

# THE MILITANT

**INSIDE**  
**Capitalism's World Disorder:**  
**a handbook for fighters**

— PAGES 8-9

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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## Ohio Steelworkers resist company and cop attacks

BY KEVIN DWIRE AND MIKE FITZSIMMONS

NILES, Ohio — More than 500 unionists and supporters braved a cold wind here February 21 to protest union busting by RMI Titanium. United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Locals 2155 and 2155-7 sponsored the rally in a park across the street from the plant, which makes titanium for many industries, including aerospace. The USWA locals have been on strike since Oct. 1, 1998. Workers from a wide range of other unions turned out for the rally, following a police attack on the strikers nine days earlier.

Three hundred strikers and their supporters had mobilized at the plant gate February 12. Strikers believed the company had begun using replacement workers from other RMI plants to get out production. About 100 cops in riot gear from five area police agencies confronted the pickets, pushing them out of the way to escort several trucks out of the plant. According to Niles police chief Bruce Simeone, the trucks carried materials and some RMI management personnel who had been locked in the plant for two days. Later that morning, as cars began to arrive at the plant, the cops arrested seven of the protesters.

This confrontation followed a campaign by the company and media to violence-bait the strikers. The Youngstown *Vindicator*



Militant/Chris Remple

More than 500 workers joined solidarity rally February 21 to protest union busting at RMI Titanium

claimed nine motorists, including four cops, got flat tires "caused by spikes thrown by unidentified people outside RMI." On February 9, the company canceled the first negotiating session since January 27, saying in a written statement, "This environment is not conducive to reaching an agreement and [the company] has asked the union to control its members' activities."

The next day, Weathersfield Township police chief Sam Pagano publicly urged people to stay away from RMI, saying, "It's not a healthy environment."

The same day police attacked the pick-

ets, RMI ran a full-page "open letter to the community" in the *Vindicator*, saying, "The strikers are trying to accomplish with violence what they have not been able to accomplish legally by withholding their labor."

"Those who are currently committing acts of violence against RMI employees, against innocent passersby, and even against the police, think that if a company hires replacement workers to do jobs that they walked away from, they are entitled to become criminals and defy the law." In bold type at the bottom of the page, the company an-

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## Washington's plan to bomb Yugoslavia is delayed, but not scrapped

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Washington was forced February 23 to postpone plans for launching a military assault on Yugoslavia after Kosovar Albanians balked at a "peace" deal pushed by U.S. imperialists. After 17 days of "negotiations," the conference held in Rambouillet, France, was suspended until March 15, while Albanian representatives consult on the accord with other leaders in Kosova.

"Without a final answer from the Albanians, it will be hard to carry out the threat of NATO bombing," the *New York Times* reported February 24.

At a news conference in Pristina, the capi-

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## Racist is convicted of murder in Jasper, Texas

BY DAVE FERGUSON

JASPER, Texas — John William King was convicted February 23 of capital murder in the June 1998 lynching of James Byrd, Jr. here. The jury delivered its verdict less than three hours after closing arguments in a trial that lasted six days. Byrd, who was Black, was beaten and then dragged to his death, chained behind a pickup truck. Two other men accused along with King will go on trial later. The jury is now deciding King's punishment. He could receive the

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## N. Carolina meeting marks advance for farmers fighting to keep their land

BY FRANK FORRESTAL AND JAMES HARRIS

DURHAM, North Carolina — About 120 people attended the 3rd National Black Land Loss Summit and first national meeting of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association (BFAA) here February 19-20. The gathering marked an advance for farmers seeking ways to advance their fight to keep their land. The meeting was all business, marked by civil debate and give-and-take

discussion. Many drove all night to get to the meeting on time.

Reaching out to other farmers and mobilizing others to attend the March 2 hearing on a proposed settlement in a class-action discrimination suit against the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) were the most important decisions taken at the meeting.

The BFAA adopted a clear position in opposition to the proposed consent decree settlement, which they argue will not stem

the rapid loss of land by farmers who are Black. Many of the farmers present are part of the suit, which was filed against the USDA in 1996 demanding redress for decades of discrimination.

According to a press release issued by the Land Loss Prevention Project, close to 1,000 farmers and farm groups, approximately 25 percent of those involved in the suit, will file an objection to the proposed consent decree.

Conference participants learned more about the content of the proposed settlement, noting in particular contradictions between what lawyers for the settlement have told farmers and what is actually written in the consent decree and claim sheet.

The consent decree is divided into two tracks, A and B. Farmers who settle for track A and meet the "substantial evidence" requirements contained in the settlement are promised \$50,000, along with relief from USDA debts that farmers can prove are the result of past discrimination. Track B allows for greater relief, but farmers who choose this path must meet a much higher standard of proof.

One farmer from Oklahoma, capturing the spirit of many at the meeting, said, "With \$50,000 I can't come close to getting my land back. \$50,000 is chicken feed. It is an insult to our heritage." Farmers said they should receive at least \$250,000-\$300,000.

Farmers who are Black are losing farm land at a rate two-and-a-half times faster than

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## Blast at Tosco refinery kills three workers

BY JIM ALTENBERG AND JIM GOTESKY

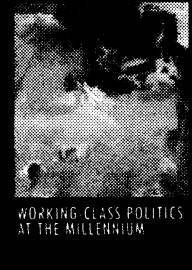
MARTINEZ, California — A fiery blast engulfed five oil workers at the Tosco Avon refinery at 12:18 p.m. here February 23. Rollin Blue, Ricardo Enriquez, and Ernie Pofahl died from extensive burns. Two others remain in critical condition.

This is the second fatal accident in two years at the Avon refinery. According to fire officials the five maintenance workers were probably repairing a leaking naphtha line on an operating crude oil distillation tower 50 feet above the ground when the explosion struck. Naphtha, a highly explosive crude oil distillate, spilled down the side of the tower, igniting in a massive fire ball.

The intense heat burned the clothes off the workers and melted their skin. It took rescue workers more than three hours to scale the distillation tower to reach the injured workers.

Jim Altenberg is an operator at the Avon refinery. Jim Gotesky is a maintenance worker at the Tosco refinery in Rodeo, California.

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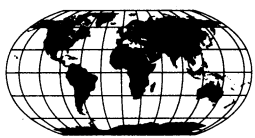
### Capitalism's World Disorder Working-Class Politics at the Millennium

BY JACK BARNES

This may be the only *millennium* title on bookstore shelves today whose purpose is not to mystify and obscure but to reveal and clarify. The social devastation, financial panics, political turmoil, police brutality, and military assaults accelerating all around us are not chaos. They are the inevitable product of lawful and understandable forces unleashed by capitalism. But the future capitalism has in store for us is not the future that inevitably must be. It can be changed by the timely solidarity, courageous action, and united struggle of workers and farmers conscious of their power to transform the world. That is what this book has been written to bring closer.

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Unionists honor life of UAW fighter at Caterpillar — page 11



## Workers in Ukraine demand pay

Thousands of coal miners in the former soviet republic of Ukraine held protest actions beginning February 10 to demand months of unpaid back wages. There are more than 406,000 mine workers in Ukraine. Several dozen workers at the Barakova mine in the Luhansk region ended their strike February 19 after bosses promised to pay back \$47,000 in wage arrears. They had occupied the underground mine since January 30. In the western region of Lviv, some 4,000 miners struck two coal mines demanding back pay for 1998.

Meanwhile, workers from five nuclear power plants in the workers state began protests February 18, demanding back pay and safer working conditions. Actions included a picket by 200 workers, clad in hazardous material uniforms, at a government building in Kiev. Demonstrators said they would begin job actions if wages were not paid by March 6.

## Cops assault miners in Romania and arrest union official

A month after forcing the Romanian government to back down from closing some mines, 2,000 coal miners began another caravan headed toward the capital, Bucharest, February 16. They were protesting pit closures and also the government's sentencing in absentia of union official Miron Cozma to 18 years in jail for participating in miners' protests in 1991. Police intercepted the workers 90 miles outside Bucharest near Stoenesti with barricades and 2,000 riot cops.

The ensuing battle left at least one miner dead and 100 injured. Miners fought and defended themselves against the police with axes, chains, knives, and sticks. Thirty-five cops were reportedly injured with head wounds and broken limbs. During the cop attack Cozma was captured along with several other unionists. More than 500 demonstrators were arrested and miners were hauled back to western Romania by train. Romanian president Emil Constantinescu praised the police for "defending a state where the law is respected."

## U.S. Army organizes 'anti-terror' drills inside U.S. borders

Many residents in Kingsville, and Port

## Nurses in Poland rally for better pay



Nurses rally January 22 in front of the Polish parliament building in Warsaw. A strike last year was settled, but nurses there are still demanding higher wages.

Aransas, Texas, were shocked as eight unidentified low-flying black helicopters swooped through their towns on February 8 and 12, dropping armed, helmeted soldiers. The Army's Delta Force — a "counter-terrorism" unit from Fort Bragg, North Carolina, was "practicing skills of getting in and out of urban areas and special operations for the missions they're responsible for," declared Army Special Operations Command spokesman, Maj. Jeff Fanto. In Kingsville troops exploded grenades in an abandoned Exxon building. At least 50 residents there called the police department complaining about the maneuvers. More such "exercises" are expected.

## Colombia: Cuba sends doctors...

A Cuban medical brigade departed February 20 to aid residents in Armenia, Colom-

bia — the area hardest hit by a devastating earthquake in late January. The Cuban government and volunteer health workers are responding to a request by the Colombian government. In the name of combating thieves, Bogotá initially responded to the January 25 quake by deploying thousands of heavily armed troops and cops against working people who, in the absence of adequate emergency aid, took food and other necessities from local stores.

Cuba currently has more than 2,000 health professionals in 57 countries. Of those, more than 200 volunteers are providing services in Central American and Caribbean countries ravaged by Hurricane Mitch.

## ...while Washington backs the Colombian military's 'drug war'

The Clinton administration is training, equipping, and funding the Colombian police and military in their assault against rural toilers and guerrilla forces. Washington claims the \$249 million being allocated for this project is aimed primarily at fighting drug trafficking.

Under pressure to win preferential trade through "certification" from Washington for fighting drugs, Bogotá has stepped up the destruction of coca crops in recent years, without offering aid and credit to farmers to produce other crops. Such crop destructions set off large peasant protests in 1996, drawing the support of workers and students. The Colombian government in cahoots with paramilitary forces have responded with brutal killings of peasant activists.

Both the U.S. and Colombian governments also try to link the guerrilla groups National Liberation Army (ELN) and the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) to the drug trade. "The Americans badly want the FARC defeated, supposedly because it plays a big part in the drug trade," read an article in London's February 20 issue of the *Economist*. "So they pile up invective and military hardware against it, in the guise of antidrug support."

## More U.S. workers are unionized

Union membership in the United States grew in 1998 by 101,000 to 16.2 million people, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). Health-care workers, public employees, and service workers reportedly comprised the largest increase in unionization.

The Service Employees International Union, for example, recruited 60,000 new members to its ranks last year — more than the previous five years combined. Among workers who are Black, 17.7 percent are unionized today, compared to with a general work force that is 11.6 percent Black. For Latinos the unionized rate — 12 percent — is also higher compared to 11 percent in the overall work force. The BLS report stated that the rate of industrial workers in unions in comparison to jobs available dropped from 14.1 percent to 13.9 percent. Kirk Adams, the AFL-CIO organizing director says the BLS report isn't totally accurate because it doesn't count more than 400,000 workers who joined unions, but were unable to negotiate and sign contracts with the various companies by December 31.

## Cops finally drop frame-up case against Geronimo Pratt

After 29 years of struggle, onetime Black Panther Party leader Geronimo Pratt is finally free of the "justice" system in Washington and Los Angeles. In 1972, Pratt was convicted of a 1968 killing that occurred in Los Angeles while he was in Oakland, some 500 miles away, attending a state Panther leadership meeting. He was jailed for two years before his conviction and served eight of his 27 years behind bars in solitary confinement. Pratt's attorney Stuart Hanlon made numerous unsuccessful appeals over the years based on new evidence. Finally in 1997 state judge Everett Dickey threw out the conviction and ordered Pratt's release, declaring that key evidence was withheld from the court.

The principle witness against Pratt, Julius Butler, was a cop informer who infiltrated the Black Panthers. District Attorney Gil Garcetti had appealed Dickey's decision twice and was twice rejected. On February 17 he announced he was dropping the case, though he could have appealed it again to the state supreme court.

— BRIAN TAYLOR

Harry Ring from Los Angeles contributed to this column.

# THE MILITANT

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Groups of vanguard workers and farmers are linking their struggles around the world. They face the same exploiters whose common language is an unceasing drive for profits. The 'Militant' brings you the latest news on this development as resistance deepens against the bosses' demands for austerity. Don't miss a single issue!



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# 600 march for Skychefs strikers

BY TIM OWEN  
AND JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON — "Don't be quiet — fight for your rights!" "Victory to Skychefs strikers!" and "Union rights — human rights!" shouted 600 demonstrators marching through Southall in west London February 20. The march had been called by the Transport and General Workers' Union (TGWU) in support of the fight by the strikers at Lufthansa Skychefs in defense of union rights. The strike started three months ago on November 20 when the 400 airline catering workers were sacked for holding a 24-hour work stoppage.

Strike leader Garth King addressed a rally at the end of the march. Appealing to people to deepen their support for the strike, King said, "This march is not only for us. Our fight for union rights today could be yours tomorrow. We went out together, and we'll go back together." King encouraged everyone to build a rally at the picket March 6.

Other speakers at the march included TGWU general secretary Bill Morris, who pledged support for the strikers, and Trades Union Congress leader John Monks.

"Three months is quite a long time on strike," said Usha Kaur, one of the strikers leading the chants, "but we are confident that we will win." Kaur, one of the women who have constituted the backbone of the pickets, added, "We get tremendous inspiration from the Hillingdon Hospital strikers who have been on strike for four years. It shows what we can do."

A contingent of Hillingdon strikers participated in the march. An industrial tribunal has ruled in favor of their reinstatement but the company refuses to reinstate them.

Other groups of workers involved in struggle were also on the march. Thirty workers from AP Moller Rosti, a technical plastics factory in Wembley, north London, who are involved in a union organizing drive, marched behind their union banner. Three of the Rosti workers spearheading the unionization drive just won reinstatement after being sacked three weeks ago. One of them, Manjit Singh Sahota, said that workers in the plant face wages, as low as £3.66 (US\$5.97) per hour, bullying, harassment, and poor health and safety. "We also face race discrimination. Eighty percent of the workers are Asian or African, but all the supervisors are white." Sahota added, "A victory for the union at Skychefs would be a victory for us all."

Small contingents of London Underground (subway) workers and University College Hospital staff, both of whom had been on strike during the week leading up to the demonstration, were also on the march.

The dispute at Skychefs is becoming a

focus for broader layers of workers. "It's good to be able to come on a march like this, which involves different groups of workers and unions in support of a strike," said Adrian Coady, one of a group of TGWU members at Aer Lingus to join the march. Workers at Aer Lingus, KLM, and British Airways at Heathrow have visited the Skychefs picket line and made financial contributions.

Other marchers carried union banners from TGWU Region 6 in the northwest part of the country, and a number of branches from the union's Region 1 in London and the southeast including Housing Workers, Kodak workers, public service workers, cab drivers, and workers from plants in Kent.

"I'm here because I know what it means to live in poverty," said Mike Ward, a farm worker from Norfolk who had traveled 100 miles to attend the demonstration. "What the Skychefs workers earn a week is atrocious." Ward carried a banner of the Transport and General Workers Agricultural and Allied Workers Trade Group. Also participating in the action were farm workers from Suffolk and Cambridgeshire.

Leading up to the demonstration, strikers had taken steps to extend their outreach work. Three hundred people attended a rally at the factory gate February 1. Teams of strikers have traveled with union officials to the United States and Germany in an effort to exert pressure on the multinational company,



Militant/Phil Waterhouse

Some 600 people joined in London march to support the striking airport workers

the biggest airline catering company in the world. Following the demonstration, King is traveling to Spain to meet up with unions at Skychefs in Madrid where the workers have already taken some solidarity action.

Strikers have also visited the London Underground picket and attended other union meetings. Adesh Farmahan, Sid Sidhu, and Gurmel Singh attended the TGWU 1/1806 branch before the march. The branch voted to make a £1,000 donation to the strike fund, regular £200 monthly contributions to

the hardship fund, and to organize a workplace collection at Glaxo Wellcome.

Asked how the strikers would win their fight, Farmahan said, "Unity is key. Unity of the strikers and other workers, especially at Heathrow Airport. Our goal is reinstatement with our union. But if we can't win this, we're prepared to stay out as long as it takes to close the company down."

Tim Owen and Jonathan Silberman are members of the TGWU 1/1806 branch.

## Protesters denounce bill to give more powers to secret police in New Zealand

BY RUTH GRAY

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand — Some 150 people marched here February 9 to protest the Security Intelligence Service (SIS) amendment bill now before Parliament. The SIS is the government's domestic spy organization. The purpose of this bill is to give SIS agents the "power to enter places, and, in appropriate cases, to install a device in a place or remove material from a place." It also retrospectively legalizes break-ins that have already occurred, excluding those for which legal action has been taken.

There has been one such case before the courts, *Choudry v. Attorney General*. In December last year the Court of Appeal ruled that the SIS acted illegally when it broke into the house of political activist Aziz Choudry without his consent or knowledge.

The Court of Appeal also refused to accept a certificate from Prime Minister Jenni-

fer Shipley that claimed 70 SIS documents wanted by Choudry's lawyers must remain secret because to release them would supposedly be prejudicial to the security and defense of New Zealand. Shipley claimed the government is planning to appeal the court's decision.

The ruling National Party's response to the Court of Appeal ruling was swift. Within a week they introduced the SIS amendment bill into Parliament. It passed its first reading with a 107-to-13 majority vote, supported by the Labour Party and the right-wing ACT party. The bill is now before a special parliamentary committee made up of National and Labour Party members of parliament.

Shipley argued, "It is vital that the SIS is able to carry out its functions properly in gathering intelligence on security threats to New Zealand. In some rare instances, this may require covert entry to private prop-

erty, which the amendment to the legislation will allow."

Former SIS Director Lin Smith said in a February 10 submission to the committee, "The post-cold war period, in particular because of the emphasis on the use of terrorism as an instrument of foreign policy, has been characterized by increased and more diverse threats to national security, here and elsewhere."

On July 13, 1996, two SIS agents broke into the Christchurch home of Aziz Choudry, a spokesperson for the anti-free trade group GATT Watchdog. At the time, Choudry was participating in a conference organized by his group to oppose the upcoming meeting of trade ministers from the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation forum (APEC) in Christchurch.

The break-in was discovered by university lecturer David Small, who stumbled on the SIS agents in Choudry's house and noted down their license number as they escaped. Five days later, Christchurch police found a fake bomb with an anti-APEC slogan written on it outside the Christchurch City Council offices. Following this, Choudry and Small had their houses searched by police, who said they were looking for bomb making equipment. Nothing was found.

Two weeks before SIS agents broke into Choudry's house, the government had passed legislation broadening the definition of security to include "the ensuring of NZ's international well-being or economic well-being."

Choudry is suing the SIS for NZ\$300,000 (US\$162,000) for breach of his rights under the Human Rights Act and trespass. Quoted in the February 17 issue of the *Christchurch Press*, he described the government's proposed legislation as "outrageous. This is nothing to do with terrorism. I think basically what the government has done is declare war on lawful dissenters."

Speaking at the Christchurch rally and march, Small called for a review of the Secret Intelligence Service. "Individual civil liberties are being removed and the powers of the state strengthened," he declared. Rally participants then marched to the Christchurch offices of the SIS, where there were several more speeches.

Smaller protests were also held in Auckland and Wellington.

Ruth Gray is a member of the Engineers Union.

## Greece: forum assesses student occupations

BY GEORGES MEHRABIAN

ATHENS — "These were the best 10 weeks of our lives. We learned to sacrifice. We learned to overcome the 'me' syndrome and start thinking as 'we,'" said Andreas Kilchiksis. He was speaking at a panel discussion organized by the Forum of the Friends of the Militant Newspaper here February 12. Kilchiksis is a member of the Coordinating Committee of High School Students in the Athens neighborhood of Zografou, which comprises six schools.

"We fought to change a whole school system and in the process many figured out we had to change a whole society," he added. About 150,000 students participated in the 10-week battle against new laws that will restrict access to post-secondary education. "Each week we held meetings, each week we held demonstrations and rallies, we held concerts and parties, we organized film showings. We learned what the police, the courts, and the government are, what the press is, and much more."

"To those that say we lost, we answer, 'No, we won!' We won because we are no longer the same and so the schools can no longer be the same. We won because we have returned to classes with our heads held high," continued Kilchiksis.

The government's education "reform," known as the Arsenis law, institutes a whole

series of tests in the last two years of high school aimed to reduce university admittance. "By their own accounts they say 40,000 university seats will be eliminated," Kilchiksis noted. "So your high school years will become battle grounds pitting student against student each fighting for the available slots. And, of course, if you can afford private tutoring after school, you will have a better shot at being among the lucky ones. So money will get you into university. They are also instituting universities with tuition for the first time."

As a result of the protests, the government has agreed to postpone implementation by one year. Kilchiksis said he expects the fight to resume next September.

Three high school students attended the forum, which took place five days after classes resumed. Others "wanted to come tonight but they had classes," the student leader said. He added that school authorities are now preventing students from holding meetings and assemblies on school grounds. In the course of the last decade, different governments have tried on two other occasions to impose such reforms. Both times they were beaten back. This time though they would not be moved. As a result many students now understand that the state, as a result of an entire world situation, must impose these conditions on us," con-

tinued Kilchiksis. "So we must think, can we win without the help of the workers? Can we win without that main strength in society?"

Many workers expressed sympathy and support for the student occupations, including parent's associations, teachers, retirees, construction unions, and the General Federation of Labor. "But we were not able to march side by side," Kilchiksis said.

"I was present at the last joint assembly of parents and students in Zografou," said Can Coban, a worker and member of the Committee of Communists, who also spoke on the panel. "The president of the student committee said that day, 'I was just a student 10 weeks ago, now I know who my enemy is. Such lessons are learned in struggle.' This is confirmation to me that we won a victory here."

"This law is a broad attack on the right of all to free public education. The ruling capitalist class is determined to push this through. Just as it is determined to push back health-care rights, just as it is determined to beat working farmers, the Olympic Airlines workers, and the list goes on," Coban added.

"What was missing was the connecting together of these battles with the fight by the students. Had this happened, an overturn of the Arsenis Law might have been won too."

# Socialists form state organization in California

BY RYAN KELLY  
AND GALE SHANGOLD

OAKLAND, California — "Our responsibility today is to act quickly and decisively in response to the changes going on in U.S. politics. What we do counts," said Greg McCartan in the opening report at the February 20-21 Socialist Workers Party California state convention. The convention was attended by 79 participants. At the end of the two days, delegates — consisting of party members in California — voted to recommend to the SWP National Committee forming a California State organization.

In his report on "Working-class politics in the post-impeachment United States," McCartan, a member of the party's National Committee and organizer of the SWP's national fraction steering committee in the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE), emphasized that party members must act in solidarity when strikes and struggles by working farmers take place. "Solidarity organized by the ranks of the unions can favorably impact the out-

come of a struggle," McCartan emphasized. "The opposite is also true: If we do nothing to work with other unionists in our areas to aid a struggle, it has a damaging impact."

This theme was struck numerous times in the course of the two-day meeting, which was also attended by delegations of socialist workers and youth from Seattle and Canada, including 13 members of the Young Socialists.

## Dissolution of PACE union fraction

Participating in the convention as guests were members of the SWP's industrial union fraction in the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers International Union (PACE), formed in January through a merger of the Paperworkers and the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union. The party members who are in PACE voted the night before the state convention to recommend to the party's National Committee that the fraction be dissolved, except for its unit in Houston.

SWP National Committee member Joel

Britton focused on this in his report, "Acting as Part of the Communist Vanguard in Formation." Britton noted this decision to dissolve the fraction was initiated by the party's Political Committee for discussion with PACE members after a balance sheet was drawn on the fraction's failure to build the February 5 "Solidarity for Justice Rally" in Pasadena, Texas, organized by Local 4-227. This event was held on the third anniversary of the workers at Crown Central Petroleum being locked out by that company, because they refused to accept a deep concession contract. Britton noted the February 5 rally was a "splendid event" that attracted unionists and farmers involved in struggles from Alabama, Georgia, Mississippi, Florida, and other states. Fighting workers need to be "blood and bone" with advanced struggles like the one being waged by the brothers and sisters at Crown, said Britton.

The record, he said, shows that only a single SWP PACE fraction member attended the rally from outside of Houston. Party members in the union did not orient unionists from their areas to support this struggle, bring young workers and students to the event, or work to get messages of support for the struggling Crown workers.

This move aimed to strengthen the competent, political functioning in all of the unions where socialist workers concentrate their forces, Britton said. "We have to function on the same high level as those involved in these fights."

During the course of the weekend, statewide meetings were held of socialist workers in California in UNITE, the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), International Association of Machinists (IAM), and United Transportation Union (UTU).

The proposal to dissolve the PACE fraction sparked debate in the state convention.

One delegate argued against it, stating that the oil industry played a major role in the U.S. economy and that the PACE fraction should be reinforced and rebuilt now. PACE members who were delegates and other unionists took the floor to counter this view. Delegates voted overwhelmingly to concur with the fraction's decision to recommend its dissolution to the political committee. The members of the PACE fraction met following the convention and voted to set a deadline of March 31, the eve of the SWP national party convention, for every fraction member to be out of their jobs in PACE-organized workplaces.

Some examples came out in the course of the discussion that demonstrate the possibilities that exist for work among trade unionists. Laura Anderson, a ramp service worker at United Airlines in Los Angeles, said many pickets have taken place at the airport by contract workers trying to get decent wages and working conditions.

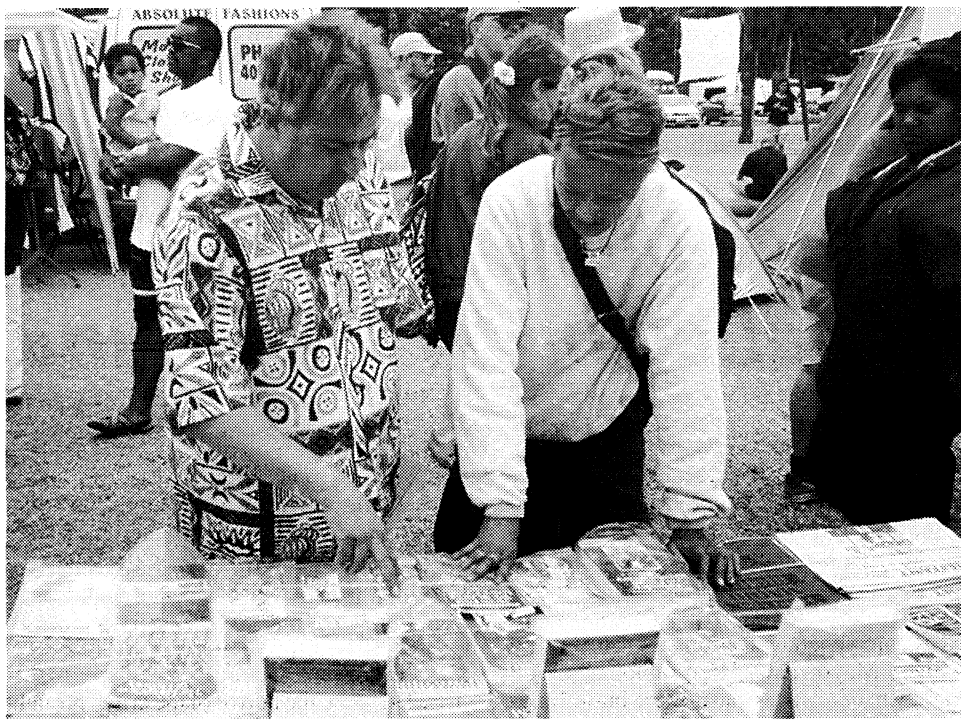
Ove Aspoy, a steelworker at the Posco mill in Pittsburg, California, described a struggle by a layer of workers who are refusing to let the company sweep under the rug facts about the death of a probationary worker several months earlier in the roll shop. The efforts of these unionists, Aspoy said, along with the steelworker's family, have resulted in a recent televised segment on the death and the dangerous roll shop conditions.

A negative example that received considerable discussion was the failure of SWP trade unionists in northern California to join ranks with the Steelworkers from Spokane and Tacoma, Washington, locked out by Kaiser Aluminum, who have been picketing Kaiser's Bay Area corporate offices.

"The new state committee should facilitate our work in taking advantage of the

Continued on Page 14

## Socialists sell 'Militant' at plant gates, farm meetings



Selling *Militant* and *Pathfinder* at Waitangi, New Zealand, Maori rights event February 6.

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

"We passed out leaflets at the plant gate where Ardella Blandford works announcing a press conference to launch her campaign as the Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Birmingham, Alabama," said Susan LaMont. "We also sold three copies of the *Militant*."

"Some of my co-workers are excited that I'm running," said Blandford, a member of the United Auto Workers at Pemco, an aerospace manufacturing facility. "A couple of co-workers are getting involved in political activities, including one who raised \$100 to get a van to drive to the March 2 rally in Washington, D.C., called by the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association (BFAA)."

LaMont, a member of the United Steelworkers, participated in a February 20 meeting in Durham, North Carolina, by the BFAA (see front page article). "About 120 people attended the conference, mostly farmers," said LaMont. "They appreciated the *Militant*'s coverage of their struggle and are thirsty for information and connection with other struggles."

LaMont said they were especially interested in the *Militant*'s coverage of the farmers who met in Albany, Georgia, and discussed the USDA settlement; farmers from Northern Ireland on tour in the United States; and an article in a previous issue of the paper that showed BFAA leader Eddie Slaughter speaking at a rally of oil workers in Pasadena, Texas, who are locked out from the Crown refinery.

"Participants bought 18 copies and four subscriptions to the *Militant*, and several *Pathfinder* titles, including *Farmers Face the Crisis of the 1990s* and *Fighting Racism in World War II*," she said.

LaMont said supporters of the *Militant* are also in Pine Bluff, Arkansas, attending

one among a series of meetings being organized across the country to discuss the terms of the USDA consent decree.

Supporters of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* in Birmingham and other cities around the world are at the midpoint in a four-week drive to win subscription renewals and sell copies of the two publications. The campaign has fallen slightly behind schedule, but with an extra push over the next two weeks we can make the goals. The *Militant* urges its supporters to send in pictures of sales activities, reports on sales at plant gates, discussions with co-workers, at campuses, and on regional sales teams like the one below.



BY PATRICK BROWN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand — We made a three-hour drive from here to Rangiora in the Bay of Plenty, a meat packing plant owned by AFFCO February 22. The company is carrying out a restructuring program involving plant closures and attacks on workers' conditions. One worker pointed to two placards the team had prepared, saying he agreed with one that read "Protest Attacks on Conditions at Rangiora and Moerewa," another AFFCO plant. He disagreed with another sign opposing the imperialist bombing of Iraq. After a friendly discussion of about five minutes, he bought a copy of *Militant*, saying he was prepared to consider the view expressed in it. We sold 12 papers to workers at the plant that day.

This sale is part of our campaign here to reach out to workers in export meat plants — an effort that has taken us to a number of areas around the North and South Islands. Sales at plant gates are also an important part of *Militant* promotion in Auckland. Workers at the wharf here have regularly bought between two and five papers.

## Militant and Perspectiva Mundial Renewal/Single Issue Circulation Drive February 6-March 7

	Sub renewal						Single issues			
	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	%	Goal	Sold	Goal	Sold
Australia	4	5	125%	1	2		20	13		2
Canada										
Montreal	1	2	200%	2	1		22	28		
Toronto	8	6	75%	1	0		50	14	5	0
Vancouver	7	4	57%				40	25		1
Canada Total	16	12	75%	3	1		112	67	5	1
Iceland	3	2	67%				4	0		
United States										
Miami	10	13	130%	4	0		30	15	5	1
Des Moines	8	7	88%	4	0		40	35	15	5
Boston	8	6	75%	3	3		30	28	3	4
Philadelphia	8	5	63%	2	0		45	57	2	0
Pittsburgh	8	5	63%	2	0		40	15		
Los Angeles	20	12	60%	8	2		80	63	8	0
Chicago	15	8	53%	5	0		60	31	8	1
San Francisco	13	6	46%	8	0		70	86	15	6
Atlanta	7	3	43%	3	0		55	67	4	2
Seattle	14	6	43%	3	1		40	32	2	0
Washington, D.C.	15	5	33%	4	2		40	38	3	0
Detroit	10	3	30%	2	1		50	27		1
Cleveland	4	1	25%	1	0		40	33		1
Houston	8	2	25%	2	1		40	31	5	2
Birmingham, AL	14	3	21%	2	1		45	45	4	1
Newark, NJ	25	5	20%	10	1		100	45	5	0
New York	30	5	17%	13	1		115	75	25	1
Twin Cities, MN	10	1	10%	2	1		45	25	3	3
U.S. Total	227	96	42%	78	14		965	748	107	28
New Zealand										
Auckland	5	2	40%				25	33		1
Christchurch	3		0%				25	19		
N.Z. Total	8	2	25%				50	52		1
United Kingdom										
London	10	2	20%	2	0		50	17		
Manchester	3	0	0%				30	0		
UK Total	13	2	15%	2	0		80	17		
Sweden	3	0	0%	1	0		23	25		
Int'l totals	274	119	43%	85	17		1254	922	112	32
Int'l goals/ should be	275	138	50%	85	43		1250		100	



# Firing of immigrants sparks protest

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

E-mail: 105162.605@compuserve.com  
BY AUTUMN KNOWLTON

YAKIMA, Washington — Nearly 750 people, the vast majority of them Latino, marched to Miller Park after picketing the office of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) here February 23 to protest a firing of an estimated 700–1,000 workers.

The INS ordered 13 Yakima-area fruit packing warehouses to fire all workers it listed as undocumented by February 19. The immigration cops audited the warehouses' payroll records and claimed there were 1,708 undocumented workers. Many on this list, however, were seasonal employees who already had been laid off. The INS claims no one will be deported as a result of this action, but some workers who were not slated for firing might have left their jobs anyway for fear of being deported.

The INS took this action in the middle of an ongoing fight by apple packing workers to organize into the Teamsters union.

Sharon Rummery, an INS spokeswoman in San Francisco, was quoted in the Yakima *Herald-Republic* as saying, "Jobs are what matter to us." Demanding the firings is "a new concept. It's kinder, gentler, and it's smarter" than mass deportations.

Amnesty for the fired workers was the main demand of the spirited protest, which was organized by the Chicano/Latino Coalition of Yakima with support from Teamsters United for Change, Washington Alliance for

Immigrant and Refugee Justice, and the United Farm Workers. Around 700 people came to a community meeting February 18 to plan a response to the INS action.

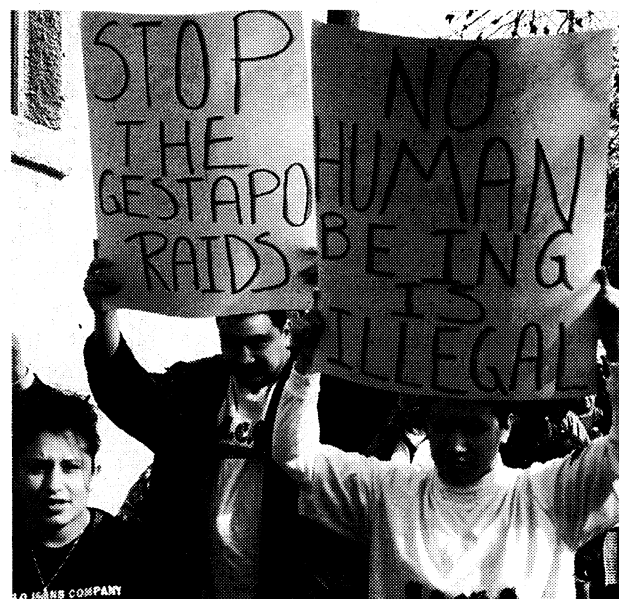
The Carpenters union and chapters of the Chicano student group MEChA from Central Washington University and Yakima Valley Community College were also at the rally with banners and protest signs.

The signs at the rally had slogans such as "Stop the war against immigrants" and "Lo podemos hacer juntos," (We can do it together). Many of the protesters were young women, who make up a large percentage of the workforce at the area's apple packing houses. An estimated 15,000 workers are employed in the Washington fruit warehouse industry.

The rally included comments by members

of the local community. Among the speakers were two representatives of the Catholic church and Ricardo Garcia, a member of the Chicano/Latino Coalition and the director of the local Spanish-language radio station KDNA, which played a big role in publicizing the action. Organizers of the rally announced a car caravan that will travel from Yakima to Olympia, the state capital, February 25 to draw attention to the situation of the fired workers in the Yakima Valley.

Autumn Knowlton is a member of the YS in Seattle.



Militant/Scott Breen  
Protest over firing of immigrants in Yakima February 23

# Racist convicted of murder in Texas

Continued from front page

death penalty. The June 7 murder sparked outrage in Jasper and far beyond. When the Ku Klux Klan called a rally in the town of 8,000 three weeks after the killing — supposedly to clarify their opposition to the killing — 200 people turned out in an angry protest, despite efforts by city officials and traditional civil rights organizations to discourage an organized counter protest. About two dozen racists took part in the KKK rally.

At King's trial, grisly photos of Byrd's mutilated body and severed head and arm were introduced into evidence, upsetting several members of his family who were in attendance. Testimony indicated that Byrd was alive and suffering excruciating pain

during most of the three miles he was dragged. Evidence linking King to the crime included his cigarette lighter, with a KKK symbol, which was found at the scene, and DNA evidence that Byrd's blood was on the defendant's shoes.

Numerous writings, documents, and photos found in King's apartment were also introduced as evidence. These included photos of King's racist tattoos that depict a Black man hanging and the slogan "Aryan pride." The documents reveal his plans to start a chapter of the "Confederate Knights of America, Texas Rebel Soldiers." The prosecutor contended that King murdered Byrd to win respect and recruits for his new racist group. King's attorneys objected to introduction of evidence of King's ideas and thoughts, but were overruled by the judge.

"This has forced us to confront the fact that we have a problem here," Jasper resident Rev. Bobby Hudson told *Militant* reporters after observing the first day of the trial. "Even though the town is 40 percent Black, the jury has only one Black. Many Blacks are opposed to the death penalty, so when asked that question they were removed."

Less than one month ago the city removed a fence that had divided the city cemetery into separate sections for Blacks and whites. Mayor R.C. Horn announced that members of all races can now be buried anywhere plots are available. James Byrd, Jr.'s grave was near the old fence. Several members of Byrd's family attended the ceremony

marking the removal of the fence.

The prosecutors have used this case to try to win new support for the death penalty. "I am opposed to the death penalty, even in this case," said Hudson who is Black. "It will always be used more against Blacks."

Another Black man observing the trial, who didn't want his name used, argued, "I want justice. And, in this case justice is the death penalty. If it had been a Black doing that to a white, they would already be executed."

The judge has prohibited protests within a two-block radius of the courthouse. There were dozens of cops on hand to enforce that.

Both local and national political figures are using the case to call for new legislation against "hate crimes." NAACP president Kweisi Mfume said after the verdict that this case "clearly shouts" for the "urgent need" for new legislation. While Texas already has a "hate crime" law, a current attempt to revise and strengthen it is named after James Byrd, Jr. The current law increases the penalties and lessens the burden of proof on prosecutors in cases where they can show that the accused were motivated by hate.

"The problem has not been that there are not laws on the books to make such lynchings illegal," said Laura Garza of the Socialist Workers Party in Houston. "The problem is that the laws are seldom enforced against racists. This time the horror of the crime brought a public outcry that forced the authorities to vigorously prosecute. But, the next time they will return to business as usual."

# Kaiser workers rally in Washington State

BY CHRIS RAYSON

OLYMPIA, Washington — About 300 locked-out Steelworkers and their supporters rallied on the steps of the state capitol here February 11. More than 100 traveled in three buses from Spokane to attend the rally. They were members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 329 at Mead Smelter and Local 338 at the Trentwood Rolling Mill of Kaiser Aluminum. They joined workers from Kaiser's Tacoma plant.

USWA officials called off a 15-week strike by 3,100 workers against Kaiser Aluminum and Chemical Corp. January 14 and offered to return to work under the terms and conditions of the expired contract. Kaiser rejected the offer and locked the unionists out.

Chanting "One day longer," rally participants signaled their determination to stand up to Kaiser's union busting and win a decent contract. Union banners from USWA Local 305 Longview Federated Aluminum Council, International Association of Machinists Lodge 751 from the huge Boeing plants in the Puget Sound, the Washington State AFL-CIO, Iron Workers Local 86, and the Association of Western Pulp and Paper Workers Local 153 were present.

Scores of students from Evergreen State College in Olympia also attended the rally. Some held a big banner at the front of the rally saying, "Hurwitz cuts jobs like he cuts trees," referring to Charles Hurwitz, who is the CEO of Maxxam, a corporation that controls both Kaiser Aluminum and Pacific Lumber. Environmental groups are protesting the cutting of old growth redwood forests in California by Pacific Lumber.

Eva Clark, 18, a student at Evergreen, told the *Militant*, "A union of labor and environmentalists makes us stronger. When labor starts protesting, change can happen."

Henry Hudon, 37, a furnace operator who works at the new carbon bake plant in the Mead smelter complex, said morale is "pretty high" among locked-out Steelworkers, especially since the workers now qualify to collect state unemployment compensation. Hudon said car caravan rallies are held every Sunday in Spokane, starting from the Mead smelter and finishing at Trentwood.

Following the rally, the Spokane workers stopped at the Tacoma Kaiser picket line,

creating a mass picket. When Tacoma police handcuffed and threatened to arrest one USWA member from Spokane who had been nearly hit by a car driven by a scab, pickets began chanting "Let him go!" The cops released him after a half-hour standoff.

Chris Rayson is a member of the United Transportation Union.

# New equipment slashes the time needed to print 'Capitalism's World Disorder'

BY NAOMI CRAINE

Supporters of Pathfinder Press contributed \$19,000 to the Pathfinder Capital Fund over the last week. This brings the total \$414,000, toward a goal of \$550,000. Of the new contributions \$3,300 came from a Northwest Airlines worker who contributed a company bonus. Another contributor pledged \$10,000 from an inheritance.

The Capital Fund has made it possible to purchase a \$350,000 computer-to-plate system that is essential to cutting the costs and labor time needed to produce books in Pathfinder's printshop.

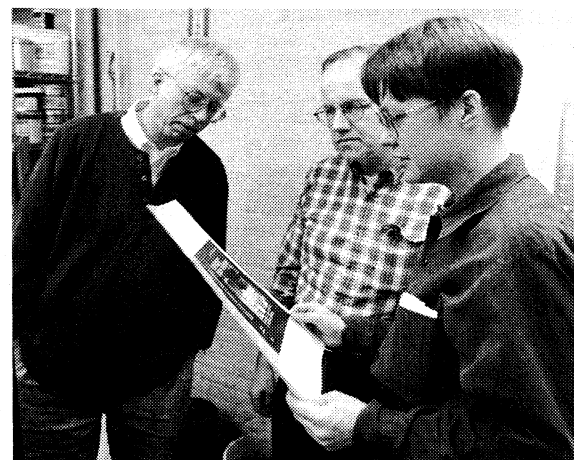
The first new book produced with computer-to-plate technology, *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*, is being printed and bound as this issue goes to press. The final text was turned in to the shop by the editors just before midnight Tuesday, February 23. The first signatures went on press at 3:30 p.m. the next day. Under the previous production methods, it would have then taken three to four days of three or four people's labor to get the book on press. As we go to press February 25, workers in the bindery are folding the signatures as they are finished, and two-thirds of the text of the 520-page book is printed.

In addition, the digital work and standardized templates produced by volunteers who are putting all Pathfinder titles

in digital form saved hundreds of hours of work and collaboration between Pathfinder and the printshop. Press operator Nell Wheeler was able to print the cover of *Capitalism's World Disorder* much faster, in part due to the precision of the digitally produced plates. The full-color cover — designed by volunteer Toni Gorton — was printed in just over six hours.

A special feature of the new book is a 36-page photo insert, containing more than 70 pictures illustrating many of the struggles by working people pointed to in the book. The opening photo is of an October 1994 solidarity rally in Decatur, Illinois, to support workers on strike or locked out at Caterpillar, Bridgestone/Firestone, and A.E. Staley. Other images include numerous labor actions by workers around the world, the struggles for Black rights and women's equality, the Cuban revolution, protests against ultrarightist Patrick Buchanan, socialist workers and youth bringing the *Militant* to picket lines and factory gates.

Pathfinder will be filling orders for the book February 26. Already supporters in Atlanta, Boston, and Houston have ordered about 30 each, 50 in San Francisco, and 75 in New York,



Militant/Megan Arney  
Nell Wheeler, who heads press department in Pathfinder printshop, checks the printing on cover of *Capitalism's World Disorder* with Pathfinder editors Mike Baumann (left) and Steve Clark February 20.

to begin discussing and selling this new tool for working people.

The additional \$136,000 for the Capital Fund is essential for further capital needs that must be deferred for now, as the funds are needed to meet a conjunctural cash shortfall as printshop workers work to reverse a serious drop in sales, increase productivity, and regenerate the capital.

To make a contribution, write to the Capital Fund Committee, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

# Palestinians resist Israeli occupation

## Discontent grows with antidemocratic measures of Palestinian Authority

(Second of two articles)

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS  
AND RYAN KELLY

SALFIT, West Bank — The rocky hilltop overlooking the Israeli settlement across the ravine was virtually flat and bare, its 200 olive trees uprooted by Israeli bulldozers about two months earlier. The same bulldozers had dumped dirt into the well, which the Palestinian farmers dug at a cost of \$1,500 years ago.

"The settlers came at night, in mid-December, with rifles. They were backed by Israeli soldiers," said Abdel Kharim Ahmed, showing his field to *Militant* reporters February 5. "I refused to leave the tent where I was staying. The bulldozer lifted the earth underneath, the tent, and me."

At the end of the confrontation, Ahmed, whose family has farmed this piece of land and surrounding areas for generations, escaped uninjured. He has vowed to continue the fight to prevent the nearby Zionist settlement from swallowing up his land and thousands of acres of other Palestinian farms.

"Look, we've started replanting trees," Ahmed said, pointing to the higher tier of the field.

"We are under occupation by the Israeli colonizers who have the help of the west, especially the government of the United States," said Ibrahim Alkam, the other Palestinian farmer who confronted the Israeli bulldozers in December along with Ahmed. "But we are not afraid. They'll take this land over our bodies."

The battle of Palestinian farmers and their supporters here to slow down or prevent further land confiscation by Tel Aviv has gotten attention throughout the West Bank. It's typical both of the furious Israeli drive to expropriate land and settle it with Jews, and of the determined resistance by Palestinians.

Salfit, in northern West Bank, just south of Nablus, is made up of 19 villages with a population of 55,000 Palestinians. The Jewish population in the 16 Zionist settlements in the region has now surpassed 50,000. The largest is Ariel, with 20,000 settlers and a number of factories in it — a 40 percent growth since 1993, when the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) signed the "peace accord" with Tel Aviv.

"In fact they are planning to increase Ariel's population to 30,000 in the next two years," said Abu Shar, another farmer whose land, near the settlement's border, faces the immediate prospect of expropriation.

### Battle over land intensifies

After years of legal battles, the farmers of Salfit won a court order a decade ago declaring that settlers could not confiscate planted Palestinian lands. But an Israeli military judge annulled that ruling in 1991, in the wake of the U.S.-led war against Iraq, and ordered the Palestinians to form a com-



Militant/Argiris Malapanis  
Palestinian farmers Abdel Kharim Ahmed (left) and Ibrahim Alkam on Ahmed's field in Salfit, West Bank, February 5. Zionist settlers from Ariel settlement on facing hill, seen in the background, and Israeli soldiers uprooted his 200 olive trees and destroyed encampment where the farmers and their supporters had organized a 15-month-long vigil to prevent further land confiscations by Tel Aviv. "We are not going to give up," said Ahmed, pointing to upper tiers of field where they had started replanting.

mittee and negotiate all land disputes directly with the Ariel settlers. The settlers have never showed up at a single scheduled negotiation, we were told. They have instead used their paramilitary units and support by the Israeli army to take over more and more Palestinian lands.

After repeated protests by thousands of Palestinians in the mid 1990s, settlement activity slowed down substantially for about three years, said Bashir Amret of the Palestinian Agricultural Relief Committee (PARC) in the Nablus area. PARC raises funds to help farmers build roads to their fields and plant idle lands. According to Israeli law, any land not cultivated for 15 years becomes automatically Israeli state property.

In the fall of 1997, however, farmers found out that the settlers were breaking ground for a new road that would cut through numerous Palestinian olive groves. That's when Abdel Kharim Ahmed and Ibrahim Alkam set up a tent on Ahmed's field and moved there from their house in the village. The encampment was used as the site for rallying support from throughout the West Bank. "Even dozens of progressive Israelis joined our protests several times," said Shar.

Last November, after Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu signed the Wye River Plantation agreement with Palestinian National Authority president Yasser Arafat, Ariel Sharon, who was later named foreign minister, and other politicians in Tel Aviv called on settlers to accelerate the seizure of Palestinian lands. The Wye accord called for further redeployment of Israeli troops in the West Bank and turning over another 13 percent of territory to Palestinian control. But in early December — as U.S. president William Clinton visited Bethlehem, Gaza, and Israel to drum up support for the flailing "peace process" — Netanyahu declared that Tel Aviv would not meet the deadlines it had agreed to on redeploying its troops. It was shortly after that announcement that the Israeli bulldozers plowed into Ahmed's field.

The Israeli regime tries to justify the expansion as a natural growth of existing settlements. But the Israeli organization Peace Now has published figures showing that the number of unoccupied apartments on existing settlements would be sufficient to accommodate "natural growth" of their population through the year 2002.

### 'Peace accords have been a sham'

"All the peace accords have been a sham," Ahmed said. "Israel's settlement policy has intensified, rather than abated, as a result of the peace process. And it doesn't matter whether Labor or Likud runs the government." Since the Oslo accord was signed, the number of settlers in the West Bank and Gaza has jumped to 170,000. Including East Jerusalem, the total number of settlers in the occupied territories now exceeds 320,000 —

a 50 percent increase since Oslo — among a Palestinian population of 2.5 million. According to Peace Now, most of this increase, occurred under the Labor Party government of Yitzhak Rabin from 1992 to 1994.

Even in the Gaza Strip, where the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has assumed security and administrative control on a majority of its territory, Israel now owns about 40 percent of the land.

In addition to military might, the occupiers use crude tactics to force Palestinians to concede and leave their villages. In the Ariel settlement, for example, plastics and chemical factories often dump waste in surrounding areas with no regard for the impact on the environment or Palestinian agriculture. Driving toward Salfit, hunks of melted plastic and chemical waste could be seen in a few gullies among Palestinian fields.

Even the names of settlements are often used as an affront to Palestinian dignity. Maale Makhmas (higher Makhmas), a settlement between Jerusalem and Ramallah, is one such example. "Makhmas is the name of the Arab village on the facing hill," said Mohammad Barakat, who was driving with *Militant* reporters. "They not only take the land, but steal the Palestinian name and tack 'higher' on to it to show superiority."

Palestinian resistance is the only obstacle to a wholesale Zionist expropriation. The status of Salfit, for example, is not yet determined through the Israeli-PLO negotiations. Salfit is not under Palestinian Authority control. At the same time, the settlers' plans to set in stone that the villages will remain under Israeli military rule have been thwarted so far by the struggle of the farmers.

### Explosive situation in Hebron

Israeli settlement policy has created quite an explosive situation inside one of the largest cities in southern West Bank — Hebron. The PNA now has control of all major cities in the West Bank. These areas, called "A," are surrounded by the "B" territories, which are under joint Israeli and Palestinian patrols. The rest of the West Bank, over 80 percent, dubbed "C," remains under Israeli rule.

The city of Hebron, however, is itself divided in areas under PNA control, "H1," and Israeli control, "H2." The occupying forces maintain 3,000 troops inside the city to "protect" 200 Israeli settlers living in four to five spots near the city center and another 200 Jewish children bused into school from other Zionist settlements outside city limits. Many Palestinians among Hebron's 150,000 population live in the occupied neighborhoods.

Under the Hebron agreement, struck after the Oslo accord, Israeli troops control 20 percent of the city. Driving inside city limits one has to pass through a maze of Israeli and Palestinian military checkpoints. A big section of Shuhad St., one of the main streets full of Palestinian shops, is closed off to Palestinian cars. It has been the site of many clashes between rightist settlers and

Palestinians.

It's a setup crying out for conflict. One the fiercest confrontations took place in March 1998. That's when a group of settlers broke through a border police roadblock and entered the PNA-controlled area, smashing windshields and house windows and attacking pedestrians, even as Israeli troops chased after to coax them back to H2 territory. As Palestinians gathered and began throwing stones at the attackers, they faced the wrath of Israeli troops. Na'el Shyukhi, a Palestinian journalist who works for Bissan Press in Hebron and who showed us around in the city, was shot and wounded by three Israeli rubber bullets during that incident, along with seven other Palestinian reporters. All eight were hospitalized.

Palestinians are not taking the attempted intimidation quietly. On February 5, Israeli bulldozers demolished two Palestinian homes on the outskirts of the city on the grounds they did not have proper licenses — among the approxi-

mately 550 houses demolished since 1993 throughout the occupied territories on the pretext of "security" or lack of building permits. While we visited the city two days later, the Palestinian owners had begun rebuilding one of the houses with support from others.

Palestinians often put their lives on the line to stop the Israeli bulldozers. Israeli troops fatally wounded 23-year-old Zaki Ubaied January 26 while his house was being demolished in the Issawiyeh village on the outskirts of Jerusalem. Ubaied died in the hospital the next day. Another 27 "unlicensed" houses are slated for demolition there, creating the prospect of another explosion.

### Campaign to release political prisoners

Land grabs, tree uprootings, and house demolitions intensified since Arafat and Netanyahu signed the Wye accord, said Jamal Cafi, a student at University, outside Ramallah, in a February 4 interview. "So did our protests."

Cafi, Qifah Fani, and Fadi Abdelnour were among 20 students who waged a four-day hunger strike on campus, beginning December 7. The students launched the action in solidarity with Palestinian prisoners. More than 2,000 Palestinian political prisoners in Israeli jails had gone on hunger strike two days earlier to demand their freedom. Their action followed numerous demonstrations demanding release of the prisoners in November.

The Wye accord, signed in October, included a pledge by Tel Aviv to release 750 Palestinian political prisoners. But the Israeli regime claimed it never made such an explicit promise. It released instead 250 inmates, 150 of whom were convicted of common crimes such as robberies. The remainder were political prisoners whose terms were about to expire.

For students at Birzeit, imprisonment for political activity is common, Fani said. During the *intifada*, the five-year-long uprising against Israeli rule in the occupied territories that erupted in 1987, nearly 90 percent of the 4,000 Birzeit students did time behind bars. Today, 41 Birzeit students remain in jail, including two who are in administrative detention — that is, held for indefinite periods without charges or trial.

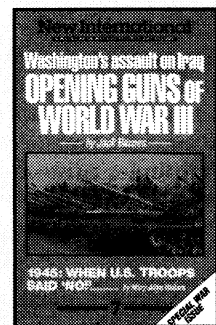
According to Najah Duqmaq of the Ramallah-based Mandela Institute, 2,400 Palestinians are behind bars today for political offenses.

While the hunger strike demanding the prisoners' freedom was going on, Israeli troops shot and killed Nasser Erekat, a Palestinian student, while he was standing on the roof of a building in Ramallah. "Classes first, and then exams, were immediately suspended," Fani said. "About 2,000 people, most of them students from Birzeit, showed up at Erekat's funeral, turning it to a political demonstration. Other marches followed. We ended the hunger strike to focus our en-

### Pathfinder

#### Opening Guns of World War III

Washington's Assault on Iraq  
Jack Barnes



The U.S. government's murderous assault on Iraq heralded increasingly sharp conflicts among imperialist powers, the rise of rightist and fascist forces, growing instability of international capitalism, and more wars. In *New Internationalist* no. 7. Also includes "Communist Policy in Wartime as well as in Peacetime" by Mary-Alice Waters. \$12.00

Available from bookstores listed on page 12.



ergies on those street actions where we continued to press for the prisoner's release."

Prior to, and throughout this period, one of the main focuses of student activity had been getting support for the "Gaza campaign."

In 1994, soon after the Oslo accord, "The military authorities issued an order saying all permits of Gaza residents staying in the West Bank were canceled," Cafi said. "All of us from Gaza, mostly students, were told to go back immediately. But nearly 90 percent stayed. Many have since been arrested at military checkpoints."

This is one of the ways of separating Palestinians in the two areas under some PNA control — Gaza and the West Bank.

Palestinians from Gaza carry an easily recognizable red ID card. "You are branded if you have that," Cafi said, showing his ID. He estimated that 1,000 students from Gaza have remained in the West Bank illegally. The goal of the Gaza campaign has been to end restrictions for student travel between Gaza and the West Bank — through rallies at Palestinian universities and communities, protests at Israeli embassies abroad, and solidarity from student organizations internationally.

"We've just got a surprise," Cafi added, explaining that he and 300 other students had just gotten their permits reinstated and could supposedly travel to the West Bank again. Travel is not that simple, though, even with a reinstated permit. The day before we visited Birzeit, for example, one of these students traveling to Gaza was arrested because the information encoded in his ID showed he was blacklisted for other activities.

One of the ministers recently fired by Netanyahu, Yitzhak Mordechai, engineered the order for the student permits along with giving work permits to another 5,000 Palestinians from the occupied territories for jobs in Israel. "This is electioneering. Mordechai is simply trying to get support for his new party. But you've got to exploit differences among your enemies," said Cafi, referring to the splits in the ruling Likud party leading up to the May 17 Israeli elections. "The 300 permits is not what we want. But it's a small achievement."

#### Protests erupt after Clinton's visit

What these students, and others interviewed by the *Militant* in Bethlehem and Gaza City were most proud of, however, were demonstrations they held to protest Clinton's December 12-15 visit and the subsequent bombing of Iraq by U.S. and British planes.

The Palestinian Authority went out of its way to paint a picture of widespread support among the Palestinians for Washington, on which Arafat's forces has been increasingly relying to get backing in the Palestinian struggle for a homeland. The PNA distributed thousands of U.S. flags and lined up the streets with its backers for a "red carpet" treatment of Clinton. The largest such effort took place in Gaza, where Clinton participated in a Palestinian National Council meeting that approved the formal removal from the PLO charter of a clause calling for a democratic, secular Palestinian state throughout the occupied territories and Israel. It was a concession Tel Aviv had demanded.

"They distributed U.S. flags and we distributed lighters," said Ziyad Abbas, a Palestinian journalist in Bethlehem. "We knew sooner or later people would need them."

Abbas helped organize a march of 1,500 in Bethlehem on December 15 from Dehashia camp, the main refugee camp in the city, to Bethlehem's Nativity Church, tracing the route Clinton's motorcade had followed during his visit there. Demonstrators carried brooms and swept the streets along the way. "We wanted to show that the president of the imperialist government of the United States dirtied our land with his presence here," Abbas said. The protest received little coverage by the Palestinian media. The PNA's security forces tried to stop the march with no success. A few Palestinian policemen joined the demonstration, we were told.

A similar but smaller demonstration was held in Ramallah, prior to Clinton's departure, Birzeit students said. For the most part, however, the PNA's campaign of welcoming Clinton prevailed.

"Hours after Clinton left, though, we heard that U.S. and British planes were bombing Iraq," Cafi said. More than 2,000 people poured into the streets of Ramallah December 16 to protest the bombings. Similar demonstrations erupted throughout the West Bank and Gaza. They continued for several days. Burning thousands of U.S. flags that the PNA had distributed over the previous week became a feature of these actions.

This time, Palestinian students, workers, and others demonstrating confronted not



**Palestinian officers in Nablus, West Bank, prevent Palestinian protesters from clashing with Israeli troops guarding Joseph's Tomb in December. The police headquarters were then besieged, and the authorities shot and wounded 19 protesters.**

only Israeli troops but in several cities PNA police who tried to stop or limit the scope of the protests. The Palestinian Authority ordered a ban on the actions, as Abdel Aziz Shahid, PNA minister of supplies, confirmed in a February 6 interview in Gaza City. Shahid said he voted against the ban in the Palestinian cabinet.

"The PNA had a hell of a time in trying to stop the demonstrations," Cafi said. "Opposition to Clinton's war against our brothers in Iraq is deep. Many of us don't support the regime of Saddam Hussein. But it's Washington that's the aggressor, the main cause of grief for the Iraqi people."

Many students and others who maintain illusions that the U.S. government may be on the side of the Palestinian struggle for self-determination also took part in the protests. Saher Safi, for example, a student at Birzeit who comes from a wealthy family in Gaza, was among them. "Clinton's visit may have something good for us," Sahi said. "It was an implicit recognition of the right of Palestinians to have our own state. But the bombing of Iraq is another matter. I can't agree with that."

#### Discontent with Palestinian Authority

One student who asked that his name not be used said he was detained by Palestinian police after the December 17 protest in Ramallah and accused of being a "collaborator" because he told a foreign journalist at the protest he had the right to take photos despite orders to the contrary from Palestinian police. He was released after other students demanded his freedom. "How can they accuse us of 'collaborationism' when they are the ones bowing their heads to U.S. imperialism," he said.

Discontent with antidemocratic measures and practices of the Palestinian Authority, along with the realization that the PNA is going along to a large degree with Tel Aviv's efforts to use the "peace accords" to tie the hands of Palestinian fighters, has grown throughout the occupied territories under PNA control.

"The Palestinian Authority is now often carrying out the Israelis' dirty job," said Sami Swalhe, a worker in Gaza City who travels to Israel for construction jobs, in a February 6 interview. "Before the so-called peace process we had the intifada. We were relying on ourselves. Now we give the appearance to the world we beg the 'international donors.' And even the meager funds we get don't mean much improvement in the lives of Palestinians here."

While this was not a universal opinion, it was certainly a widespread view among workers, farmers, and students interviewed by *Militant* reporters. Gaza City does not have as desolate an appearance as six years ago. A number of streets that were dirt roads in 1993 are now paved. A few people say the sewage system is slightly better. But the improvements are only on the surface, as unemployment hovers between 40 and 60 percent, farmers have a harder time to export produce

because of denial of licenses by the Israeli regime, and fishermen are often detained by Israeli patrol boats at the sea.

What bothers many Palestinians the most are antidemocratic measures of the Palestinian Authority and new obstacles to pressing the struggle for self-determination institutionalized in the "peace accords."

"The Oslo accord was a bad agreement from the beginning," said Haidar Abdel-Shafi in a February 7 interview. He is the head of the Red Crescent in Gaza and was one of the main Palestinian negotiators in the initial talks with the Israeli regime in 1992-93. "It relegated the issue of the settlements to the final stage, thus leaving the Israelis an open field to continued land confiscations, which has been one of their main strategies in support of their territorial claims. It left open the issue of the political prisoners. It gave us very little control of our land. I disassociated myself from it in 1993 and called on chairman Arafat to halt negotiations. He chose a different course."

The Wye agreement put in place new strictures tying the Palestinians' hands, Abdel-Shafi said. One of its main purposes was to increase restrictions under which Palestinians live to keep people docile. One reflection of this was a presidential decree issued by Arafat November 19 and "dedicated to national unity and prevention of incitement." The decree forbids "illegal organizations," as well as "undermining the quality of life, agitating the masses to bring about change by illegal methods of force, incitement to civil strife, incitement to violate agreements made between the PLO and Arab and foreign countries."

Implementing this new law will be an Anti-Incitement Committee of Palestinian, Israeli, and U.S. government representatives. Many Palestinians also expressed dismay at the fact that the CIA is now involved in the "training" of Palestinian police. The November decree was issued to satisfy Israeli and U.S. demands that the PNA curtail "terrorism" and help Tel Aviv safeguard Israeli security.

The decree traces its legal references and precedents to, among others, "the Palestinian penal code No. 74 for 1936 and its amendments." This refers to the Emergency Defense Regulations issued by the British Mandatory Authority to punish Palestinian resistance, when Palestine was a British colony. "It was then adopted by the Israelis in 1948 for the same purpose," said Edward Said, now a professor at Columbia University in New York, who resigned from the Palestine National Council in 1991.

Abdel-Shafi, students at Birzeit, and many other Palestinians said arrests of opponents have become widespread by the PNA. Nearly 200 Palestinians are now being held in PNA jails under administrative detention, without charges or trial, as many as are held in Israeli jails. Abdel-Shafi is now on the board of the Palestinian Independent Commission for Citizens' Rights that monitors not only abuses of Palestinians by the occupying forces but by the Pal-

estinian Authority as well.

#### Bourgeoisification of PLO

These are manifestations of the increasing bourgeois character of the PLO leadership. This process began in the mid 1970s. In the following 15 years, a political toll was taken by the continued dispersion of the Palestinian people. The PLO built an apparatus throughout the Middle East and North Africa, hosted and financed by the capitalist regimes in those countries. The blows dealt to the PLO in Lebanon in the following years by the Israeli regime, the Syrian regime, and Lebanese bourgeois political forces had an additional disorienting and demoralizing impact on many in its leadership, turning their eyes away from the ranks of the Palestinian masses inside and outside Israel. The intifada, while drawing a new generation of youth into the struggle, did not forge a new leadership strong enough to replace the PLO apparatus. Those dominating the PNA today come from that apparatus, having returned from abroad.

Reliance on Washington has accelerated the bourgeoisification of the PLO leadership.

"The American government has yet to acknowledge the right of the Palestinian people to self-determination and independence," said Abdel-Shafi. "Their involvement here, the CIA included, is aimed at establishing peace on the terms of Israel. The Palestinian Authority is at best misleading the Palestinian people."

Abdel-Shafi was elected to the Palestinian Legislative Council in 1994. He resigned three years later when the executive branch refused to take any action against PNA ministers involved in misappropriation of government funds. Referring to this, PNA minister Shahid said in a rather unabashed way, "Yes we have corruption within the Authority. But we are no worse than the other Arab regimes in the region."

Class differentiation is also growing among Palestinians. Among the most ardent supporters of the PNA and its course are Palestinian businessmen, a few of whom have returned to the PNA-controlled areas from abroad in the last half decade. At the Tayebah brewery north of Jerusalem, for example, owner Nadim Khouri, who made money in the liquor store business in Boston in the 1980s, had high praise for Arafat and for Clinton's visit.

Ziyad Abbas and several other Palestinians, on the other hand, referred to officials in the Palestinian Authority and their beneficiaries as the "Oslo class." While unemployment is at an all-time high and living conditions for most Palestinians continue to deteriorate, a number of PNA officers live in newly constructed villas in Gaza.

This contrasts sharply with the overcrowded housing for Palestinians, especially in refugee camps. Nearly 40 percent of the Palestinian population in the occupied territories, about 1 million, live in 29 such camps — 21 in the West Bank and 8 in Gaza. These are Palestinians whose families were uprooted from what is today Israel when their villages were razed by the Zionist colonizers in 1948.

Under these conditions, support for Fatah and other organizations that have functioned in the PLO has been diminishing. Hamas, a bourgeois organization that advocates an "Islamic state" and has opposed the Oslo accords, has maintained a strong backing. Hamas attracts many youth and workers to its calls for an uncompromising struggle to end Israeli military rule. It is also opposed to a secular state where both Palestinians and Jews can live together. Today, Hamas backers have a plurality in all eight Palestinian universities in the occupied territories.

"This is a temporary phenomenon, due to the ebb of the struggle," commented Mohammad Barakat.

#### 'We won't give up'

Despite the setbacks of the last decade, however, Palestinian resistance to Israeli occupation remains unbroken. Most Palestinian working people are not cowed or crushed and continue to press their struggle for self-determination forward.

As Abdel Kharim Ahmed, the farmer in Salfit, put it, "We are not going to give up."

"The Palestinian Authority acts as if they'd like those of us with a revolutionary perspective in the struggle for a Palestinian state to stop or go away," said Jamal Cafi. "But we are not going away."

Progress in the Palestinian struggle for self-determination will depend both on the ability of these fighters to forge a new leadership and revolutionary developments in other parts of the world, which will have a decisive impact on this process.

# A handbook for workers and farmers who reach for solidarity, offer to fight with others

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

*We are at the beginning of struggles that will bring profound changes. And because this is only the beginning, we can make the mistake of not seeing it soon enough, of not responding by radically changing the understanding and — above all — the timeliness with which we act today from our starting point within, and as part of, a militant vanguard of working people.*

A Sea Change in Working-Class Politics  
Jack Barnes, December 1998

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

"A Sea Change in Working-Class Politics," the opening chapter of *Capitalism's World Disorder*, is the real introduction to the pages that follow.

In that talk, given to the closing session of the Young Socialists convention and conference in Los Angeles, California, in December 1998, Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes emphasized a central feature of today's reality.



Militant/Jacque Henderson

Rally to support locked-out oil refinery workers at Crown Central Petroleum in Pasadena, Texas, in February. Other combative workers and farmers came in solidarity, like the women shown above, who are catfish workers fighting unjust firings at Freshwater Farms in Belzoni, Mississippi, and Eddie Slaughter (fifth from left), a leader of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association, which is fighting for farmers' land and against discrimination by U.S. Department of Agriculture. "The emerging pattern is taking shape, defined by the actions of a vanguard resisting indignity and isolation, whose ranks increase with every single worker or farmer who reaches out to others with the hand of solidarity and offers to fight together."



Militant/Floyd Fowler

Members of United Steelworkers of America check out Pathfinder books while on the picket line at Continental General Tire in Charlotte, North Carolina. "Today what matters is our ability to use the space that has been opened, to apply what we have come to understand, and to respond with a working-class course of action."

"A new pattern is being woven in struggle today," he noted, "as working people emerge from a period of retreat, resisting the consequences of the rulers' final blow-off boom, of 'globalization' — their grandiloquent term that displays imperial arrogance while it masks brutal assaults on human dignity the world over. The emerging pattern is taking shape, defined by the actions of a vanguard resisting indignity and isolation, whose ranks increase with every single worker or farmer who reaches out to others with the hand of solidarity and offers to fight

**"This is a handbook for workers and farmers everywhere who increasingly recognize themselves as part of a new vanguard of toilers and for young people attracted to proletarian struggles who find their lives transformed as they become part of them."**

together."

There is a new mood and growing confidence among clusters of vanguard workers and farmers from one end of the country to

how the wretched world in which we live came to be, how it was imposed on us, and how we can overturn it and build something new.

changes that swept world politics between the October 1987 near-meltdown of the world's stock markets, and the so-called Mexican peso crisis that hit in December 1994, coinciding with the first government default in the United States since the Great Depression, the Orange County, California, bankruptcy filing.

During those seven years from 1987 to 1995, the world the twenty-first century inherits was born. From the fall of the Berlin Wall to the disintegration of the Stalinist apparatuses in the Soviet Union; from the defeat of the white-minority apartheid regime in South Africa to the strengthening of socialist Cuba's world vanguard role; from the brutal and destabilizing imperialist assault on Iraq to the opening of the twenty-first century Balkan Wars; from the bursting of the Japanese economy's miracle "bubble," to the sharpening economic and social indigestion suffered by the German capitalist rulers as they tried to swallow whole the east German workers state — the post-World War II pattern of the twentieth century came to a convulsive end. The outlines of the major forces whose contradictory interrelation already marks the course of the world class struggle had emerged. A historical watershed is now behind us. Today what matters is our ability to use the space that has been opened, to apply what

## About this special feature...

This *Militant* features the preface by Mary-Alice Waters to *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*, by Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes. Last week's issue highlighted the preface to the new edition of *El rostro cambiante de la política en Estados Unidos*, the Spanish-language translation of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions*, also by Barnes. Members of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists are using both of these documents as part of the discussions they are having with interested working people and youth they are organizing to bring to the 40th constitutional convention of the SWP, to be held April 1-4 in San Francisco.

Branches of the SWP are also discussing these and other documents as the political basis on which to elect convention delegates at the end of March.

Another important document whose political line will be put before convention delegates for discussion and vote is "A Sea Change In Working-Class Politics," the summary talk given by Barnes at the closing session of the Young Socialists convention and conference held in Los Angeles in December 1998. It was published in a special *International Socialist Review* supplement to the February 15 *Militant*.

*Capitalism's World Disorder*, issue no. 11 of *New International*, featuring the 1990 SWP resolution "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War"; and *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* are also being read and discussed as part of the convention preparations. One chapter of *Capitalism's World Disorder*, "Youth and the Communist Movement," a 1992 report adopted by a fusion convention of the Communist League in the United Kingdom and young socialists groups there, was published in the *International Socialist Review* as part of the Febru-

ary 22 *Militant*.

SWP and YS members are actively selling the two prefaces published in the *Militant* and the special *International Socialist Review* supplement to workers, farmers, and young people interested in these ideas and in attending the San Francisco convention. "A Sea Change in Working-Class Politics" can be purchased for \$1.00 or in Spanish for \$2.50 in the march issue of *Perspectiva Mundial*. The *Militant* issues containing the other documents are \$1.50 each at the nearest Pathfinder bookstore (see listing on page 12) or from the *Militant* at 410 West Street, New York, NY 10014.

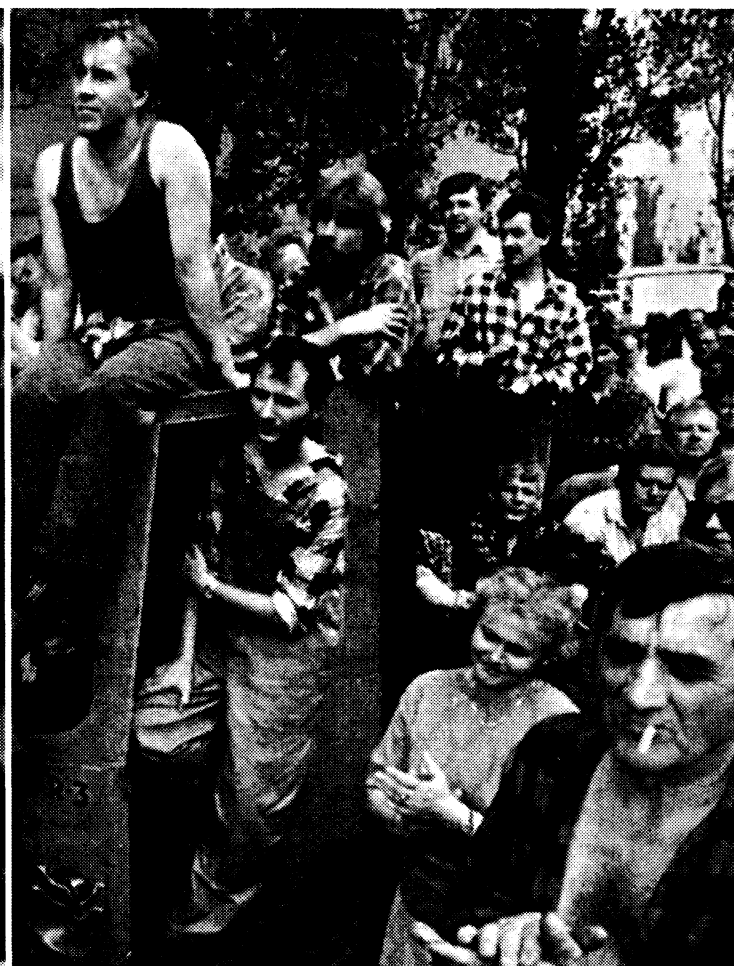
The Socialist Workers Party convention and socialist conference will be held at the downtown San Francisco Hilton. For more information, contact the SWP branch nearest you or the communist league in your country (see addresses on page 12).



we have come to understand, and to respond with a working-class course of action. We and all others will be judged, daily and uncompromisingly, by the needs of the struggles of the workers and farmers vanguard forming itself across the United States.

If the new millennium was born prematurely, its first wail was heard as the New York stock exchange plunged 500 points on October 19, 1987, losing 23 percent of its value in one day. The tremors rocked financial markets and capitalist confidence around the world. But when all was said and done, the October 1987 crash remained a market event that most capitalists soon recovered from. It was not yet the opening of an accelerated worldwide economic and social crisis, devastating the lives of millions, with repercussions on every level of financial, banking, trade, and production relations, as well as on the unfolding of political and military conflicts.

The 1987 crash did announce the inevitable that was coming. The opening of the "Asian crisis" ten years later — from Jakarta



"The 1987 crash did announce the inevitable that was coming. The opening of the 'Asian crisis' ten years later — from Jakarta to Moscow — confirmed that the future had arrived and was now irreversible." Left, workers in Bangkok, Thailand, protest layoffs and worsening economic conditions, Sept. 14, 1997. Right, workers in Gdansk, Poland, where Solidarity union movement rose against Stalinist regime, protested plans to close the bankrupt shipyard June 12, 1996.



David Yard, at microphone, a member of the United Mine Workers on strike at Freeman United Coal Co., joins in the discussion at conference held in conjunction with Young Socialists Third National Convention, December 1998.

to Moscow — confirmed that the future had arrived and was now irreversible.

Most importantly, along with that reality has come the growing resistance of the toilers worldwide, including in the imperialist centers. A shift in mass psychology has occurred. It marks every new struggle, every anticipation of the spread and polarizing results of rightist initiatives, every gesture of solidarity, every use of political space to advance discussion and unity among workers and farmers who have gone into action.

Among proletarian militants who are engaged in scattered actions now a communist party is being prepared. Currents and individuals, from different pasts, are finding out about each other and reaching in practice today toward a unified future, a political future. They are being led toward each other by the need for mutual solidarity and broader understanding of the forces behind a seemingly chaotic, conspiratorial world. Through broadening and accelerating this process, any current claiming to be communist must stand, act, fight, and be counted. Within this multifaceted effort, for a revolutionary-minded toiler nothing is impossible; outside of it, all one can do is hide for a while — more and more denying even the knowledge that such change is occurring. In one direction lies the line of march along which a communist party will be forged. In the other is the drift of the League of the Just into self-induced oblivion.



Each of the presentations collected in this volume was discussed and adopted by con-

globe, to discuss and deepen their understanding of the unfolding class struggle as they were in the very process of responding to its demands. In editing them for publication the sequence of points has sometimes been rearranged, and questions and discussion that took place during meetings on the same subject in different cities have been combined, but there is nothing in these pages that a reader who attended the events at which these talks and reports were given would not have heard and even joined the issue from the floor or raised their hand to vote on. As a result, this book in fact reflects the experiences of a party, not just the views of a speaker.

*Capitalism's World Disorder* should be read as a companion volume not only to the second expanded edition of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions* by Jack Barnes, published in 1994, but also together with issue no. 11 of *New International*. The centerpiece of that issue of the magazine of Marxist politics and theory is a resolution adopted by the Socialist Workers Party in August 1990. Entitled "U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War," it lays out in thesis form the main lines of change in world politics and the working-class response to them — the same themes developed throughout the talks in the present volume.

A great deal of discussion went into selecting the title for *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*. At least one young worker who saw the proposed subtitle raised with the author that he thought it was a mistake for the communist vanguard to publish a book this year with the word millennium in its title. It would be taken on the street for one more crank, conspiracy theory volume, he pointed

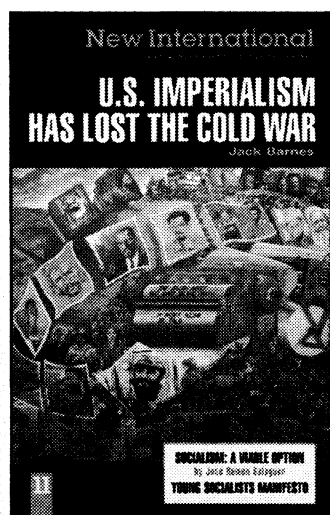
out, one more recipe for evasion of reality by the toilers. Young people especially are being pounded by reactionary hype poured out by the tons as the clock ticks toward a moment of no more significance than the turning of a calendar page. It is all designed to divert the oppressed and exploited from understanding, uniting, and — above all — doing something to confront the real world of social misery and economic devastation in which we live. After considering all the arguments, it seemed that far from being a drawback, however, these were good reasons to take the "millennium" diversion head on.

Yes, the working class does have an answer to the crisis felt by hundreds of millions at the millennium; it is a course of action that is based not on mysticism and superstition but science. A course that depends not on gurus but the unification of fighters.

*Capitalism's World Disorder* may be the only millennium title on bookstore shelves today whose purpose is not to obscure but to clarify. The social devastation, financial panics, political turmoil, police brutality, and military assaults accelerating all around us are not chaos. They are the inevitable products of lawful — and understandable — forces unleashed by capitalism.

But the arrival of the future capitalism has in store for us is not inevitable. It can be averted by the timely solidarity, courageous action, and united struggle of workers and farmers conscious of their power to transform the world. The urgency with which we act on this understanding today to guide the forging of a communist leadership will be decisive. This book has been written to help bring that future closer.

February 1999



## New International

A MAGAZINE OF MARXIST POLITICS AND THEORY

NEW INTERNATIONAL NO. 11

### U.S. Imperialism Has Lost the Cold War

Jack Barnes

◆ IN THIS ISSUE: **Ours is the Epoch of World Revolution** Jack Barnes and Mary-Alice Waters ◆ **Socialism: A Viable Option** José Ramón Balaguer ◆ **Young Socialists Manifesto** \$14.00

### The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions

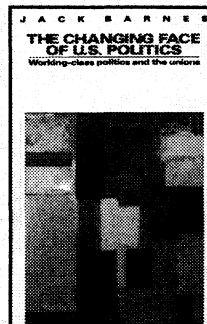
JACK BARNES

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## FROM PATHFINDER





# Farmers meet in N. Carolina

Continued from front page

U.S. farmers as a whole. They face the same conditions as all working farmers — low commodity prices, debt, and threat of foreclosure — plus the added onus of racist discrimination. Over a 15-year period from 1978 to 1992, farmers who are Black lost half their land — down from 57,000 farms and 4.2 million acres of land in 1978 to 18,816 farms and 2.3 million acres in 1992.

The meeting consisted of two plenary sessions and workshops. Of the 120 participants, 80–90 were farmers, the biggest number of them from North Carolina and Georgia. Smaller groups of farmers came from Alabama, Oklahoma, South Carolina, Texas, and Tennessee. Students, academics, trade unionists, farm activists, and a few lawyers also attended.

During the first plenary discussion, BFAA president Gary Grant pointed to the large agribusiness monopolies that exploit working farmers. "This fight is not just about the Black farmer, it is just as much about all family farmers," he said. Grant noted that New York dairy farmers, most of whom are white, are being foreclosed on at an accelerated rate. In addition, Grant said, the BFAA was proud to stand up for the locked-out Crown oil workers in Texas, who just held a successful rally marking the third anniversary of their struggle.

## 'We need moratorium on foreclosures'

"Right now I'm being jammed by the bank, who's ready to pull the plug on me," said Wayne Alexander, a farmer from Stafford, Texas. "We need a moratorium on all bank foreclosures. We need to get the word out that we mean business." A later plenary session adopted the call for a moratorium.

"We want our day in court," said Eddie Slaughter, a leader of the BFAA and a farmer from Georgia, "and we demand that the government pay punitive damages." Slaughter brought to everyone's attention the fact that the settlement does not allow discovery motions, a legal procedure through which farmers could collect evidence that could be used in trial proceedings. As it stands now, the burden of proof is on the farmers.

For example, the claim sheet farmers must fill out to apply for redress reads, "Identify... the name and address of each white farmer who was situated similarly to you, and state in detail the specific manner in which your treatment was different from the treatment accorded each such white farmer."

Not having the tool of discovery makes this nearly impossible. "How are we supposed to get this information?" asked one farmer at the meeting.

"This is one of the main reasons we should reject the settlement," said Stephon Bowens, executive director of the Land Loss Prevention Project (LLPP), organized by the North Carolina Association of Black Lawyers. "Most of you won't be able to get the information you need. What's in the consent decree does not set the stage for getting financial relief." The LLPP has filed an ob-

jection to the consent decree on behalf of 150 farmers. A February 12 press release by the LLPP explains the reasons for the objection:

- "The proposed Consent Decree does not provide relief to all affected black farmers. Relief is limited to those black farmers who complained between January 1, 1981, and December 31, 1996.

- "The proposed compensation does not cover the average black farmer's outstanding debt not owed to the USDA which is a direct result of the discriminatory actions/omissions by USDA.

- "The proposed Consent Decree does not require USDA to admit its liability or discriminatory practices.

- "The proposed relief is not equitable among the class members; it fails to account for the farmers' individual actual damages and lost opportunities.

- "The proposed Consent Decree does not require systematic change by USDA. There is no requirement that USDA employees who openly and blatantly belittled, misinformed, ignored, threatened and otherwise discriminated against black farmers will be sanctioned and/or terminated despite well documented incidents of discrimination."

## Need to reach out to other farmers

Farmers at the conference realize they are a distinct minority up against the USDA, the Clinton administration, a battery of well-paid attorneys, the big-business media, as well as the NAACP, the AFL-CIO officialdom, the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund, mainstream farm groups, and a host of others.

How to confront this was taken up at the workshop entitled: "What do Black farmers and landowners want." The clearest position was presented by Thomas Burrell, a longtime farm leader from Covington, Tennessee. He stressed that in addition to racial discrimination, which he called a "lesser crime," the main crime is the fact that farmers who are Black are losing their land. (see below).

At the workshop, Burrell described organizing farmers in his home state. "Most were lulled to sleep by the settlement lawyers, who have convincing arguments. These farmers think they are going to get \$50,000," said Burrell. "We organized a meeting of 50 farmers and invited Stephon Bowens, who explained why the settlement should be op-

posed. Finally, there was another version beside the USDA one," said Burrell. "These farmers have heard both sides, and many are against it now."

Burrell also talked of the need to reach out to farmers who are directly affected by the settlement, more than to the NAACP and churches. "They are selling this settlement all over the South," he said.

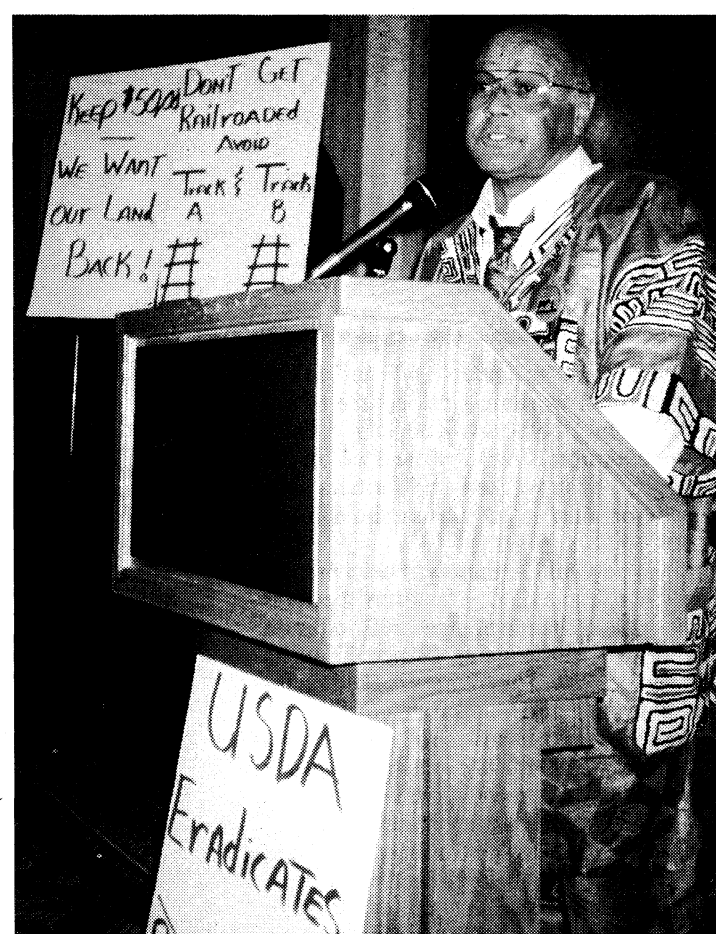
"Everybody is saying take the agreement. We need to go to these meetings with placards protesting the settlement and talk to farmers," he said.

To underscore the point, Burrell brought a dozen placards that he and other farmers used at an Albany, Georgia, meeting the previous weekend.

The February 13 meeting in Georgia, sponsored by the Federation of Southern Cooperatives/Land Assistance Fund (FSC/LAF), was designed to sell the settlement to the affected farmers. Despite opposition from FSC leaders, Burrell led a group of farmers into the meeting who held there signs up during the entire meeting. More than 700 farmers attended.

"We came in a bus with farmers from Tennessee and Arkansas. By picketing inside the meeting farmers came to us with questions and found out the truth. If we hadn't protested, they wouldn't know what was going on." During the BFAA meeting Burrell was talking up the need to protest the next meeting to sell the settlement, which will take place in Pine Bluffs, Arkansas on February 24.

Five more meetings of this character are planned in March. The meetings, all of which are scheduled from 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., include: **Orangeburg, South Caro-**



Militant/Susan LaMont  
BFAA president Gary Grant speaks at February 19–20 conference. Signs were made by Thomas Burrell and others to reach out to farmers in Georgia the week before.

lina, March 4, Smith, Hamilton, Middleton Memorial Center; **Fresno, California**, March 5, Law Offices of Richtel & Smith; **Baton Rouge, Louisiana**, March 10, Southern University and A & M College Smith-Brown Memorial Union; **Langston, Oklahoma**, March 18, Langston University, Multi-Purpose Building; and **Memphis, Tennessee**, March 23, Martin Luther King, Jr. Labor Center.

The meeting ended with a clear vote on opposing the USDA settlement and working to organize the largest turnout possible at the March 2 hearing in Washington, D.C. Gary Grant was elected president of the BFAA and Eddie Slaughter was elected vice president. Farmers left the meeting determined to make March 2 a rallying point for advancing their struggle for justice on the land.

Frank Forrestal and James Harris are members of the United Transportation Union.

# Sweden: farmers protest low prices

BY CATHARINA TIRSÉN

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — Driving their tractors through Halmstad, a town in the south of Sweden, 150 farmers demonstrated January 23. "Low pork prices will increase crisis," read one of the placards on top of one of the tractors. The following day 100 farmers marched in Gothenburg to the home of local regional governor Göte Bernhardsson. That evening and the evening

of January 25, farmers lit bonfires — a traditional signal of alarm — along highways leading to Gothenburg and Stockholm.

Earlier on January 25, more than 1,000 farmers rallied at Vakasala Square in central Uppsala, some 70 kilometers north of Stockholm. Hans Jonsson, chairperson of the National Farmers Community (LRF) said, "Farmers in Sweden carry an added backpack in the shape of extra taxes on elec-

tricity, petrol, diesel, and fertilizer, which other farmers in Europe are not burdened with. This backpack must go. We can't wait any longer." On January 26 some 250 farmers from around the country went to the House of Parliament in Stockholm to attend a hearing of the Agriculture Commission. Part of the overflow crowd had to watch the hearing on screen in a hall nearby. That day, 800 farmers joined a protest in Malmö.

The protests coincided with a decision January 14 by Swedish Meat, owned by farmers cooperatives linked to the LRF, to close two plants in Varberg and Luleå. Four hundred packinghouse workers will lose their jobs. The low prices of pork have hit farmers and pork production especially hard. Pork is not subject to price regulation, unlike beef, milk, and other agricultural products in the European Union.

Anders Ekström, a young farmer who works on his father's farm outside Örebro, told *Militant* reporters who visited him January 19 that pork prices have dropped from 17 kroner in June 1997 to 9 kroner today (1 kroner = US\$0.13). Recently, Ekström and his father took a substantial loan to build a new pigsty with room to produce 2,500 pigs a year. "When we took the loan, we calculated that we would need to sell at 12 kroner per kilo to cover our costs," Andres explained. Supporters of the *Militant* were invited to visit Anders and his wife Anna after having met them distributing leaflets in the street in downtown Stockholm.

"Nowadays, I can take out only 45.50 kroner an hour in wages — before taxes," Anders said. "Of course, I would be a fool to work for that kind of money. I should get 80 kroner an hour. But this is my father's farm, which my family has owned for generations. And I don't want to be the one that breaks the chain. Times just have to get better."

Catharina Tirsén is a member of the Metal Workers Union.

## Farmer to judge: deal is 'totally inadequate'

Below are excerpts from a letter of objection to the proposed consent decree sent to U.S. district judge Paul Friedman by Thomas Burrell, a farmer in Covington, Tennessee. Friedman presides over the class-action discrimination suit against the USDA.

According to U.S. Census Bureau figures, in 1910, "thirty-five years after slavery," Black Americans had acquired approximately 16,000,000 acres of farmland in the United States of America.... However, today there are less than 20,000 Black farmers in this country. Even more alarming is the fact that these farmers now own less than 3,000,000 acres of farmland in their community, according to U.S. Census figures....

Contrary to popular opinion, the 16,000,000 acres of land mentioned above which was purchased by Black Farmers was not the result of financial credit received from the agencies above mentioned. Nor did Black Farmers achieve that level of land ownership because they were shrewd Wall Street investors. The reason Black Farmers were

able to acquire 16,000,000 acres of farm land in 1910 is due to, among other things: (1) the efficiency and proficiency which Black Farmers had mustered, developed, and otherwise acquired during hundreds of years of farming for their slave masters; and (2) every member in the family, large and small, young and old, participated in the planting, cultivating, growing, and harvesting of the crops; and (3) the need by white landowners, who were devastated economically by the civil war, to generate income. In other words the 16,000,000 acres was bought and paid for by long and arduous days and nights of back breaking work, blood, sweat, and tears....

The Secretary of Agriculture, Dan Glickman's admission of racial discrimination toward Black Farmers is nothing more than an admission of guilt to a lesser crime, as it were. The real crime committed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture is not of discrimination against Black Farmers, but is one of defrauding and expropriating land from Black America with the assistance of the local county committee men and women who were... in league with the now discontinued Farmers Home Administration; African American participation on those com-

mittees notwithstanding.

The tentative settlement between Black Farmers, through their attorneys of record, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture is not, by any stretch of the imagination, indicative of the value of land which has been taken from Black Farmers. Even at a conservative figure of one thousand (\$1,000) dollars per acre, sixteen million acres (16,000,000) of land would be worth sixteen billion (\$16,000,000,000) dollars....

When we divide the \$375,000,00 by the 16,000,000 acres that Black Farmers have had taken from them, they would be receiving in settlements from the USDA Twenty-Three (\$23.43) Dollars per acre; in other words *two cents (\$0.02) on the dollar....*

This settlement Sir, is not only a disgrace to Black Farmers but is totally and completely inadequate to accommodate the losses the Black Farm Community has suffered. We hope, therefore, that you will not allow such inadequate, incomplete, and defective relief to become of record in the chronicles of American Justice. Thank you.

Thomas Burrell, et al



# Unionists honor life of UAW fighter at Cat

BY CAPPY KIDD

EAST PEORIA, Illinois — Rodney Garman, a member of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 974 and one of the central rank-and-file leaders of the UAW fight against Caterpillar, died in a Chicago hospital February 15 after a lengthy illness. Funeral services followed by a reception were held here February 19.

"I buried him with his union jacket and his 'Illegally Terminated' union hat," said Linda Garman, Rodney's wife and co-fighter. "During visiting hours a worker from the Tazewell strike came and put one of their fundraising pins on Rodney's coffin. I told my son to pin it on Rodney's shirt. Rodney was straight union. I wanted him to be buried straight union. That's how he was."

After the service, a covered dish supper was organized at the UAW 974 union hall for Garman's family, friends, and co-fighters. Following the reception, several members of the Tactical Response team talked with the *Militant* about Garman's role in the Caterpillar struggle and other battles.

Members of the UAW at Caterpillar plants in Illinois, Pennsylvania, and Colorado waged a 163-day strike in 1992 and a 17-month strike in 1994-95 against the company's arbitrary firings and unfair labor practices. Despite voting down a management contract offer by 81 percent, strikers began returning to work in December 1995 after top UAW officials called off the walkout. In March 1998, a contract was ratified in a close vote after the company backed down and agreed to reinstate 160 workers it had fired during the battle. The two-tier setup and other concessions in the contract are being resisted today by many of the unionists and new hires.

Garman was a founder and core leader of a rank-and-file committee known as the Tactical Response team, nicknamed the "Blue Shirts." Originating out of UAW Local 974 in Peoria, Illinois, during the second strike in 1994, the Blue Shirts fought to mobilize the power of the union ranks in the battle against Caterpillar and other workers' struggles.

"We started out with 18 or so people, meeting in basements and back yards at first," said fellow Blue Shirt Bill Wheat.

"Rodney always felt there could be something better for working people," said Ron Heller, another Blue Shirt. "He would never give up, even when many others were ready to throw in the towel."

"The thing that was unique about Rodney was that he had no fear," added Jim Peacock, also part of the group. "Most people, myself included, will second-guess and think things over. Once he believed a cause was just, Rodney was committed. He had no fear of the management, of the cops, of Vance Security, or the threats of being fired."

Wheat explained that at the height of the strike in 1994-95, the Blue Shirts grew to about 250 people throughout the Caterpillar system. Of these, about 50 were on a list of "core people," including Garman. Wheat said, "These were the people you could depend on, who went through the 1992 strike and felt we needed something more organized this time."

Peacock described one of the Blue Shirt activities, "There were about 30 of us who would regularly picket [at the General Office, or G.O.] and confront the corporate officers who were leading the attack against our union. Rodney was always on this team. Don Fites, the CEO, and the other corporate officers were afraid of this picket line. They would enter the parking lot scrunched down in the back seats of their cars, their faces hidden behind newspapers. They preferred to be anonymous. They didn't like coming face to face with the workers they were attempting to screw over. Fites was annoyed at having to enter through the garbage door."

## Built links with others' struggles

The Blue Shirts, from the beginning, reached out and made links with other workers' struggles. In 1995 they supported members of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union on strike at a Lamont, Illinois, oil refinery. They backed a strike of UAW foundry workers in 1997 in Vermont, Illinois. "We backed workers in the UPIU at

Trailmobile in Vandalia, Illinois," Wheat added. "We found out that Caterpillar was sending scabs from Cat to cross their picket lines."

Early on in the United Mine Workers of America strike last year against Freeman United Coal, the Blue Shirts invited the strik-

tion during which he was forbidden to come within one block of any Caterpillar facility, attend any union rallies, or approach any company officials in public places. During this probation, he continued to attend meetings of the Blue Shirts but could not go to the picket lines.

UAW international and local leadership. Even though the March contract proposal called for the reinstatement of the illegally terminated, Garman felt that the rest of the contract made unnecessary concessions that would seriously weaken the union.

Garman, who in his youth wanted to become a teacher, wrote numerous letters championing the workers' cause. Several of his letters were published in Peoria area papers. One of these letters, which was published in the *Peoria Journal-Star* and reprinted in the Jan. 25, 1999, *Militant*, was titled "Caterpillar Wants To Crush Working People's Aspirations."

In it he says, "Why should the Cat struggle matter to you? Because the struggle at Caterpillar was a battle over the direction of our society. Cat's assault on its workers is part of the attack on all working people, whatever your job, wherever you live. Cat workers were fighting not just for themselves and their families, and for the generation of workers who are

passing on and for the younger workers yet to be. Concessions demanded by Cat are designed to undercut the power of workers in the future.

"Caterpillar's long-range strategy is one of the capitalist elite to crush working people's aspirations for a better world. The Cat struggle has shown that the whole system of elite power is the enemy."

Garman worked at Caterpillar for 32 years and had for a

brief period accepted a job as a supervisor. Linda Garman said her husband had early on relinquished the supervisory position when he was told how Cat expected the supervisors to treat the employees.

Linda said both she and Rodney were a lot happier when he went back to being a worker.

Blue Shirt Kenny Whetstone said, "He couldn't treat people the way Caterpillar wanted, and got out. If you've got the kind of principles he had, you could not divorce yourself from the things Caterpillar wanted."

When the second contract proposal was approved in March 1998, Garman returned to work. "He wore his 'Illegally Terminated' hat or his blue team hat everyday," said Linda.

In August 1998, he traveled to Chicago to participate in a Militant Labor Forum on developments in the labor movement. Upon his return, Linda Garman said, "he started talking to other people about what was happening in the world. Up until the very end Rodney still wanted to fight. 'It's not over yet,' he would say."



Michael Reeser

Rodney Garman was a founder and core leader of the Tactical Response team, or "Blue Shirts," who have fought to mobilize the power of the union ranks in the battle against Caterpillar and other workers' struggles. Above, workers fired by Caterpillar during the UAW strike. Garman is in the front row, fourth from the left. Right, Garman (left), at fund-raising picnic for illegally terminated UAW members.

ing miners to one of their weekly meetings. Blue Shirts regularly made trips to the UMW picket lines in central Illinois. Tom Smith, another Blue Shirt, said "A big group of us went to the October 11 UMW solidarity rally for the miners in Virden. Rodney was there. He helped with all of these fights."

Recently, the Tactical Response team has been organizing solidarity for the 82 strikers at Tazewell Machine Works among Caterpillar workers and others in the region.

One of the central issues of the 1994-95 Cat strike was the arbitrary firing of union members who stood up to the company. "Caterpillar fired Rodney about four times. Whenever there was a picket line incident, Rodney would be blamed, whether he was present or not, and mailed another letter informing him that his job was terminated," said Peacock.

"Terminated" workers, including Garman, traveled to earth-moving equipment trade shows to get out the union's side of the story. They would work the trade show floors wearing Caterpillar-yellow T-shirts that read "Ask me about Cat."

On Aug. 1, 1995, Garman was arrested and charged with assault for bumping into a Vance Security guard as both were crossing the street at the morning picket outside the G.O. Though witnesses on the scene said the Vance guard initiated the contact, Garman was the only one charged.

"When we learned that Rodney had been arrested, 40 to 50 Blue Shirts quickly gathered at the Peoria County jail to demand his release," said Wheat. "However, we had to wait three days to get him out because the sheriff's department would not tell us how much the bail was supposed to be." Meanwhile, the Blue Shirts sent teams to his house to protect his family.

"It was while we were waiting in the lobby of the county jail that we learned from inmates that Caterpillar had been hiring convicts as strike breakers. A bus would pick them up at the jail, take them to Cat, and back to jail after the shift. If they missed the bus, a deputy would take them to work," Wheat said. When the Blue Shirts tried to contest this, they were told it was illegal to use state and federal prisoners as scabs but legal to use county prisoners.

Wheat recalled, "The other inmates treated Rodney with great respect. They had all heard he was a striker from Caterpillar. The first night he was in jail he missed his meal. The inmates gave him food from the vending machines. He wasn't given a bed to sleep on that night, because the jail was so overcrowded, so one of the inmates gave him his bed."

Charged with assault and threatened with a four-year prison term, Garman was advised by the attorney hired by the UAW international to plea-bargain the charges. He was fined \$750, had to serve two more days in jail, and was sentenced to two years' proba-



Smith recalled, "The Blue Shirts would recruit other strikers by talking to them on the picket line. That's how Holly [Smith's wife] and I got involved. We learned to take our knowledge to other unions and tell them what to expect. We realized you have to have the wives involved. You have got to have the support groups. Wives came to every meeting."

"I was right there with Rodney on the picket line," Linda Garman told the *Militant*. "When finances were difficult, Rodney would say, 'This is a fight we have to go through and we'll find a way to make it.' And we did."

Smith continued, "Rodney was always one that stood up. He would do whatever was necessary to defend the union and win the strike. He knew how far he could go. He set an example and was an inspiration to me and hundreds of others. When I decided to join the Blue Shirts I had already decided that I wanted to be just like Rodney."

In February 1998 and again in March, Garman vigorously campaigned for a 'No' vote on a contract recommended by the

## Rodney Garman: a vanguard combatant of the working class

BY JOEL BRITTON

CHICAGO — I met Rodney Garman at the Militant Labor Forum here last August 1. Rodney was on a panel that included fellow Blue Shirt Tom Smith.

The topic was "Union Fightbacks Deepen" and the meeting hall was packed. Special guests included Socialist Workers from all over the United States active in unions in the meatpacking, rail, and oil industries. A half dozen Young Socialists from Sweden were also in town, taking part in a volunteer effort to refurbish the Pathfinder bookstore and learning about the class struggle in the United States. I understand Rodney asked some time later how the youth from Sweden were doing.

Garman and Smith spoke at length on the long fight of their union against Caterpillar and offered their experiences and

example as vanguard combatants of the working class to all those present. They passed out copies of the letter to the editor that Rodney had gotten published in the Peoria paper (see accompanying article) and Rodney read this manifesto of sorts as part of his talk. He was real proud of it. And, he said, "We're with you" if we can actually take on the powers that be "all the way." After the presentations and a lengthy discussion period, informal discussion with these fighters continued past midnight.

Working people honor the memory of Rodney Garman every time we join together at strike picket lines and solidarity events.

Joel Britton is a member of the Trade Union Committee of the Socialist Workers Party.

# Cops attack Mississippi strikers

BY SUSAN LAMONT

BIRMINGHAM — Willie Evans and Donald McGhee, members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 303L in Natchez, Mississippi, were roughed up by police and arrested for "disturbing the peace" February 17. Evans described what happened in a recent telephone interview.

"We were at a job fair sponsored by the Mississippi employment service," Evans said. The fair was held at the Natchez Convention Center. "Between 40 and 50 of us went down there to pass out flyers about our strike and hold a rally in front of the Titan Tire booth." Some 200 USWA Local 303L members have been on strike since Sept. 15, 1998, fighting to defend their union and win a decent contract from Maurice Taylor, the new owner. Workers at another Titan plant in Des Moines, Iowa, are also on strike.

"At about 10:00 a.m. we began to chant in front of the Titan booth. We chanted, 'Who are we? Steelworkers! What do we want? Contract,' and other chants. After 15 or 20

seconds, the police came. They told us we had to leave and so we started to leave. We were chanting as we marched out.

"We were marching out, about three wide, in a line going out the door," Evans continued. "We got to the edge of the walkway and were heading to our cars. None of the strikers were refusing police orders. But all of a sudden, they started to grab hold of individuals. Most people shifted free and left.

"But then they grabbed me, took my walking cane, twisted my left arm, and sprained my left index finger. They shoved me on the back of a car, and one policeman jumped on my back. Then five of them attacked me. I said I wasn't doing anything, but they handcuffed me and put me in a police car. At that point, one officer took my cane and waved it at other picketers, threatening them. 'Back off if you know what's good for you,' the cop said. He even threatened one of the ministers who was with us."

McGhee was also arrested, when he was 200 feet from the convention center, Evans

said. Both were taken down to the police station, finger printed, and booked. Meanwhile, no attempt was made to provide medical attention for Evans, who is using a cane because of an injury he sustained last September when he was struck on the picket line by a scab-driven pickup truck. Evans and McGhee are scheduled to appear in court February 24. McGhee has been arrested twice before during the strike.

"There was no reason for the police to act the way they did," Evans said. "They had no right to attack us, to handle us the way they did. We were acting in a just cause."

Evans has been active in the Titan Tire strikers' outreach activity, including a recent visit to the locked-out Crown Central Petroleum refinery workers in Texas. Evans, who is also a farmer, is working to bring farmers from his area to the March 2 rally in Washington, D.C. (see front page article).

Susan LaMont is a member of USWA Local 2122.



Militant/Jacque Henderson

Willie Evans, one of the arrested Titan strikers, at Texas rally to back Crown workers.

## RMI strikers win support in fight against union busting

Continued from front page

nounces, "RMI WILL NOT NEGOTIATE WHILE THE VIOLENCE CONTINUES."

Police at first claimed five of those arrested February 12 had tried to force their way into the plant, and that one man was carrying a piece of metal that could be used to break car windows. When the seven arrested workers pleaded innocent at their arraignment February 16, the police admitted that none had tried to get onto the company property. All seven, most charged with disorderly conduct, are free on bond with their next hearing scheduled for March 24.

Following the confrontation on the picket line, Trumbull County common pleas judge Peter Kontos ordered production stopped at the plant for a one-week cooling-off period, saying "violence has reached a level that the law enforcement cannot adequately handle... and thus there exists an immediate danger to the citizens of this county."

Production resumed February 22.

Meanwhile, on February 19, Federal Judge Peter Economus granted a sweeping temporary restraining order against the union at the request of the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). The order prohibits strikers from engaging in mass picketing for one mile in either direction on the road in front of the plant. It also bans strikers from using "video cameras, film, or digital cameras," or writing down license numbers on cars going into and out of the plant. Strikers report that the company, meanwhile, still videotapes the strikers.

The NLRB also asked that U.S. Marshals act to enforce the restraining order "because of the local authorities' inability to deal with the situation." The judge agreed. A hearing on whether to turn the restraining order into a permanent injunction began February 24 and was scheduled to reconvene the next day. Strike supporters had to pass several cop cars parked at both ends of the plant and in fields along the road before arriving

at the February 21 rally.

### Solidarity from other workers

Members of USWA Local 1375 at WCI Steel and International Union of Electronic Workers (IUE) Local 717 at Delphi-Packard in Warren, Ohio, came to the rally. Also present were members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) from the GM Lordstown plant, members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), the United Electrical Workers (UE), and many others.

Speaking before the crowd, a representative of nurses at Trumbull Memorial Hospital thanked Steelworkers for the support they contributed to the nurses' victory in their nine-day strike last November. "If [Local] 2155 fails, we all fail, so get out and spread the word and build support for this strike," he added.

To loud cheers, Irma Roberts told the rally of the need to keep fighting for a decent pension. Her husband Joe, who worked for RMI for 33 years, died six months ago. His \$100-a-month pension leaves her with \$55 after health insurance premiums.

Four members of Teamsters Local 24, on strike against East Manufacturing in Randolph, Ohio, drove to the rally after hearing about it at their union meeting. "We came to show our support for a union in the same situation as we are," said Troy Valesko, a member of the bargaining committee. Four hundred members of their local have been on strike against the trailer manufacturer since January. One demand of the striking

Teamsters is a 58-hour cap on the workweek. They said that seven-day, 70-hour weeks were common. "They don't respect our families, they don't think that we have lives other than work," said Duane Bowker.

A spirited group of UAW members, fresh from an organizing drive victory at the K-Mart distribution center in Warren, came "to show our support for our brothers and sisters because they deserve the same dignity and respect we fought for," said Thom Dorff. "By joining forces it gives them a big shot in the arm. There is strength in numbers."

Dorff and the other workers said they fought for a union for three years, beginning the organizing drive in February 1996 with the Teamsters union. After four votes, they were victorious on January 29, winning representation by the UAW. When asked what the final vote total was, they began chanting "328-234," explaining this became their union chant after the votes were counted.

In one year "125 people turned around and voted for the union," explained Dorff. More

than 100 workers took part in the organizing committee. They are now getting ready to begin negotiating for their first contract.

Three of the other 13 K-Mart distribution centers are unionized, one by the Teamsters and two by the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE). "We're looking forward to hooking up for a national contract," said Dorff.

Clint Adkins and Brandon Sersich were among several high school students present. Adkins told the *Militant*, "We came to show support for our friend's father, who's on strike. It's not right to throw someone out of a job."

Negotiations resumed with a four-hour meeting between the union and the company February 22. Both sides agreed to meet again three days later. Already the strikers have announced plans for another rally March 28. For more information call USWA Locals 2155 and 2155-7 at (330) 652-0288.

Kevin Dwire is a member of the UAW. Mike Fitzsimmons is a member of UNITE.

## MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

### BRITAIN

#### London

**Palestinians: 'There is no Peace': an Eye-witness Report from Palestine.** Speaker: Anne Howie, just returned from *Militant* reporting trip. Fri., March 5, 7 p.m. 47 The Cut (tube Waterloo). Donation: £2. Tel: 0171 401 2409.

### NEW ZEALAND

#### Auckland

**The Euro and 'Mega Mergers': Aspects of Imperialist Rivalry.** Speaker: Terry Coggan, Communist League. Fri., March 5, 7 p.m. 203 Karangahape Road. Donation: \$3. Tel: (9) 379-3075.

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101515,2702

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### NEW ZEALAND

**Auckland:** La Gonda Arcade, 203 Karangahape Road. Postal address: P.O. Box 3025. Tel: (9) 379-3075. Compuserve: 100035,3205

**Christchurch:** 199 High St. Postal address: P.O. Box 22-530. Tel: (3) 365-6055. Compuserve: 100250,1511

### SWEDEN

**Stockholm:** Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St Eriksplan). Postal code: S-113 42. Tel: (08) 31 69 33. Compuserve: 100416,2362

## CALENDAR

### FLORIDA

#### Brooksville

**The Battle of Black Farmers Against Discrimination.** Speaker: Gary Grant, president of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association, director of the National Land Loss Fund. Sun., March 7, 4 p.m. Mt. Pleasant Mission Baptist Church, 27064 Church Road. Tel: (352) 799-4133. **Miami**

**The Battle of Black Farmers Against Discrimination.** Speaker: Gary Grant, president of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association. Sat., March 6, Program 7 p.m., Reception 6:30 p.m. Church of the Open Door, 6001 NW 8th Ave. For more information, call: (305) 866-2662.

**The Fight of Black Farmers to Keep their Land.** Speaker: Gary Grant, president of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association. Mon., March 8, 3:30 p.m.-5:30 p.m. Florida International University (south campus), GC 150

### NEW ZEALAND

#### Christchurch

**Socialist Education Day. Celebrate International Women's Day! The Fight for National Rights Today.** Sponsored by the Communist League and Young Socialists. Sat., March 13, 2 p.m. Pathfinder Bookshop, 199 High St. Donation: \$3. Tel: 365 6055.



**Maybe it was a recording** — Lillian Mills, 81, of Canada's Ontario province, was taken aback when she phoned the Health Insurance Plan. The voice at the other



Harry Ring

end told her that she was dead and if she used her insurance number she would be defrauding the government.

**Anglicans at war** — The Anglican come-to-church Easter poster of

Che with a crown of thorns has sparked a war of words in the church. Rev. Tom Ambrose, a director of advertising, declared: "We want to get away from the wimpy little Nordic figures in a white nightie." Rev. Peter Mullen, chaplain of the London stock exchange, responds, "The example of the real Jesus is not adolescent trendiness but mature obedience.... I suggest: 'Grow up. Come to church at Easter.'"

**Or at least an error** — "Portraying Christ as a Communist revolutionary is verging on the blasphemous." — Julian Brazier, Conservative member British parliament.

**Insurance career, anyone?** — We're late on this: Gertie

Witherspoon of Adrian, Missouri, was killed by a truck last summer. Tiny and spry at 81, she was still putting in 50 hours a week at a restaurant. Driving to work, one of her tires blew. Dazed, she got out and was killed by an oncoming truck. Afterward, her daughter got a \$2,800 damage claim for "negligence" from the truck's insurer. "I'm not paying them for killing my mom," she said. "I'll go to jail first."

**Try busting rich people** — Findlay, Ohio, isn't doing well with its "pay to stay" plan for jail inmates. Last year they squeezed \$15,000 from prisoners, about 3 percent of the asserted cost of housing them.

**Catch 22.com** — About that Free-PC.com offer of 10,000 free commuters to people willing to let them track their web surfing. There is a snag. You have to fill out an application at the company's web site. You don't have a computer or access to one to do this? Tough situation.

**Plain talk** — Pittsburgh's Northgate High is featuring his and hers "honors" bathrooms — pink toilet covers, gold-plated faucets, scent, Muzak. But you don't need good grades to use them instead of the regular dilapidated latrines. Get a key by signing a card pledging not to smoke or trash the place. Break the rules and get a 10-day key suspension. One student said he didn't intend to apply. "Either way," he

said, "I'm gonna go to the bathroom if I have to."

**Too busy cracking heads?** — "LONDON — Policing costs have risen to £115 a year for every man, woman and child on England and Wales, but the number of crimes solved by each officer is falling." News item.

**It can really pile up.** — "The Vatican owes \$23 million to Rome's municipal sewer company, which said they would have acted long ago if it was an ordinary customer. But not the Vatican, which asserts that free water services were included in the 1929 Lutheran treaty establishing the Vatican as an independent city-state within Rome.

## The Kurdish struggle for national self-determination

The following selection on the Kurdish struggle for national self-determination is excerpted from "The Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's Assault on Iraq," the lead article in issue no. 7 of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist*. The article is based on a talk given by Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes on March 30, 1991, just weeks after the U.S.-organized slaughter of the Gulf war in Iraq. It is copyright © 1991 by 408 Printing and Publishing Corp. Reprinted by permission.

BY JACK BARNES

The U.S. rulers' military "victory" put an international spotlight on another unresolved fight for national self-determination in the region — that of the Kurdish people. Prior to the Gulf war the Kurdish struggle had largely been in retreat, having been dealt repeated defeats over the past half century by the Iraqi, Turkish, Iranian, and Syrian

Washington's shifting relations with regimes in the area, especially Baghdad and Tehran.

The Kurdish people took advantage of the weakening of the Saddam Hussein regime as a result of the war to press forward their struggle once again, holding many villages and towns — including the major city of Kirkuk — for a week or more in March. Baghdad used helicopter gunships and heavy armor to crush the Kurdish rebellion with ruthless brutality, causing two million or more Kurdish refugees to attempt to cross the Turkish and Iranian borders.

As we discuss here today, the U.S. and European imperialist powers have declared a temporary refugee "enclave" for the Kurds north of the thirty-sixth parallel in northern Iraq near the Turkish border. Washington is sending troops, Special Forces units, into northern Iraq to function as what amounts to little more than a police force for Saddam Hussein. Along with Turkish soldiers, the U.S. troops are forcing the refugees out of Turkey and off nearby mountains into ill-provisioned and barren transit camps. Washington's aim is to push the Kurds back to the towns and villages from which they fled.

At best, this enclave will be the temporary equivalent of an Indian reservation in the United States or one of the many blocked-off areas near Israel's borders containing Palestinian refugee camps. The imperialists share a common interest with the capitalist regimes in Baghdad, Ankara, Damascus, and Tehran in ensuring that such a "haven" for the Kurds is short-lived. All of them know that any more-or-less-permanent Kurdish area can only breed aspirations for more land that is justly theirs, as well as potential "intifadas" among young generations of Kurdish fighters. Bush will have nightmares about setting up a very large reservation, nightmares about a modern-day Geronimo leading a new breakout.<sup>2</sup>

This is another of the unresolved and uncontrollable social forces in the Gulf that has been unleashed, rather than contained, by the results of Washington's war against Iraq.

As we continue campaigning against imperialism and war today, we must call not only for "All foreign troops out of Iraq!" but also "Open the U.S. borders!" — to the Kurdish people and to all Iraqi and Kuwaiti refugees fleeing the Baghdad regime and the al-Sabah monarchy.

For the ruling class in Turkey, which joined Washington in the war against Iraq in hopes of winning trade favors and military aid and hardware, the results so far — nearly one million refugees pounding at its borders — are nothing short of a catastrophe. (The Turkish regime is also suffering major economic blows from honoring the continuing blockade, which shuts off Turkey's oil pipeline with Iraq and the resulting flow of funds into the state treasury.) These events have brought to

<sup>2</sup> Geronimo, an Apache warrior, was an outstanding leader of the struggle by the American Indian peoples against the U.S. government's genocidal policies and dispossession of Indian lands and rights. In May 1885 he and his followers broke out of the San Carlos reservation in Arizona, where they had been driven by U.S. government forces. They then went to Mexico, where they were ultimately pursued by five thousand U.S. soldiers, a force equivalent to nearly one-third of the U.S. army's combat strength, as well as thousands of Mexican army troops. Geronimo and a few dozen followers finally surrendered in September 1886. The entire band was then deported to Fort Marion, Florida.



Kurdish independence fighters in northern Iraq in 1991.

greater world attention once again the Turkish rulers' own suppression of the Kurdish people, until recently legally denied the right even to speak their own language in Turkey — and they are still denied the right to read, write, or be educated in Kurdish.

Above all, the Kurdish people have come to the center stage in world politics as never before, not primarily as victims, but as courageous and determined fighters for national rights....

The U.S. rulers did not anticipate the scope of the rebellions by Kurds and other oppressed toilers in Iraq, nor the bloody suppression unleashed by Saddam Hussein and its embarrassing media results at home.

But the most important point is that such matters were never part of Washington's calculations one way or the other. The U.S. rulers have no interest in the national rights of the Kurds. The depth of the national pride and determination of the Kurdish people — like that of the Palestinians and other fighting peoples — is a mystery to them; it will always catch them by surprise. To the contrary, Washington's interest is in forging stronger ties of imperialist domination with a subjugated Iraqi government and with other historic butchers of the Kurds: the Turkish government, the Syrian government, and, to the degree possible, the Iranian government.

## —25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

### 25 CENTS THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEETLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

March 8, 1974

The strike of Chicano clothing workers against the Farah Manufacturing Company ended Feb. 24 with a resounding victory.

Farah, based in El Paso, Texas, with other plants in San Antonio and Victoria, Texas, and Las Cruces, N.M., is one of the largest producers of men's slacks in the country. The Amalgamated Clothing Workers union began organizing there in 1969, and after repeated firings of union activists 3,000 workers, mostly women, walked out in May 1972.

Instrumental in the success of the strike was a nationwide boycott of Farah pants that forced the closing of four of the nine Farah factories and reduced sales from \$164-million in 1971 to \$132-million in 1973. The price of Farah stock fell from \$30 a share to as low as \$3.25. The boycott received widespread support from the trade-union movement, church groups, and the Chicano movement.

The strike settlement came after mounting public pressure forced Farah to allow a company-wide poll of its workers, including those laid off and those on strike. Sixty-three percent signed union pledge cards.

The settlement provides for the rehiring of the 3,000 strikers and full recognition of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers union as the bargaining agent for Farah workers. Striking workers will be paid \$30

a week by Farah — the amount they were receiving in strike benefits from the union — until they are rehired.

### THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

March 7, 1949

TOLEDO, Feb. 25 — Unemployment figures show a steep rise in the past week in this area. From an estimated 7 to 8,000 jobless workers the number has jumped to over 10,000. Willys-Overland Motors, the largest plant in town, is expected to shut down for two weeks and according to Richard Gosser, UAW Vice President, will recall only 4,200 workers and not 10,000, the number recently employed.

Meanwhile, hundreds of unemployed workers filled the Unemployment Compensation office, overflowing into the streets. The congestion was so bad Wednesday morning that the officials requested groups of workers to wait outside in the street.

To illustrate the blind callousness of the corporation big shots who are sitting securely upon the huge profits made in the last several years, we quote the proposed solution of the president of the Textilcather Corp., Jules D. Lippman, who says: "If we could achieve a high rate of productivity in Toledo it would be a simple matter to attract new industries." While workers are being laid off in all parts of the country, all the bosses can think of is speeding up those still on the job.

<sup>1</sup> The Kurdish regime held power for nearly a year. When the Iranian monarchy moved to crush the two governments and reoccupy the areas in December 1946, the Soviet government opposed the resistance efforts by the Azerbaijani and Kurdish peoples. This led to a split in the Azerbaijani leadership, with the majority following Stalin's dictate and calling off armed resistance. The Stalinist leadership in Azerbaijan capitulated without a struggle. The fall of the Azerbaijani government quickly led to the fall of the Kurdish republic. Kurdish forces, however, organized a fighting retreat.

The retreat was organized by Mustapha Barzani, the military commander of the Kurdish Republic of Mahabad, who had earlier led Kurds from Iraq to join the republic in northern Iran led by Ghazi Muhammad. Fighting the shah's army, they crossed the border into Iraq, where they came under attack by the armed forces of the Iraqi monarchy backed by British imperialism. Barzani then led his forces in a fighting retreat through Turkey and Iran into the Soviet Union. They remained there until the overthrow of the Iraqi monarchy in the July 1958 revolution when they returned to Iraqi Kurdistan and continued the struggle for self-determination.

# Tosco: blood for bosses' profit

"Fatal blast renews criticism of Tosco." "Five are killed in Explosion in Pennsylvania." "6th Ford Worker Dies From Injuries in Blast." These were national headlines in February alone. The Tosco Avon refinery in Martinez, California, where three workers died from a February 23 fireball, "maintained an unsafe workplace, had unsafe equipment, and permitted risky procedures to keep up production," said the *San Francisco Examiner*, citing a federal Environmental Protection Agency investigation of a 1997 disaster.

These catastrophes are not a "string of accidents" at industrial work sites, but are the results of the crisis-ridden system of the capitalist bosses, who always put the dollar sign ahead of the lives and safety of working people. The dog-eat-dog competition among the capitalists will intensify as the average rate of industrial profit continues to decline. This is behind the bosses' drive to increase

inhuman hours, worsen working conditions, and push to lower our wages and benefits.

Under the pressures of accelerating competition, the Tosco bosses have caused five fatalities at their refinery in a decade, four deaths in the past two years. And the toll from the latest blast may still rise. For the profit barons, workers are simply beasts of burden who can be disposed of like a pair of worn shoes — chewed up, mauled, or incinerated as in the latest industrial explosions — for the sake of a good profit margin.

That's why the question of safety on the job is central to the labor movement. The working class fought bloody labor battles over the last two centuries to insist that human beings not to be treated like commodities. The fight for the unions to become instruments of struggle that defend health and safety on and off the job is a life or death battle to keep the capitalists from tearing us apart.

# SWP California State convention

Continued from Page 4

political developments among workers and farmers in the state," said Norton Sandler, organizer of the San Francisco SWP. Sandler noted that very limited progress had been made to date, with members in the state working in only a couple of packing and garment shops. Finding UFCW and UNITE jobs where there are party branches should be taken on as a top priority by the new state committee, Sandler stated.

Sandler proposed the state committee have overall responsibility for the party's work among exploited farmers and farm workers, and work in defense of the Cuban revolution.

In the days preceding the convention, a team of party and YS members from Los Angeles and San Francisco spent three days in the Fresno area. One stop was in Orange Cove, a town dominated by the Sunkist Co.'s orchards and packaging and shipping operation. A big freeze devastated the citrus crop earlier this winter. Sandler noted that those hit hardest are small farmers and farm workers in "Sunkist Country."

Team member Francisco Picado said 400 farm workers had turned out in Orange Cove, on February 19 when the team was there, expecting to hear U.S.-government proposals for dispensing food and other desperately needed aid to the thousands of workers hit hard by the freeze. The government official did not show up, Picado stated.

The team also sold 35 copies of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* to meat packers at the UFCW-organized Harris Beef plant, and another dozen to UFCW members at a sizable poultry plant. The team met with students at Fresno State University interested in building a tour stop for two young Cubans, Itamys Caridad Garcia Villar and

Luis Ernesto Mórejon Rodríguez, who have applied for visas to travel to the United States this spring in a tour organized by the Los Angeles-based Committee on Cuban Youth and Education. The California SWP and Young Socialists put working with others in the Fresno area to arrange a tour stop for the young Cubans as one of their central efforts in the coming weeks.

The California Young Socialists hosted a meeting during the state convention. Samantha Kern, a UFCW member in a meat-processing plant and YS California State organizer, reported on the work the YS had carried out in California since its national convention in December and put forward what could be done now to advance in California. The participants added several proposals to be carried out heading into the SWP's convention in April.

Manual González, a YS member in Santa Cruz, spoke in the convention discussion on the decisions of the state YS meeting. "The YS was adamant that there be a YS member on every trip to the coal mines and on all regional teams; Fresno and elsewhere," González said. The California State YS also passed motions on writing for the YS column in the *Militant*, participating in the upcoming state MEChA Chicano student conference, organizing report backs from international teams that YS members have participated in to Ireland and Palestine, producing T-shirts and organizing events to raise money for the YS nationally, and to propose to the YS National Executive Committee to open a Web page for the organization.

Before ending the SWP State convention, delegates decided on proposed state by-laws and elected a six-person state committee of Samuel Farley, Cecilia Ortega, Francisco Picado, Verónica Poses, Norton Sandler, and Gale Shangold.

# Washington postpones plan to bomb Yugoslavia, for now

Continued from front page

tal of Kosova, a spokesman for the Kosova Liberation Army (UCK) said the U.S. plan "would not bring peace in the Balkans" and would not "provide the Albanians with the freedom and rights they deserve."

During 17 days of talks in Rambouillet, Washington had tried to browbeat the Albanian and Serb delegations into accepting its entire proposal, including NATO troop deployments in Kosova. The negotiations stalled when the Kosovar representatives insisted that the "peace" plan include a referendum on independence.

After becoming furious over the Albanian intransigence to Washington's demands, U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright, who opposes independence for Kosova, called Adem Demaci, the UCK political representative, to demand he swallow the U.S. deal. The Albanian rebels, however, "did not get enough assurance that NATO would not be directed against them as well" as the Yugoslav army, an unnamed European diplomat told the *Washington Post*.

The UCK is fighting a guerrilla war for independence. Albanians, who comprise the overwhelming majority in Kosova, have faced severe repression from the regime of Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic. The Clinton administration has used Belgrade's efforts to crush that struggle as a pretext to prepare NATO intervention. The White House is letting Belgrade do its dirty work of conducting military assaults to demolish the Albanian fighters before preparing intervention in the Balkan nation.

The U.S. government began its latest war moves in the region after 24 Albanians were killed by Yugoslav government forces January 29 in the Kosova village of Rogova.

That same day the so-called Contact Group on the Balkans made up of government officials from the United States, France, Britain, Italy, Germany, and Russia adopted the U.S. "peace" deal.

The White House plan calls for limited "self-government," less than the autonomy scrapped by Milosevic in 1989. The plan also mandates the Albanian rebels to surrender their weapons over a six-month period.

If the Albanians approve the U.S.-crafted plan, "we'll have the NATO air trigger" back to impose the occupation army in Kosova, said U.S. state department spokesman James Rubin, referring to threats to bomb Yugoslavia.

Some 430 NATO warplanes, including 260 U.S. jets, are poised for military action in the region. Under Washington's occupation scheme, Kosova would be carved up into zones that would be controlled by 4,000 U.S. troops, 8,000 from Britain, 5,000 from France, and 4,000 from Germany.

The NATO occupation force planned for Kosova is a link in the U.S. military encirclement of the Russian workers state. It marks another step in Washington's preparations for a future military confrontation with Moscow in order to reimpose the system of wage slavery there and in other countries in Eastern Europe and other regions where capitalist property relations have been eliminated.

In response to U.S. war moves, Russian president Boris Yeltsin sent U.S. president Clinton a letter in mid-February opposing military action against Yugoslavia. Beijing, which is also hostile to bombing raids on Yugoslavia, will take over as chair of the UN Security Council March 1 — a move which could create diplomatic hurdles for U.S. military intervention.

# Northwest Machinists accept contract, gov't extends probe of unions

BY MARY MARTIN

WASHINGTON, D.C. — A proposed contract between Northwest Airlines and the International Association of Machinists (IAM) has passed, according to preliminary results announced by the IAM District 143 officials. Ground operations workers voted 3,277 to 2,038 in favor of the contract. Clerical and passenger employees voted the contract up 6,249 to 2,071.

Before the vote, IAM officials urged members covered in the agreement to vote "yes," so as not to face a possible several-month delay before negotiations would resume or the Federal Mediator would authorize a "30-day cooling off period," in other words, a countdown to a strike. Many IAM members said the new contract offer was worse than the one they rejected overwhelmingly last July. The company's latest offer increases part-time jobs up to 20 percent. Workers point out that over time, this will erode the number of full-time jobs and reduce overall wage and benefits levels.

Not included in the contract are 8,000 mechanics, cleaners, custodians, and other workers who were separated from the IAM in a union representation election that took place in November, which the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA) won.

## Federal mediation board probes unions

In a related development, the National Mediation Board (NMB) announced that it was extending until May 19 its field investigation into the IAM's challenge of the AMFA victory. During the representation election AMFA officials campaigned against what they termed the ineffectiveness of the IAM and also against the idea of labor solidarity and unity.

The IAM officials did not organize to lead a fight against AMFA's union-busting bid. Instead, hoping to outflank AMFA, the IAM tops set up a special, separate union district for the mechanics and cleaners, District 149, capitulating to the reactionary political course of AMFA officials.

AMFA national director O.V. Delle-Femine responded to the NMB's ruling in a letter to Northwest mechanics and cleaners. He stated, "This corrupt federal agency must and will be exposed by the media.... We must remember that this is not the company's fault; Our adversary is the [NMB]." He added, "We must not let them destroy your carrier." Delle-Femine said AMFA officials are planning a march in protest of the NMB's decision at Minneapolis St. Paul International Airport and to picket the Washington, D.C., NMB office. The effect of the IAM's challenge — besides indefinitely postponing contract negotiations for AMFA-organized workers — has been to open the door to a lengthy government probe into union matters.

Meanwhile, in a February 20 action a delegation of flight attendants tried to focus attention on their demands for a just contract with Northwest. Organized by Teamsters Local 2000, a group of nine flight attendants attempted to deliver petitions signed by 8,000 members to the company's negotiating team in session in downtown Minneapolis.

Federal Mediator Danielle Piculin initially shut the door in the face of Teamster's Local 2000 representative Billie Davenport, according to the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*. When Northwest company officials realized several media representatives were present, they quickly agreed to accept the petitions. Pay, work rules, and retirement pensions are key issues the flight attendants are demanding be addressed.

Mary Martin works on the ramp at Northwest at Washington National Airport and is a member of IAM Local 1759.

## Correction

A sentence in the preface to the new second edition of the Spanish translation of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*, printed in last week's *Militant*, said, "The best presentation of what a turn party is, what it does, and its continuity through generations back to the 1919 founding of communism in the United States, is found in Section IV of the present book, 'The revolutionary perspective and communist continuity in the United States.'" The section of the book that was intended is Section III, "Building a Party of Socialist Workers."



# Unionists rally for Tazewell strikers in Illinois

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

We invite you to contribute short items to this column as a way for other fighting workers around the world to read about and learn from these important struggles. Jot down a few lines about what is happening in your union, at your workplace, or other workplaces in your area, including interesting political discussions.

Chad Hartley, president of the striking local, thanked union supporters for coming, and told them to come back again March 1 from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m.

## Auto workers in France confront 'flex-time' plans

PARIS — "For a 35-hour, five-day work week, including the coffee breaks" and "No to flexible work hours, No to annualized work time," were the demands as 700-800 workers walked off the morning shift January 28 at Peugeot's

as "work time," although it would still be paid. This meant that Peugeot would only have to reduce "real work time" by one hour and 40 minutes to be in agreement with the 35-hour workweek law. Peugeot has promised to hire an additional 1,500 young people, but workers point out that increased auto sales would have forced some hiring anyway.

Negotiations on a similar plan are under way at Renault. In Renault's auto parts plant in the Paris suburb of Choisy-le-roi, workers have already defeated a company attempt to renew an annual plant agreement on flexible work time.

Opposition has been vociferously led by young workers on the motor assembly line. Many of them had previously worked as "temps," known as *interimaires* in France, working on temporary contracts for outside labor contractors like Manpower. At the Choisy plant, 13 percent of the workers last year were *interimaires* but only five young workers were hired on permanent Renault contracts during the year. Many of the younger Renault workers who had previously supported the flexible work hours agreement now argue that it gives Renault leverage to avoid hiring the *interimaires*.

## Boston transit workers: 'No contracting out jobs'

BOSTON — About 200 members of the Transport Workers Union (TWU) and several other railroad craft unions made their mark on a ceremony of the centennial of Boston's South Station January 19. Amid a bustling lunch-hour crowd the unionists chanted above State Transportation Secretary Kevin Sullivan and the Lieutenant Governor Jane Swift, "We want our jobs!" and "What are you hiding? Tell us the truth!"

The "truth" the trade unionists want is about deals they suspect are being made behind the back of the TWU by the Massachusetts Bay Transportation Authority (MBTA) to award a new contract for mechanical services at the commuter rail that contains massive job cuts. The union is calling for public hearings on this issue. There have been rumored threats by MBTA management for years to "outsource" the work of the mechanical department when the current contract expires.



Transit Workers Union members and other unionists protested possible job cuts during January 19 centennial celebration of South Station in Boston.

Amtrak has been contracted to run the service as a whole since 1987, and the 700 mechanics, mechanical helpers, and car cleaners affected are members of TWU Local 2054 together with the Amtrak Northeast Corridor mechanical workers.

The daily *Boston Herald* and *Boston Globe* both gave prominent coverage to the protest with an anti-union bent, including an editorial in the January 21 *Herald* editorial saying that the mechanics' noontime protest indicated, "They are not a very good deal for taxpayers."

The possible outsourcing deal has led to a lot of discussion among rail workers here. Working people are told to expect fewer of the socially necessary services like public transportation, and to pay more for it because, as the big business government argument goes, transportation must increase its profitability, or in Amtrak's case become "self-financing" by 2002. One car mechanic on the MBTA, Richie Poteau, said what is posed is "...a big challenge — to fight the MBTA with all the workers so divided into separate unions."

If the MBTA plan goes into effect, one Amtrak worker who did not want his name used pointed out, layoffs would displace many women and Blacks who are now car cleaners and in the TWU, most of whom have been hired in the last five years.

## Ontario hotel strikers protest cop harassment

CHATHAM, Ontario — The 250 strikers at Wheels Inn here took their battle against police harassment to the local government on January 25. The workers got hundreds of signatures on a petition citing "numerous

unnecessary police calls and police intervention on the picket line," where "several CAW [Canadian Auto Workers] members have been arrested for merely walking on the picket line... and the picket line has been overwhelmingly lawful and without major disturbance."

They asked that the "mayor and elected councilors of the municipality of Chatham-Kent demand that police be instructed to allow lawful picketing without interference; and further ask that all assaults against CAW members, including vehicles striking persons on the picket line, be investigated promptly and appropriate charges laid."

Picket captain Andrew Binga reported that 70 workers showed up for the city council meeting, with the prior understanding that a vote would be taken on hearing their plea. Chatham city council regulations stipulate that labor disputes are not to be discussed. Two and a half hours into the meeting, the city council members still had not voted on their request. The strikers learned that a secret vote was taken before the meeting against putting them on the agenda. The strikers walked out in disgust.

"They think it's a big joke.... I thought the city council was there to take care of the city. I found out otherwise. This issue is tearing the city apart," Binga said. Workers intend to press their fight. At least 27 people have been arrested so far.

Alyson Kennedy in Pekin, Illinois; Jacques Salfati and Nat London, members of the CGT near Paris; Linda Marcus, a member of United Transportation Union Local 1462 in Boston; and Marty Ressler and Bill Schmitt in Detroit contributed to this column.

## ON THE PICKET LINE

PEKIN, Illinois — At shift change February 15, the strikebreakers at Tazewell Machine Works here were greeted by 75-100 union members chanting "Union, union, union," and "We want Justice." This was the second rally to be organized in front of the plant within two weeks.

Members of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 2283 have been on strike since October 5 at Tazewell, which makes parts for Caterpillar. Members and retirees from UAW Local 974, which organizes Caterpillar workers in East Peoria, have been among the strongest supporters of the strike. UAW Local 974 had organized a chili supper fund-raiser for the strike the previous week. More than 400 union members from 20 different unions in central Illinois attended.

Five strikers from Lenc-Smith in Cicero, Illinois, traveled almost three hours to be part of the February 15 picket line. Another big group of union members came from the Pekin power plant where they do contract work. They are in many different unions and have been supporting the Tazewell strike with collections on the job.

Earl Ferguson, a member of Pipefitters Local 178, said, "If they can do it to them, they can do it to us. I remember in the early '80s when I was working at Chrysler outside of St. Louis, they cut our wages. We were supposed to help get Chrysler back on their feet." Chrysler workers "still haven't got it back," he added.

Dozens of members of IBEW Local 34, electricians working at the Pekin power plant, also came. Brian Perry, 27, said, "We heard about it from our union steward that morning at a safety meeting and decided to come." He said his father is on strike against Inco Alloys in Huntington, West Virginia.

After the shift change, Henry Cakora, the owner of Tazewell Machine Works, came out to thank the Pekin cops who were out in force to escort the strikebreakers.

Sochaux plant in eastern France.

At almost the same moment, workers at Peugeot's Poissy plant near Paris opened their monthly pay slips to discover that the normal reference to a wage "based on a 169-hour work month" had disappeared. Animated discussions led to spontaneous work stoppages blocking the motor assembly line for two hours.

Company representatives were unable to convince workers that the change in the pay slips was of no importance. In Poissy's press shop, Hamid Chliah said, "You don't have to have gone to school to know that they don't change the pay slips for no reason." Work stoppages continued in both factories the next day.

An agreement at Peugeot had been announced with great fanfare as the first major private company in France adopts the 35-hour work week and hires unemployed workers in the framework of a new government law. All unions at Peugeot except the CGT initially said they would sign the agreement. But Peugeot workers, by determined action including spontaneous work stoppages, forced union officials to renounce the agreement. In the end, even the company union at Peugeot, the CSL, refused to sign.

Since his election in 1997, Socialist Party premier Lionel Jospin has promised to reduce unemployment by lowering the working week from 39 to 35 hours. But the 35-hour work week law voted in June 1998 encouraged local negotiations that granted major concessions to the bosses, particularly allowing the 35-hour week to be considered as an annual average rather than as a fixed weekly schedule. In the proposed Peugeot agreement, the workweek could have been varied from three to six days at the bosses' discretion. Up to 23 Saturdays could have been imposed a year and not paid as overtime unless the annual average workweek was more than 35 hours.

In addition, Peugeot announced that the 22 minutes a day of coffee break would no longer be considered

Taipei, consisted mostly of very old men representing electoral districts inside of China. They were, needless to say, rather hard to unseat.

Talk of independence was viewed as defeatist. In recent years, a new, opposition bourgeois party claiming to support independence and to defend the rights of native Taiwanese has grown. The current president is from that party. The mayor's office in Taipei, however, was recently recaptured by the Kuomintang party. I don't think the "Taiwanese" have a program for independence. It's just a demagogic appeal by a section of the ruling class. I think it's viewed that way there, too. It also, of course, gives some substance to the "democratization" of the country.

I believe the capitalist rulers, with the limited room to maneuver world politics gives them, are simply positioning themselves to profit from

some Hong Kong-type relationship with China in the future. There is already a lot of Taiwanese investment in China. Many jobs have "left" Taiwan for China, among other places.

I visited Taiwan for a week and a half last year. It doesn't appear to be an armed camp. Less than here. I know there is politics there. My in-laws spoke of youth protest movements some years ago. My wife claims a majority wants to be a part of China. More than anything because it would be safer. Even the Taiwanese natives (excluding the real indigenous peoples; a very small minority) view themselves as Chinese. They are descendants of immigrants from Fujian, starting no more than 500 years ago, most much more recent.

Marty Anderson  
Brooklyn, New York

## Letters from prisoners

I'm curious about your publication entitled the *Militant*. I understand it's a socialist news publication. That is all I know. Would you please mail a complimentary issue or any subscription information you may have available? Any info is greatly appreciated. Many prisoners are interested in this publication.

A prisoner  
Soledad, California

I am interested in reading your publication in order to learn and inform myself on socialist issues and workers issues. I am currently in Pelican Bay SHU Unit in California, and am indigent. Also I read Spanish, so you can send me your issue in Spanish *Perspectiva Mundial*.

A prisoner  
Crescent City, California

The *Militant* offers reduced subscription rates to workers and farmers behind bars. A six-month subscription to the *Militant* costs \$6, and one year costs \$12. We send a free sample copy on request. Free complimentary subscriptions are sent on a first-come, first-served basis according to budgetary constraints. Contributions make these special rates possible for those who cannot afford regular rates. Please send your donation to: Militant Prisoner Fund, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

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.

## — LETTERS —

### Taiwan and China

In your article, "Clinton's missile plans raise tensions with Beijing" in the February 22 *Militant*, you state that since the 1949 revolution in China, "the capitalist rulers of Taiwan have tried unsuccessfully to win international recognition of Taiwan as an independent nation." This isn't true. They rejected independence, trying to convince the world, with some success for more than twenty years, that they were the legitimate government of all of China. Until Nixon's action, the U.S. government recognized the Republic of China, Taiwan, as China. To claim independence would have ceded victory to the revolution and the People's Republic government.

I really don't know much about it, but it was then an important part of world politics. It was comical as well. The Chinese "congress," in

## Kurd leader's arrest sparks protests

BY GEORGES MEHRABIAN

ATHENS, Greece — In a blow aimed at the struggle of the oppressed Kurdish nationality of Turkey, Iraq, and the rest of the region, Turkish forces abducted Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) leader Abdullah Ocalan in Nairobi, Kenya, February 16. Within hours, protests by Kurdish immigrants and other supporters of the Kurdish struggle for self-determination erupted at Greek, Kenyan, and Israeli diplomatic missions throughout Europe.

Ocalan, whose party is one of the largest fighting for Kurdish independence in Turkey, was under the protection of the Greek embassy staff at the time of his arrest. Many suspect Israeli government involvement in his capture.

Europe is home to 1 million Kurdish immigrants. Thousands protested in London, Bonn, Paris, Milan, Moscow, and nearly two dozen other cities. Germany, where close to 400,000 Kurdish immigrants live, saw protests in nine cities across the country. In Berlin, Israeli consulate security staff shot three protesters dead and wounded 16 others when they tried to occupy the embassy grounds.

"Release Ocalan, freedom to Kurdistan!" and "Kurds betrayed by Europe" read the signs and banners at the London protest (see article elsewhere on this page).

### Refuge denied throughout Europe

Ocalan was forced out of exile in Syria on October 19 after the Turkish government threatened the Damascus regime with military action for harboring him there. Over the following months Ocalan was denied refuge at Ankara's request by a long list of governments, including those of Italy, Switzerland, Netherlands, Russia, and Belarus. He reportedly entered Greece February 2 and was then smuggled by Athens to its embassy in Nairobi, supposedly to get asylum arranged for some place else.

Despite official denials, Washington's role in this affair is becoming increasingly plain. The February 21 *Athens News* referred to "a strongly worded letter from President Bill Clinton warning Syrian President Hafez al Assad 'that he is playing with fire in the Ocalan case and asking him to deport him.'" The same article quotes unnamed U.S. National Security Council sources saying, "U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbot 'called the Italians and pressured them to boot Ocalan.'"

A White House official is quoted as saying, "As soon as we had indications that Ocalan would go to a certain city we immediately activated our intelligence services to avert his settling down there."

## Greek cops round up Kurds

ATHENS, Greece — The night before the abduction of Abdullah Ocalan, "close to 500 people, most of them Kurds demonstrated at the Greek parliament demanding that Ocalan be granted political asylum here," said Abu Ali in an interview with the *Militant*. Abu Ali is president of the Political Refugees from Kurdistan of Iraq in Greece. According to Ali there are between 4,000 and 5,000 Kurds seeking refugee status here.

At 4:30 a.m. the next morning, February 16, police surrounded Platia Koumoudourou, a square in downtown Athens where several hundred Kurds from Iraq have been squatting in the open air for months. "They broke into the tents and shacks without any warning, destroying the few belongings of people and herding folks into waiting buses," said Abu Ali. "In all, they managed to round up 350 of our people. They had 250 cops on hand! These are all people that have applied for political refugee status but despite international requirements are left with no aid from the state, no food, no shelter. They have to wait until February of the year 2000 for even their first in-



Militant/Tony Hunt

### Hundreds protest arrest of Kurd leader Abdullah Ocalan in London February 20

Ocalan was immediately flown to a high security island prison in the Sea of Marmara near Istanbul, Turkey. A video broadcast by the Turkish government the day after his arrest showed the PKK leader groggy, handcuffed, and blindfolded. Ocalan's trial "need not last too long because all the illegal actions, the crimes of the PKK leadership are well known," declared Turkish prime minister Bulent Ecevit February 17. Ankara claims Ocalan is responsible for the deaths of 29,000 people in the 14-year armed struggle by Kurdish independence fighters. On the same day Ocalan's Netherlands-based attorneys were denied entry into Turkey.

### No fair trial, protests in Turkey

Turkish officials are also moving ahead with plans to ban the Kurdish People's Democracy Party (HADEP), which has mass support in the Kurdish areas of southeastern Turkey and substantial backing throughout the country. Demonstrations have broken out in several cities in Turkey against Ocalan's arrest. "Demonstrations took place almost immediately in Diyarbakir in Turk-

ish Kurdistan, but also in Istanbul and other large cities," said Abu Ali, president of the Political Refugees from Kurdistan of Iraq in Greece, in an interview. "Clashes with the police have also occurred."

Police in the city of Ceyhan shot at protesters February 18, wounding 15. Three cops were also reportedly injured. In Istanbul 400 protesters have been arrested, while through out the country 1,000 arrests were reported February 21-22, according to a Turkish TV broadcast. Large demonstrations have also been organized by HADEP.

"As part of their crackdown on the Kurdish struggle, the Turkish armed forces have sent 4,000 to 8,000 troops into Iraqi Kurdistan since Ocalan's abduction," Abu Ali continued. "They have supposedly entered to battle against PKK forces in Iraqi Kurdistan. This is yet another crime against the Kurdish people." Since the end of the Gulf war in 1991, a northern tier of Iraqi Kurdistan has been under the control of Kurdish organizations. Baghdad's forces have lost effective control of that area.

Ocalan's abduction has precipitated a deep

## London action: 'Hands off the Kurds!'

BY DEBBIE DELANGE AND TONY HUNT

LONDON — In a huge expression of anger at the kidnapping of Abdullah Ocalan

and of the long denial of their national rights, more than 5,000 Kurds and their supporters marched through the governmental district here February 20.

The boisterous protest by men, women, and children of all ages demanded freedom for Ocalan, the release of Kurdish demonstrators arrested earlier that week by British police, and the right of the Kurdish people to a homeland. "We shall fight, we shall win, viva viva Kurdistan!" "Yesterday Vietnam, Today Kurdistan!" and "Turkey terrorist, USA terrorist, Israel terrorist," were among the chants in English and Kurdish.

Supporters of the fight for Irish freedom were warmly received at the demonstration, carrying a banner consisting of an Irish tricolor with the words "Troops Out Now!" referring to the occupying British troops in Northern Ireland.

Many demonstrators carried pictures of the captured leader of the Kurdish Workers Party (PKK) or wore PKK emblems on their clothing. Other banners and placards included "Release Kurdish political prisoners," "Stop arm sales to Turkey," and "Kurds betrayed by Europe."

Many of the marchers were young. Cigdem Akpinar, 15, among a group of young women, told the *Militant*, "We want freedom for our country. We want the Turkish government to take their hands off our lands. We want to speak our own language and use Kurdish names."

Seyhan Coban, 26, a Turkish student living here, marched with her Kurdish friend. "I support the rights of the Kurdish people. I am human, this is a march for freedom."

The demonstration was the culmination

of a governmental crisis in Athens. Prime Minister Constantinos Simitis fired the ministers of foreign affairs, the interior, and public order, as well as the head of the secret police National Information Agency. The newly reshuffled cabinet is attempting damage control by blaming "forces outside the government" for the PKK leader's capture.

### Governmental crisis in Greece

The imperialist rulers in Athens present Turkey as the main enemy of the Greek nation. They have sought to use Kurdish independence fighters as a pawn in their rivalry for control of the resources of the Aegean Sea, the island of Cyprus, and markets in the Balkans. So to have Ocalan swept up by Turkish security while under so-called Greek protection has shaken confidence, including within the ruling class.

Jingoistic demagoguery is coming from all the bourgeois parties. "This is the most humiliating moment in Greece's history," declared member of parliament Christos Kipouras, from the ruling social democratic PASOK. The main conservative opposition party New Democracy stated, "The government, by means of its irresponsible stance, has once again entangled our country in a most serious crisis."

More than 10,000 people took part in a February 18 demonstration in Athens lamenting the "shame and dishonor of Greece" and demanding the resignation of the PASOK government. The largest contingent was of the Communist Party youth group, the Communist Youth of Greece (KNE). Large groups from New Democracy's youth, other right-wing groups, and very visible and vocal fascist groups also took part. Smaller left groupings and supporters of the PKK also took part.

Red flags waved side by side with the Greek flag and the double headed eagle on gold of the Byzantine Empire — a favorite of fascist organizations.

Many working people and youth were uncomfortable about this. "Marching side by side with the fascists is the real shame.... The only time I want to be in the streets with the fascists is when I am battling them with a big stick," said one worker who did not want to be identified.

of a week of protests outside the Greek embassy in London. Seventy-seven Kurdish protesters occupied it February 15 and took a hostage, blaming the Greek government for complicity in the capture of Ocalan. At one point more than 1,000 people gathered outside in support. The occupiers gave themselves up to police February 18 and released the hostage unharmed. The 77 were held by police under the reactionary Prevention of Terrorism Act, a law originally passed to victimize Irish people in the 1970s. Nine Kurdish fighters remained in custody February 20 after court hearings.

A majority of the marchers February 20 appeared to come from the section of the Kurdish nation under Turkish military occupation. There were contingents from different Kurdish and Turkish political groups as well as the PKK, such as the Kurdish Socialist Party. One marcher Ibrahim Rebwar told the *Militant*, "I'm from Iraqi Kurdistan, there are Kurds here from Syria and Iran, and there are different political organizations. But the kidnapping of Ocalan has united all of us. Our struggle is the same, we all face repression of our language and our schools. We are on the march to express our anger. The democratic countries of Europe are hypocrites. None would give Ocalan refuge when he asked for it. He has no hope of a fair trial in Turkey."

Soran Hamarash, 31, also from Iraqi Kurdistan, said, "I'm here with my mother, who is 70 years old. We are 30 million people with no status, no right of expression as a nation. We want basic human rights. This is the anger of centuries and of the last 70 years of massacres, which no one knows about."