

THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

INSIDE

Interview with Graziella Pogolotti,
leader of Cuban artists union

— PAGE 8-10

VOL. 62/NO. 44 DECEMBER 7, 1998

Stakes grow in miners strike at Freeman Coal

BY DANNY BOOHER
AND ALYSON KENNEDY

FARMERSVILLE, Illinois — With less than two hours notice, 70 striking miners and their supporters mobilized to the picket line November 18 when they heard Freeman United Coal Co. was running scabs into the Crown 2 mine in Virden, Illinois. "We wanted 30 miners," said Frank Hasquin, a team leader



Striker Frank Hasquin (center), with UMWA staffer from Alabama (left) and another striker from Local 1969 picket Freeman's Crown 2 mine November 18.

Support striking miners!

— See editorial, page 14

for United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) Local 1969. "I made 40 calls and could only reach 10 people, but we had 70 people show up to the gate" from the work he and other strikers did. Hasquin is a fourth-generation miner. He has worked at Freeman's

Continued on Page 12

Victory of pro-company AMFA is blow to union at Northwest

BY MARY MARTIN
AND ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

"The company is the winner," said Terry Tindall, a machinist at Northwest's Atlanta maintenance base, when he learned that the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA) had defeated the International Association of Machinists (IAM) in a decertification vote. Northwest is the fourth-largest U.S. airline. As a result of the election, 9,500 mechanics, cleaners, and custodians now have the pro-company outfit AMFA as their representative, while 17,000 ramp workers, customer service workers, and others remain in the IAM.

According to the National Mediation Board (NMB), the government agency that supervised the November 20 vote count, the final tally was 5,160 for AMFA and 3,905 for the IAM, with 96 percent of eligible workers participating in the election. The IAM has challenged the results of the election. The NMB must investigate and rule on the IAM's challenge before certifying the vote. AMFA was defeated in three previous attempts to represent mechanics at Northwest. Its success this time is its biggest victory to date. Until now, AMFA's membership has consisted of barely 1,000 mechanics and cleaners at Alaska Airlines, Atlantic Coast Airlines, and Mesaba Airlines.

Tindall's reaction has been one response among Northwest workers. Other workers

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Come to the Young Socialists

Third National Convention & Socialist Conference

— Mining our communist continuity

— Linking up with workers and youth in struggle: Building the YS through mass work

December 4-6
Los Angeles, California

Los Angeles Airport Hilton
5711 W. Century Blvd.

All sessions are open to YS members and invited youth



Conference and several convention reports will be open to all invited guests, including:

Friday, Dec. 4

Registration opens at 10 a.m.

- ♦ Welcome 12 Noon
- ♦ Young Socialists Manifesto: 2:30 p.m.
Building a Proletarian Youth Organization Today

Saturday, Dec. 5 Socialist Conference

MARY-ALICE WATERS, editor of *New Internationalist* 11 a.m.

Cuba as Part of the World

- Confronting global capitalism's assault on the toilers
- Winning a new generation to communism

JACK BARNES, national secretary, Socialist Workers Party 2 p.m.

Bonapartism and Polarization: Contradictions and Instability of the Leftward Shift in Bourgeois Politics

- What do the voters for AMFA and Jesse Ventura have in common?
- The underestimated social weight of Young Socialists activism

CAPITAL FUND: PROGRESS REPORT AND APPEAL

PANEL OF YOUNG SOCIALISTS LEADERS 8 p.m.

Bringing Alive 'The Changing Face of U.S. Politics'

Sunday, Dec. 6 Final Conference Session 3:30 - 5 p.m.

- ♦ Report on accomplishments of YS convention and preparing the 1999 Socialist Workers Party convention in San Francisco
- ♦ Meet new Young Socialists National Committee and Trade Union Committee of communist movement



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

Countdown to the YS convention

BY CECILIA ORTEGA
AND CARLOS HERNÁNDEZ

LOS ANGELES — There are eight days remaining before the third national convention of the Young Socialists convenes here. The work that YS chapters carry out in this final countdown period to bring as many youth who we have been doing political work with to the convention will have a lot to do with the success of the gathering.

Many YS chapters have met young people attracted to socialist ideas at recent

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'Inspectors' in Iraq resume provocations

BY NAOMI CRAINE

United Nations "arms inspectors" are once more on the ground in Iraq, demanding access to facilities and documents from the Iraqi government. Washington and London have already begun accusing Baghdad of "refusing to cooperate" with the snoops, who have been imposed since the end of the 1991 U.S.-organized slaughter of more than

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Election of Bonapartist Ventura is danger to workers — page 5

Moscow economic crisis deepens

Moscow's three-month moratorium on making interest payments on a \$10 billion debt to foreign capitalist bankers and bondholders has expired, and Russian banks are scrambling to negotiate restructuring deals on their debts. Some imperialist creditors like Deutsche Bank have filed suit against the Russian financial institutions. Bank officials in Russia project more than half the country's 1,500 banks may fold as a result of lifting the debt-payment freeze.

German chancellor Gerhard Schröder, in a recent trip to Moscow, said Bonn would not issue further loans to Moscow. During his visit, in addition to talking with Russian president Boris Yeltsin, Schröder met with a range of opposition political figures. The International Monetary Fund is demanding an austerity plan before making further loans. The plan would include stiff tax collections from working people and opening up more Russian markets for capitalist investment.

Meanwhile, the government announced November 16 it would bar five of six major Russian oil companies from exporting crude if they failed to supply to Russian people. The same day, a bill was drafted to give the state powers to nationalize any company sold off at prices below market value, as well as those considered vital for protecting national interests.

Nuke workers in Russia: 'pay us'

Three thousand nuclear workers, living in the Ural Mountains city of Snezhinsk, Russia, held a one-day strike November 19 to demand at least three months of unpaid wages and a 200 percent pay increase to offset rising inflation. About 100 striking workers picketed Snezhinsk local government headquarters. Pickets sought signatures on a petition to Russian nuclear energy minister Yevgeny Adamov that in part read, "Constant undernourishment, insufficient medical service, inability to buy clothing and footwear for children or to pay for their education...is the cause of our protests." In September nuclear workers in several Russian cities held a three-day strike with similar demands.

Official unemployment in Russia is 1.75 million, but the real figure, including those

not registered for state aid and therefore not counted, could be more than 8 million — or 11.5 percent — of the country's 70 million-person workforce.

Romania: workers demand pay

Some 3,000 machinists and other workers marched through Bucharest, Romania, November 19 to protest unpaid wages, layoffs, and other antilabor features of bosses' "restructuring" plans. Many of the machinists are in the Machine Workers Trade Union. Machine tool workers' wages are below the national average wage of \$120 a month.

Meanwhile, 150 copper miners in western Romania barricaded themselves in the Gura Barza mine November 18 until they are paid all their wage arrears. Miners have only been paid 60 percent of their wages from October.

Train workers strike in Italy

Train workers in Italy staged a one-day strike November 17, demanding issues surrounding their union contract be resolved. Unionists say 80 percent of Italy's trains were halted. This 12,000-worker-strong action was the latest in a series of strikes across Italy in the last two weeks.

Nat'l strike rattles Zimbabwe

Workers in major cities across Zimbabwe waged their second one-day strike November 18, paralyzing the country. The strike was called by the Zimbabwe Congress of Trade Unions to protest President Robert Mugabe's refusal to subsidize skyrocketing fuel prices. Shops and factories in major towns were closed, trains were halted, and



Miners on grounds of White House (parliament) in Moscow, Russia, July 18. Miners, many from Siberia and the Far East, have camped on the grounds since June, demanding back pay.

Militant/Nelson Blackstock

the business district in the capital city of Harare, was barely working. Mugabe has deployed soldiers to patrol townships throughout the country. Fuel prices have increased 67 percent, contributing to an increase in transportation costs of up to a 100 percent and a 33 percent increase in the cost of food and other essential goods.

Managua accepts Cuban doctors

After initially refusing the initiative that came from Cuban volunteers and the government, the Nicaraguan Health Ministry asked Cuban internationalist doctors for help November 18. Two days later Nicaraguan officials announced a health emergency. Six medical teams from Cuba, consisting of a doctor, a nurse, and an epidemiologist (disease control specialist), are set to arrive in Nicaragua November 21.

Soon after Hurricane Mitch decimated Central America, killing thousands, Cuba offered medical aid to the hardest-hit regions, including Nicaragua. Havana also canceled Nicaragua's debt. Managua accepted the aid, but refused Cuban doctors, claiming they couldn't be transported to areas affected by the storm. Meanwhile, the Nicaraguan government accepted doctors from other countries. An Associated Press article reported "sharp criticism by Nicaraguans" to the government's rejection of this internationalist solidarity. The massive flooding from Hurricane Mitch has left the Central American country with at least 17,000 cases of

acute diarrhea, 39,000 respiratory infections, 554 of cases of dengue fever, 459 of malaria, and 68 suspected cases of swamp fever, or leptospirosis.

'Megan's Law' hits Queens, N.Y.

Community School Board District 24, in Queens, New York, ordered that photographs of people released from prison after sex crime convictions be posted in school hallways and cafeterias. The District 24 board also ordered detailed descriptions and photos of the alleged offenders be mailed to the parents of the district's 36,000 students.

The board was encouraged by an undemocratic law passed in New Jersey in 1994 emotively dubbed "Megan's Law" after a child who was raped and murdered, allegedly by a convicted sex offender. Immediately following the passing of the law, police precincts all over New York began informing school administrators of people paroled for sex crimes.

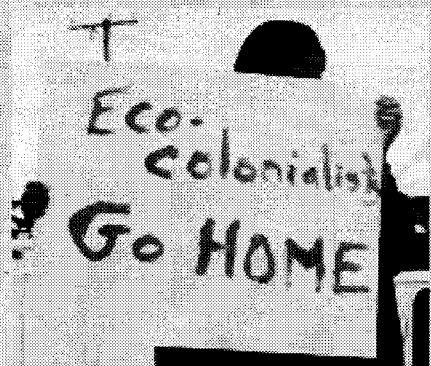
One man in New Jersey paroled after a sex crime conviction, was constantly harassed and eventually shot at by a vigilante this past June, nine days after his photograph was circulated. The assailant recently pled guilty to the attack and is now serving time in prison. The man who became a vigilante's target, in part due to Megan's Law, said, "I'm out of prison, but it's like I'm in a big prison now."

— BRIAN TAYLOR

THE MILITANT

Support Makah right to whaling

The fight by the Makah Indian Nation to defend their sovereign right to hunt gray whales should be supported by workers, farmers, and youth everywhere. The 'Militant' covers this struggle and exposes the provocative, racist attacks against the Makah. Don't miss a single issue!



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Brazil 'bailout' means austerity for workers, peasants

BY HILDA CUZCO

Weeks after his reelection as president of Brazil, Fernando Henrique Cardoso announced an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for a \$41.5 billion "rescue" loan package. As a condition, Cardoso vowed to carry out social spending cuts that will affect most of the country's 165 million people. The severe austerity measures include cuts to social programs, the social security system, and tax increases affecting millions of workers.

In Washington, IMF Managing Director Michel Camdessus lauded the Brazilian government for a step he claimed would assure the economic stability of the country. Brazil has the largest economy in Latin America. U.S. president William Clinton also praised it as "a solid program to tackle its fiscal problems that he [Cardoso] has committed to implement swiftly."

The declared purpose of the new loans and "loan guarantees" is so the Brazilian government can continue making debt payments to Wall Street and other imperialist creditors. It is similar to earlier imperialist "bailouts" — in Mexico in 1995 and in Indonesia, Thailand, south Korea, and other countries in Asia last year — except that it comes prior to a complete financial collapse in Brazil. Those so-called rescue packages have in fact deepened the debt slavery of the semicolonial countries and accelerated the sell-off of banks, industries, and other resources to the imperialists.

Part of world deflationary crisis

Until recently, Brazil was one of a handful of countries in Latin America and Asia pointed to by boosters of the so-called free-market system as a model proof that capitalism could bring economic growth, national development, better education, and expanding democracy to the Third World. But the growing worldwide deflationary crisis is exposing this myth, from the collapse of the so-called "Asian tigers" to the growing social catastrophe in Africa and Latin America — and Brazil is no exception.

The Brazilian government announced November 18 that the economy contracted 1.5 percent in the third quarter of 1998, and there's no sign of the trend being reversed. Industrial production has slowed, particularly in the automobile sector. Sales dropped almost 20 percent in the second quarter, and are down 40 percent compared to last year. Auto accounts for 12 percent of Brazil's gross domestic product.

Between 1992 and 1997, auto sales in Brazil increased from 740,000 to 1.64 million car units. Before the financial turmoil in Asia began directly affecting markets in Brazil at end of last year, predicted sales for 1998 were 1.8 million. To avert a currency devaluation last year, the Brazilian government doubled short-term interest rates to 43 percent and raised excise taxes on industrial production, including automobiles. The number of sales on credit — more than two-thirds of auto sales — plummeted 30 percent. Last July and August the excise tax was lowered 5 percent and short term interest fell to about 22 percent, but consumer interest rates skyrocketed to 150 percent. The inventory of unsold cars in factory yards and in dealerships has doubled to 200,000 in recent months.

Meanwhile, 1,300 auto workers were laid off in September and October and another 2,500 are expected to lose their jobs by year's end.

Unemployment now officially stands at 19 percent in São Paulo, Brazil's largest city, and 8 percent nationally, with higher figures expected. "We're probably going to have record levels of unemployment in the first half of next year," said Maílson da Nogueira, a former minister of finance.

Pressured by bosses' demands, some unions have agreed on concession contracts, such as collective vacations or temporary layoffs. Other companies have floated the idea of payment in products instead of cash for the "13th month" of wages workers receive at the end of the year. Since workers get paid monthly, which covers four weeks, the 13th month salary constitutes compensation for the extra days each month and is a legally mandated payment.

Nilton Silveira, 43, a glove factory worker whose monthly pay totals \$300, told the *New York Times*, "It doesn't do us any good to receive products." At Silveira's work place, which produces industrial gloves for metal workers, business has dropped 40 percent and only five of 11 workers remain employed.

Cardoso: tax pensions, limit retirement

The austerity measures Cardoso has pledged will exacerbate the situation facing millions of toilers. Many of the measures, such as cutting pension payments, are steps he has been pushing since his inauguration four years ago but has been unable to push through so far for fear of workers' reaction.

The current scheme includes collecting an additional \$2.2 billion in social security

6,000 people rally in Paris to demand papers for all immigrants



Militant/Nat London

Some 6,000 people rallied in Paris November 21, demanding papers be given to all immigrants in France. A demonstration of about 600 also took place in Marseille. Individual workers and those in union contingents participated in both marches. Several leaders from the Greens and French Communist Party, and a Socialist Party mayor took part in the protests. The demand for papers for all immigrants was rejected by Socialist premier Lionel Jospin just days earlier.

taxes from public employees and imposing new taxes on retired government workers of between 11 and 20 percent of their income. Pensions for private-sector workers are to be based on the number of years contributing to the social security plan, rather than on years worked, and for government workers there would be a minimum retirement age for the first time. Nilton Tambara, a 54-year-old retired metalworker, told the *New York Times* he began working at 11 and contributed to the social security system 33 years of the 41 he had worked before he could collect his pension. "The categories that the government talks about — the rich, the middle class, and the poor — don't exist. It's just the rich and the miserable," he said.

The plan outlines cutting 30,000 nonpermanent government jobs and not filling 15,000 openings. It also includes doubling the charge for check transactions and imposing 40 percent of local, state, and municipal taxes for the national government until 2006. Vicente Paulo da Silva, leader of the Central Labor Union, said these measures would "deepen the country's crisis." He announced protests through December 10 as Congress debates the austerity proposals in the social security system.

The imperialist banks and other financial institutions participating in the \$41.5 billion "bailout" plan to collect loan-shark rates for the supposed aid. Some \$14.5 billion in loans

from 20 governments or central banks — including \$5 billion from the U.S. Treasury — must be paid back in six months of when the funds are accepted, at interest rates 4 percent over U.S. Treasury bill rates. Half of an \$18 billion IMF loan must be repaid in a year and the rest six months later, at rates starting 3 percent above what the IMF usually charges. The InterAmerican Development Bank and World Bank, which have put up a loan of \$9 billion, also demand a 4 percent premium over normal rates. Meanwhile more than \$250 billion in debts come due in a few months; as of June \$25.6 billion loan to U.S. banks remain outstanding.

Sell-off of national patrimony

Cardoso also hopes to push through the sell-off of a number of state-owned industries to foreign capitalists. Attempts to do this have run into resistance over the last several years, however, including major strikes by oil workers in 1995.

Cedae, the state water company in Rio de Janeiro, is slated to be sold for about \$4 billion. Two French bidders, Suez Lyonnaise des Eaux and Vivendi, had announced bids for the enterprise in September under the Social Democratic state government. The deal is on hold now because the new governor-elect, from the Democratic Labor Party, says he opposes the sell-off.

The telephone company, Telecomunicações Brasileiras S.A. (Telebras), was auctioned off earlier this year, but not without a battle from unionists. It was the highest sale the Brazilian government has achieved so far. The July 29 auction, held on the floor of the stock exchange in Rio de Janeiro, netted \$19.2 billion. A consortium headed by MCI Communications based in Washington, D.C., took the lucrative long-distance portion of Telebras, while Spanish and Portuguese capitalists bought much of the rest.

Outside thousands of protesters called it the "sellout of the century." The demonstrators, in their majority trade unionists, landless workers, and students, battled 2,000 military police in riot gear with several dozen injuries and 30 arrests. The telecommunications union Sintel and others had filed lawsuits to block the auction. Although initially the union won a court injunction to reconsider the sale, the government lawyers contested the appeals and overturned the Rio court ruling hours before the auction.

At the same time, other struggles by workers and peasants against the conditions they face continue. The Movement of Landless Rural Workers (MST) has been plugging away in their fight for the land and to protest the steep austerity measures to come. In northeastern Brazil landless peasants occupied two farms November 16 and were heading to take another 22 farms in Pernambuco state. Carlos Brasileiro, one of the leaders, said that 80 people took over the Sibiro Grande farm, located 1,160 miles northeast of Rio de Janeiro, and another 80 occupied the Curupaí farm. The austerity plan, he said, would dry up \$31.5 million intended for agricultural reform in the state.

Cuban youth leader begins Sweden tour

BY CATHARINA TIRSEN

STOCKHOLM — Olga Díaz Ramos, a leader of the Union of Young Communists of Cuba (UJC), arrived here November 12. She was met at the airport by a delegation from the Committee for Youth Exchange with Cuba.

During the first days of her stay here, Olga has had a chance to address more than 100 participants in different meetings.

She was welcomed to the University of Stockholm on November 13 by Johan Blaus, the president of the student union. He stressed the importance of academic freedom and cultural exchange at a meeting at "Interpub," a pub organized by the student union with different international themes.

Díaz kicked off a "Cuban Night" with a meeting of 50 participants. She began by describing the measures the Cuban government had to take following the loss of trade at favorable conditions the country had enjoyed earlier with the Soviet Union and eastern European countries. She stressed how the people were consulted in a process of discussions that took several months. "People had a chance to say what they thought and what they didn't like before the drastic measures were taken to expand tourism and foreign investments."

Tourism, she said, employs a great number of youth and is very important for the economy of Cuba today. Answering a question, Díaz described how youth organiza-

tions and others put a lot of emphasis on working with employees in tourism, to improve the service, but also to counter its social effects and the inequalities created by the fact that workers in tourism get access to hard currency. "Every year we participate in a campaign to encourage workers to give their tips to a fund for cancer medicines. They are very expensive and the contributions from these workers are a real help."

During Díaz's visit to Stockholm, the papers carried daily news reports of the rising death toll of Hurricane Mitch in Nicaragua and Honduras. More than 10,000 people were killed, and hundreds of thousands lost their homes.

"Cuba and other countries in the Caribbean and Latin America have to deal with these storms. You can not avoid them in that part of the world," Díaz said. "In Cuba we are well prepared. Everybody knows exactly what to do in case of a hurricane to save not only himself but also his neighbors. It has all been organized beforehand. So when something happens we have smaller material and human losses." Díaz mentioned that six people had died during the hurricane George that hit Cuba some weeks ago, mainly because they had been in the wrong place, like close to a high voltage wire that had fallen down.

Díaz also described the efforts Cubans were making now to help neighboring countries. Medical brigades have been sent to

the Dominican Republic, Haiti, and countries in Central America.

Díaz was asked whether the present economic crisis has affected Cuba. "We never got any loans from the IMF before so we don't have so much to lose. Cuba also has a planned economy, which means we can decide on our goals. But of course we are affected too. If the crisis really hits Brazil, it will affect Mexico and eventually even the United States. Then the whole world economy will be affected."

A party including dance and salsa lessons followed the meeting at Interpub. During the evening Díaz spent hours mixing it up and discussing with groups of students and individuals, who signed a banner that Díaz will take back to Cuba.

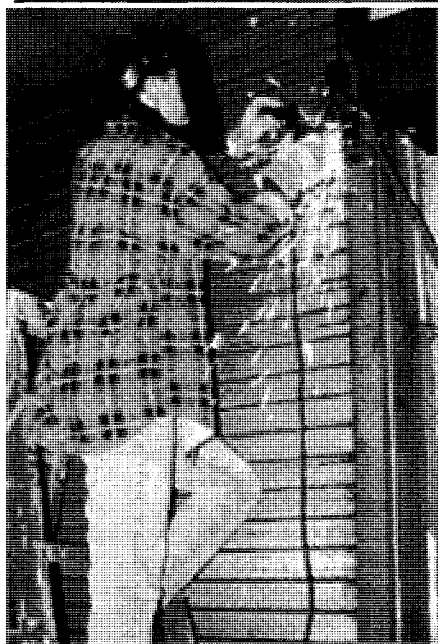
Díaz spoke at a November 15 seminar on international struggles organized by *Fältbiologerna* (Field Biologists), a youth organization that is involved in studies of nature and ecology. That evening, a welcome party for the Cuban youth leader drew 40 participants, who spent an hour and a half after dinner asking questions about Cuba.

At both these events Díaz was asked about the importance of Ernesto Che Guevara, the Argentine-born leader of the Cuban revolution. Díaz took the opportunity to encourage everyone to read some of Che's works and not just look at him as a symbol on a T-shirt.



Militant photos: Megan Arney, Ana Chávez, Margrethe Siem, and Brian Taylor

A collage of photos from Pathfinder's Red Weekend include: wiring the room for the new computer-to-plate machine, bringing in the machine, welding, painting, tearing down and building back up the walls, and getting files ready for digitizing and sending to CTP.



Volunteers prepare Pathfinder for future

BY MICHAEL BAUMANN

NEW YORK, New York — Equipped with paintbrushes, hammers, saws, sheetrock drills, and other tools, more than 80 supporters of Pathfinder Press fanned through the publisher's printshop here in a Red Weekend of voluntary labor November 20-22. In three days they finished a range of tasks needed to bring in the new computer-to-plate equipment the shop had ordered — the Agfa Galileo platesetter.

Supporters came from every city in the United States and Canada where Pathfinder has a bookstore, and some in between. Many were communist workers with years of experience in industry; others were newer to politics, including members and contacts of the Young Socialists from Chicago, Houston, Los Angeles, Newark, New York, Santa Cruz, and elsewhere.

Over the weekend the volunteers worked with great care as production continued in most of the factory. Beginning on November 20, crews tore down part of two internal walls to create an entrance large enough for the huge crates housing the platesetter.

The new equipment, once it is up and running, will make it possible to produce printing plates directly from computer files. This completely eliminates a previous — and highly labor-intensive — process of stripping up by hand large sheets of film.

Within hours after the machin-

ery and rigging crews arrived — at 7:00 a.m. on the dot the morning of November 21 — the dismantled walls were back up; the plumbing and electric fixtures they housed were on line for the night production shift. Press operators were turning out work on the two Heidelberg sheetfed presses that had been taken out of production for two shifts and wrapped to protect them from construction dust.

In the section of the factory housing the platesetter itself, work continued for several more days to turn the area into a bright, well-lit, dust-free showcase that can make it possible to operate state-of-the-art printing technology using proletarian norms of work. In the process the volunteers are setting a standard that the rest of the factory has taken on the challenge to match.

Volunteers also painted the second floor sales offices and renovated the room that formerly held the bulky Robertson horizontal camera, which the new equipment made obsolete.

In addition to the work they carried out in the shop, participants in the Red Weekend took part in a number of political events in the area. This included, in New York, a conference and car caravan demanding release of Puerto Rican political prisoners, and, in New Jersey, an action in the state capital, Trenton, in defense of women's right to choose abortion.

Meals were organized by the volunteers themselves, along with a class on the Cuban revolution today and a social event at a nearby school November 20. Funds raised through these efforts totaled nearly \$1,200, which will be used to provide "scholarships" to help a number of local Young Socialists and supporters get to the YS convention in Los Angeles December 4-6. A raffle organized by the Young Socialists raised another \$280.

The weekend also included a pre-

sentation by Janice Prescott on the work being done by 140 volunteers around the world to create electronic files of every Pathfinder book and pamphlet. This, along with the new equipment, is the second essential element for producing books rapidly, in response to shifts and developments in the class struggle. Prescott, a leader of this work, centralizes files sent in, prepares a single CD for each book, and turns the finished product over to Pathfinder, ready to go to press.

A capital fund of \$550,000 has been established to pay for the new platesetter and to pay off outstanding loans on the shop's three presses. It got a \$5,000 boost over the weekend in contributions from among the volunteers. The fund now stands at \$202,000 in contributions and pledges. The task remains to raise \$148,000 by the end of December to meet the full \$350,000 cost of the Agfa Galileo.

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



Election of Bonapartist figure Ventura in Minnesota is danger to working people

BY DOUG JENNESS

ST. PAUL, Minnesota — Two weeks ago the *Militant* ran an excerpt from a soon-to-be-published book, *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics in the 21st Century*, by Jack Barnes. The selection, headlined "Radicalism, Bonapartism, and the Perot Vote," was part of a talk Barnes gave four days after the 1992 presidential elections, where Ross Perot scored 19 percent of the vote, the highest by a "third party" since Theodore Roosevelt won 28 percent in 1912.

Barnes, referring to the rise of the Bonapartist Perot phenomenon, stated: "This kind of movement, this kind of dema-

AS I SEE IT

gogy 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 the world capitalist order heading toward intensified trade wars, economic breakdowns, banking and currency crises, accelerated war drives, and their inevitable accompaniment — class battles."

Six years later, with Jesse Ventura's election as governor of Minnesota on the Reform Party ticket, Perot's party, we can see how well this assessment stands up to today's reality.

Moreover, the Ventura campaign should not be viewed as a development restricted to the North Star state, and consequently less significant than the Perot race. It's true that Perot ran a national campaign, but Ventura was elected chief executive officer in one of the country's 50 states. The import of this is still ringing from coast to coast.

Most significant result of elections

Barnes stated in the talk six years ago, "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." Likewise in 1998, Ventura's victory was the most significant development, and underestimating it or not describing it accurately will be at the peril of the working-class

vanguard — we will be politically disarmed to act.

Given this record, leaders of the communist movement shouldn't have been surprised by Ventura's victory — as was the case with the entire working-class movement in Minnesota and beyond. We should have anticipated and explained to the broader working-class vanguard what was about to take place and the danger it poses for the workers movement.

The problem was refusal to use the communist movement's political conquests from the past and apply them, as tools, to politics today. But in a world where capitalism's instability deepens and the openings for class-conscious workers to carry out mass work in the labor movement in a qualitative new way multiply, attention to theory and to educating in the basics of Marxism is more, not less, necessary.

In the 1992 talk, Barnes explained even why bourgeois opinion pollsters were so wrong on the vote for Perot. He pointed out that "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." Perot pushed the idea that there was a conspiracy to stop his ascent. And every time Perot cried "Conspiracy!" he increased his vote.

A similar thing happened with the polls predicting Hubert Humphrey III, the Democratic candidate for governor of Minnesota, would win the election. Ventura hammered away at the press's "unfair treatment" of his campaign at the expense of his Democratic and Republican opponents. Not a single newspaper in the state endorsed his campaign.

Promise to act differently

A related phenomenon is reflected in the victory of the antiunion Aircraft Mechanics Association Fraternal (AMFA) in breaking off mechanics and cleaners from the International Association of Machinists (IAM) at Northwest Airlines (see article on front page). The backers of Ventura and AMFA have something in common.

It's not what Ventura or AMFA promise to do that's the key. It's the fact that they promise to act *differently* and their opponents promise to continue as is.

Thinking workers need to 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 something radically different from those politicians whom growing numbers consider incurably corrupt, ineffective, and self-serving. In the Minnesota race, the Democratic and Republican candidates for governor offered more of the same. Ventura said he was "different," he presented himself as a champion of the "people."

Like Perot, Ventura is a Bonapartist — that's the best description of this breed of radical demagogue. Ventura presents himself as a representative of a heterogeneous layer of the population, one who stands above classes and partisan politics. The breadth of his appeal was shown by the

stands he took. They ranged from supporting keeping abortion legal and decriminalizing prostitution and drugs, to approval of recent cuts in workmen's compensation, to reveling in the sex scandals surrounding the Clinton administration.

Ventura: a Bonapartist, not a rightist

It's not accurate to label Ventura as a rightist, unlike ultrarightist politician Patrick Buchanan, who has run twice in the presidential elections. Buchanan has campaigned to recruit cadre for a potential fascist movement, not win the broadest range of votes possible. Unlike Ventura's positions on social policies, Buchanan espouses rightist positions across the board — from banning abortion to gay-bashing and closing the border to immigrant workers from Mexico. Buchanan admires former dictator of Spain Francisco Franco; Joseph McCarthy, the U.S. Senator who helped lead the witch-hunt in the 1950s; and Gen. Douglas MacArthur who led the U.S. army during the Korean War. Ventura did not put forward rightist

Continued on Page 14

Protests: free Puerto Rican political prisoners



Militant/Ned Apple

Nearly 40 people protested outside the Federal Penitentiary in Leavenworth, Kansas, November 21, demanding freedom for Puerto Rican political prisoners and independence for the U.S. colony. One of the 15 prisoners, Luis Rosa, is held at Leavenworth. Protesters traveled from Chicago, Des Moines, and Lawrence, Kansas. The National Committee to Free Puerto Rican Prisoners of War and Political Prisoners along with the Leonard Peltier Defense Committee organized the action. Peltier, a fighter for Native American rights, is currently serving two life sentences in Leavenworth on framed-up charges. Above, sign reads: "Let them out now!" Another action took place in Danbury, Connecticut, the same day. About 30 protesters marched down Main Street there demanding the unconditional release of Alejandrina Torres, who is jailed at the federal penitentiary in Danbury. Manuel González, a worker from Southington, Connecticut, said he came to express outrage at the "hypocrisy of the U.S. government, which marches around the world preaching freedom of expression while denying Puerto Ricans those rights for 100 years." A vigil at the United Nations December 10 will publicize the demand that Washington free the prisoners.

Socialist workers campaign against U.S. attacks on Iraq

BY PETE KENNEDY

MANCHESTER, United Kingdom — In response the *Militant's* request for accounts of promoting the paper and "Washington's assault on Iraq — The Opening Guns of World War III," this is a story of how a young worker at the large postal depot where I work came to buy *New International* no. 7.

Our employer, Royal Mail, makes a point of implementing the November 11 "Armistice Day" commemoration with a work stoppage and two-minute silence, as directed by the government for the last couple of years. Workers are encouraged to join the bosses in wearing poppies, rallying around the flag, and gathering around a statue to the dead of two world wars.

When it became known that I opposed the event, one young worker, Terry, approached me and asked: "I've been told this is just out of respect for those few men left alive today from the '14-18 war, so what's your problem with it?" I suggested that "respect" was not a feature of the ruling classes' approach to these men, either during the imperialist slaughters, or any time since. And that they wouldn't think twice about squandering the lives of working people all over again for their profits. I asked him why he thought they had introduced this practice into the factories right now, today, after all these years. When he couldn't find an answer, I argued that the hypocritical event was really designed to tie us to their war

chariot for the next wars, like the one being prepared against Iraq.

He asked my opinion on the conflict in the Gulf. I keep a copy of *New International* no. 7 handy on my workframe, where it gets borrowed and bandied about a bit and has become known among some of the workers. I showed it to him, explaining its stance. He read the back cover. When I told him the magazine argued that we needed to take the power out of the employers' hands if we were to stop such wars, he immediately moved the discussion to the Russian question and whether workers could successfully hold power. We discussed this a little and I encouraged him to get the magazine. Another worker who has been reading this copy intervened and advised him to get a copy, "especially now, with what's happening in the Gulf."

Terry bought a copy of the *Militant* a few days later, and decided to buy the *New International* two days after that.

A young Tibetan student attended a Militant Labor Forum on Iraq the same evening, at which the *NI* no. 7 was promoted. When he heard how this young worker had bought it, he said, "I think I'd better get one too," and then bought a copy.



BY DAN FEIN
AND FLOYD FOWLER

COLUMBUS, Georgia — Supporters of

the *Militant* from Atlanta attended a protest against the U.S. Army School of the Americas (SOA) here November 21-22. Organizers estimated that 7,000 joined the weekend protest. The School of the Americas trains military personnel in Latin America in techniques of repression and is located inside the Ft. Benning Army base. "Close the school of the assassins!" was a popular sign held by demonstrators. Most participants were young, many coming in groups by bus and van from college campuses across the United States.

We set up a table with signs opposing U.S. aggression against Iraq and inviting youth to attend the December 4-6 Young Socialist convention in Los Angeles.

More than 50 people from 17 different states signed up to be contacted by Young Socialist chapters and Socialist Workers

Party branches near them. Several had been to Cuba or were planning to go within the next few months. Matt Skiba, from Wilmington, North Carolina, came by the table both days, encouraging other young people to stop and pick up one of the many books by Che Guevara or Fidel Castro that were prominently displayed. Many youth were impressed that the YS defend the Cuban Revolution and join with others in organizing tours of young communists from Cuba to the United States to meet and exchange ideas with young fighters.

Participants in the weekend bought 50 single issues and 9 subscriptions to the *Militant*, as well as 59 different Pathfinder titles worth more than \$600. Nearly every book by Che Guevara was sold, as well as 10 copies of the Marxist magazine *New International*.

Houston cops who killed immigrant are fired

BY LEA SHERMAN
AND ALEJANDRA RINCÓN

HOUSTON — On November 2 Houston police chief C.O. Bradford fired the six police officers who participated in the July 12 shooting death of 22-year-old Pedro Oregón Navarro.

The cops entered Oregón's apartment with no search or arrest warrants, acting on a tip from a police informer about drugs. Smashing into his bedroom, they fired 33 rounds of bullets, hitting the Mexican worker 12 times all from behind. Nine bullets hit him in the back, one each in the back of the head, shoulder, and hand. No drugs were found in the apartment or in his system.

The internal police investigation found the six cops violated state and federal laws including lying, criminal activity, entering without a search warrant, and using a drunken informant in an authorized drug investigation.

The firings came in the wake of an October 19 ruling by a grand jury here refusing to indict the cops on any felony charges. Only one cop was charged with misdemeanor criminal trespassing.

The *Houston Chronicle* reported November 5 that one of the cops who was no-billed (cleared of felony charges), David R. Barrera, had fired 24 of the 33 shots discharged in Oregón's apartment. He fired his semiautomatic pistol until the magazine was emptied then, reloaded it and continued shooting.

This grand jury ruling sparked widespread condemnation and outrage.

City officials used the firings in an attempt to restore confidence in the Houston police department and the justice system. Mayor Lee Brown, along with three Houston city



Janie Torres, whose brother José Campos Torres was killed by cops in 1977, was one of several speakers at a November 5 anti-police brutality protest in Houston organized by the Justice for Pedro Oregón Coalition.

councilmen, backed the decision to fire the six cops involved in the shooting. Brown told the *Houston Chronicle* the firings were "proof that our system of justice is the fairest and most democratic system in the world."

But at a news conference and protest sponsored by the Justice for Pedro Oregón Coalition on November 5 to demand the cops be indicted for murder, four families of victims of police brutality repudiated Brown's statement and called for real justice in Oregón's case.

Speaking out at the protest were Janie

Torres, whose brother José Campos Torres, a Vietnam veteran, was savagely beaten and thrown into Buffalo Bayou by police in 1977 to drown; Susan Hartnett whose unarmed son Derek Jason Kaesman, 24, was killed on October 25 after a chase, in a hail of 50 bullets with 14 bullets hitting him; Betty Williams, whose unarmed brother Robert Williams, was shot to death in front of her house earlier this year; and Skip Allen, whose 17-year-old, 126lb son, was shot twice through the heart while lying face down and handcuffed.

Except for the Torres case where some of

the cops received a short probation, no charges have been brought against any of the other cops involved in these cases. Also participating in the protest were the NAACP and League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC).

After the news conference, 50 protesters against police brutality marched in front of the office of District Attorney John B. Holmes, demanding murder charges be brought against the killer cops in the Oregón case.

Much anger and condemnation has been directed at Holmes who has been in the forefront of defending the cops against prosecution. He sent the case to the grand jury with no charges. Just a few days after the shooting death, he conceded that the cops had entered Oregón's apartment illegally, but that they had a right to shoot him.

Holmes, who has sent more working people to death row in Texas than any other prosecutor in the country, defended Barrera's actions — shooting 24 bullets at Oregón — by saying state laws allow police officers to use deadly force "so long as they reasonably perceive" they are threatened.

"An analogy I use is that if it is OK to kill a guy dead, it is OK to kill him dead, dead, dead," Holmes said.

The Justice for Pedro Oregón Coalition plans further actions to keep the pressure on city officials and demand further action. A picket line was planned in front of Holmes office on November 12 demanding murder charges be filed. A townhall meeting is scheduled for early December.

The coalition has organized a series of protest actions, including news conferences, marches, and picket lines.

On October 22, some 300 people rallied and marched to the Houston police headquarters, protesting the grand jury's decision and demanding prosecution of the six police officers involved. On October 25, more than 200 people marched in the neighborhood where Oregón was killed demanding justice and denouncing the cover-up.

On November 4, more than 100 students at the University of Houston participated in a rally sponsored by MEChA, the College Democrats, and the Young Socialists to demand justice in the case. One week earlier about 50 people participated at a press conference, where five professors joined students in demanding justice.

The coalition vows it will continue to call public protests to demand murder charges against officers involved, keeping the pressure on until justice is served.

Lea Sherman is a member of the International Association of Machinists.

Socialist books a hit at bookfair in Sweden

BY HILDING EKLUND
AND BIRGITTA ISACSSON

GOTHENBERG, Sweden — "Thank you for an interesting discussion with inspiring visions. Besides that, you have exciting books. I hope I can come back to you," wrote one visitor in Pathfinder's guest book at the bookfair held here October 22-25. It was the seventh time supporters of Pathfinder Press have attended the annual event.

The young woman who signed the book was interested in the Cuban revolution. She bought *Che Guevara Speaks* in English and *Socialism and Man in Cuba* in Swedish. After further discussion on socialism and what other Pathfinder books are about at a nearby McDonald's, she also bought the Swedish-language edition of *Socialism on Trial* by James P. Cannon, a founding leader of the Socialist Workers Party in the United States who was jailed during World War II for speaking out against Washington's im-

perialist slaughter. The book is the transcript of his courtroom testimony in that trial.

The big majority of those who visited the Pathfinder booth were young people, including a youth of about 12, who bought *The Communist Manifesto* last year and *Socialism and Man in Cuba* this year. The booth was staffed by supporters of Pathfinder from United Kingdom and Sweden.

Tens of thousands of people attended the event. The first day and a half was open only to publishers, librarians, and other professionals; after that the general public was admitted. Pathfinder supporters sold 79 books during the fair, worth about \$800. Books by Ernesto Che Guevara were best sellers. Twenty-four copies of the Swedish-language pamphlet were sold, and five copies of *Che Guevara Speaks* sold out.

Frank Kofsky's book *John Coltrane and the Jazz Revolution of the 1960s* sparked a lot of attention. A "jazz freak," as he called himself, bought three copies of the book for himself and as gifts for friends.

There was also considerable interest in books on the question of women's liberation. One woman who was working with battered women bought *Sexism and Science* and *Woman's Evolution*, both by Evelyn Reed, to learn and inspire women to read more about their history. *Woman's Evolution* sold out — two copies in English, one in Swedish, and one in Farsi. *Marxism and the Feminist Movement*, a pamphlet by Mary-Alice Waters, also sold out, as did *Sexism & Science*.

The stall featured big displays of the newly published issue no. 11 of *New International* and the Swedish-language edition of *New International* no. 10, which includes the lead article "Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War" by Jack Barnes. Many expressed surprise at the title of the feature article in issue no. 11, "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War," also by Jack Barnes, and the display sparked many discussions and sales.

Four youths stopped to look at the booth and immediately started to ask, "Explain what Trotskyism is!" "How can a planned economy work?" "What is a Leninist party?" They returned three times during the day and ended up buying *Socialism on Trial* and *The Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and

Frederick Engels. Many young people decided to get a weekly update of working-class politics and bought subscriptions to the *Militant*. Altogether seven subscriptions were sold. Others decided to buy *An Action Program to Confront the Coming Economic Crisis* in Swedish or Leon Trotsky's pamphlet *Fascism: What it is and How to Fight it*.

The volunteers staffing the booth also publicized the November tour of Olga Díaz Ramos, a leader of the Union of Young Communists of Cuba. She is speaking in Denmark, Norway, and Sweden, including visiting Gothenburg November 22-24.

Hilding Eklund and Birgitta Isacsson are members of the Metalworkers Union in Stockholm.

Tehran daily reviews pamphlet by Che Guevara

The November 11 issue of the Tehran daily *Kar va Kargar* (Work and the worker) published the following review of the Farsi-language pamphlet *Socialism and Man in Cuba* by Ernesto Che Guevara and Fidel Castro, along with a photo of the cover of the book. A new edition was recently published by Talaye Porsoo Publications. The paper represents an umbrella formation connected to the Islamic shoras (committees) in the factories and in part reflects the views of figures in the government who are associated with labor.

Recently the second edition of *Socialism and Man in Cuba*, authored by two revolutionary leaders of the 20th century, Ernesto Che Guevara and Fidel Castro, has come to the publishing market.

The first part is an article by Che Guevara on the role of human beings in building socialism. The article explains the course charted by the leadership of the Cuban revolution in leading people to overcome problems, register economic progress, and advance in the transition from capitalism to socialism.

The second part of the book is Fidel Castro's speech commemorating the 20th anniversary of Che Guevara's death. Here Castro goes over the motivation for the changes that started in the Cuban society in 1986 and came to be known as the "rectification process." In order to accelerate and sustain this process, he emphasizes that Che Guevara's ideas on economy must be revived.

Che Guevara, an Argentine-born doctor, was a Cuban revolutionary who for years fought against U.S. imperialism in Latin America. He had scientific ideas on politics and the economy of societies in transition from capitalism to socialism, some of which are presented in his article and can be read and judged.

In the [translator's] introduction to the book we read that "these ideas are based on the fact that mechanisms of the capitalist economy, even mechanisms of the nationalized planned economy, by themselves, offer no solutions. It is human beings, with their revolutionary consciousness and creativity, who provide the driving force for progress in the society."

from Pathfinder

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Makah Indians in Washington State defend treaty rights

BY CHRIS RAYSON
AND SCOTT BREEN

NEAH BAY, Washington — The campaign against the Makah Indian Nation and their treaty right to hunt gray whales escalated November 1. The Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, which has pledged to stop the Makah from whaling, organized a provocation against the Makah on their reservation here.

Lisa Distefano, Sea Shepherd International Director, and three other members of the group attempted to land on the Makah's docks as part of an anti-whaling protest. Makah Tribal Police took them into custody and their inflatable boat was confiscated. The protestors were turned over to Clallum County police. No charges were filed.

These groups have been frustrated by their lack of public support and the restraint and discipline shown by the Makah. They have been escalating their campaign against the Makah, taking increasingly provocative and racist actions in the process.

They have converged with Rep. Jack Metcalf, a Republican who opposes Indian treaty rights in general and has crusaded against the Makah whale hunting in particular. Metcalf and Sea Shepherd held a press conference in nearby Seiku to condemn the Makah Nation, especially its Tribal Police. Sea Shepherd claims its members were "assaulted by members of the Makah Indian tribe," and may charge tribe members with assault and illegal seizure. Metcalf called for "an immediate aggressive investigation by the Justice Department." The Federal Bureau of Investigation also announced that it is actively investigating whether the civil rights of the Sea Shepherds were violated during the anti-whaling protest.

Makah Tribal Chairman Ben Johnson, Jr. was quoted in the *Seattle Post Intelligencer* as saying that the tribal police "were protecting them [the protesters]." According to press reports, the anti-whaling ships were pelted with stones thrown by some teenagers on the Makah docks during the November 1 confrontation. Johnson also pointed to the U.S. government's responsibility in the situation. "We did all we were supposed to do, and then they allow Sea Shepherd to provoke our people. If we have a treaty right, why can't the government stop Sea Shepherd from doing this?"

On August 25, the Makah Tribal council passed an ordinance prohibiting the opponents of Indian treaty rights from docking at the Makah marina. They were warned that if they docked or came ashore, their vessels would be seized and their members detained. Sea Shepherd's vessels — including a 172-foot ocean-going ship and a former Coast Guard cutter — have been constantly anchored in Neah Bay and patrolling the Washington coastline since early October, with the aim of preventing the Makah from hunting a gray whale.

Makah reclaim right to hunt whales

The Makah, who had hunted whales for more than 2,000 years, managed to hold onto that right in an 1855 Treaty with the United States, where they were forced to cede nearly

700,000 acres to the government. They continued to whale until the 1920s, when they voluntarily halted due to the depletion of whale stocks caused by commercial whaling. The gray whale was removed from the U.S. Endangered Species list in 1994 and numbers about 22,000 today. After a four-year process, the Makah finally received permission to hunt four gray whales a year for subsistence and cultural reasons. The Makah began the hunt October 1 this year, but postponed it until November 1 under pressure from the National Marine Fisheries Service, which opposed the Makah hunting any "resident" gray whales in the area. After October 31, gray whales from Alaska are migrating past Washington to Mexico.

Sea Shepherd and some other "animal rights" groups have carried out increasingly provocative acts over the last few weeks, in an attempt to intimidate and terrorize the Makah. Residents told *Militant* correspondents that Sea Shepherd has fired its cannon several times while anchored in Neah Bay, startling and offending residents of this small community. Sea Shepherd claimed the shots were blanks. They have repeatedly broadcast animal noises and speeches over loudspeakers, disturbing the community. And in an interview with the *Seattle Times*, Paul Watson, founder of Sea Shepherd, declared, "My job is to rock the boat, sometimes to sink the boat." According to the *Times*, the Sea Shepherd is responsible for ramming or sinking 11 vessels engaged in whaling since 1979.

Provocations and racist taunts

Some 20 whaling opponents organized by Progressive Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) tried, unsuccessfully, to caravan through the Makah reservation as the tribe was beginning a potlatch gathering October 31. This provocation, witnessed by these reporters, was stopped by about 30 Makah youth and Tribal police, who met the caravan at the border and prevented them from entering. The treaty rights opponents yelled insults and made threats against the Makah youth, especially targeting whaling crewmembers like Eric Johnson and Wayne Johnson.

One woman took out her anger at a young Makah by saying, "I wish I could harpoon you," and threateningly said, "As god is my witness, you will regret this."

Others taunted the Makah with racist



Militant/Scott Breen

Makah celebrate after preventing opponents of tribal whaling rights from entering their reservation and provoking a fight in Neah Bay, October 31.

statements like "How many of you will be drunk when you all go out in your canoe after your big party tonight?" Another baited a member of the whaling crew: "What is a Makah whaler? A harpoon on Viagra."

Despite these vulgar and racist insults and threats, the Makah maintained a firm and disciplined line, forcing the protesters to turn around and leave the reservation without provoking the Makah into a fight.

Simultaneously with PAWS' protest, a Sea Shepherd flotilla of 10 boats, including kayaks and even a small submarine, was maneuvering into Neah Bay and heading for the docks. It was led by an all-black cutter, the *Sirenian*. Those aboard tried to incite the Makahs at the docks and shoreline.

Paul Watson, founder of Sea Shepherd, led the insults. "Just because you were born stupid doesn't give you any right to act stupid," Watson yelled over loudspeakers mounted on the *Sirenian*. His crew, who like him were dressed in all-black uniforms, began videotaping all those on the shore. The smaller vessels cruised up to the docks as crewmembers, including Lisa Distefano, mocked and taunted the Makahs.

The Makah drowned out the Sea Shepherd loudspeakers by honking their car horns. One youth held up a hand painted sign: "Eco-colonialists go home." At a certain point, Eric Johnson and other crew members organized those on shore to turn their backs on Sea Shepherd, and the confrontation fizzled as the flotilla moved away from the shore, unable to provoke the Makah.

The potlatch, which brought together hundreds of Makah tribal members and natives from Alaska, British Columbia, and

other parts the Pacific Northwest, continued unaffected that day. Its theme was celebrating Indian treaty rights and the unity of the Indians in fighting for their treaty rights. "We're a strong tribe, we're a fighting tribe," Marcie Parker told those at the celebration.

The night of the November 1 provocation by Sea Shepherd, the tribe held a community meeting to discuss the incident. They decided not to allow themselves to get into a future confrontation. "The elders gave us a very clear message yesterday," Ben Johnson explained. "We should never have went down there and if they start a fight to walk away." Two weeks later, another attempted march through the reservation was turned back by the Makah without incident.

A few days later, Henry Cagey, chairman of the Affiliated Tribes of the Northwest representing 44 tribes, spoke at a press conference in Neah Bay. "You are not alone," he told the Makah. "We are standing behind you." Also speaking at the press conference were Billy Frank Jr. of the Nisqually Tribe, Joe De La Cruz of the Quinalt, Terry Williams of the Tulalips, and Lee Silversmith of the Navajo Nation. They announced that the National Congress of American Indians, representing 288 tribes, also voted to support the Makah.

Reflecting the growing weakness of the Sea Shepherd siege of the Makah, Captain Watson agreed to withdraw their two ships, the *Sirenian* and the *Sea Shepherd*, from Neah Bay in exchange for a meeting with the Tribal Council on November 23. The Makahs have emphasized that they still plan to carry out their whale hunt.

Black farmers speak in New York on fight against racist gov't policies

BY EVA BRAIMAN

MT. VERNON, New York—"All I ever wanted to be was a farmer, but I never knew it would be so difficult," said Leonard Hunter, president of the New York Chapter of the Black Farmers and Agriculturists Association (BFAA), speaking in this small town just north of New York City November 14. More than 70 people came to hear the program, entitled "Saving African American Farms, Landowners and Communities: The Time is Now."

The featured speaker at the meeting was Gary Grant, national president of the BFAA. He described the conditions facing working farmers who are Black.

Grant cited statistics that illustrate this crisis, including the decades of documented discriminatory lending policies of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), the pervasive racist treatment of Black farmers by government agencies, and the lack of technical support, all of which have contributed to the alarming rate of foreclosures on Black family farms.

In 1910 Black farmers owned 15.6 million acres of farmland. By 1982 this figure had declined to 3.2 million. Currently, Black landowners are losing land at rates as high as 9,000 acres per week.

In his wide-ranging presentation, Grant received a standing ovation and enthusiastic shouts of, "Teach on brother." He urged

the audience to get involved in the fight against Black land loss, including supporting the \$3.5 billion class-action lawsuit being filed by Black farmers against the U.S. government for discriminatory practices.

Grant reminded those assembled of the historic role played by Black farmers in the civil rights movement, particularly in the southern United States, and the need of Black and white farmers to unify to fight against foreclosures.

He implored the audience to reject the "divide and conquer" methods employed by the government against farmers and within the Black nationality.

Contrasting the economic devastation visited on Black farmers in the last decades, Grant described the "obscene profits" being reaped by agribusiness conglomerates such as ConAgra, Cargill, and Continental, whose amassing of land, and growing monopoly control over grain production, agricultural chemicals and technology, red meat slaughter, poultry processing, retail food sales, and finance capital has spelled economic and environmental disaster in the communities where many Black and white farmers once tilled the land.

Grant argued that unlike the giant enterprises like ConAgra, "family farmers are good environmentalists because they would not contaminate the food they themselves eat." He also decried the brutal conditions

faced by workers such as those at the Perdue poultry plant in Lewiston, North Carolina.

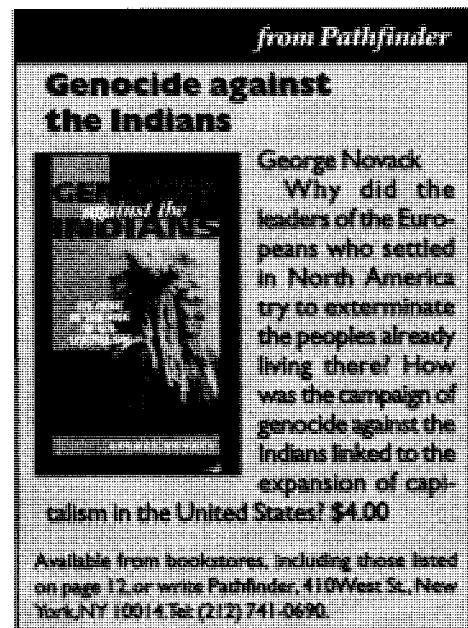
Grant and his fellow fighters are traveling around and reaching out to workers, youth, and trade union leaders to educate on and win support for the fight of Black farmers.

In a letter to U.S. secretary of agriculture Dan Glickman, Douglas H. Dority, international president of the United Food and Commercial Workers wrote, "The UFCW has historic ties with organizations representing America's family farmers...and its 1.4 million members strongly urge the Department, at the bare minimum to support legislation that enables victims of the discrimination...to pursue legal remedies...America's Black family farmers are entitled to their day in court."

Others addressing the Mt. Vernon meeting included David Jones of the A. Philip Randolph Institute, Mt. Vernon City Councilman Lyndon Williams, Imam Adams of the Yonkers Islamic Center, Charles Jarvis of the Million Man March Organizations of Westchester, and Sylvia Webb, a nurse and local farm rights activist.

For more information, call the Black Farmers and Agriculturists Association, P.O. Box 61, Tillery, NC 27877; Tel: (919) 826-3017.

Eva Braiman is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 174.



'We are defending our culture of

Interview with Graziella Pogolotti, theater critic and leader of the Union

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS
AND MARTÍN KOPPEL

HAVANA, Cuba — The sixth national congress of the Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (UNEAC), held here November 5-7, took up some of the main challenges facing the Cuban revolution today. A central thread of the discussion was how UNEAC members could take the offensive to defend the social and political conquests of the revolution that are part of the cultural identity of the Cuban people. In particular, delegates addressed the challenges resulting from the economic and social crisis known here as the Special Period.

The Special Period was triggered by the sudden loss in the early 1990s of aid and favorable trade relations with the Soviet Union and Eastern European countries. In the face of this economic crisis, reinforced by the intensified economic war conducted by the U.S. rulers, the revolutionary government was obliged to adopt a series of economic measures that made Cubans more vulnerable to the world capitalist market and that began to erode the social solidarity and equality conquered by Cuba's working people in the course of their socialist revolution.

The November 23 *Militant* ran the text of a document on "Culture and Society," adopted by the congress delegates, which took up some of these issues.

On November 10 we had an opportunity to interview Graziella Pogolotti, a member of UNEAC's national secretariat and a well-known Cuban theater and art critic, who discussed the main themes of the congress with us. Also taking part in the discussion, held at UNEAC's national offices, was Norberto Codina, editor of *La Gaceta de Cuba*, UNEAC's bimonthly magazine.



Waters: Following the victory of the Cuban revolution in 1959, when Che Guevara established a Rebel Army command post at La Cabaña garrison here in Havana, some of the first cables between the U.S. embassy and Washington referred to what they considered an alarming development — the creation within the Rebel Army of a Department of Culture, known as G-6. They noted that through this Department of Culture Che was organizing not only literacy classes for Rebel Army combatants stationed at La Cabaña but musical concerts, ballet performances, and poetry readings. This was proof of communist influence in the revolutionary army, they said.

From the very first days of the revolutionary war to overthrow the Batista dictatorship, the Cuban leadership has always

given a great deal of importance to the fight to extend culture and raise the cultural level of all working people in Cuba. We saw that this was at the heart of the discussion at the UNEAC congress — how to advance along these lines today. It would be useful if you could talk a little about the cultural policy of the revolution.

Pogolotti: From the beginning, the Cuban revolution brought about a true cultural revolution, in the broadest sense of the word. Culture was viewed as a road to liberation.

I remember that at the beginning of the revolution, when I was working at the National Library, we made a sign carrying a statement by Fidel [Castro]: "The revolution doesn't tell you to *believe* — the revolution tells you to *read*." In other words, being exposed to reading and knowledge is in itself an act of liberation by human be-



ings.

And this policy was implemented. An important aspect of our culture is education. One of the first things the revolution did was the literacy campaign. Afterward, we launched classes for newly literate workers to achieve a higher level of schooling. Education became universal and was taken to every area.

From the beginning, a series of institutions were established to foster the development of artistic creation and spread culture. In March 1959 a film institute was created. This was in a country that had no cinematographic tradition, where filmmakers had to improvise. Its name was, and still is, the Cuban Art and Film Industry Institute, ICAIC.

This led to the development of Cuban film and filmmakers. There was also a resurgence that brought film from the entire world to the Cuban public — the great European cinema; the best film from the United States, despite

all the obstacles faced by distribution companies; and film from the socialist countries of Europe at that time. It was a broad opening to the world.

Then there was the development of the national publishing industry, which not only gave Cuban writers the possibility of publishing their work — an opportunity they had not enjoyed before — but led to the publishing of authors from the whole world: all the great classic authors from the United States, European literature, and something that is not published very much elsewhere: literature from Africa and other parts of the Third World. That too was an opening to the world that enriched our culture.

Similar institutions were established in all sectors to promote the growth and extension of culture.

There have also been projects aimed at reducing the cultural gap between the capital and the provinces and rural areas. This is a long process that cannot be completed in a day, of course. Cultural life in this country was concentrated in Havana. It was limited to small groups in the capital, primarily people from the petty bourgeoisie. So this continued to be broadened out.

For example, we had remarkable experiences such as the Teatro Escambray theater group, which just marked its 30th anniversary during this congress. This group launched a particular kind of experience, performing theater in a rural area with no theater tradition, in the area of the Escambray mountains. They sought to do so while maintaining high standards of quality and allowing the audience to be critical participants with respect to the work itself and the conditions surrounding it.

Codina: Graziella knows about the Teatro Escambray not only as a teacher and theater critic, but through her direct experience. She was part of the Teatro Escambray during an early stage.

Pogolotti: Yes, I was one of a group of students from the university that spent five years with them.

Culture of national and social liberation

Waters: One of the strongest aspects of the discussion at the UNEAC congress was the clarity of the reaffirmation that what you are defending is a culture of national and social liberation, that Cuba's national identity is the product of the socialist revolution, of internationalist traditions, and of hundreds of years of anticolonial and anti-



Granma photos by Juvenal Balan
At UNEAC congress, said Pogolotti, "we spoke about going on the offensive" to defend the socialist conquests of the revolution that are part of the cultural identity of the Cuban people. Above, delegate Alfredo Guevara, president of Cuban film institute ICAIC, takes floor. Left, Cuban president Fidel Castro joins discussion. At left, UNEAC president Carlos Martí; at right, Minister of Culture Abel Prieto.

imperialist struggle.

This was linked to the reaffirmation of Cuban culture as an expression of the most advanced culture of all humanity, embracing — not rejecting — the highest cultural conquests of previous historical epochs and other societies.

That working people will be bearers of culture in the new society we are seeking to build is a very revolutionary perspective. It's the opposite of the caricature that the imperialists try to identify as "socialist culture," which has more in common with the socialist realism policies of the Soviet bureaucracy than anything else.¹

Pogolotti: Our cultural identity comes from Spain, Africa, and all the elements that historically have become part of Cuban society. It is a social and historical product.

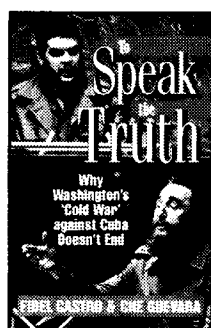
The creation of Cuban art and literature has always been very much tied to the development of universal culture. We are a country with open borders. I always say Cuba is a port where many things arrive, of which we assimilate those that fit in with the development of our own culture.

Beginning with the triumph of the revolution, there was an internal polemic here over "socialist realism." Cuban writers and artists who considered themselves revolutionaries, who agreed with the principles of the revolution and its reason for existence, were convinced socialist realism was not an authentic or organic expression of art, but just the opposite.

That battle took place in the 1960s. Afterward, there was a period in the 1970s in which, without directly talking about socialist realism, there were in practice some attempts to apply those schemas. But that baggage was gradually left behind. Cuba today has recovered its links to universal culture.

At this very moment I think it is extremely important to reaffirm our national identity in face of imperialism's tendency to homogenize and trivialize everything. This is true not only for us but for other countries.

We must rescue and champion the cultural traditions that are based on emancipa-



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emancipation'

of Writers and Artists of Cuba

tion and humanism. This means not only the liberation of man from exploitation and oppression. That is an indispensable first step for human beings to be able to realize themselves fully. But it also means fighting against all the prejudices that have grown over the centuries.

What we are defending is not only for us but for the entire world as the new century begins — which will be a century of enormous conflicts.

So there is a convergence in the understanding of these problems between the political leadership of the Cuban revolution, which is confronting the problem of globalization, and the defense of Cuban culture that was discussed at the UNEAC congress.

A live, democratic organization

Waters: There is nothing similar to UNEAC in the United States or other capitalist countries. It was born out of the Cuban revolution. What is UNEAC?

Pogolotti: UNEAC arose in 1961 after [the U.S.-organized mercenary invasion at] Playa Girón. It's a social organization that Cuban writers and artists can join voluntarily. Membership in UNEAC is not compulsory, nor is it required to be a member in order to get a book published or an art exhibit displayed. People join because they see in UNEAC a means of expressing their concerns, interests, and affinities.

To be admitted as a member, you have to have a certain record of literary or artistic work.

UNEAC is made up of five associations: for literature; plastic arts [sculpture, painting, and photography]; music; theater; and film, radio, and television.

It's a very democratic structure. The leadership of the national organization and the associations is renewed at every congress through a process in which members freely elect delegates to the convention and make nominations for the leadership. It's a completely open process in which the members hold meetings to propose those they consider best qualified.

UNEAC carries out many kinds of cultural activities. It has a publishing house, produces the magazine *La Gaceta de Cuba*, sponsors *casas de cultura* [community cultural centers], and organizes exhibits, concerts, and theoretical conferences on different topics.

It's a place where members can get together to discuss. It's a social center and a vehicle for participating in public discussions on questions related to the national culture.

Waters: At the congress Fidel stated that "capitalism is the enemy of culture." There was a lot of discussion about the penetration of the capitalist market in Cuba today and measures needed to protect artists from exploitation and the distortions that are inherent in it.

One measure you have adopted involves Cuban artists who travel abroad and do tours or sell their works. Part of their hard-currency earnings go to a cultural fund that helps subsidize art and all cultural institutions in Cuba. Could you describe this?

Countering effects of the market

Pogolotti: In the last few years we've witnessed a growing presence of the market in the world of artistic creation. The market makes it possible to circulate works of art and get them known in places where they would otherwise have no access. It's through entrepreneurs that Cuban popular music has become known internationally. It's through gallery owners that paintings, sculpture, and photography are circulated.

At the same time, we know the market involves dangers. It means works of art may be manipulated, directly or indirectly dictating norms to artists. It can have a negative effect on artistic experimentation.

So we must establish a counterweight to the market through our cultural institutions. These must make sure to foster artistic experimentation and research, and defend the values we consider our patrimony, even if they often are not commercially successful. We must prevent the commercialization of

our classic works.

Today, musicians, painters, and sculptors are breaking into the international market and receiving income in hard currency. Part of those earnings goes to the artist as remuneration for his or her work. Another part goes to the state institution promoting that artist. In the case of painters and sculptors it's the Cuban Fund for Cultural Works.

The hard-currency income Cuba receives in this way is used to support many areas of the arts that are not profitable but are considered essential. First and foremost is art instruction, which in Cuba has great importance and is extraordinarily costly, especially in terms of musical instruments, other materials, and facilities with the needed requirements. Art instruction is completely free for Cubans, so the state must subsidize it in this way.

The state also subsidizes a large part of the publishing aimed at the Cuban population. At the beginning of the Special Period, publishing dropped sharply — overnight, we went from abundance to nothing. Paper today must be purchased with hard currency.

So through this fund for the development of culture and education, we have injected hard currency to revive the publishing of books and cultural and theoretical magazines.

Waters: On the subject of youth, I saw in a recent issue of *Juventud Rebelde* an interview with Fernando Rojas, the head of the Saíz Brothers Association of young artists and writers. In it, he refers to a comment you made at the UNEAC congress — that it's important not only to provide young artists with scholarships and other benefits, but to truly integrate them and support their work.

During the sixth national congress of the Union of Artists and Writers of Cuba (UNEAC), held in Havana November 5-7, Cuban president Fidel Castro talked with journalists from the Cuban press covering that event. The following excerpts from his remarks are from an article by Magda Resik Aguirre that appeared in the November 8 issue of *Juventud Rebelde*, weekly newspaper of the Union of Young Communists of Cuba. The translation from Spanish is by the *Militant*.

"In Cuba we had to create a new culture, beginning with political culture — a different one from the culture of exploitation of man by man, of imperialist domination. McCarthyism was deeply rooted in the mentality of a lot of people. And the revolution is not only about making laws. It's about creating a new culture...."

"In our colonial and neocolonial country there was culture too. But if you want to make a revolution, if you want to change the existing economic and social order for an order based on equality and justice, you have to begin by changing the old culture of that society in many, many ways. That doesn't mean that we have to change musical culture, but rather historical, political, philosophical culture.... It has to be changed, or else it's impossible to make a revolution."

For those who seek to homogenize culture through the communications multinationals and promote a capitalist philosophy and way of life, art and literature are "always a commercial vehicle. Capitalism is an enemy of national culture and a bearer of the culture of selfishness, exploitation, plunder, commercialization, and money grubbing. By definition, it's a system that's an enemy of culture."

"We waged a tremendous cultural battle. For me it was the main battle. Not in the field



Granma

"From the beginning, the Cuban revolution brought about a true cultural revolution in the broadest sense of the term. Culture was viewed as a road to liberation." Above, literacy volunteers return to Havana in 1961 to join a mass rally declaring Cuba "Territory Free of Illiteracy."

There seems to be a concern in UNEAC and among young artists that there is a generation gap.

Pogolotti: Yes, we noted at this congress that there are not enough youth among the members of UNEAC and that they don't participate very much in it. Even given the number of young members of the organization, they were not adequately represented as delegates, and are not adequately represented on UNEAC's National Council.

We analyzed this at the congress, and we think the different associations must immediately study this problem in their field. In some of the associations there has been a more conservative tendency than in others.

But we must appeal to youth who have produced some works — and there are some young artists who have produced works that are truly significant — to join UNEAC. They must feel that UNEAC responds to their needs, that here they have a vehicle to raise their concerns and discuss questions of particular interest to them, and that it allows

a greater interrelation between different generations.

I think there is an almost biological defense mechanism among older people who, after a certain age, try to defend themselves and don't open the way to the youth. That reaction must be combated. We need to ensure that youth are tied to UNEAC and, in this way, to the revolutionary process and the continuity of Cuban culture itself.

Waters: Membership in UNEAC is voluntary but you have to be selected.

Codina: Yes, membership is selective. As Graziella said, to join, an artist must have an established record of work in his or her specialty. This doesn't mean you have to make your living from artistic work, because you can be a university professor who is an art critic.

In the case of writers, as a norm they must have published some books, and these books must be favorably recognized. In other words, you can't join the writers association

Continued on Page 10

Castro: 'Capitalism is an enemy of culture'

of theater, music, or dance in particular, but in the field of ideas." Confronting the culture they had imposed on us: "the false history that asserted that the United States had liberated us, that we owed them our independence — all those antipatriotic ideas. We had to create a consciousness about our homeland and a revolutionary consciousness: against anticommunism, against pro-Yankeeism, and against racial discrimination."

The scene of Vidal Park in Santa Clara, where blacks used to have to walk around the outside, away from whites, returns to memory as a distant evil. It was a holdover that the revolution was able to overcome: "We ran into many problems, and the very first one was changing a certain culture, a certain consciousness. And that's what I devoted all my energy to at meetings, at rallies, on the radio and television. (...) Building unity is serious political work."

"We were riddled with discrimination. One day I spoke on television on this subject, and three days later I had to speak again. It caused such a reaction among such broad sectors that I was surprised. They began to say that we were going to force people [of different races] to get married, that we were going to impose racial equality by force. I had to explain once again what the ideas of the revolution were."

"We had to change a certain culture, and all these things become relative when there is poverty. There is a certain lack of culture that is inherited. It's a lack of knowledge more than a lack of culture. There were people who lived in better conditions, who had schooling, and then there were the poorest people, who had less culture and education because they had few means. That is inherited over time."

On a personal level, Fidel recalls not having racial prejudices as a boy when, in [the town of] Birán, he would sneak out of his parent's house to visit the Haitians' house: "They would scold me a lot, not for being there — in my home there was no sense of discrimination — but they were afraid that

by eating toasted corn in the Haitians' barracks we would get indigestion or get sick."

He learned about racism later at the Dolores school, where blacks were refused admission. "Once I asked why there were no blacks there, and they replied: 'Well, there are so few of them, poor things!' I'll never forget. (...) There was a little school next door for those who couldn't afford to pay, with some mulatto and black students. But those of us who considered ourselves white were at the big school."

For the Cuban leader, U.S. society was yet another revelation about racial discrimination. "Once I traveled by car from New York to Miami. Racism there isn't only against the Black population. It's against the Hispanics, the Latin Americans. In a simple cafeteria you could see how they regarded Latinos with contempt, even if they were white. If they were Indians it was worse, and even more so if they were Black."

During one of his visits to the United Nations to represent the revolutionary island, the president of Cuba was discriminated against for political reasons also: "When they kicked me out of the hotel where I was staying near the UN, I had two alternatives — either a tent in the UN courtyard, or Harlem. So I took off for Harlem. They [residents of Harlem] always saw it as a gesture of friendship, and 30 years later they welcomed me again with a lively and friendly rally."

The day before, Fidel had engaged in an extensive dialogue with the delegates to the UNEAC congress about the kind of ignorance that existed in his generation, which got its education on the march. This is what happened with racial discrimination, a problem that was largely resolved over these years, but which continues to exist in the form of prejudices in society: "There is an entire culture that is inherited, and we Cubans must do a self-analysis. (...) Part of our ignorance is having the false illusion that by socializing everything we were going to end this situation, which depends on human subjectivity."

Interview with leader of Cuban artists union

Continued from Page 9

tion simply by having books published.

Waters: But these days it's very difficult to get books published, given the shortages of paper and other resources that have sharply limited publishing in Cuba over much of the decade.

Codina: Well, in the case of writers, there has been some flexibility in this regard. The [subsidized] collection of books called "The New Pines," for example, has given a big boost to previously unpublished authors. Through "The New Pines," almost 240 titles by young authors have been published. The authors were selected through award-winning contests with nationwide juries of critics.

Today there are few nationally known Cuban writers who haven't had at least one book published in recent years, for example through an alternative system of small notebooks, especially in the provinces outside Havana. Some young writers don't have a book per se, but three or four of these small notebooks that have nationwide circulation.

Discussion on racist prejudices in Cuba

Waters: Another theme of the discussion at the congress was on the question of racism and racist prejudices. It seems there is a broader and more open discussion on these questions today in Cuba.

Pogolotti: This question has been raised in UNEAC for some time. Before the congress, the Fernando Ortiz Foundation organized two days of discussion on the subject. This is a foundation, led by [well-known Cuban writer and UNEAC leader] Miguel Barnet, that is devoted to studies of ethnology, sociology, and the world of our popular traditions.

Codina: Ortiz, a Cuban ethnologist whose work was mainly before the revolution, produced a serious theoretical and documentary work that established the foundations for the definition of the Cuban nationality, especially regarding the place of blacks, not as a secondary element but as a fundamental component of Cuban society and culture.

Pogolotti: Fernando Ortiz devoted his entire work to studying the contributions of blacks, the traditions of African origin, to Cuban culture. He was the first to champion and legitimize the presence of that culture among us. It is an extraordinarily broad work from an ethnological perspective. He pioneered concepts that later became well established, such as "transculturation." This is the process that began when Africans were brought to Cuba, preserving their own culture, and in which this culture was gradually modified and incorporated into a Cuban context.

The Fernando Ortiz Foundation organized a discussion on the survival of elements of racism and racial prejudice in Cuban society today, as well as the kinds of measures that must be taken to confront this problem. This includes giving a greater presence to blacks, as members of Cuban society, in television and other mass media.

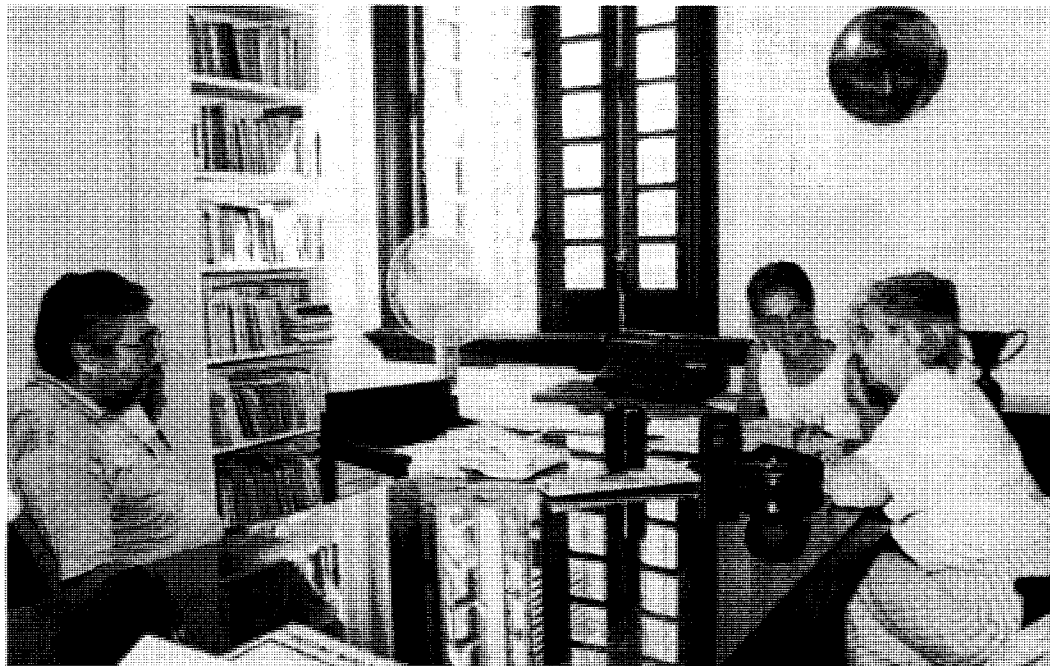
The Cuban revolution eradicated the economic basis for racism, and perhaps it was naively believed that this problem would be solved much more rapidly. Of course, there has been a significant change between the

situation before the revolution and today. Even so, prejudices continue among certain parts of Cuban society.

This situation becomes more acute when you live through such difficult economic conditions as we do, and when certain social inequalities inevitably become accentuated. This leads to the reappearance of germs that had been eliminated.

This problem cannot be left to be gradually, automatically eliminated by society. Instead, we must influence society to make it aware of this problem and begin to overcome it.

The debate that has begun now is a necessary starting point. After the meetings at the Fernando Ortiz Foundation, we took this discussion to the field of television. There was a discussion with producers and leaders of Cuban television to make them see the problem [of the small number of blacks in prominent television roles] and urge them to find solutions. This was an important step forward.



Norberto Codina, Mary-Alice Waters, and Graziella Pogolotti at UNEAC offices in Havana.

Waters: It's the first time there has been such a broad discussion on this question since the early years of the revolution, when there was a lot of discussion.

Pogolotti: Yes, in the early years there was a lot of discussion on this question. Fidel raised this problem. So did Che [Guevara], especially in a [1959] speech he gave at the Central University of Las Villas, where he called on the university to dress in the colors of workers, peasants, mulattos, and blacks. That is, he called for a transformation of the social composition of the university student body, which also meant transforming its racial composition.

Waters: It seems very healthy and positive that this kind of discussion is taking place. It's essential for the revolution. It's as important as the alliance between workers and farmers.

Was there a similar discussion about the challenges facing women artists?

Pogolotti: Not so much at this congress, because the subject of women has been discussed a lot in recent years. There have been many seminars and other events on the work of women writers, painters, and sculptors. Among the new generations this is an important topic of discussion.

So the view at the congress was rather that there has been progress for women.

Codina: For example, there was a bigger proportion of women among the delegates. There was only one woman on the congress organizing committee — Graziella — but as far as delegates to the congress, the candidates for the National Council, and those elected to it, the proportion of women corresponded to the membership of women in the organization. It was roughly 40 percent.

Waters: That's interesting. It's a higher percentage than in other institutions of the revolution.

Codina: And you have to

keep in mind that this is a selective organization.

Waters: Another topic that received prominent attention is the strength that UNEAC derives from its "collective" style of work. [Minister of Culture] Abel Prieto took this up in his remarks to the congress. This is an important aspect of the organization's democracy, isn't it? It gives members the confidence that they can confront, discuss, and resolve these problems and move forward.

Pogolotti: This is an important contribution by UNEAC. There are collective discussions on many levels — from the leadership of UNEAC, which is a collective leadership; to the associations, which have their own specific discussions; to the meetings by specialty within each association.

Members establish their own programs of activity. These programs are not set from the top down. Instead, they come from a general strategy based on specific needs, in

tion at the congress, made the point that UNEAC is an organization in which intolerance is not possible; no single tendency prevails. It is an inclusive organization where there is a real exchange of ideas.

Stepping up the battle of ideas

The delegates at the congress discussed culture as a trench in the struggle to defend the socialist course of the revolution against the challenges to the revolution's social values that are part of the pressures of the capitalist market. This idea of taking the offensive was an important aspect of the congress.

Pogolotti: Yes, we spoke about going from the defensive to the offensive. Taking advantage of the dynamics of this congress, we must step up the debate of ideas. We are involved in a battle that is not local but truly of international scope. And it requires developing a platform of ideas and seeking exchanges with people from other countries.

A debate is opening up on the questions related to the process of neoliberal globalization. This process is expressed on an economic level. But ultimately this is a cultural battle. Culture has a role to play in this battle like never before.

Waters: Is UNEAC stronger today than it was a decade ago?

Pogolotti: Yes, it is much stronger. UNEAC has become stronger as it takes on greater responsibilities and increases its role in society.

Koppel: It seems this progress shown at the UNEAC congress is part of the broader strengthening of the revolution that we've seen, for example, in the confident reception given to the pope by the Cuban people and the revolutionary leadership.

Pogolotti: I think we've gradually been freeing ourselves from intolerance. For example, one expression of intolerance in our society had to do with sexuality. There has been a gradual but substantial change in this regard, in which the film *Fresa y chocolate* [Strawberry and chocolate] has had a certain influence.²

Similarly, the response to the [January] visit by the pope took place within this atmosphere of tolerance and openness that had begun earlier. There is a lessening of prejudices against those who hold religious beliefs. This has been seen since the fourth congress of the [Cuban Communist] Party in 1991. The party now will accept into membership individuals with religious beliefs. That's what made it possible for the pope's visit to get the reception it did in this country. It was important.

Waters: This is part of the political, revolutionary recovery that is taking place, isn't it? It seemed to me that the UNEAC congress was another step in this march forward of the last few years, following the most difficult period of 1992-94.

Pogolotti: It's an important sign. During the period of 1992-94 it would have been practically unthinkable to begin a political discussion when we didn't even know if we were going to survive. Today conditions are still difficult but we have proven we can survive. We have shown we can open up to the world and that, through this, we can deepen our understanding of the problems we face.

Waters: It's hard to imagine that such discussion could have been possible at your last congress in 1993, under such severe conditions when all efforts were directed at survival. It's very different today. And this is noticed outside Cuba. All the enemies of the Cuban revolution sense this change also, and they know it's not what they had expected and hoped for.

Pogolotti: At that time they were expecting the collapse of the revolution at any moment. I remember that after the fall of [Romanian Communist Party leader Nicolae] Ceausescu, the hotels here in Havana were flooded with foreign journalists who came to await the collapse. But that didn't happen. So they just had to leave!

² *Fresa y chocolate* (Strawberry and chocolate), a popular, prize-winning Cuban film by Tomás Gutiérrez Alea, takes on anti-gay prejudice in Cuban society.

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Why IAM members should vote 'No' on splitting Lodge 141

BY RASHAAD ALI
AND LARRY LANE

SAN FRANCISCO — At the annual convention of IAM District Lodge 141 held in Pittsburgh October 27-29, IAM officials decided to hold a referendum on whether to establish a separate district among mechanics and "related workers" (a technical term used in voting under the Railway Labor Act) at United Airlines and U.S. Airways.

The ballots are now in the mail and union officials say the referendum vote will be counted on December 11. The ballot questions states, "Do you support the restructuring of District Lodge 141 into two separate district lodges; one consisting of only the members within the mechanic and related agreements?"

The ranks of the IAM should vote "no"

UNION TALK

in this referendum.

If implemented the restructuring would divide and weaken the IAM. It will play into the hands of the employers. Passage of the proposal would create a separate district solely for mechanics and related workers at the two major carriers in the district plus some smaller airlines. All other IAM District 141 members, including ramp workers, stores, kitchen workers, and customer service workers, will be excluded.

This same proposal to divide the IAM was scheduled to be put into place by IAM union officials at Northwest Airlines on December 1. This arbitrary attempt by the Machinists officials to divide IAM workers at Northwest into separate districts came on the heels of union members' overwhelming rejection of a tentative contract settlement with Northwest Airlines by 81 percent. This tentative settlement, which was so resoundingly rejected, was touted in the *IAM Journal* by IAM general vice-president William Scheri as an "industry-leading agreement."

IAM 'restructuring' helped AMFA win

The November 20 defeat of the IAM by the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association

(AMFA), at Northwest Airlines in the recently concluded election (see accompanying article) demonstrates clearly that what the officials call an "experiment" with a separate IAM Mechanics and Related District is a failure and in fact bolstered AMFA's claim that mechanics would fare better separate from other workers, contributing to the victory by the pro-company outfit.

If the officials' "restructuring" plan is not rejected by workers in District 141, the potential for the same result as at Northwest—a weakening of the organized-union component of the workers at United Airlines and USAirways—looms not that far down the road. The worst case scenario would result in mechanics and cleaners at United Airlines also being represented AMFA.

The formation of a new "mechanics district" is not in the interest of union members at United or USAirways. Its creation would deepen the divisions the company seeks to foster between mechanics, cleaners, and baggage handlers, making it more difficult to mobilize the potential power of the union to resist the company's day-to-day attacks and the concessionary demands of the airlines bosses at contract time. This entire "restructuring" proposal is an adaptation—to AMFA's pro-company ideas that workers are "thrown together" in industrial unionism and that less skilled workers, "those without crafts," were "being carried" by those with "skills." The IAM's contract with United expires in 2000. The company is already pressing for early negotiations.

Many of the airlines have notched high profits over the past couple years while continuing to undercut work rules and lengthen the work day. The airline bosses propose meager pay hikes at the same time they try to impose more discipline on the workers. For more than a decade airline workers have had contracts imposed upon us that call for deeper and deeper concessions.

The 1994 agreement at United known as ESOP is a perfect example. The ESOP (Employee Stock Ownership Plan) led to steep cuts in wages being traded off for stock in the company, supposedly redeemable at retirement or when someone quits or is fired by the airline. Support for ESOP and similar scams, where workers' wages are cut with

Chicago: 1,500 protest antigay picket



Militant/Jim Rogers

More than 1,500 people joined a demonstration November 22 in Chicago in response to Rev. Fred Phelps, a right-wing antigay preacher from Topeka, Kansas. Phelps and his family were picketing the Broadway United Methodist Church in Lakeview, where Rev. Gregory Dell recently performed a same-sex marriage. Phelps picketed the funeral of Matthew Shepard, a young gay man killed in Wyoming in October. The antigay protesters carried signs that read: "2 gay rights: AIDS and Hell."

the promise of company stock at some later date, involves workers in stock speculation and its accompanying instability—part of middle-class life and politics—not workers' solidarity.

Recently, 19,000 customer service representatives voted to join the IAM at United Airlines. This represents a potential significant strengthening of the union. But some promote a reactionary view of this: that the ESOP shares will be distributed to a larger number of workers, so each will get less, as the number of shares is fixed. Under these stock schemes, union growth becomes an obstacle to union solidarity.

AMFA's successful attempt to split mechanics from the union, while it was in a fight with the Northwest bosses, signals the reactionary character of this outfit. AMFA is hell-bent on destroying the industrial form of organization in the airline industry.

This potential strength of the IAM was demonstrated in the 1966 airlines strike, when the union struck five major carriers at once and won a victory by smashing the 3.2 percent ceiling on annual wage increases. It was demonstrated again 1989-91 when fighting members of the IAM defeated union-buster Frank Lorenzo's attempt to run Eastern airlines as a nonunion operation.

The IAM officials' referendum proposal in District 141, which they hope will keep the mechanics under the IAM banner, prevents ramp workers and others from having a say in the outcome of a vote that will have substantial consequences for the union. When motivating the proposal for a new mechanics district, IAM officials refer to Mechanics and "related." The largest category of the "related" are the thousands of airplane cleaners who work for the company. They will be allowed to vote, but the IAM tops treat the cleaners more as a source of dues money and a nuisance than as an important component of the ranks of the IAM.

On the ramp most union members know very little if anything about this very important question. Moreover, no real effort is being made to allow the membership to openly discuss these questions before they are being put to a rapid vote.

All IAM members have a stake in debating this issue and campaigning to reject the IAM officialdom's proposal for a new mechanics and related district.

Rashaad Ali is a ramp worker at United Airlines. Larry Lane is a maintenance machinist at the carrier. Both are members of IAM Local 1781.

IAM defeated by pro-company AMFA at Northwest

Continued from front page

are describing the AMFA victory as a vote against corruption, and for something radically different—a "can-do," "grassroots" organization that can get the job done. A November 21 article in the Minneapolis *Star-Tribune* compared the AMFA win to the victory by the Reform Party candidate Jesse Ventura for governor of Minnesota.

AMFA's victory is a blow to unionism and to all workers at Northwest who are fighting for a contract. It gives the Northwest bosses greater leeway to implement layoffs, job combinations, and work rules changes for the 9,500 affected workers. While the pilots at Northwest won a favorable contract settlement to their strike in September, the majority of unionized workers at Northwest, including flight attendants, ticket agents, mechanics, ramp workers, cleaners, and stores agents, have been working under expired contracts since 1996. Members of the Machinists union overwhelmingly rejected

the company's contract offer in July.

AMFA has a long history of preying on workers who are in a fight with their bosses, and becoming an obstacle to workers' advancing in their fight. AMFA is currently seeking to decertify the IAM or other unions and win the representation of mechanics at American Airlines, Southwest Airlines, United Airlines, and US Airways. AMFA is also distributing authorization cards to non-union Federal Express and Delta Airlines aircraft mechanics.

In a November 21 statement, issued the day after the ballots were counted, AMFA announced to workers that it will work on the company's terms. "We know a lot of you are skeptical and believe the only way to deal with NWA is to fight them. The Company knows what we can do to harm their business. They also know that we are some of the most talented and productive people in the business. We believe we owe it to ourselves and NWA to give this opportu-

nity a fair chance to see if we can figure out a better way to run an airline."

The statement also rejects the successful "work safe" or "work-to-rule" campaign, that machinists, pilots, and flight attendants employed this spring to press their contract demands. Then, workers refused to take unsafe shortcuts or succumb to speed-up pressures at work to solve the company's problems of chronic understaffing related to its competitive drive for profit. Northwest was then forced to cancel or delayed flights, costing the company \$60 million dollars in the month of June alone.

According to the AMFA statement, "Working Safe" is something we should do everyday, not just when we are trying to negotiate a contract. So please continue to work safe, but with the intent of being as productive and efficient as you are capable of. Morale and productivity have been on the rise for a few months now. This is the direction we need to pursue."

As they gathered around a bulletin board at Northwest's Atlanta DC-9 maintenance base, AMFA supporters expressed agreement with the statement, saying workers who don't work hard should be fired.

Cleaners at Northwest's Washington National Airport station received the news of AMFA's win with apprehension over the future of their jobs. One of them was Maurice Myton, who commented, "With the uncertainty of AMFA, we don't know where we stand. We could lose benefits, jobs."

Supporters of the IAM at the Atlanta maintenance base are discussing why the Machinists lost the election. "This was a defeat. I wasn't surprised—there were too

many people out there talking up AMFA. But unfortunately, the IAM shares some of the blame. The union leaders did not draw a clear enough line between the IAM and AMFA," said Tindall. "The IAM let AMFA seem like it was for change, while IAM remained the status quo. When the IAM takes on the Black rights questions, the human rights questions, it won't lose."

IAM officials maneuvered to try to match AMFA's promise of a separate, elite organization for mechanics by setting up a separate IAM district for the mechanics, custodians and cleaners, instead of leading a fight against AMFA's pro-company union busting centered on the need to strengthen and unify the union ranks in face of the employers onslaught. Had the IAM won the representation vote, the mechanics district was to have been set up in December of 1998. This move drew substantial fire from within the ranks of IAM District 143 members and signaled to the union tops the confidence within the ranks to take AMFA on.

"When I heard them celebrating and saying 'We're free now,' I really had to laugh," said Thereatha Hill, an aircraft cleaner at the Atlanta hangar. "How can you say you're free, when the struggle is just beginning. The relations here are going to be different now. We're out on a limb. Something the worker's need is gone—the union."

Workers at Northwest are beginning to discuss how to respond to this blow.

Mary Martin is a member of IAM Local 1759 on the ramp at Washington National Airport. Arlene Rubinstein is a member of IAM, Local 2655 aircraft cleaner in Atlanta.

FROM PATUFINDER

The Changing Face of U.S. Politics
Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions
JACK BARNES
A handbook for workers coming into the factories, mines, and mills, as they react to the uncertain life, ceaseless turmoil, and brutality of capitalism in the closing years of the twentieth century. It shows how millions of workers, as political resistance grows, will revolutionize themselves, their unions, and all of society. In English, Spanish, and French. \$19.95.

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12 or write Patufinder.

Fight by striking Illinois miners escalates

Continued from front page

Crown 2 mine for 24 years, and helped sink the first shaft at the mine.

The company had painted a white line in front of the mine entrance and told miners they cannot cross it. The 70 pickets were walking back and forth near the white line when three Illinois state police cars showed up, claiming that they were called because the strikers were blocking traffic. Miners at strike headquarters told the *Militant* that Vance Security, the notorious strike-breaking outfit hired by Freeman, had called the cops. Strikers who were on the line that day said a Channel 20 news reporter told the state police the only traffic that had stopped was the police cruisers.

Members of UMWA locals 1969, 12, and 2488 struck Freeman September 11, after the company refused to guarantee health benefits for retirees. Freeman is a subsidiary of General Dynamics Corp. The strike affects Freeman's three mines in central Illinois.

The company's decision to run two van loads of scabs to work in the mine is one part of the company's increased attacks on the strikers and the UMWA as a whole.

Freeman files lawsuit against miners

On November 17, Freeman filed a \$1 million lawsuit in the United States District Court for the Central District of Illinois naming as defendants the UMWA International Union; District 12 of the UMWA; locals 1969, 12, and 2488; and unnamed "individual John Does."

Freeman's lawsuit charges that the UMWA has organized an "illegal strike," in violation of the National Labor Relations Act. The lawsuit claims that the mine workers union is making "illegal" demands in its negotiations with Freeman. Count I of the lawsuit charges the union "has induced or encouraged Freeman's employees and/or the employees of persons doing business with Freeman to engage in a strike or refusal in the course of their employment to use, handle or work any goods, articles, commodities and to perform any services, with an object of forcing or requiring Freeman...to enter into agreement."

Along with attacking the right to strike, the company lawsuit charges the union with "physical obstruction of the public and private roads and entranceways to Freeman's property so as to prevent employees of Freeman, and persons seeking to work for or do business with Freeman from doing so." The lawsuit also accuses the strikers and the UMWA of violence, claiming that the strikers are "assaulting persons entering or leaving Freeman's property, placing objects in the public right of ways, threatening to and damaging the property of Freeman, its employees...and picketing at or about the public and private roads and entranceways leading to Freeman's property."

The November 18, Springfield, Illinois, *State-Journal Register* quotes Freeman spokesperson Steve Cindrich as saying, "We were trying to keep the doors open to continue talks," but the lawsuit, "is a step we have to take if we're going to see a conclusion to this process." Two weeks earlier, negotiations between the company and the union stopped after Freeman added a demand that the union give up seniority rights for job bidding, along with "panel rights" for rehiring laid off miners. Cindrich told the *Illinois Times*, "Freeman must be able to find the right people for the job in order to be efficient and competitive, and not be forced to hire the next person on the list."

The battle has escalated substantially. Just a few days after Freeman filed its lawsuit, a letter signed by company president Walter Gregory was sent to each striking member. "I invite you to return to work," the letter states. "Please report to work on your regular assigned shift beginning with the 12:01 AM shift on November 30, 1998. Should you decide not to return to work, the company will have no choice but to pursue alternatives including hiring other miners."

In response to the company's threats,

Hasquin told the *Militant*, "I'll return to work when Freeman guarantees health-care benefits for our current and future retirees. We are not giving up anything."

"A lot of us have given most of our working lives to mining coal," he continued. "I've given 24 years of my life. Freeman wants to be able to say that we are not qualified miners and hire someone off the street. Freeman wants the right to pick and choose who they want to run their machinery. They want workers who would do anything for them and run unsafe. I will not give up my health care or seniority rights."

Another striker in Local 1969, Paul Perrine, has worked at the Crown 2 mine for 22 years. He told the *Militant*, "This is a big slap in the face. Freeman has been posturing in the negotiations. They are out to bust our union. We are not giving up. Freeman will not beat our spirit. Miners have a lot of history, we have always had to fight hard. Miners are really finding out what matters to Freeman — the dollar."

Miners have also faced harassment from government police agencies. Strikers say they are now seeing helicopters flying over Freeman's property, as well as one helicopter hovering over the home of David Yard, a striking member of UMWA Local 1969 and a trustee on the UMWA's Miners Relief Fund.

FBI agents showed up at the door of Georgia Yard November 6 demanding to search a tool shed on her property. Mrs. Yard is David Yard's grandmother. Georgia Yard told the FBI they could not search her property without a warrant. Three days later the cops returned with a search warrant. They found nothing and were told to leave.

The miners publicly opposed this attack on the strike and one of their members, passing out leaflets describing the FBI harassment and writing letters to the editors of area newspapers. Local newspapers carried lead articles on the FBI visit.

The November 18 *State Journal Register* quoted Georgia Yard saying that one of the FBI agents "said they thought they were making, I guess they call them 'jackrocks,' things that bust your tires. But they surely knew I wasn't making them. I'm 86 years old."

"Grandma" Yard, as she has become known, told the *Register* the FBI called her back the next day. "He wanted to know if my family was mad at me. I told him, 'I don't know why that would be. I was just following the law.'" She continued, "It did make it look bad on me, the FBI being here. I've never been in trouble with the law. I don't plan to start now."

Georgia Yard is viewed as a hero by miners and supporters of the strike. She has been invited as a special guest at the retire-

ees Christmas party for United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 751, which organizes the Caterpillar workers in Decatur, Illinois.

The striking miners are standing firm and reaching out for support in the region. These reporters attended a November 21 film showing at the strike headquarters in Farmersville, Illinois, sponsored by the Women's Auxiliary. Two films were shown that night. *Out of the Darkness* tells some of the history of the UMWA, including footage of the struggle to win union recognition from the coal bosses, for Black Lung benefits, and to democratize and strengthen their union. It also has a segment on the 1989-90 UMWA strike at Pittston, which ended in a victory for the miners union.

The other movie was *Matewan*, a Hollywood film about one of the battles to forge the UMWA. About 20 strikers and supporters were in attendance that night, and other strikers were coming and going from the headquarters, carrying out their picket duty. Young family members, wearing strike support T-shirts and carrying picket signs, also walked about the room.

Workers in area help fill food pantry

The Women's Auxiliary, made up of miners' family members and others, organizes the food pantry, kitchen, and other support for the strike. Members reported that the previous week more than 140 strikers' families came to the headquarters to get food baskets made up by the auxiliary.

In the past week UMWA locals from southern Illinois had delivered turkeys to every family of the striking locals. Food and financial contributions continue to arrive daily in support of the strike. Four strikers drove up to the General Motors Electro Motive plant, just outside of Chicago, to pick up food donations UAW members had collected at the plant gates there. The Electro

Motive UAW local and its retirees section each gave a financial contribution to the Miners Relief Fund.

In a November 24 phone interview Barbara McCoy, a striking member of UMWA Local 1969, said she and four other members of locals 1969 and 12 spent the previous day helping members of UMWA Local 2488 picket the Freeman strip mine in Industry, Illinois. There are just 42 workers on strike at the strip mine. McCoy pickets there for eight hours every week. Miners in Industry are getting food and other donations, like in Farmersville, she reported. A local grocery store is donating bread, and other items.

Two members of the striking locals are headed to the Alabama coal fields for a week-long solidarity tour. Invited by District 20 of the UMWA, the Freeman miners will be visiting mine portals throughout the district and addressing fellow UMWA members about the stakes in their fight and gaining much needed financial support. The strikers will also visit bathhouses at mine sites throughout the area.

The strikers have also been invited to address United Transportation Union Local 1405 in Granite City, Illinois, at their December 9 Christmas party.

The striking UMWA locals are organizing a December 12 Christmas dance for members and strike supporters.

For information about the strike, to request a speaker from the striking miners, or to make a contribution to the food pantry or Miners Relief Fund, contact the UMWA Strike Headquarters, P.O. Box 107, Farmersville, Illinois 62533, or call: (217) 227-3233.

Alyson Kennedy is a member of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 7-507. Joel Britton, also a member of OCAW Local 7-507, contributed to this article.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

ALABAMA

Birmingham

What's Behind the "Culture War?" How do we stop rightist violence against Blacks, abortion providers, and gays? A panel discussion: Michelle Farley, New Woman/All Women Clinic bombed earlier this year; Cindy Jaquith, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Dec. 4, 7:30 p.m. 111 21st Street So. Donation: \$4. Tel: (205) 323-3079.

IOWA

Des Moines

Hurricane Mitch Toll: Social Not Natural Catastrophe. Panel discussion. Fri., Dec. 4. Program: 7:30 p.m. Dinner: 6:30 p.m. 2724 Douglas

Avenue. Donation: \$4 event/\$4 dinner. Tel: (515) 277-4600.

AUSTRALIA

Sydney

New Upsurge in Indonesia and East Timor. Fri., Dec. 4, 7 p.m. 1st floor, 176 Redfern St., Redfern. Donation: \$4. Tel: 9690-1533.

NEW ZEALAND

Christchurch

Oppose the Privatization of Electricity. Introduction by Agnes Sullivan, Communist League. Fri., Dec. 4, 7 p.m. 199 High Street. Donation: \$3. Tel: (3) 365-6055.

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CALENDAR

Miami

Day of Remembrance and Recommitment to Abortion Rights. Sat., Dec. 5, 1-3 p.m. Torch of Friendship at Biscayne Blvd. next to Bayside in downtown Miami. Sponsored by the Miami Clinic Access Project. For more information, call Julia: (305) 895-2849.

Happy holidays — Late fees on monthly credit card payments now average \$22, up from \$13 in 1995. Penalties for exceeding credit limits have also been hiked. And some



Harry Ring

banks have sliced the grace period for escaping interest from 25 days to 20.

Typical — The Dept. of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), which is supposed to help people

find affordable housing, has been selling thousands of homes for more than they're worth. Under congressional pressure to pay for its programs, HUD in a 12-month period took in about \$50 million more than its own appraisals said the properties were worth. — News item.

Better late than never? — The *American Legion Magazine* advises veterans who participated in atmospheric nuclear tests, or were in the post-World War II occupation of Japan, that they're eligible to be tested for the presence of plutonium. A Legion official explains: "Plutonium is the only radioactive material... released in nuclear explosions that can be measured in the human body years after exposure."

Sleep well — At least two power companies are bidding on a government project to use plutonium from surplus atomic bombs as part of the fuel in their nuclear energy reactors.

Vultures Inc. — Top international investors will be in Bangkok December 2 to bid for the assets of 56 financial companies devastated by Thailand's 1997 financial crisis. The money sharks will bid on \$10 billion worth of loans secured by half empty office buildings, idle rice fields, resorts and golf courses. Thai financiers, who have been turning down offers of a dime on the dollar, understandably, take a dim view of the fire sale.

Bright future — In Britain, the

Liberal Democratic Party polled firms in the City, London's Wall Street, and found a deep conviction that there will be a major recession next year. A party spokesman estimated this could mean a loss of 400,000 jobs over the next two years.

Progress report — Orange County, California, repealed a 1950s law requiring Communist Party members to register with the sheriff's dept. Along with 243 other ordinances, it was deemed outdated. A business figure and former county board member, recalled that the statute was passed when Soviet prez Nikita Khrushchev was visiting and canceled a Disneyland trip after officials said they couldn't guarantee his safety.

Buy cheap, sell dear — Neiman Marcus, the department store chain celebrated for its rip-off prices, agreed to pay \$112,500 to settle charges that it violated federal law by selling, for nearly a decade, flammable terry-cloth robes.

Well sure, that's banking — David Kohl, an agriculture professor, gave warning to a Minneapolis gathering of bankers. He said overproduction of farm produce and the world recession means farmers will be struggling for survival at least seven more years. What to do? Offer cheap credit? Stop farm foreclosures?

Nope. Tighten their lending techniques to minimize the risk of bad loans.

Workers' rights vs. Washington's secret police

Below we reprint a portion of the introduction to *Workers' Rights Versus the Secret Police* by Larry Seigle. It is followed by the opening paragraphs of the pamphlet, which explains the lawsuit filed by the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance in 1973 against the FBI and other government agencies, demanding a halt to the government's spying and disruption operations against the organizations. Ultimately, the court ruled in favor of the SWP and YSA in 1986, concluding that the FBI's use of informers, "black bag jobs," (burglaries) and its SWP Disruption Program were illegal and unconstitutional. The SWP was awarded \$264,000 in damages. *Workers' Rights Versus the Secret Police* is copyright © 1981 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

BOOK OF THE WEEK

As more and more workers reject their previous outlook and adopt more radical ideas and more militant forms of struggle, the employers increasingly rely on...repression. There is more frequent use of cops to intimidate striking workers, more use of injunctions to break strikes, more cop murders of Black and Latino youth, and stepped-up use of the secret police against the unions, Black organizations, and socialist groups. This in turn serves to encourage racist and fascist scum like the Ku Klux Klan to carry out terrorist attacks.

"Workers' Rights vs. the Secret Police" discusses the SWP and YSA lawsuit and the campaign in support of it in this framework. It is based on a talk presented on behalf of the Political Committee of the SWP at a socialist educational conference in August 1980.

In explaining the new stage in this cam-

paign, which is a result of the deepening economic crisis and the more radical moods in the working class, it was pointed out that "we are experiencing a general step-up in incidents of FBI-type harassment. These are things we haven't seen for a while, including spying and harassment on the job, not just by the FBI and the cops but also by private detective agencies." It did not take long for such incidents to come to light.

Four months after this speech was given, five unionists at the Brooklyn Navy Yard were fired at the instigation of the navy. The sole reason for their dismissal was that they were accused of membership in the Socialist Workers Party.

The five pipefitters returned the following morning and handed out 500 copies of their termination notice to co-workers, with a protest on the back. "How can the U.S. Navy itself claim that the ships we work on are being readied to protect democratic rights abroad when the Navy itself suppresses democratic rights of workers on Navy ships?" the leaflet asked. News of the political firings swept through the yard, and many workers expressed their anger at this violation of fundamental rights. The union began to make inquiries about the justification for the firings.

A political fight is not what the company, the Coastal Dry Dock and Repair Corporation, had bargained for. It got cold feet. By that evening the fired workers had been rehired. The news was greeted by workers in the Navy Yard as a solid victory that was doubly sweet because it was won against the U.S. Navy as well as the Coastal Dry Dock bosses.

Within weeks after the Navy Yard victory, however, another case of union members being fired for purely political reasons broke. The giant Lockheed corporation, one of the nation's largest war contractors, began firing members of the International Association of Machinists at its Marietta, Georgia, aircraft plant. The unionists were fired because they showed up in Lockheed "security" files as suspected members of the SWP or YSA.

In December and January, fifteen workers were dismissed. All fifteen have been active members of IAM Lodge 709 and were involved in its struggles against speedup and unsafe working conditions in the plant. Most also belong to the SWP...

The files show that Lockheed has finks report on all union meetings as well as on discussions and activities engaged in by union members on and off the job. The workers who were targeted for firing, as well as some of their co-workers, were followed around the plant, to their homes, to restaurants, on shopping trips, and even to the laundry. Dossiers were compiled on people the socialists talked to, with special attention to Black workers. Information on the workers was collected from police agencies and from the FBI's political dossiers. But [the] FBI's thick files turned up absolutely nothing illegal, violent, or secretive. Today, the fired unionists are waging a nationwide effort to win their jobs back...

The capitalists and their government have targeted the SWP and YSA for persecution because our ideas speak to the needs of working people. Workers' rights are not "given" by the capitalist government — they have been won and defended through the mobilization of our class and its allies. The suit of the SWP and YSA against the secret police is part of that struggle.

February 1981

This case has a long history, much longer than we usually think of. Like so much of what we in the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialist Alliance are involved in today, our fight against the FBI has its roots in the period around 1848, when the modern communist movement began in Europe. That was when the industrial working class first entered the political arena as a class, with a vanguard consciously charting a course in its historic interests. And the ruling classes responded with, among other things, the unleashing of police spies, agents provocateurs, and political frame-ups.

Our fight against the political police today continues the fight waged by Marx and Engels, beginning in 1848, against the series of frame-ups of leaders of the Communist League, including successful defenses of Marx himself. These led up to the notorious Cologne trial in 1852, which took place in the wake of the defeats of the 1848-49 revolutions. All the police methods we see today came to light there: the accusation of illegal conspiracy based solely on political ideas and activities, the false testimony of informers, even "mail covers" and police forgeries. The original "black bag job" — to use a current FBI term — took place in preparation for that frame up.

Our fight today has many parallels with the fight by the German Social Democratic Party against the Anti-Socialist Laws in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. The party fought for the right to function openly, as a legal party. And it refused to begin acting as a conspiratorial society

even when forced into illegality.

Our war with the FBI today is in a direct line of descent from the fight that the Bolshevik Party and the entire Russian workers' movement waged against the Okhrana, the tsars' FBI, which fielded an army of informers against the working-class movement...

Our fight against the political police also has, of course a long tradition in this country. It includes the national campaign against the execution of the Haymarket frame-up victims, the battles against the Pinkertons and other labor-spy outfits, and struggles to stop police and KKK racist terror against Blacks, Mexicanos, and Asians. Another early chapter was the crusade by the Wobblies, the Industrial Workers of the World, to establish their right to free speech on the street corners. It was a pre-World War I equivalent of our fights today to establish the right to petition in shopping malls and to defend our right to sell our newspapers on street corners and at plant gates.

Our heritage also includes the fight against the arrest, trial, and imprisonment of Eugene Debs and other antidraft and anti-war fighters in World War I. It includes the fight against the anticommunist and anti-immigrant witch-hunt and deportations after that war, known as the Palmer raids (named after A. Mitchell Palmer, the attorney general at the time). It includes the fight against the monstrous frame-up and murder of Sacco and Vanzetti, and countless other cases of political persecution aimed at the working-class movement. It is a continuation of the fight waged on behalf of Julius and Ethel Rosenberg, who were martyrs of the witch-hunt in the 1950s.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



December 7, 1973

EL PASO, Texas — After a year and a half on the picket line, striking Farah workers feel they are now getting closer to victory. On Nov. 2, the company announced it was shutting down two of its plants, one in Victoria, Texas, the other in Las Cruces, N.M.

The company said the shutdowns were the result of the nationwide boycott of Farah pants. A spokesman said the decision was reached reluctantly and was forced on the company because of the boycott's negative effects.

Some 600 workers were employed at the two plants. An estimated 7,500 are employed in the remaining plants — the bulk of them in El Paso. However, according to strikers, for the past three months the main El Paso plant has been in production only two and three days a week.

The organizing initiative at Farah came from the workers themselves. On the picket line we met Adam Gonzales, a member of the initial organizing committee. A veteran, he went to work in the Farah shipping room in 1968. He soon saw the need for a union and began talking with other workers.

On the picket line, Gonzales talked about the impact of the boycott on Farah and said, "I think we're getting close...maybe by Christmas."



December 6, 1948

SAN FRANCISCO, Nov. 28 — The Pacific Coast maritime strike which began on Sept. 2 appeared near settlement yesterday as 6,000 members of the CIO International Longshoremen & Warehousemen's Union in this area voted overwhelmingly to accept a contract. The new agreement underwritten by the national CIO, extends until June 15, 1951. It continues the rotary system of hiring through the union hall that has been in effect since 1934, recognizes the principle of the six hour day and limits the work day to 9 hours (except when ships are ready to sail and work can be completed in 11 hours), raises the wage scale 15 cents an hour, bring the straight-time rate to \$1.82 for six hours (overtime rate of \$2.73 is payable after six hours and/or after 5 p.m.), and provides for an annual wage review on Sept. 30 each year. Also gained is a vacation clause providing for one week with pay after 800 hours work, two weeks for 1,344 hours. Hereafter, the starting time for work shall be 8 a.m.; and longshoremen will get one day off each week, at least two Sundays a month.

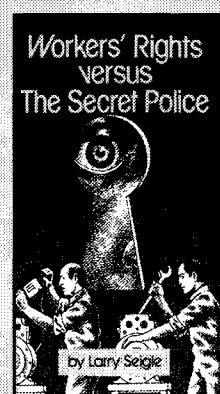
These are the gains longshoremen voted to accept. Inasmuch as the employers undertook to small the maritime unions on this coast and restore open-shop conditions, this is considered victory after nearly three months on the picket line.

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Larry Seigle

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Support striking miners now!

The 350 United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) members on strike at Freeman United Coal's three central Illinois mines deserve the support of the entire labor movement and all of those who fight for social justice.

Freeman has made it clear that it intends to take down the three striking locals. The company has escalated its attacks against the union: threatening to take away hard-won health benefits for retired miners and then demanding a gutting of seniority rights; calling on the FBI for its help; filing a cynical anti-strike lawsuit; running scabs across the picket lines; and now threatening to "hire other miners" if the strikers don't return to work November 30.

Freeman is using every resource at its disposal, including the political police, to defeat the strikers — a stark

reminder of what working people are up against when capital goes to war against workers.

Our side must respond accordingly, with our solidarity. Since early September when the strikes began, concerned workers in the region have come to the strike headquarters in Farmersville and Industry and have joined the picket lines at the mines. Donations of food and money have come in. Special strike solidarity actions, like the October 11 commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Virden, have attracted union fighters, from Caterpillar and Titan to Budweiser and General Motors.

Now is the time to step up solidarity as unionists, working farmers, and youth who see the miners' fight as our fight. Their victory will be our victory.

Iraq 'inspectors' resume provocations

Continued from front page
150,000 Iraqis in the Gulf War.

Simultaneously, the Clinton administration has stepped up its threats and slanders against the Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK).

The Clinton administration has repeatedly used accusations that Baghdad has "weapons of mass destruction" to justify continuing the economic blockade that has already killed several hundreds of thousands of Iraqis over the last eight years. Provocations by the "inspectors" have likewise served to justify Washington's recurring plans to use its own weapons of mass destruction and launch a military assault on Iraq. The aim of such an attack would be to increase U.S. dominance in the oil-rich region, bolster Washington's position vis-à-vis its imperialist rivals, and tighten the U.S.-led military encirclement of the workers state in Russia.

The supposed resolution of the latest round of U.S. threats to bomb Iraq, in which Baghdad agreed November 14 to allow the so-called inspectors back into the country, put the U.S. war makers on an even tighter hair trigger.

In the mid-November confrontation, Washington was prepared for a slaughter of up to 10,000 Iraqis, U.S. officials have acknowledged. That was the Pentagon's estimate of Iraqi casualties in its planned bombing assault.

An article in the November 20 *Financial Times* of London described how the inspectors' task will be to try to push Iraqi officials over the brink. The paper quoted unnamed officials as saying that "over the next two weeks inspectors would test access to 'a full array of sites, documents, information and people.'"

Initially, the "inspectors" demanded Baghdad hand over a wide range of documents, including some the government maintains do not exist or deal with Iraq's national security. In one case, Iraqi officials offered to show them key parts of a requested document, but only in the presence of a UN special envoy. The immediate response of Sen. Richard Lugar, the second-ranking Republican on the U.S. Senate foreign relations committee, was to tell television reporters, "When the president returns home [from Asia]... we better be prepared for the military strike."

Days earlier, British defense secretary George Robertson made clear his government's readiness to take part in an assault on Iraq. "The fuse is much shorter," he said in Washington before meeting with his U.S. counterpart, William Cohen, November 19. "The next time the only warn-

ing he [Iraqi president Saddam Hussein] will get is a withdrawal of the UN inspectors." Some 23,000 U.S. troops, nearly 200 aircraft, and 23 Navy ships remain poised in the Arab-Persian Gulf. This force will be beefed up with a second aircraft carrier by the end of November.

Iraqi deputy prime minister Tariq Aziz said November 22 that Richard Butler, who heads the "inspection" operation, was "either creating a superficial pretext to justify the American aggression or he is trying to confuse and undermine the comprehensive review" of the UN sanctions against Iraq. The Clinton administration refuses to allow such a review by the United Nations Security Council, where Washington has a veto, until there is "full cooperation" with the investigators. Washington and London have publicly reiterated their long-standing goal overthrowing the Iraqi government. To this end, the British government demonstratively publicized its November 23 meeting in London with about 15 Iraqi opposition groups, which are dependent on Washington and London for their existence.

U.S. threats against north Korea

Meanwhile, President William Clinton spoke to U.S. troops in south Korea November 22, near the so-called demilitarized zone, where a massive wall built by Washington and Seoul divides the Korean peninsula. Clinton compared north Korea to Iraq, stating that the DPRK was "also a major concern" and renewing U.S. charges that the government in Pyongyang possesses chemical and biological weapons. "Lately, signs of danger have intensified with incursions from the North, provocative missile tests and the question of a suspected underground installation," he asserted.

The week before, Clinton's envoy to north Korea, Charles Kartman, claimed to have "compelling evidence" that the DPRK government was constructing an underground facility for nuclear uses. Washington is demanding that it be allowed to inspect the site. A few days later, Clinton qualified Kartman's assertion, turning the "compelling evidence" into "strong information that raises a suspicion, but no one yet knows for sure."

Washington has roughly 40,000 troops in south Korea along with a massive arsenal, which includes nuclear-armed submarines off the coast. These forces have maintained the division of the Korean nation for the last 45 years since the Korean people succeeded in fighting Washington to a stalemate in the 1950-53 Korean War.

Ventura's election: danger to workers

Continued from Page 5

positions on a number of issues. But the rise of Bonapartist figures like Ventura greases the skids for adaptation to the development of an openly fascist movement in the future.

Like all Bonapartists, Ventura portrayed himself as a "strong man." Using his background as a former Navy SEAL, a professional wrestler, and a radio "shock jock" talk show host, he tried to create the impression that he could cut through legislative logjams and cope with corrupt partisan politicians.

As with Perot, Ventura's radicalism taps into resentments and suspicions of the rulers and their government representatives. This is a radicalism that pits human beings against each other and thrives on conspiracy theories to explain the mounting crises produced by capitalism. Radical capitalist politicians like Ventura will continue to garner support from a layer of workers until the working class begins to develop a class-struggle leadership out of the labor battles that are deepening.

The challenge for class-struggle fighters to explain clearly the danger of Bonapartist demagoguery is compounded by the adaptation of some labor officials and their hangers-on to Ventura. According to the report in last week's *Militant* on the Labor Party convention held in Pittsburgh November 13-15, a number of speakers hailed Ventura's election because it has supposedly opened up doors for other parties running against the Democrats and Republicans. On the eve of the convention, a Twin Cities activist in the Labor Party, Greg Gibbs, posted a letter on the Internet stating, "The dull dead horse of 'responsible' Minnesota politics has been turned upside down. This

can only be good for the 3rd Party movement. Ventura's victory is the best thing that could have happened, as it opens the door for us."

There are many examples of the attraction to Ventura by liberals and middle-class radicals. One, cited in *Insight News*, a weekly oriented to the Black community in Minneapolis, is Leola Seals, president of the Minneapolis NAACP chapter. "Go for it Ventura!" Seals stated. "It's time for a change and we're moving toward a more progressive society." The paper said of Seals, "She believes that young people, who registered to vote in droves just to cast a ballot for Jesse, are ready to see a change."

Gibbs, Seals, and others are lured by the siren song of Ventura's radicalism. But it is precisely here that the danger lies. In the name of "radicalism" workers are pitted against each other and sucked into capitalist politics. To even give one toe to this will only help pave the way to being attracted to or disarmed in the face of the social demagoguery of a fascist movement. It's similar to how activists can be attracted to protests against sweatshops in other countries, disregarding that their main political content supports trade restrictions on other countries. The result is to adapt to bourgeois nationalism, undermining the international solidarity the working class needs in the face of the bosses' attacks.

It's not Ventura's campaign that opened elbowroom for more "minor parties" to get a hearing in the recent elections. Rather, it's the accelerating capitalist crises and inability of the Democratic and Republican politicians to provide answers. This is what is opening up more space for the working class to organize and fight for its interests, including in the political arena.

Countdown to YS convention

Continued from front page

picket lines and campus protests against the recent escalation of U.S. imperialism's threats to assault Iraq. Expanding this work by participating in more sales of the socialist press at factory gates, picket lines, literature tables on campus, and by organizing socialist class series is essential in making the YS convention a success.

The Young Socialists will kick off the convention with a welcoming session beginning Friday, December 4, at noon. It will be followed by a report and discussion on the Young Socialists Manifesto: Building a Proletarian Youth Organization Today. These and other sessions will be open to all invited guests (see front-page ad).

In addition to the efforts made by YS chapters across the country and by the national leadership of the Young Socialists to build the convention, the Political Committee of the Socialist Workers Party has urged party members, supporters, and friends of the communist movement to come to Los Angeles to participate in the open sessions of the convention.

One of the main political presentations the second day of the gathering will be given by Mary-Alice Waters, editor of *New Internationalist*, who recently returned from a *Militant* reporting trip to Cuba. Waters will discuss how working people and their communist leadership in that nation confront the increasingly miserable conditions world capitalism is imposing on the lives of millions of workers and farmers around the world and why Cuba remains at the center stage of international politics for revolutionaries today.

Jack Barnes, the national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, will initiate political discussion on "Bonapartism and Polarization: Contradictions and Instability of the Leftward Shift in Bourgeois Politics." Barnes will take up the important tasks ahead of the Young Socialists and the Socialist Workers Party in building a proletarian youth organization and party that is politically prepared to take advantage of the opportunities opening up for mass work and recruitment of young workers and students today.

There will be a dinner Saturday evening, which will be an important opportunity for fighting workers and youth to continue their discussions following the political reports.

Saturday's program will conclude with a panel of Young Socialists titled "Bringing Alive the Changing Face of U.S. Politics." The panel will consist of YS members who are carrying out political work in the industrial unions, building the YS on campuses, and working in Pathfinder's print shop to guarantee the production of Pathfinder books.

Young fighters in Los Angeles, Seattle sign up to come

The Young Socialists in Los Angeles has put building the YS convention at the center of the local chapter's activities. This includes participating in student-led actions in defense of affirmative action and organizing classes where both YS members and youth attracted to socialism can learn and discuss current politics and the necessity of a proletarian youth organization.

The Los Angeles chapter organized a class and discussion at Occidental College, focused on Washington's recent moves to carry out a military assault against Iraq. Seven students attended the discussion, where copies of the *Militant's* front-page articles on these recent developments were discussed.

One of the students who attended is a founder of the Progressive Student Alliance, a group established this year at the college. In addition, she took part in a panel the following day at the Militant Labor Forum entitled "Hands Off Iraq." She talked about what happened last February, when students built campus speak-outs to protest Washington's campaign against Iraq at that time. The YS played an integral part in building those speak-outs, and was invited to participate on the platform.

A class series on *New Internationalist* no. 7, which features "Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's Assault on Iraq" by Jack Barnes, and the Pathfinder title *The Truth About Yugoslavia: Why Working People Should Oppose Intervention*, was established out of those events.

Several other students who attended the recent class and discussion on Iraq first met the Young Socialists through a "100 Years of Anti-Imperialist Struggle" event at Occidental College in October. One of them is a leader of the Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Alliance who has been involved in protesting the killing of gay student Matthew Shepard. In addition, the chair of the Black Student Alliance, who gave the main welcoming speech at the anti-imperialist event, is organizing to raise the funds to attend the convention.

Socialists in Seattle are working hard to bring four youth interested in the politics of the Young Socialists to the convention. Two of them are co-workers of a YS member at the airport. As part of protesting the recent developments in the Mumia Abu-Jamal case and Initiative 200, a Washington state ballot measure banning affirmative action, two youths who purchased a subscription to the *Militant* newspaper are planning to attend the YS convention. Autumn Knowlton, a YS member in Seattle, reported that a Thanksgiving dinner has been organized as part of a fund-raising effort to cover travel expenses. In addition, Knowlton said, a class on the YS Manifesto and Organizer will take place November 25.

Titan strikers picket rightist boss's lecture

BY RAY PARSONS

DES MOINES, Iowa — Maurice Taylor, Jr., the president and chief executive officer of Titan International, spoke at Culver-Stockton College in Canton, Missouri, November 10. Some 150 students along with a number well-to-do admirers of Taylor attended.

His presence did not go unchallenged. Ten members and supporters of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 164 were there, and the unionists distributed a union flyer entitled, "Why we are on strike" to nearly everyone in the audience.

Local 164 has been on strike against Titan Tire in Des Moines since May 1 in a fight against intolerable overtime work and two-tier wages, and for restoration of pension and medical care benefits for retirees. In September, USWA Local 303L in Natchez, Mississippi, joined the walkout. As part of its purchase of the bankrupt Fidelity Tire Manufacturing Co., Titan is seeking deep concessions from Local 303L similar to what was imposed on the Des Moines workers three years ago.

In the course of the USWA fight, Taylor has become notorious throughout Iowa, Mississippi, and beyond for his vicious, anti-working-class statements. As Local 164 began their strike, Taylor raged in the media, "They're stupid! They're stupid! If they think walking out is going to change anything, they're nuts! Every one of their wives should smash them over the head with a frying pan!"

During the Culver-Stockton talk, Taylor outlined a right-wing political agenda aimed against the working class as a whole, in the United States and around the world. He said, "The politicians are fine people, but how many know how to manage?... Business people are the most capable of running the government." While going on at length about

his management skills, Taylor also noted he bought the Titan business from a "Jewish Orthodox Canadian." Taylor was one of the candidates running for the Republican Party's presidential nomination in the 1996 U.S. elections.

He called for restoring "law and order" in Russia, and declared, "Europe is all screwed

up. They have high unemployment, and the politicians there have no backbone. They have to say [to workers] you can't have all this free stuff."

Strikers get out word about their fight

The team of unionists handbilling at Stockton-Culver College was made up of



Some 400 people marched and rallied in Des Moines November 5 in support of USWA 164 on strike at Titan. Militant/Tim Mailhot

Local 164 strikers from Des Moines; several more who are full-time volunteers in the USWA organizing drive at the Taylor's nonunion wheel plant in Quincy, Illinois; two members of USWA Local 310 who work at Bridgestone/Firestone in Des Moines; and an Iowa State University student who organized a meeting in support of the strike on his campus the week before.

The strikers made an impression on the students at the small private college. The first question after Taylor's lecture came from a student who asked, "How do you respond to the unfair labor charges of the strikers outside this meeting?" Another student asked how workers are supposed to get from big business what is rightfully theirs, but Taylor responded without answering the question.

"We got positive feedback from people coming out," said Mike Mathis, a Local 164 striker who's been on the Quincy organizing team two months. "They had a better understanding of what we're about."

Before the program began, one student, thinking the team of leafletters was a sort of picket line, took a flyer and said, "I support the strike. I wouldn't cross you but I'm required to go." Other students explained to *Militant* reporters that the meeting was made a course requirement.

Ray Parsons is a member of USWA Local 310 in Des Moines.

Toronto airport workers win strike

BY SYLVIE CHARBIN

TORONTO — After five weeks on strike, members of Local 0004 of the Public Service Alliance of Canada, representing 520 ground

maintenance and clerical workers, voted November 8 by a majority of 88.4 percent to ratify the latest contract offer from their employer, the Greater Toronto Airports Authority (GTAA). Ninety percent of the membership voted on the contract.

After a seven-year wage freeze, union members will receive wage increases ranging from 27 percent to 44 percent over the life of the six-year contract, retroactive to August 1997, with a cost-of-living allowance in the final year.

The union also won more job security against contracting out, improved overtime pay, and vacation leaves.

Two years ago airport workers were federal government employees. Although still covered by federal laws, they now work for private corporations.

The GTAA's original offer included no benefits and virtually eliminated seniority rights in case of layoffs.

Saleem Quadri has been a stationary engineer at the airport for the last 10 years. He recalled that the last time his union went on strike, in 1991, he was a "designated" employee, whose job is considered an essen-

tial service. As such, he was denied the right to strike. Quadri was pleased in the new contract no union member can be tagged a "designated employee."

As Greg Dufour, an electrician's helper and a picket captain, told the *Militant*, "Management tried to break the union, but in my opinion, all they did was make us stronger. As the strike went on, the numbers on the picket line increased."

"Nobody was ready for a strike," said Kavita Vyas, who has worked at Pearson for two years as an airport support operations specialist. "Management prepared, but we didn't. But we had solidarity. It was a good experience."

"I'm happy from the union perspective," said William Pontes, a ground operations worker. "Going into the strike, ground operations staff were suspicious of clerical staff, but the strike clarified how strong we are. No one crossed the line. We're more united now, and we've gained a sense of self-worth."

Sylvie Charbin is a member of International Association of Machinists Local 2113.

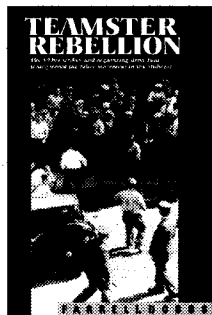
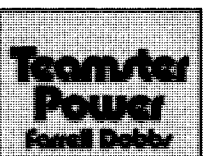
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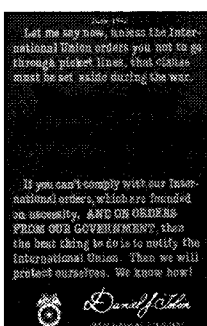
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The author, Farrell Dobbs, was the central organizer of these labor battles during the rise of the CIO, and subsequently national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party.

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LETTERS

A correction

The *Militant* contained an article in the "In Brief" section about several proposed pipeline routes for oil from the Caspian Sea (see November 23 *Militant*). The headline reads "Ankara hinders Iran oil pipeline." In the article there is a sentence "Tehran is moving to set up a pipeline for the oil running through Iran to the Black Sea." The sentences do not agree with the map. Iran does not touch the Black Sea and there appears to be little that Turkey could do to stop a Azerbaijan-Iran pipeline to the Persian Gulf.

The article describes changes to shipping regulations in the Bosphorus Strait. These changes will make shipping in the Black Sea more costly but are aimed not at Iran but at an existing pipeline with a terminal in Russia and a proposed pipeline ending in Georgia.
Ron Richards
Trujillo Alto, Puerto Rico

Impact of deforestation

Your article on the "social disaster" in Central America triggered by hurricane Mitch (see November 23 *Militant*), missed one factor that reinforces the point of the article: it

is the capitalist profit drive that is responsible for the horrendous destruction and loss of lives and livelihood for thousands of workers and farmers in the region.

An article in the November 11 *Globe and Mail* explains that widespread deforestation by multinational banana producers and timber corporations has resulted in a loss of 48 hectares of forest every hour in the region. Mountainsides no longer have trees to hold back landslides or stop the rain from sweeping away topsoil and dumping it into rivers.

According to Juan Blas of the Central American Council on Forests and Protected Zones, "the rain that fell in deforested regions could not be absorbed. Instead it carried the soil into the rivers depositing sediments in river beds. This diminished the rivers' capacities and worsened the floods."

John Steele,
Toronto, Ontario

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.

Electricians firm in strike over safety conditions at London Underground

BY CELIA PUGH

LONDON — Five hundred electricians are picketing 10 construction sites on the 10-mile extension to the London Underground Jubilee line. The strike began November 16 against the victimization of workers protesting safety violations.

The events that led to the strike began when electricians working at the London Bridge site were not able to hear fire alarms. Amalgamated Engineering and Electrical Union (AEEU) shop steward Keith Knight told the *Militant* after an evacuation, 60 people were left "down the hole." AEEU elec-

As we go to press:

Strikers won a victory November 25 when the company climbed down and agreed to reinstate the 12 victimized workers.

tricians on site refused to go back underground until the alarms were made effective and tested. Management then picked the 12 most vocal workers for transfer to another site, including the union safety steward.

"This is a message that if you speak out for safety you will be moved," Knight said. Union members do not oppose transfers but demand that they be based on volunteers, most recent hires, or "out of a hat," he added. They want guarantees that fire safety violations are corrected. While backing off on the transfer of the union safety rep, the company has rejected other demands.

Dave Trotter, a picket at Southwark, declared, "This is victimization. The company wants to keep us down, they want to show who is in charge. But they can't break the union because we're sticking together. We are not easily trampled on."

The strikers are employed by contractor Drake and Scull. They report that electricians from other contractors have refused to cross picket lines. This includes 80 workers employed by Waverley who have also elected a union steward and organized a union shop.

Gov't, bosses, and press slander union

The Jubilee Line Extension (JLE) is a key piece of government plans for a millennium jamboree centered on a specially built Millennium Dome at Greenwich. A new North Greenwich Jubilee Line underground station, the biggest in Europe, is designed to take 22,000 passengers an hour to the Dome. The March 1998 deadline for JLE completion has passed, and speculation mounts that Jan. 1, 2000, will pass without an underground link to the Dome. The London *Times* editorialized, "This will be the worst public relations disaster imaginable."

Prime Minister Anthony Blair told London Weekend Television news "We will take every step" to open on time. The *Independent* quotes Blair asserting, "It is not banging a few heads simply, it is making sure that the management is allowed to get on and do their job." These pro-business newspapers blame low productivity and union militants. Three days into the strike, the *Times* editorial blamed delays on "...the wrong kind of electrician." The *Mail on Sunday* headlined a smear article of union steward Terry McBride titled "Return of the Wreckers"

JLE bosses have made highly publicized claims of vandalism by strikers, including the alleged cutting of electric cables to fire sprinkler systems. An editorial in the *Evening Standard* conceded, "The delays and mounting expenditure were evident before any workers downed tools, or there was any talk of 'sabotage,'" citing planning and design fiascoes.

In September the government brought in a trouble shooting company Bechtel to take over the management of the JLE, oversee productivity, and ensure completion of the dome by October 1999. Bechtel executive Cliff Mumm is quoted as saying the "illegal walkout... cannot be allowed to continue."

Strikers refute accusations of sabotage, noting that union members employed by Drake and Scull had no access to the alleged vandalized areas and were not at work on the weekend JLE claimed this took place. Since early October the AEEU-organized Drake and Scull electricians have refused to work weekends. This is part of a fight for the right to refuse work over 48 hours, as allowed by the new European Working Time Directive, and to get enhanced overtime payments if they choose to work the 66-plus hours demanded by JLE.

Bechtel's claim that the strike is illegal is based on legislation that demands a postal ballot for industrial action. After a positive strike vote, the union must give seven days notice before taking action, which must take place within 28 days. The strikers argue that this law does not apply to immediate action taken over health and safety. The AEEU nationally has not officially endorsed the strike. A letter to strikers from AEEU head office has declared it "unofficial" as there has not been a ballot. Press speculation that strikers are due to receive sacking letters has not yet materialized. Pickets say such intimidation only strengthens their determination to defend conditions and their union.

Union fights for safety underground

The strikers dispute the company's claim that their action is motivated by greed for pay topping more than £1,000 per week (\$1,600). Such levels are exaggerated, the electricians said, and as contract workers they rely on periods of

higher pay to cover times of unemployment, sickness, or lower-paid contracts. Conditions underground are dangerous and arduous. There is poor lighting and ventilation, diesel fumes, and sometimes rats. Workers say their union action to protect safety has so far prevented any death on the job, unlike many other underground construction projects like the Channel Tunnel, where the union has not been organized.

Alan Knowles is chair of the union shop of electricians at Drake and Scull on the JLE. On the picket line he told the *Militant* when the Jubilee Line Extension began there was little union organization. "When we started we tended to see ourselves as 'subbies,' [sub contractors] who just looked out for ourselves. Then we realized we had to start looking out for each other." That's when the union shop began to be organized. "When we mouthed off they sacked 11 of us," claiming there were no more jobs. In May 1997, "180 'sparks' [electricians] downed tools for 10 days demanding our reinstatement," Knowles said. "We called this our battle of Waterloo," referring to the name of their work

site. "We got our jobs back after (the arbitration service) ACAS found we were unfairly dismissed for trade union activity. Our union shop was stronger out of that strike. I'd not seen such strength for over 10 years. We were 100 percent on the picket line, including new younger workers." Since then the union shop has regular mass meetings for all members.

Trade unionists from other workplaces and industries are looking to the Jubilee Line strike. Drivers passing picket lines honk their horns and many train passengers are positive about strike leaflets explaining the issues. Pickets at Waterloo station were visited by a group of 11 workers employed by South West Trains at the same station in a show of solidarity. Strikers agreed to attend a meeting organized by the local branch of the Rail Maritime and Transport union (RMT) to explain the issues in their fight.

Celia Pugh is a member of the AEEU at Prestolite in west London. Pamela Holmes an AEEU member at Prestolite contributed to the article.

New Jersey teachers strike, defy back-to-work order



Striking teachers in Jersey City, New Jersey, walk the picket line outside P.S. 25 November 20.

BY JANE HARRIS

JERSEY CITY, New Jersey — Some 3,500 striking teachers, aides, secretaries, and nurses here have defied a judge's November 20 order to end their strike and return to work. The unionists' main demand is, as 70 teachers on a picket line at Snyder High School chanted it, "R-E-S-P-E-C-T," after the famous Aretha Franklin song.

The same day the judge threatened to fine the Jersey City Education Association \$100,000 a day. When the school week started again on November 23, the picket lines were strong. At Public School no. 17, an elementary school, only one person crossed the picket line. And unionists report about 98 percent of the membership has stayed off the job. The teachers walked out November 19. Prior to the strike, several teachers told the *Militant* money was not the issue. "How do you put dignity in a contract?" one asked. A Jersey City Education Association advertisement in the *Jersey Journal* explains that the strike is

about teachers being "evaluated" 10-15 times a year with surprise visits. Other issues include overcrowded classes, extending the school day, shortening the lunch break with no increase in pay, and forcing teachers for the first time to pay for part of their health benefits. The big-business media has attempted to portray the unionists as money-hungry. But the pickets' fight for dignity is clear to anyone who walks by.

The school board has hired scab replacements at \$200 a day, their only qualification being that they accept being fingerprinted. After one day, the board found itself unable to keep the high schools open. Students at McNair-Academic organized a peaceful walkout in support of their teachers by 10:00 a.m. the first day — despite the principal's attempt to lure them in by showing the film *Titanic*.

Jane Harris is a member of the United Transportation Union.

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