyer and the company lawyer. They came out and the judge briefly announced that he was continuing the case to see if the parties can agree to a settlement. Gary Grant said this was a positive result, reflecting weakness in the company case. But it was not a positive experience. "This is the debt crisis of Black farmers in the raw," Gary said. "They spend 20 minutes discussing your fate without you even being present — about a case that is 20 years old."

Matthew Grant's life covers decades of work, struggle, and combat. He grew up on the 58-acre farm in Northampton County that his father bought in 1921 and cleaned up. His grandfather had a farm across the field from his. "My grandfather's father was a slave in Northampton County working for a man named Fly."

Toward the end of the 1930s the family could not survive on the farm any more and moved to Newport News, Virginia, about 100 miles north. After working very low pay-



Militant/Stu Singer

Matthew Grant (center) with his son Gary, president of Black Farmers and Agriculturist Association, and wife Florenza Grant in Tillery, North Carolina, October 14.

ing jobs and surviving mainly from his mother's wages, Matthew and other relatives finally got jobs at the large shipyard in Newport News that was gearing up for World War II. "I worked punching holes in steel plates for rivets. The pay was 38 cents an hour, going up to 98 cents an hour. I supported bringing in the CIO union, but the company stopped that by setting up the Peninsula Shipbuilders Association, a company union."

In 1947 as production declined in the yard, he quit before being laid off and returned to the farm in Northampton County.

It took the rise of the civil rights movement and 30 more years before workers at Newport News Shipbuilding were able to smash the Peninsula Shipbuilders and win recognition and a contract for an AFL-CIO union, Local 8888 of the United Steelworkers of America.

In 1947 Matthew Grant applied for and was accepted in a federal government resettlement program around Tillery in the Roanoke River flood plain. Matthew and Florenza Grant and their young children got a small house, 40 acres of land, a mule, and seed and tools to start up a farm. The re-

settlement projects were open to Black and white farmers, but the areas were segregated, and whites got better land and houses.

The Tillery Resettlement went through a big crisis when the Roanoke River flooded and many of the Black farmers in the flood plain were wiped out. White farmers on higher ground survived better.

Matthew Grant continued farming, rented more land, bought equipment, and did fairly well until about 1976 when a hurricane blew down his crops and he had to start borrowing from the USDA. He got \$46,000 that year, but was turned away the next. "They put me in jail, though not behind bars. I'm still in jail. I can't get credit to farm."

Florenza Grant worked the farm along with Matthew and their children. She recalled that in 1954, the year of the U.S. Supreme Court decision against school segregation, the Grants helped organize the first NAACP chapter in Tillery. That year she registered to vote, one of the first Blacks to do so.

"There was a literacy test," she explained, "where the clerk read a section of the constitution and you had to write it down and then read it back to him. When I was waiting to take the test, a young white woman came in to register and they just waved her through. When I complained, the clerk said it was because of the grandfather clause. I told him one of my grandfathers was white, but he said that didn't count and I had to take the test. 'Give it here,' I told him." Florenza said she had to help the clerk pronounce words he didn't know.

The "grandfather clause" was a Jim Crow law in North Carolina and other southern states. You did not have to take a literacy test to register to vote if your grandfather could vote, that is, if you were white.

The decades of discrimination have produced distorted farmer and land ownership relations in areas such as Tillery. The population in this rural area is majority Black. But there are very few working Black farmers. However many Black families, like the Grants, have held onto at least some of their land. Since they have been cut off from the credit needed to farm, they rent out their land to farmers who can get the production loans, most of whom are white.

Many of the young people from areas like Tillery leave. The difficulty in actually operating a farm, hard work for anyone, is doubly hard for Black farmers facing the ongoing discrimination from banks, businesses, and the government. Not many young people are attracted to this.

"You have to understand, Black families often don't have cash to leave their children," Gary Grant commented. "But many have land. Taking our land is a death knell to our children."

The Grant family's story is similar to many of the Black farmers who are plaintiffs in the suit against the government. What is also typical of the Grants is the failure of the racists, from the local businessmen to the government bureaucrats and politicians, to defeat them or break their spirits. These are strong people, with a sense of humor and a sense of history and a refusal to give up — powerful allies for other workers and farmers around the world.

Stu Singer is a member of the United Transportation Union in Washington, D.C.

Wyoming students denounce lynching

BY AMANDA ULMAN

LARAMIE, Wyoming — A team of *Militant* supporters visited Laramie, Wyoming, October 31 to learn more about the local response to the lynching of Matthew Shepard. Shepard, a University of Wyoming (UW) student who was gay, was beaten on October 6 and left tied to a fence post in near-freezing weather. He died in the hospital on October 12. Weeks after the incident, signs, banners, and ribbons displayed on the UW campus, in business windows, and other locations in Laramie were still prominent, showing widespread public opposition to the lynching.

At the homecoming parade on October 10, the last contingent was a group of students protesting the attack on Shepard. According to David Rivera, president of the

United Multicultural Council, one of the organizations that sponsored many of the protests around Shepard's murder, the parade grew from about 100 people to between 500 and 600, as people joined in to protest. Cheerleaders and athletic teams wore yellow ribbons and stickers at games to show their opposition to the lynching. Other events and protests included a three-day long teach-in sponsored by faculty; "Community Healing for Laramie," sponsored by a few campus and community organizations; and a performance by The Rainbow Chorus from Denver, Colorado, dedicated to the memory of Shepard. Twenty-nine campus organizations sponsored an open forum October 20. According to Jenn Palmer, 23, a member of the Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and TransGendered Association, greetings have

been sent from students all over the country and from as far as Australia and England. Students from Kansas State University sent an 8 by 10 foot banner with over 300 signatures saying, "Our thoughts are with you." Palmer said, "We've gotten two nasty messages, but a lot of support. It is something that everyone knows about."

The team of *Militant* supporters set up a literature table in downtown Laramie. Posters on the table read "Defend abortion rights," and "Defend civil rights for gays and lesbians." The polarization that Palmer referred to was reflected in the response of passersby. Some expressed support for the signs on the table and the *Militant*, which featured articles on protests around the lynching. One woman said, "I'm glad to see someone out here raising these things." A few passersby expressed disagreement, and one group of young people sped off from a traffic light shouting, "Kill the gays."

Student activists expressed differing views on legislation against so-called hate crimes. This debate can be seen in the pages of *Branding Iron*, the campus newspaper.

Also under debate is what would constitute justice in the prosecution of Aaron McKinney and Russell Henderson, the two men charged with murder, kidnapping, and aggravated robbery in Shepard's death. Many students who were angered at Shepard's killing also voiced opposition to the death penalty, which is used in Wyoming. Eric Lewis, 19, said, "if they [McKinney and Henderson] get the death penalty it will give more support for the KKK and groups like that to be violent." Preliminary hearings for the two are scheduled for November 19 and 20.

Amanda Ulman is a member of the Young Socialists and of United Auto Workers Local 450 in Des Moines, Iowa.

Minnesota: 500 protest attack on gay student

BY JAVIER ARAVENA

ST. CLOUD, Minnesota — "The people united, will never be defeated!" was one of the chants heard as a crowd of mostly students marched around the St. Cloud University campus. The October 28 evening march and rally was called to protest the beating of an openly gay student. The beating occurred on October 19, following a vigil to protest the murder of Matthew Shepard, a gay student in Laramie, Wyoming.

"There have been verbal attacks on people here for a while," said Sarah Johnston, 20. Her friend Jess Johnson added, "This is the first time I have seen a rally here this size." Over 500 people participated in the march and rally.

"This is an amazing turnout! It sends

a direct signal that people won't stand for this kind of hatred," Heather Sammons, 24, said. Tiffany Miller added, "We want the community to become aware of this and to speak out, or events like last Monday [October 19] will reoccur. It is not enough to vote, you also have to come out and protest."

Thomas Fiske, the Socialist Workers candidate for governor of Minnesota, was campaigning at a nearby campus in St. Cloud when he heard about the rally. Fiske and three campaign supporters immediately drove to St. Cloud State University to participate in the rally.

Javier Aravena is a member of Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union Local 6-418.

Toledo unionists march to support Meijer workers

BY JOHN SARGE

TOLEDO, Ohio — Chanting "Meijer, Meijer, you must know — you can't bust the union in Toledo," 500 unionists marched around the Woodville Road store of the food and discount store giant November 8. The unionists turned out to support the 1,700 members of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 911 who are fighting to win a new contract at four area stores. Nine out of every 10 workers rejected the companies' "final offer."

Roberta Rahm, a store employee for six years, explained why she turned out for the protest. "They [the bosses] don't want people with benefits. I've worked here six years and will not have medical benefits again until February because I didn't work enough hours a few months ago. I even offered to pay their costs for the coverage but they wouldn't let me." She also explained

that the company has moved to implement its offer by giving workers the miserly wage increase that had been proposed. Another stocker, who asked that her name not be used, explained that her hourly rate went from \$5.25 to \$5.60 an hour.

Dozens of Meijer workers took part in the march in face of company intimidation. Close to a dozen black-clad "security" guards stood on the roof with cameras, video taping the protest. Local police were prominently parked in the store parking lot.

The stockers and clerks were joined by members of at least 15 other unions, including Longshoremen; Machinists; Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers members from the refinery down the road; Steelworkers; Teamsters; construction trades, and government employees. The largest non-UFCW contingent was from United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 12. Meijer workers leafleted the giant



Militant/John Sarge

Solidarity rally November 8 for United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 911 at Meijer stores in Toledo. Unionists there have been fighting for decent wages.

Jeep plant here and many turned out.

The union plans to keep up a campaign to force the bosses back to the bargaining table. The Toledo city council was expected to pass a resolution urging "both parties to return to the bargaining table and conclude a fair agreement as soon as possible." Participants

took 10,000 fact sheets printed by the union for circulation on the job and in their neighborhoods. Local 911 announced plans for another protest November 22.

John Sarge is a UAW member in southeast Michigan.

Hundreds rally in Des Moines to back Titan Tire strike

BY RAY PARSONS

DES MOINES, Iowa — Some 400 strikers and other unionists joined a noontime march and rally November 5 in support of the two United Steelworkers of America (USWA) locals on strike against Titan Tire. That evening strike supporters at Iowa State University (ISU) in Ames hosted a meeting for the Titan workers to explain their fight.

The 670 members of USWA Local 164 in Des Moines hit the bricks May 1 in a fight against forced overtime and two-tier wages and for the restoration of pension and health-care benefits for retirees. In September 500 members of USWA Local 303L in Natchez, Mississippi, joined the walkout when Titan demanded concessions from the union following its purchase of bankrupt Fidelity Tire Manufacturing Co.

The action began at Local 164 headquarters. The workers marched to the Titan plant chanting, "What do we want? A contract! When do we want it? Now!"

The march passed by the strikers' sturdy new picket shacks. An on-duty picket waved

a letter he and many other strikers received that day from Titan owner Maurice Taylor, Jr. "It's all lies! He's a liar!" the striker called out. In the letter, Taylor repeats his charges that the unionists are victims of manipulation by their union, and tries to downplay the impact of the strike.

Workers from nearly 20 unions were represented at the rally, including 25 members of USWA Local 310, who work at Bridgestone/Firestone Agricultural Tire in Des Moines. Members of International Association of Machinists Local 2048 from Titan's wheel plant in Walcott, Iowa, were there. Other unionists included United Auto Workers members from John Deere, public service workers, meatpackers, telephone, and construction workers.

The rally was timed to send a message to Titan as contract talks between the company and union were set to resume. Recently, hundreds of strikers signed solidarity pledges that affirm, "We, the members of USWA Local 164 in Des Moines, Iowa, and USWA Local 303L in Natchez, Mississippi,

stand in Solidarity with our brothers and sisters, and with our International Union in pursuit of dignity and fairness for all Titan workers." The poster-size petitions will be taken to the contract talks as a reminder for Titan negotiators. The company has opposed union efforts to link the two struggles.

Talks between Local 303L and the company resumed November 6 in Natchez, but ended after a short time. Union negotiators said that the offer presented by Titan was "a major step backward." The two sides agreed to meet again November 20.

In Des Moines, union and company negotiators met November 9 but the talks broke off after an hour because Titan insisted that union members would only be allowed to fill jobs not currently held by replacements.

The strikes at Titan Tire are an example of increasing working-class resistance in the United States and around the world. The employers have been unable to convince working people to accept their demands for greater sacrifice. Capitalist politicians seek to distance themselves, for now, from pro-

posals to slash social gains, and pose as friends of labor.

This was reflected in the November 3 elections in Iowa. In an upset over the Republican Party, the Democratic Party candidate, Thomas Vilsack, was elected governor. It was the first time a Democrat won the seat in 32 years. Vilsack spoke to the Titan workers' rally. The capitalist daily the *Des Moines Register* reported that current Governor Terry Branstad, who did not stand for reelection, said that Vilsack "should not get involved in labor disputes, taking sides."

Tom King, a member of the Local 164 executive board, spoke before a meeting of college students at ISU in Ames November 5. The event was sponsored by several student groups and by professor Mack Shelley. Some 18 people were part of a lively discussion on the issues of the strike and the union's efforts to win support. ISU student Nicholas D'Amico, 19, helped to organize the campus meeting after visiting the Titan picket lines in October. "I thought it was important to let students hear what the strike is about and let the strikers tell their story," he said. A student reporter for the *ISU Daily* said she was pleasantly surprised to see the program taking place, and wanted to provide ongoing coverage of the strike.

Tom King closed his remarks saying, "For the rest of your life, when you see a picketer, go talk to them and show your support. You'll make their day and make yourself feel good — for standing up for what's right."

Ray Parsons is a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 310.

N. Carolina tire strikers win solidarity

Continued from front page

pany not only refused to provide a wage and benefit package comparable to those of its competitors, but it is again demanding a broad array of concessions."

The rally was addressed by District 9 director Homer Wilson and USWA executive vice president John Sellers. "This strike is about the right of workers to have parity with the rest of the tire industry," Sellers said. He announced that charges were being filed that day with the National Labor Relations Board for unfair labor practices. The company has refused to provide information necessary for negotiations. He called on the company to get back to the bargaining table.

More than a dozen workers came from USWA Local 959 at the Goodyear plant in Fayetteville, North Carolina. Formerly owned by Kelly-Springfield, it is reportedly the largest tire plant in the world. USWA members there waged a successful strike last year. "We're right behind you," declared the local president, Gideon Massey, as he presented a check for \$1,000.

Dennis Robinson from the Continental General Tire plant in Mt. Vernon, Illinois, where workers are trying to organize a union, presented a check for \$2,125 from gate collections there. "We will be union by the first of the year," Robinson declared to big applause. "We're behind you and ready to go union."

Other support and donations came from workers at Continental General Tire plants in Mayfield, Kentucky, and Bryan, Ohio, and from the Bridgestone-Firestone local in Gastonia, North Carolina.

Rally participants wore T-shirts that said, "We support Local 850. It's our fight, too."

This summed up the workers' unity, determination, and confidence.

A number of truck and bus drivers honked in support as they passed the rally, eliciting cheers from the strikers. The Charlotte cops were also there in force to ensure that scab trucks continued to enter and exit the plant.

"The company just wanted to keep taking," tire builder Michael Fisher told the *Militant*, "and the profits they're making are on the backs of the workers. They send out literature saying we're among the top-paid workers in the country, but they don't explain the kind of work we have to do."

Many workers described the conditions inside the plant where temperatures often soar to over 100 degrees during the 12-hour shifts, their work with hazardous chemicals, and the heavy weights they must lift. Others told how the company had begun fortifying the plant, even before the strike began September 20. Continental General built a fence, installed floodlights, hired Vance security guards who videotape the strikers, and has police cars on the street.

Several strikers who had been through a number of strikes against the company said this was the first time that this "army of paramilitary guards" as well as replacement workers were brought in. The last strike, in 1989, lasted four months.

Replacement workers and salaried employees are trying to keep some production going. The plant normally produces 33,000 tires a day. According to striker Pierre Monroe, the company claims they are producing 6,000 tires a day. But some trucks seen leaving the plant are actually coming out empty, some of the strikers said.

"I'm impressed with how we've stuck together," Local 850 vice president Murray

said. "Black, white, women and men — we're all together."

Janice Lynn is a member of International Association of Machinists Local Lodge 1759. Brian Williams, a member of USWA Local 2609 contributed to this article.

Rally to demand: Free all the Puerto Rican political prisoners!

November 14

Chicago, IL
Protest at Chicago Federal Building
Dearborn and Jackson 4:00-6:00 p.m.
For more information call Marcos Vilar or Lin Velázquez at (773) 278-0885.

November 14

USP Lompoc, Lompoc, CA
For more information, call Gloria Alonso at (415) 824-7950, or Khalil Jacobs-Fanlauzzi at (510) 841-9684.

November 14

MOC Miami, Miami, FL
For information call (305) 751-9462 or (407) 323-7638.

November 20

Houston, TX
Houston Federal Building
For more information, call Corrie Soblett-Berrios at (512) 477-3606.

November 21

USP Danbury, Danbury, CT
For place and time of departure in New York City, call Ana López (212) 427-3874 or Eduardo Sánchez at (212) 348-6325. In Upstate New York, call Rubén Ayala of TheWoodcrest-Bruderhof Community at (914) 658-8351.

November 21

USP Leavenworth, Leavenworth, KS
For more information, call Marcos Vilar or Lin Velázquez (773) 278-0855. In Kansas, call the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee Gina (785) 842-5774.

November 21

Orlando, Florida, Federal Court Building
For more information, call (305) 751-9462 or (407) 323-7638.

• Protests will be held at the Minneapolis, Madison, and Milwaukee Federal Buildings. Call: Emanuel Ortiz at (612) 623-0842.

Hurricane Mitch is social, not natural, disaster

Continued from front page

treme conditions of underdevelopment imposed through domination by the imperialist powers, which — from Washington, to London, and Bonn — have responded with meager offers of aid. In addition, the capitalist regimes in Central America took little to no preventive measures that could have minimized fatalities. Much of the food and other aid that's now arriving is sitting unused as helicopters and other resources for transportation to hard-hit areas are scarce. What thousands of working people perceive as indifference among many of these capitalist politicians is generating anger and protests.

Worst hit were Nicaragua and Honduras, the second- and third-poorest nations in the Western hemisphere after Haiti. Guatemala and El Salvador also suffered serious damage and many deaths. While official figures for the region refer to 11,500 dead and 13,000 missing, it is widely accepted that the death toll will top 20,000.

Tony Savino, a freelance photographer on assignment for *Newsweek* in Nicaragua, described visiting the town of Renaldo Rodríguez that was devastated by a massive mud slide. "The town had been made up of 164 houses but only two shells were left," he said. "It was just a huge field of mud and debris. A little further away there was a cane field. As I walked towards the cane field I could see many dozens of bodies still laying where the mud slide had pushed them a week ago."

The official number for people displaced from their homes is 800,000 in Nicaragua; 569,000 in Honduras; 60,000 in El Salvador; and many thousands more in Guatemala.

Gonzalo Martínez, a jet engine parts inspector at AeroThrust Corp. in Miami, is organizing a food and clothing collection here. His family is from Jinotega in northern Nicaragua. He explained that the area surrounding the town is devastated. "The roads from Managua are completely destroyed," he told *Militant* reporters. "The only way to reach the area is by helicopter. There are approximately 20,000–30,000 homeless who have come into Jinotega. They are still finding bodies. Two small towns in the mountains were totally wiped out."

Many roads, bridges, and communications lines are destroyed. In Honduras more than 100 bridges are reportedly out and 68 major highways are cut off. In Nicaragua 70 bridges are either completely wrecked or severely damaged.

The massive devastation of agriculture in the region is compounded by the destruction of infrastructure, which means that many of the crops that survived will rot before they are able to be transported. In Honduras at least 80 percent, if not 100 percent, of the banana crop was lost. In banana production alone, U.S.-based monopolies Chiquita and Dole have already announced long-term layoffs of 12,000 workers in Honduras. Prior to the hurricane unemployment in that country exceeded 35 percent.

As much as 50 percent of Nicaragua's peanuts, beans, and soybeans crops are rotting underwater.

In addition to these problems, the rains uncovered thousands of land mines that were planted in Nicaragua and along the Honduran border during the U.S.-organized *contra* war aimed at overthrowing the government of the Sandinista National Liberation Front (FSLN). The Sandinistas came to power through the 1979 popular revolution during which working people toppled the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Anastasio Somoza. Some of these mines have floated down river and into villages.

A social, not a natural, disaster

Working people in Nicaragua defeated the *contras* militarily but the FSLN lost elections to a bourgeois-led coalition in 1989, after giving up on implementing the revolutionary program of the organization, which was at the heart of cementing and bringing to power an alliance of workers and peasants. The policies of the capitalist regimes that have ruled Nicaragua ever since have wrought economic and social ruin to the majority of the toilers.

Col. Raúl Estrada, who heads the Joint Operations Center in Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras, estimated there may be as many as 75,000 mines to be cleared. The results of Hurricane Mitch are mostly a social, not a natural, disaster.

Savino, on his return from Nicaragua, described the class character of the relief ef-

forts he witnessed. "There was all this food and other aid in Managua just sitting there," he said, referring to Nicaragua's capital. "Government people said they couldn't reach some in the most needy areas such as in Posoltega. But me, a journalist, I was able to get there. I also saw some of the road repairs. They were fixing small potholes around Managua. I guess this was for the better off people with their four-wheel drives. In the meantime, the countryside is in desperate need of road repair."

With the lack of drinking water, shelter, adequate food, and medicines, disease has begun to break out. Twenty-five cases of cholera were reported in Guatemala. In many areas there is no medicine for the sick. Doctors in Nicaragua have reported what they believe to be malaria. But they don't have equipment to do blood tests to find out for sure.

The depth of the crisis in Central America, which existed before Hurricane Mitch, and the lack of adequate responses by the governments there and in the imperialist countries, especially Washington, has led to anger among many. When Nicaragua's president Arnaldo Alemán visited León, a city hit hard by the storm, crowds gathered yelling, "Murderer!"

Press reports from Nicaragua state that the inadequate help being given is especially galling to a people that remember the corruption of the Somoza dictatorship during the 1972 earthquake. While 10,000 people were killed and many more were injured and left homeless at that time, the Somoza regime funneled the international aid through its National Guard, which stole and redirected much of it for the private gain of government officials and others.

Private aid agencies in many parts of the world have responded to the need in Central America. But it's clear that only massive aid from the developed capitalist world could adequately meet those needs.

Such aid is not forthcoming, however. With destruction estimated in the billions, governments in the European Union announced they will donate \$120 million and Washington has pledged only \$70 million. And this U.S. "pledge" is moving at a snail's pace. The Fort Lauderdale *Sun Sentinel* quoted Honduran Capt. Carmen Velásquez who referred to aid supplies that were sitting outside the city of Choluteca. "Look at all this food sitting here waiting for the people who need it," he said. "We only have a few helicopters to deliver them. If it wasn't for the Mexicans, people out there would have nothing. What's taking the U.S. so long to send helicopters?"

Referring to the U.S. military bases in Honduras, the *Sun Sentinel* also quoted Juan Ramón de la Fuente, Mexico's health minister, who said of the U.S. relief effort: "I can't find any justification for the passivity with which they have moved since they have so many facilities and have them close."

In response to calls by the Central American governments that the U.S. government halt deportations of immigrants to their countries, the U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) announced November 6 that it would delay expulsions to the storm-ravaged countries until November 23 — a total of two and a half weeks.

On November 9 the heads of state in Central America met in El Salvador. They called on the developed capitalist nations — from North America to Western Europe — to provide real massive aid to their countries as the only way out of the catastrophe there. They also called for better trade relations.

Some bourgeois politicians have even floated calls for the cancellation of Central America's foreign debt. Honduran president, Carlos Flores Facusse, called his country's \$4.2 billion foreign debt unpayable.

According to a report in the November 11 *El Nuevo Herald*, the governments of France and the United Kingdom have announced

they would favor a debt moratorium, unlike Washington that holds most of the debt these countries owe.

Servicing the foreign debts of these countries has been draining much of the wealth produced by working people into the coffers of imperialist banks. This has accelerated the impoverishment of millions and worsened living conditions and infrastructure that exacerbated the destruction of Hurricane Mitch. Nicaragua, for example, pays \$250–\$300 million a year on its debt of \$6.5 billion. These payments equal 40 percent of the country's export income.

In stark contrast to the imperialist regimes, the Cuban government canceled \$50 million in Nicaragua's debt and offered to send all the medical personnel needed to carry out the relief effort there. The Nicaraguan government has so far turned down such aid from Cuba.

In Miami, press coverage of the Cuban doctors sent to Honduras and the refusal of the Nicaraguan government to accept any help from Cuba has sparked discussion and debate. Some rightists have denounced the Cuban government for sending aid to the Dominican Republic and Honduras while the people of Cuba themselves have been hit by a drought and then Hurricane Georges. Others see the Cubans setting the right example.

Anibal Cano, who works at the United Airlines kitchen here, told *Militant* reporters Washington should help more in Central America. "President Alemán did wrong in not accepting Cuba's doctors," he added. "My point of view is that a politician doesn't have to mix politics with a tragedy in the country."

Ernie Mailhot is a member of International Association of Machinists Local 1126. Maggie McCraw, member of IAM Local 368; and Rachele Fruit, member of IAM Local 1126, contributed to this article.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

The 1998 Elections: A Shift to the Left in Capitalist Politics. Speaker: Andrea Morell, recent Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Congress in the 8th C.D., member of United Transportation Union. Fri., Nov. 20, 7:30 p.m. 780 Tremont St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (617) 247-6772.

NEW YORK

Brooklyn

Support Campaign to Free Puerto Rican Po-

litical Prisoners! Organize sendoff for human rights caravan to prison in Danbury, Connecticut. Speakers: Ana López, coordinator of New York caravan and National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Prisoners of War and Political Prisoners; representative of Socialist Workers Party; others. Fri., Nov. 20, 7:30 p.m. Dinner 6:30 p.m. 59 4th Avenue (corner of Bergen). Donation \$5 for dinner; \$5 for program. Tel: (718) 399-7257. Caravan will leave from 116th St. and 3rd Avenue in Manhattan on Sat., Nov. 21, 9 a.m.

AUSTRALIA

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You don't have to be John Glenn — Reservations are now available for the six-passenger Space Cruiser. Includes seven-day preparatory program, and welcome-



Harry Ring

back dinner. Flights begin Dec. 1, 2001, with departures on Mondays and Saturdays. \$98,000, round trip.

Law n' order (I) — In Roxbury, a Black community in Boston, plainclothes cop Michael Cox responded to a false call-in that a cop had been

shot. He tried to chase down a presumed suspect. Meanwhile, a gang of cops swarmed in and grabbed Cox, who is Black. They beat him savagely, until they realized he was a cop. At that point they took off.

Law n' order (II) — The beating of Cox by fellow cops occurred four years ago. Police "investigation" since then has resulted in one cop being convicted of perjury. Now, with a civil suit by Cox pending, four others have been suspended from the force — with pay.

They've got a point — "WALL STREET WINS THE ELECTION" — That was the post-election headline on a CNN web site. Actually, it was a nothing article, but the headline, in big block type, was an eye

catcher.

Zero IQers — At a St. Petersburg, Florida, high school, Jennifer Coonce, a four-year honor society senior, was suspended from school and dropped from the honor society. On the first day of a job internship, the boss had handed her a glass of sangria to join in a toast to a departing coworker. She took two sips.

Learning of this, school officials promptly applied the "zero tolerance" rule. Declared Coonce, "It's depressing."

Anyone seen Mickey? — Federal researchers concluded that at least 62 people were stricken with salmonella three years ago after drinking unpasteurized orange juice

at Disney World in Florida. Previously, it was assumed that oj was acidic enough to counter the bug. They now speculate it could have been contaminated toads that got into the processing plant, or perhaps, impure water or improperly processed manure fertilizer.

Pity the poor crooks — A group of Russian officials were busted for helping companies dodge taxes. Police said more than \$1 million cash was found in suspects' homes. Some 5,500 officials are being investigated for bribe-taking. The minister of the interior called for higher pay for law enforcement and other officials. Pointing to the ruble crisis, he declared: "A poverty-stricken official is always prone to crime."

Top of the news — "Supermodel-actress Cindy Crawford and her husband, Rande Gerber...have completed a remodel of the Malibu house that Gerber, 36, bought before he and Crawford, 32, were married.... Gerber purchased the house...for \$1.85 million. The house has French limestone floors.... Comic Garry Shandling is a neighbor." —Los Angeles Times.

Note to readers — If you would like to see this column brighter and more varied, you can help make it that way. Simply clip appropriate news items and send them to: Great Society c/o Pathfinder Books, 2546 W. Pico Blvd., Los Angeles, CA 90006. Fax to (213) 380-1268. Thanks.

Radicalism, Bonapartism, and the vote for Ross Perot

Continued from Page 7

defeat in Vietnam. It marked the end of the historic high point of U.S. imperialism's strength and stability. Similar problems for the U.S. rulers — revolutionary developments in Central America and the Middle East in the late 1970s and 1980s — are behind the so-called Irangate and Iraqgate scandals too.

This tendency, in the context of sharpening political polarization, increases suspicions of the rulers and their government representatives. Perot plays on this growing distrust of politicians, even as he offers a Bonapartist solution that would in fact greatly tighten the grip of the presidency. Congress is an obstacle, says Perot. Gridlock! Gridlock everywhere! Gotta cut through the gridlock! Gotta get rid of corruption to end the gridlock! Gotta watch out for conspiracies that lead to gridlock!

Perot uses insinuation effectively. How do people like Bush and Clinton end up so wealthy? Ross Perot is a self-made man — an effective businessman, not a Washington insider, he boasts. There's no mystery how he made his money. "I'm spending my money, not PAC [political action committee] money, not foreign money, my money — take this message to the people," Perot aggressively asserted during the second televised presidential debate last month.

But what about Bush and Clinton? How did they get their wealth? How do they explain how they got where they are? Ability? Moral stature? Hardly. So what is the explanation? "Who would you give your pension fund and your savings account to, to manage?" Perot said in his closing remarks during the final presidential debate. "Who would you ask to be the trustee of your estate and take care of your children if something happened to you?" And he returned to that theme in Long Beach the other night. "If you had a small business, would you hire either one of these guys to run it?" he asked to thundering shouts of "No!" from the crowd. But wouldn't you trust your money with Ross Perot? The guy's a billionaire, after all. He claims to be beholden to no one — no lobbyists, no bankers, no "foreign interests," nobody. He says he spent millions of dollars of his own money on the campaign. Ross puts his money where his mouth is — his own money. That's Perot's

pitch....

Perot, the self-made man, isn't afraid to explain why everybody has to accept pain, why "we all" have to sacrifice, he explains. Social Security can't be sacred, Perot says, at least not for well-off people like himself who don't need it. (That is his "populist" foot in the door, to open the assault on Social Security as a universal social right, guaranteed for all.) A higher tax on gasoline may be necessary, too. The federal budget deficit has to be slashed at all costs. But "we" in America can do this, Perot says. *Can do!*

Perot did not win the election, but we should all watch what happens to domestic policy in this country over the next twenty-four months. Perot's economic program will come closer to what the Clinton administration and bipartisan Congress actually implement than anything either the Democratic or Republican candidates talked about during the campaign.

A warning to workers movement

Perot's radical, demagogic appeal gained a hearing from millions this year, as the election results show. I repeat: the vote for Perot is the important outcome of the 1992 elections, and it is a warning the workers movement ignores at its own peril....

A vote anywhere close to the size of Perot's is rare for a third-party candidate in the United States in this century. Remember the John Anderson campaign in 1980? Anderson got less than 7 percent of the vote, running against Ronald Reagan and Jimmy Carter. In 1948 two third-party movements broke off from the Democrats — Strom Thurmond's segregationist States' Rights Democrats, and the Progressive Party ticket of Henry Wallace, backed by forces in and around the Stalinists and some liberal milieus. Those two parties combined, however, got less than 5 percent of the vote, and Democrat Harry Truman won the election and started consolidating the national security state for U.S. imperialism.

But Ross Perot got nearly 20 percent of the vote — 4 to 5 percent more than predicted on the basis of those who said beforehand they would vote for him. The Perot vote registers the growing view that no established Democratic or Republican party candidate will ever be any different. It registers the glorification of the armed forces and

their special elite units that gains momentum at times of social crisis — no corruption there! It converges with the glorification of the cops. It reflects the elevation of the so-called self-made businessman (like Perot) who knows how to cut through red tape. "I'm Ross. You're the boss!" — that became Perot's demagogic, populist watchword as the campaign progressed. Together, we will cut through the pretense of democracy in Washington, the gridlock of elected institutions, and *get things done!*

To get a feel for the way similar forces evolved earlier in the century in the United States, it is useful to read a novel called *All the King's Men*, by Robert Penn Warren. It is based on the life of Huey Long, the demagogue who became governor of Louisiana during the crisis-ridden years of the late 1920s and early 1930s. Warren brings to life some of the social reality behind the rise of Bonapartist-minded demagogues such as Ross Perot. This is not a new phenomena in the United States. What is new is the acceleration of the social crisis that begins to provide a social base for such rightist developments again today. These movements all combine populist demagoguery with deeply undemocratic attitudes and proposals, always built around conspiracies.

The social and political pressures reflected in the vote for Ross Perot have nothing to do with him as an individual. The vote he received has nothing to do with what may or may not happen to Perot or to his "United We Stand" movement tomorrow. What is new is that a candidate running outside the two major bourgeois parties, with the kind of radical demagoguery he spouted, got close to 20 percent of the vote in the United States of America in the closing decade of the twentieth century. To drive home how new it is, we should just ask ourselves the question: "What would I have thought if I had turned on the televi-

sion ten years ago, or even five, and heard a major candidate for president saying these things?"

This kind of movement, this kind of demagoguery is going to be a permanent and growing aspect of the intersection of bourgeois and petty-bourgeois politics in the period we have entered. It is an inevitable product of a world capitalist order heading toward intensified trade wars, economic breakdowns, banking and currency crises, accelerated war drives, and their inevitable accompaniment—class battles.

Perot's radicalism is a manifestation of the increasingly brutal politics of capitalism in decline. It is a radicalism that pits human beings against each other and reinforces all the most savage competitiveness and dog-eat-dog values of capitalist society. It singles out scapegoats among the most oppressed and exploited layers of our class. When Perot explains what "we" can and must do, the "we" is a lie. But when he says that "we" must act quickly and decisively, because "time is not on our side," Perot is pointing to a fundamental class truth—he is just deliberately using the wrong pronoun. Time is not on *their* side—the side of the capitalists and rightist demagogues who seek to salvage their system. But time is on *our* side—the side of the working class, in the United States and around the world.

That is why it is so important for workers and revolutionary-minded youth to absorb that radicalization per se is not in the interests of the working class. In and of itself it has no class content. Radicalism has staked out a permanent place in bourgeois politics, one that will expand as the crisis deepens. Perot may or may not be among its standard-bearers next time around. But the bourgeois right will win adherents to their own radical—radically reactionary—views and proposals until the working class begins to forge a leadership with class-struggle answers out of the fighting vanguard of the toilers.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

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

November 23, 1973

"Reason and logic don't work with the chain stores. We need lots of picket lines to hurt them economically," said Dolores Huerta, United Farm Workers Union vice-president, at a recent news conference in New York City.

In Detroit the UFW has been ordered by a local court to halt all picketing of Boreman's Inc.-owned stores for the next 30 days. Boreman's owns the Farmer Jack supermarket chain of 84 stores in Wayne, Oakland, and Macomb counties. Farmer Jack sells more scab grapes than any other chain of stores in the area.

Some 250 to 300 people had been participating in the picket lines. The UFW is appealing this blatantly illegal restraining order.

In Boston, where picketing has succeeded in getting every major supermarket chain except A&P to stoop selling scab products, the UFW faces a court injunction brought by supermarket chains in the New England area to prevent picketing.

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

November 22, 1948

NEW YORK, Nov. 16 — Maritime labor's mighty power in action continues to paralyze all East Coast ports and shipping on the seventh day of the AFL International Longshoremen's Association strike.

The strike came at the termination of an 80-day "cooling off" Taft-Hartley injunction imposed last August by the Truman Administration to halt an impending walkout for a 50-cent hourly wage increase, improved vacation benefits and other vital demands.

Under the old contract, the workers had to work 1,350 hours for a week's vacation pay. They are seeking a week's vacation pay for 750 hours and two week's pay for 1,350 hours. The employers are offering a week's vacation pay for 1,250 hours. Other rank-and-file demands call for retroactivity to Aug. 21; increase in the size of the longshore gangs; and a health and welfare fund based on royalties for each ton of cargo handled by the longshoremen.

from Pathfinder

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

What Is American Fascism?
James P. Cannon and Joseph Hansen
Analyzing examples earlier in the 20th century — Father Charles Coughlin, Jersey City mayor Frank Hague, and Sen. Joseph McCarthy — this collection looks at the features distinguishing fascist movements and demagogues in the United States from the 1930s to today. \$8.00

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12 or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690.

Cancel debt, stop deportations!

Cancel the foreign debt of all countries in Central America! Stop deportation proceedings against all Central Americans and grant them the right to live and work in the United States and other imperialist countries! Massive aid with no strings attached to alleviate the disaster precipitated by Hurricane Mitch! This is what working people must demand of Washington and other capitalist powers in the aftermath of one of the worst storms that hit Honduras, Nicaragua, and other nations in the region.

The catastrophe facing millions of people — mostly workers and peasants — in Central America is much more a social than a natural disaster. The substandard housing and shoddy infrastructure that was swept away by stormy rainfall, winds, and mudslides is a result of the imperialist domination of those countries and the unceasing siphoning of much of the wealth workers and peasants produce into the coffers of foreign banks and other imperialist institutions through debt slavery.

Washington is the number one culprit. It has spent billions over decades to maintain this domination not only through its policies of economic plunder but through direct military interventions to prop up dictatorial regimes and defeat attempts by the toilers to take the destiny into their own hands — from Guatemala to El Salvador and Nicaragua.

The U.S. rulers' callous and imperial indifference and contempt for working people in Central America in the face of the current disaster stands on the shoulders of this unbroken record. With plenty of U.S. military bases and helicopters in the region, Washington is not providing the resources it could to help transport relief supplies to areas

only accessible by air. Not a word has been uttered by the White House about canceling or even postponing debt payments by those countries to use funds for much needed reconstruction. The aid pledged by the Clinton administration is a paltry \$70 million, and even this amount is slow to make its way south. And faced with calls by the heads of the capitalist governments themselves in Central America to halt deportations, the Immigration and Naturalization Service — the hated *la migra* — has announced it would delay expulsions for two and a half weeks!

The capitalist regimes in Nicaragua, Honduras, and elsewhere in Central America have compounded the human toll and misery by their unwillingness and inability to take preventive measures before the hurricane and their efforts more recently to fix potholes in well-off areas, rather than concentrating on rural and other regions. The position of the Nicaraguan regime, which has refused much needed aid offered from Cuba, stands out for its inhumanity. This stands in stark contrast to the recent life-saving efforts of Cuba's revolutionary government when Hurricane Georges hit the Caribbean.

The only shining example in the middle of the unfolding social catastrophe is indeed revolutionary Cuba. The Cuban government immediately canceled Nicaragua's debt and has offered to send all the medical personnel needed to Nicaragua. Cuban doctors have already arrive in Honduras. This selfless internationalism will show to more working people in the region that only through taking state power out of the hands of the capitalists and landlords can imperialist plunder, class exploitation, and the social catastrophes they breed be eliminated once and for all.

U.S. hands off Iraq!

Continued from front page

throw the Hussein regime and attempt to replace it with a U.S. protectorate, thus tightening its grip on oil reserves in the Middle East and gaining more leverage over its rivals in Bonn, Paris, and Tokyo in the competition for domination of raw materials, markets, and access to the superexploitation of low-paid labor; to humble its imperialist competitors, especially Paris, which has pursued a foreign policy at odds tactically with Washington; and to build up a zone of domination and influence on the southern flank of Russia as part of the U.S. empire's attempt to tighten the military encirclement of the Russian workers state.

The 1990-91 Gulf War was the first war since the end of World War II that grew primarily out of intensified competition and accelerating instability of the crisis-ridden imperialist world order. A new military attack against Iraq will exacerbate the conflicts between Washington and its imperialist rivals in Europe and Japan. Just days ago, the U.S. government escalated a looming conflict over the banana trade, announcing it would impose a 100 percent

tax on a range of exports from the European Union, if these countries did not amend their banana import policies by January 1. Meanwhile, a deluge of reactionary protectionist propaganda is opening up in the United States, as Clinton chimes in with U.S. steel bosses about the "breathtaking imports of Japanese steel, which hurt a lot of our industry, people and workers."

Working-class fighters around the world need to campaign to tell the truth about Clinton's war moves, especially on picket lines, at the plant gates, in working-class neighborhoods, and on college campuses. Using political weapons — such as *New Internationalist* no. 7, featuring the article "Opening guns of World War III: Washington's assault on Iraq," and *New Internationalist* no. 11, with "U.S. Imperialism has lost the Cold War" — is essential in the struggle.

Let's organize protests to demand:
U.S. hands off Iraq!
Lift the embargo!
Inspectors out of Iraq!
End the no-fly zones that violate Iraqi sovereignty!

Cuban gov't sets example

Continued from front page
example with its own aid and solidarity.

Cuban president Fidel Castro sent a message to the Nicaraguan people November 4 that received prominent coverage in Central America. "The news and images of the death and disappearance of thousands of Nicaraguans and the hundreds of thousands who have lost their homes and belongings have deeply moved our people, who have always loved and admired the homeland of Rubén Darío and Augusto César Sandino," he wrote.

Darío is considered Nicaragua's national poet. Sandino led an army of Nicaraguan workers and farmers that fought the U.S. military occupation of that nation in the late 1920s and early '30s.

Cuba "has offered Nicaragua aid in medical personnel and medicine, in accordance with our rich human potential and our limited material means," Castro said. This is what Cuba did "when the earthquake destroyed Managua in 1972, what we did more than once during the 1980s" — when Nicaragua's workers and peasants were combating Washington's determination to overthrow their revolutionary government — "and what we will always do whenever the life of a fellow Latin American is in danger and our modest contribution is needed to save him." The Cuban government subsequently announced it was canceling Nicaragua's debt to Cuba.

The Nicaraguan government of President Arnoldo Alemán has so far declined to accept Cuba's offer of medical volunteers.

Meanwhile, the first Cuban brigade of 14 doctors and other medical personnel arrived in Honduras November 3, heading to Mosquitia, one of the most impoverished areas of the country and hardest-hit by the hurricane. Taking with them a field hospital, the Cuban volunteers told

the press they were prepared to go anywhere and stay as long as they were needed. A few days later, a second medical brigade of 13 Cuban doctors, nurses, technicians, and epidemiologists joined them in Honduras.

As the risk of epidemic diseases spreads in the region, a group of 19 Cuban doctors has been aiding flood victims in Guatemala. They were sent to the worst-hit areas, in the provinces of Zacapa, Izabal, and Escuintla. Further Cuban brigades are being readied for Central America, Cuban health minister Carlos Dóres announced.

Cuba responded the same way to the devastation caused earlier by Hurricane Georges in Haiti and the Dominican Republic. The Cuban medical brigade currently in the Dominican Republic has won widespread praise there for its competent and selfless work.

Among the dozens of ordinary Cubans interviewed here about their reactions to the social catastrophe unfolding in Central America, one common theme has emerged: the difference between the life-saving efforts of Cuba's revolutionary government in response to Hurricane Georges, which swept through Cuba in September, and the callous indifference to human life exhibited by the capitalist governments in Central America when confronted with the need to mobilize resources to protect their citizens from the devastation of Hurricane Mitch.

At a ceremony welcoming Haitian president René Préval to Havana November 9, in which the Haitian leader thanked Cuba for its aid, Castro stated that Cuba is ready to send the doctors and other specialized personnel needed to develop a health program in Haiti. He called on governments of wealthier nations to help fund such a program, which he said could make a big contribution to reducing infant mortality there — currently 135 children per 1,000 live births — and providing treatment to many Haitians in need of basic care.

U.S. war moves

Continued from front page

will join the *Dwight D. Eisenhower* and 13 other warships stationed in the area.

The Pentagon also announced that it was sending a Marine Corps attack force to the region as well as dispatching a guided missile cruiser, the *Anzio*, to the Gulf. The U.S. military arsenal in the region currently includes 173 war planes, 250-300 Tomahawk cruise missiles, and 23,000 troops. By mid November, Washington's armada there will increase to 27,500 GIs, 300 war planes, and 14 warships. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, Pentagon officials are debating military options including a major escalation of firepower, "that would culminate with air raids larger than those launched the first night of the 1991 Gulf War." Washington has scuttled its "revised policy," which involved rapid military action without sending in additional U.S. aircraft and ground troops for its latest military confrontation with Baghdad.

The U.S.-led military slaughter in 1991 resulted in the killing of an estimated 150,000 Iraqis. Prior to that assault, Washington also imposed economic sanctions against Baghdad that after eight years have inflicted hunger and destitution on millions of Iraqi civilians.

The latest crisis began in August when the Iraqi government prohibited UN Special Commission snoopers from conducting unannounced "inspections," after it became clear that these spying operations have no end in sight. Baghdad charged that the UN spies were deliberately working to maintain the sanctions and "to serve U.S. policy against Iraq."

In September the commission released a report charging that missile fragments dug up in Iraq showed traces of VX nerve gas, backing up propaganda by Washington that Baghdad had loaded its missiles with nerve gas. Swiss studies on the fragments showed nothing and French tests revealed that one out of 40 samples showed traces of an agent that could have been VX, another chemical, or some other product for civilian use. The special commission was also instructed to spy on 300 facilities, including plants, breweries, and university laboratories, which the imperialists claim can be considered of dual use for producing "weapons of mass destruction."

During debates in late October, Paris, Moscow, and Beijing — three of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council — argued that sanctions could be lifted once the weapons inspectors say Iraq no longer has "weapons of mass destruction." On October 30, the Security Council sent a letter to UN secretary general Kofi Annan about reviewing the sanctions imposed on Iraq. Washington had refused to include in the letter reference to a section of UN resolution 682 that stipulates lifting of the oil embargo if Baghdad was declared free of "weapons of mass destruction."

Washington and London, instead, insist that Baghdad must meet other requirements, including paying war reparations and accounting for Kuwaiti prisoners following Baghdad's invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

The next day the Iraqi government announced it would end all cooperation with the UN inspectors, stating it would not reverse its decision until UN economic sanctions are ended. Baghdad has also called for the dismissal of Richard Butler, head of the UN commission, viewed as a puppet for the U.S. government.

'Flagrant violation' of UN resolution

In its last confrontation with the Iraqi government in February, the Clinton administration received little support for launching a military assault from its imperialist allies in Paris, as well as from Moscow and Beijing. Washington's only major support for its war moves in February came from London, which recently drafted a resolution passed by the Security Council on November 5 condemning the Iraqi government of "flagrant violation" of its resolutions.

That same day Paris withdrew its chargé d'affaires from Iraq to condemn Baghdad's moves to assert its sovereignty. Alain Dejammet, France's representative to the UN Security Council, asserted that the Iraqi government could only get the sanctions lifted by "rescinding without delay the unjustifiable measures" it took on October 31. Moscow's representative, Sergey Lavrov said the UN resolution should not be "interpreted arbitrarily as a kind of permission to use force." Moscow, Paris, and Beijing voted for the resolution condemning Baghdad.

While Washington prepares to launch its military action, Iraqi trade minister Mehdi Saleh declared that the Iraqi people had nothing to fear from such attacks since the sanctions were already causing suffering. According to the Associated Press, he stated: "They will not kill in a military strike more than they are killing with sanctions every day."

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Canada: striking paperworkers reject contract

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

We invite you to contribute short items to this column as a way for other fighting workers

the Communications Workers of America, went on a one-day unfair labor practice strike against ABC Inc. November 2. Hundreds turned out to staff picket lines set up in front of the television network's offices in Manhattan.

They have been working without

ON THE PICKET LINE

around the world to read about and learn from these important struggles. Jot down a few lines about what is happening in your union, at your workplace, or other workplaces in your area, including interesting political discussions.

SHAWINIGAN, Quebec — After five months on strike against the paper company Abitibi-Consolidated, the 4,500 members of the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union (CEP) at 10 mills in Ontario, Quebec and Newfoundland rejected the company's latest contract offer by a vote of 97.4 percent at union meetings organized the last week of October. The company was proposing a six year contract with only a 10.5 percent wage increase over the life of the contract, with a \$1,000 signing bonus. According to the Montreal daily *La Presse*, a union spokesperson said that the CEP would not accept a contract longer than four years. The company also wants to run production 365 days a year with only Christmas day being voluntary.

At the Shawinigan picket line, strikers have decorated a Christmas tree to show how long they are ready to stay out in order to win their demands. Luc Poulin at the Grand-Mère mill echoed this sentiment: "After four months on strike, we're not going back without winning something."

Abitibi-Consolidated has other mills in Canada, the United States, and Europe that are still producing, but the struck mills represent 30 percent of its newsprint capacity and 66 percent of its higher quality paper production. The company announced losses of Can\$57 million (Can\$1 = US\$0.65) for the third quarter, which ended September 30. Striker Denis Turgeon commented, "Now that the company is losing money, maybe they'll get serious." But the company continues to acquire new mills, the latest being a newsprint mill in Arizona belonging to Stone Container Corp.

ABC TV workers locked out after one-day strike

NEW YORK — Some 2,700 members of the National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians (NABET-CWA), part of

a contract since March 31, 1997. The stumbling block in negotiations is ABC's refusal to provide the union with information on a new health plan they want workers to accept to replace their existing medical insurance. The union has stated that if ABC does not want to provide information on the new plan, they are willing to stay with their present plan.

ABC, a subsidiary of the Walt Disney Co., responded by locking out the workers the next day at its offices and studios in New York, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Chicago, and Washington, D.C. ABC stated that they will not allow the workers back to work unless NABET promises to give the company warning of future strikes. Tom Donahue, a spokesman for the union, said, "That would require us to waive our rights as a labor union."

In response to the company lockout, union members continue to picket, replacing placards for the unfair labor practice strike with those stating, "Locked Out! Disney/ABC unfair to union workers!"

The workers on the picket line have received solidarity since the lockout began. Construction workers, who have been protesting the New York city government's contracting out of work, brought their huge rat balloon to the picket in front of the ABC building. According to pickets, members of the Transport Workers Union, CWA members from Bell Atlantic, and Teamsters have joined the picket lines as well.

"NABET-CWA supported us when we were on strike in August 1997. Now we're standing strong with them in their struggle with Disney/ABC," said Howie Redman, president of Teamsters Local 804 at UPS (United Parcel Service).

In Hollywood, California, hundreds of NABET-CWA members and their supporters marched and rallied November 7 to protest the lockout. Other protests took place that day, including the Michigan AFL/CIO's protesting the use of nonunion scab camera crews by ABC television in its broadcast of the University of Michigan vs. Penn State football game. Similar picketing was scheduled for Ohio State, Florida State, Stanford, and San Diego State, all sites of ABC College Football broadcasts.



Militant/Jessie Ludlow

Hundreds of National Association of Broadcast Employees and Technicians-Communication Workers of America (NABET-CWA) members picket during one-day strike in New York November 2. The next day television giant ABC locked them out.

Several ABC newscasters have brought hot food and drink to workers on the picket lines, and actors Whoopi Goldberg and Tony Bennett canceled appearances because of the strike.

Poultry workers walk out over pay cuts in Quebec

JOLIETTE, Quebec — Members of the Confederation of National Trade Unions at two poultry plants owned by Olymel-Flamingo in Quebec went on strike October 28. They oppose the company's attempt to slash Can\$2.50 per hour off their wages. They also denounce working conditions in the plants. The CNTU is the second-biggest trade union federation in Quebec.

Two days into the strike the company announced its decision to shut down the Joliette plant January 31. The plant employs 265 workers. The other plant, in Berthierville, employs 300 workers. "I'd rather find another job at \$10 than working here at \$12.50 under these horrible working conditions," said François Joli, who works at the Joliette plant. The Joliette plant kills 8,500 chickens per hour. Workers on the picket line described how they suffer from tendonitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, and other repetitive motion injuries.

The decision to shut down the plant "looks like a strategy for the negotiations," said Denis Ayotte, reflecting a common assessment among pickets here.

Workers plan to fight this decision, pointing to the fact that poultry plants in Quebec are functioning close to full capacity. "If they do shut down the plant it will be difficult for us because we wouldn't get severance pay," said Clarice Lajeunesse, who has been working there for 45 years. "And we don't have a pension fund," she noted. Approximately 40 percent of workers are women.

Workers are planning to reach out for solidarity from workers at a third poultry plant owned by Olymel-Flamingo in St-Damase, east of Montreal, where the company has transferred some of the production from the struck plants. The 250 workers at the St. Damase plant are members of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW). Striker Robert Pichette explained workers at another poultry plant in St-Damase, owned by the Dorchester company, went on strike when the company demanded a take-back of Can\$1 an hour. The company has since offered a \$350 lump sum for the first year and small hourly increases for the second and third years. The workers rejected this offer.

Olymel-Flamingo is owned by the Coopérative fédérée du Québec. Several workers on the picket line pointed out that the cooperative is controlled by rich farmers, and its

decisions harm smaller poultry producers, who are dictated the price for their chickens and the conditions for production.

Atlanta: grocery workers win strike at Kroger

ATLANTA — More than 500 union members won a two-day strike against Kroger grocery stores here. Kroger sold its two warehouses in Atlanta to CSI and Ruan Transportation Management Systems. The new owners, who were scheduled to take over November 15, told the Teamsters and the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), who represent truck drivers and warehouse workers, their union contracts with Kroger would not be recognized. Present employees were told they could apply for a job with the new owners, losing seniority.

The Teamsters set up picket lines at both the Bouldercrest facility and the East Point warehouse November 3. UFCW members, who work at the East Point facility, picketed there.

No union members crossed the picket lines. The company was unsuccessful in getting an injunction to limit picketing, although there were plenty of cops on hand to help store managers drive trucks through the picket lines.

On November 5 the new owners agreed to a five-year contract with the unions, with seniority intact. Workers got no severance pay from Kroger's, but received a \$2,000 signing bonus, and all those who were not yet at top pay were bumped up to top pay. A two-tier pay scale stays in effect, with new hires beginning at 80 percent of top wages.

Nursing home strikers rally over staff cuts

LOWELL, Massachusetts —

"We are going to fight you to the end!" shouted a woman striker, member of Service Employees International Union (SEIU) Local 285, picketing the Glenwood Convalescent Home here October 24.

Pickets and rallies were held at both nursing homes that members of the SEIU are striking in Lowell and Boston.

After their shift change, the strikers in Lowell boarded a bus and drove down to the Oakwood Care Center in Boston to picket at its 6-8 p.m. shift change. There were 50 pickets in Lowell and close to 75 in

Boston.

Joanna McKee, a Lowell striker with 14 years at Glenwood, said, "We're out here over a moral issue. We couldn't continue to condone the way SunRise is running this home because we'd be hurting the patients."

"We had to go out. In one week, we had 35 unfilled slots. On one third shift, there were three nurses aides for 101 patients. We've been too quiet as a labor movement."

A SunRise home in Lawrence made front-page news in Massachusetts over the weekend when it was discovered a 24-year-old patient, comatose for five years, was five months pregnant. Strikers pointed to this as an effect of the cost-cutting, short-staffing policy of SunRise.

Toward the end of the shift change in Boston, pickets and local supporters confronted four vans taking replacement workers out of the Oakwood home.

The strikers surrounded them, slapping the sides with strike placards and shouting "scabs!" as the vans slowly inched their way up the residential street.

Neighbors began coming out of their houses as the action took on an almost festive mood, with strikers, most of them women, running down the block after the vans, yelling, blowing whistles, and setting off wails with the bullhorns.

Joanne Pritchard, a member of the United Steelworkers of America in Montreal; Nancy Rosenstock, member of the International Association of Machinists in New York; Michel Dugré, member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees in Montreal; Dan Fein, member of the United Food and Commercial Workers in Atlanta; and M.J. Rahn in Boston contributed to this column.

LETTERS

Bad headline

I thought the headline on the article by Ruth Gray in the November 2 issue of the *Militant*, "New Zealanders protest workfare laws" was at odds with the *Militant's* normal practice. You don't usually define workers or other participants in protests or strike actions by their nationality unless they are members of an oppressed nationality or there is some other specific reason. I thought maybe it was just a space problem, but quickly came up with some suitable alternatives, all of a similar length. For example:

Rally protests workfare in New Zealand

New Zealand workfare laws condemned

Workfare laws protested in New

Zealand

Workers in New Zealand protest workfare

Protest slams New Zealand workfare laws.

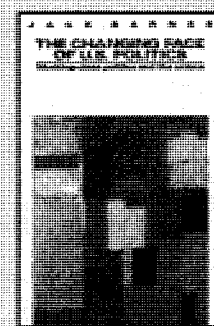
Michael Tucker
Auckland, New Zealand

Editors' reply: We agree. Your suggested alternatives are better and conform to *Militant* style.

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

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JACK BARNES

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Protesters: 'New trial for Abu-Jamal!'

BY BETSY FARLEY

PHILADELPHIA — More than 1,000 people rallied and marched here November 7 to protest the decision of the Pennsylvania Supreme Court upholding the conviction and death sentence of Mumia Abu-Jamal. Many, like 18-year-old Erica Young, heard about the protest on their campuses and organized cars, vans, and buses on short notice. "Mumia Abu-Jamal was wrongly convicted and needs a fair trial," Young said. "But this fight has significance for more than just Mumia. The whole setup is aimed to keep repression and racism going, and justify use of the death penalty." Young drove all night along with two other students from Warren Wilson College in Ashville, North Carolina, to get to the rally.

Political activist Mumia Abu-Jamal, a journalist and former member of the Black Panthers, was framed up, convicted, and sentenced to death in the 1981 shooting death of Philadelphia policeman Daniel Faulkner. The prosecution's main witnesses were subjected to pressure and harassment by the cops. Much of their testimony was contradictory. Witnesses who saw another man fleeing the scene at the time of the shooting were effectively silenced by police intimidation and coercion. Abu-Jamal, who was also shot, was beaten by police on the scene and again after he was taken to the hospital.

Prosecutors claimed that Abu-Jamal's gun was the murder weapon. Police ballistics experts testified, however, that the bullets that killed Faulkner could not be matched to Abu-Jamal's gun. Although no physical evidence linked Abu-Jamal with the murder, he was convicted and sentenced to death in 1982 after less than four hours of deliberation by a mostly white jury.

In 1995, Abu-Jamal won a stay of execution, the result of an international campaign in his defense. Thousands across the United States and from France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Brazil, Ireland, Cuba, South Africa, and many other countries joined in protests demanding the government stop his execution and grant a new trial. The fight became an emblem of the struggle for Black rights and against the death penalty.

The November 7 Philadelphia protest included people from Delaware, Ohio, Georgia, South Carolina, Massachusetts, Maine, Maryland, New Hampshire, New York, New Jersey, Virginia, and several other states. The youthful crowd marched from the State Office Building through Center City to chants of "Brick by brick, wall by wall, we're going to free Mumia Abu-Jamal," and "They say death row, we say hell no!"

Stopping briefly in front of District Attorney Lynn Abraham's office, the marchers heard a speech from Barbara Vance, the aunt of Kenneth Griffin, who was shot to death by Philadelphia cops a year ago. Vance linked the frame-up of Abu-Jamal with the police killings of several Black youth here in recent years, most recently 19-year-old Donta Dawson, shot to death by Philadelphia cops as he sat in his car on October 1 of this year.

Speakers at the rally included Pam Africa of the International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal, Native American activist Jason Corwin from the Philadelphia Leonard Peltier Big Mountain Support Group, and Rodney Muhammad from the Nation of Islam.

Leonard Weinglass, Abu-Jamal's attorney, explained the next step for the defense would be to ask the Supreme Court to reconsider its denial of a new trial. Until this appeal is acted on Pennsylvania governor Thomas Ridge cannot issue a death warrant. If the appeal is denied, that verdict will be appealed to a federal district court. Until recently these courts have overturned 35 percent of the death sentences appealed from state courts. The Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act, rushed through Congress and signed into law by President William Clinton in 1996, severely limits the right to this type of appeal. Weinglass said that Abu-Jamal's federal appeal will challenge the law's constitutionality.

Sonia Gibbs, 18, and Zeke Schlader, 19,



Militant/John Staggs

More than 1,000 people rallied November 7 in Philadelphia to protest State Supreme Court decision upholding the conviction and death sentence of Mumia Abu-Jamal.

helped organize a group of 40 students from Antioch College in Ohio get to the demonstration. They explained that antiracist protests and a demonstration on their campus

against the killing of Matthew Shepard in Laramie, Wyoming, encouraged students to make the trip to Philadelphia. For Jennie Negash, a 19-year-old student at the Uni-

versity of Massachusetts in Boston attending her first political demonstration, the Abu-Jamal case was new. "I didn't know what it was about, with the evidence being so obvious and still being ignored," she said. "It makes you start to question everything."

Actions are taking place across the country demanding justice for Abu-Jamal. Some 250 people marched and rallied in downtown Chicago November 7. Among the participants in the action were locked-out broadcasting workers from ABC Inc. Steven Mies told *Militant* reporters, "Today I marched for Mumia out of solidarity, and because supporters of Mumia's case have supported our strike." One striking ABC worker addressed the rally.

Marcos Vilar, director of the National Committee to Free the Puerto Rican Prisoners of War and Political Prisoners, also spoke at the rally. Vilar read a statement from Edwin Cortés in solidarity with Abu-Jamal's fight. Cortés is one of the Puerto Rican political prisoners currently in a U.S. jail.

The International Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal has announced plans for continuing actions, including a protest on Thanksgiving Day, November 26, in Philadelphia.

Young Socailists member Elena Tate from Boston, Jason Corley from New York, and Joshua Carroll from Chicago contributed to this article.

New Zealand: firefighters push back cuts in new setback for government

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — "There was optimism among the troops that there's been some justice served," said Greg Fletcher, the Professional Firefighters Union delegate at the Pitt Street Fire Station in Auckland.

He was responding to the decision of the Employment Court, announced on October 15, to slap an injunction on the government-run Fire Services Commission. The injunction prevents the commission from carrying through a decision, announced on May 7, to sack 1,600 firefighters and make them apply for 300 fewer jobs. The decision was one of several rebuffs received by the National Party government of Prime Minister Jennifer Shipley during October.

Firefighters responded to the threatened sackings with a campaign of public protests. These included rallies, a nationwide petition, and a three-day trip by West Auckland firefighters to parliament. A number of other unionists joined these actions, including some who had been involved in their own fights. By the time the dispute was turned over to the Employment Court in August the sackings were six weeks overdue.

Following the Employment Court decision, the Fire Service's chief executive, Jean Martin, declared job cuts would still be sought, and that "the numbers depend on how many people may wish to opt for voluntary severance." Fletcher told the *Militant*, "We'll wait and see what they do next."

Shipley's government has been dealt other setbacks since taking over in August, as it moved to implement a number of attacks on working people with what Shipley claimed would be "discipline, momentum, and determination."

The National Party has a minority of seats in the parliament, and is ruling with support of the right-wing ACT party and a new party, Mauri Pacific. This was formed by defectors from the New Zealand First party of rightist politician Winston Peters. A coalition between the National Party and New Zealand First broke up in August.

Large protests opposing government plans to end the statutory powers of the producer boards greeted Shipley when she visited farming areas in September. Eight hundred marched in Nelson on September 25,

and more than 300 farmers and others demonstrated in the Hawkes Bay September 5.

Opinion polls also register overwhelming opposition in the countryside to deregulation of the boards. These play a key part in the production and export of New Zealand's pastoral products, which together with fish represent more than 60 percent of the total value of the country's exports. A layer of capitalists in town and country are demanding that the boards' jurisdictions be opened up to more competition.

Among those protesting are working farmers with smaller holdings, who predict that the proposals will mean still tighter margins for farmers, and greater joblessness in rural areas.

The government, which had been confidently projecting rapid deregulation, was clearly taken aback by the wave of protest and "has been back pedaling ever since," as one commentator observed. The National Party is also concerned about undermining the electoral base it has traditionally enjoyed among farmers. Shipley now states that the government opposes the "hare-brained idea of deregulate and be damned."

Protests have also broken out at further steep increases in fees for tertiary education. At Auckland University, hundreds of students disrupted an October 19 meeting of the university council as it decided to charge differential fees for different courses, a move that will result in an increase in tuition fees by an average of NZ\$600 per course.

The vice-chancellor of Auckland University said that the decision was forced by a reduction in government funding from 75 percent to 72.4 percent of course costs. As of June, 250,000 students around the country owed a total of NZ\$2.7 billion. Their loans now carry a rate of interest higher than home mortgages. A still greater furor was provoked by the government decision to cut pensions for retired people.

While it has suffered embarrassing checks on some fronts, the Shipley government is not reversing its attempts to subject further pieces of the social wage to "targeting" (means testing) or outright privatization.

The country's government-built infrastructure is not safe from this process. Private interests are carving up the generation and marketing of electricity, and proposals

are being examined to introduce "roading reforms" involving new taxes on road users.

At the same time, Shipley has promoted the purchase of a controversial third new frigate for the navy, to bolster Wellington's ability to enlist in imperialist wars under the leadership of Washington and London.

These attacks take place in the midst of a downturn in the New Zealand capitalist economy, which has been in recession since the start of the year. Government ministers are predicting a deficit in the national budget, after five years of surpluses they were fond of boasting about.

The New Zealand Treasury predicts that official unemployment will rise from 7.7 percent to 8.5 percent over the next year. A "work-for-the dole" program was introduced last month. To date, 85 people have had their benefit reduced for failing to turn up for work interviews or not accepting "community" work.

The economic crisis particularly affects members of the oppressed nationalities, especially the Maori population and Pacific Islanders. Census figures for Pacific Islanders in New Zealand, collected in a recent report and summarized in a *New Zealand Herald* article, show "Rates of unemployment ... were more than double the rate of the population at large ... Median incomes for the six [main] ethnic groups [Tokelauans, Cook Islanders, Tongans, Niueans, Samoans, and Fijians] were all below the national rate."

The wearing effects of the crisis, and the attempts by working people to find avenues to express their discontent, are adding to political instability in the country. Recent local body elections were notable for the high casualty rate among incumbents.

Public opinion polls indicate that the Labour Party would be comfortably elected if national elections were held. Labour leader Helen Clark has pledged to form a coalition government with the Alliance, a grouping of parties that includes many former Labour Party members. Clark is proposing an incentive scheme for New Zealand business competing against overseas firms, and has floated the idea of restoring some social services through a modest increase in taxation on higher incomes.