

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

**Che Guevara: 'The university should color itself black, mulatto'**

— PAGES 8-10

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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## Overnite strikers march for solidarity in Memphis

BY SUSAN LAMONT

MEMPHIS, Tennessee—Some 250 Overnite Transportation Co. strikers, family members, and other supporters held an enthusiastic rally and march here December 18 to show their determination, after two months on strike, to win union recognition and a decent contract. The strikers are members of International Brotherhood of Teamsters (IBT) Local 667.

Teamsters from other freight haulers and other companies organized by the IBT in Tennessee and Georgia also attended. Overnite strikers from Tupelo, Mississippi—the only strike site in that state—came as well.

Some 2,000 drivers, dock workers, and maintenance workers across the United States began their strike against Overnite on October 24 and in the days that followed. Overnite is the sixth-largest U.S. trucking company and the largest one that is unorganized. Memphis is one of Overnite's four hubs and a center of the strike.

Teamsters from other freight haulers, including Yellow Freight, ABT, Holland, and Consolidated, are playing an important role in keeping the picket lines going, as many strikers

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About 150 striking Teamsters and supporters rallied in Atlanta December 21. Nationwide fight by drivers and dock workers to win union recognition at Overnite is gaining solidarity.

Militant/Don Pane

## Chechnya invasion, imperialist hostility are backdrop to elections in Russia

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

As Russian artillery and planes hammer the capital Grozny in Chechnya, voters in Russia have elected a new Duma, or parliament. Prime Minister Vladimir Putin and the president who

appointed him, Boris Yeltsin, emerged after the December 19 ballot with an increased roll of supporters in the 450-seat house. Putin has built his popularity as champion of the still-undefeated military offensive in Chechnya.

Judged by the response of the big-business media, the election results were met with some relief in Washington and other imperialist capitals. At the same time, the rulers of the United States and the major European powers, frustrated by the longer-term lack of progress toward "market reforms" in Russia, have grasped the destructive assault on Chechnya as a pretext for stepping up pressure on Moscow.

"The nation is pinning great hopes on the new Duma," Putin said December 21. The prime minister is the current front-runner in the lead-up to next June's elections to replace Boris Yeltsin as president. The two parties that Putin endorsed in the parliamentary campaign, Unity and the Union of Right Forces, together polled around 30 percent. Both parties were formed less than a year ago and feature present or past government figures.

The Communist Party remains the single largest party in the Duma with 24.3 percent of the vote. The party of the rightist Zhirinovskiy polled around 6 percent.

"This opens a lot of possibilities that no one had expected," said Anders Aslund of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a pro-imperialist outfit. "Putin can now change the political stage by having a reformist parliament." The prime minister and his parliamentary supporters back increased reforms, the code word for steps towards reintroducing ownership by private capitalists of the major factories, enterprises, and banks.

Washington Post reporter David Hoffman described the deadlock in the former parliament as perceived by the

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## U.S. gov't whips up 'antiterror' campaign, targets rights

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

WASHINGTON, D.C.—During the final weeks of December, U.S. government officials have flooded the media with warnings of impending terrorist attacks against U.S. citizens worldwide. This stepped-up so-called antiterrorist drive, combined with unsubstantiated charges of possible espionage, targets the democratic rights of immigrants and all working people.

Hundreds of additional cops have been placed at U.S. border crossings, leading to increased harassment of those seeking to pass through customs as many more individuals are being subjected to searches and questioning. The Immigration and Naturalization Service announced December 21 that it plans to institute similar measures in the coming days. The Federal Aviation Administration has stationed bomb-sniffing dogs, more uniformed police, and additional tracer explosives detector units at airport security checkpoints. They're advising passengers not to gift wrap items.

The State Department in mid-December issued its fifth "worldwide terrorism warning" in the past four months, advising travelers to stay away from "large gatherings and celebrations" throughout the world.

President William Clinton's national security

Continued on Page 11

## Hundreds protest in N.Y. after court moves trial of killer cops

BY AL DUNCAN

NEWYORK CITY—The Appellate Division of the New York State Supreme Court ruled December 16 that the four cops charged with brutally gunning down Amadou Diallo, a 22-year-old worker from Guinea, are to be tried in Albany, New York. This ruling reversed an earlier decision by a lower court that the trial would be held in the Bronx where the killing occurred.

The cops involved—Richard Murphy, Kenneth Boss, Edward McMellon, and Sean Carroll—face second degree murder charges for killing Diallo in a hail of 41 bullets on Feb. 4, 1999. If convicted, they could receive up to 25 years to life in prison.

The indictment of the cops was a major victory for working people in the city of New York. It came about as a result of demonstrations, speak-outs, and civil disobedience protests over the course of weeks, including daily picket lines outside the police headquarters that involved thousands of workers and others from throughout the area.

Moving the trial to Albany is an attempt to prevent the cops from being convicted, and also to try to stop this case from further weakening the Democratic and Republican parties

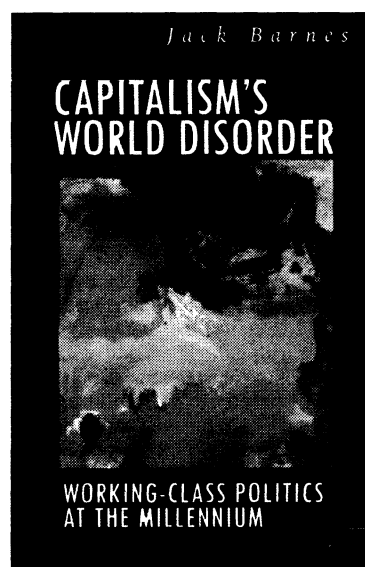
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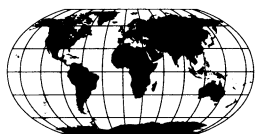
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**Jack Barnes**

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 released by capitalism.

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## Mud slides hit Venezuela

Massive flooding and mud slides from a rain storm that started December 15 have killed at least 5,000 people and left 150,000 homeless in Venezuela. Venezuelan officials estimate that up to 30,000 people may have died. Many residents of the coastal area, which was hardest hit by the floods, said they received no warnings from the government or orders to evacuate. Even in the area of El Guapo, in the state of Miranda, where the governor did order an evacuation, large numbers of people were reportedly killed when a large dam broke.

Economists have estimated the damage to housing and infrastructure as high as \$2 billion. As of December 21 some \$4.5 million in international aid had been sent to Venezuela. Two hundred volunteer doctors and medical workers were on their way from Cuba almost immediately, and the revolutionary government delivered eight tons of medical supplies and other equipment.

## Iraq gov't rejects UN demand for new round of inspections

The Iraqi government rejected a "weapons inspection plan" December 18 that was approved by the United Nations Security Council one day earlier. The plan would supposedly end the U.S.-led sanctions imposed on Iraq next year if a new "disarmament commission" were permitted to operate inside the country. Among the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, all of whom have veto power, only Washington and London voted to place these conditions on Baghdad. The governments of France, China, and Russia abstained. The Iraqi government has stated that it will not allow any UN "monitors" to enter the country until the embargo is ended and the "no-flight" zones enforced by Washington over northern and southern Iraq are eliminated.

Washington has used its military might to maintain sanctions against Iraq as an advantage over its imperialist rivals, especially in France, in the battle for the right to plunder the world. Pining for the lucrative

## Social crisis deepens in northern Argentina



Workers protest in Corrientes, in northern Argentina, December 17 demanding back pay owed to state employees since April. At least two people died and 40 were injured when police attacked. Protesters blocked a bridge, a major link for trade with Brazil and Paraguay. President Fernando de la Rúa, who took office this month, ordered border patrol to attack a day after taking control of the officially bankrupt province.

contracts Paris had with Baghdad before the 1990-91 Gulf War, French foreign minister Hubert Védrine declared in mid-December, "The embargo is a crude and cruel tool that hurts civilians. We need to ... suspend it." The trade embargo imposed on the Iraqi people that has lasted nearly a decade after the U.S.-led Gulf War, and which Paris participated in, killed some 150,000 Iraqis.

## Syrian, Israeli gov'ts agree to talk

Representatives of the Syrian and Israeli governments have begun talks over the status of the Golan Heights, Syrian territory seized by Israeli forces in the 1967 war. Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak hopes to hold onto a major part of the area, bordering a lake from which Israel draws water.

Widespread opposition to a deal is surfacing within Israeli capitalist politics, including among the 17,000 Israeli settlers in the Golan Heights. The U.S. government has taken a major part in organizing the talks, and is hosting them in Washington, D.C. The Syrian government is a major power in the region, and the U.S. rulers hope to draw it into shoring up "stability"—above all, in helping keep a lid on the Palestinian struggle. Previous talks between the two sides broke down in 1996.

## Indonesian MPs reject price hikes

On December 8 the House of Representatives (DPR) in Indonesia rejected a proposal to raise the prices of fuel and electricity. "Since the purchasing power of the people remains low, higher fuel and electricity tariffs will put much burden on them," said House Speaker Akbar Tandjung, adding, "We will hold a series of discussions with the government to find the right time to impose it." Elected in June, the DPR is under close scrutiny from workers, farmers, and students who have mounted many struggles since a massive economic downturn hit the country in 1997.

The price rises were part of an agreement or "Letter of Intent" signed between the government of Abdurrahman Wahid and representatives of the International Monetary Fund. The IMF and many other imperialist banks froze loans to Indonesia earlier this year, as part of their push to restructure Indonesia's banking system. Despite

the DPR's decision the IMF has said it will resume parceling out payments of a promised \$43 billion loan next year. An attempt to impose higher fuel and electricity prices at the IMF's urging in May 1998 sparked protests that led to the ouster of President Suharto after 32 years in power.

## Nearly 2 million in U.S. jails

More working people have been put behind bars during the 1990s than in any other decade in history, according to the Justice Policy Institute. And more than 2 million people will be incarcerated in the United States soon. According to the World Almanac, the number of arrests this country jumped from 10.4 million in 1993 to 15.2 million in 1996. As a result of the U.S. rulers' assault on the rights of immigrants, thousands of workers from other countries who have not been accused of any crime or have completed prison terms for misdemeanors have been locked up pending deportation.

Meanwhile, legislation pushed by the Democratic administration of President William Clinton has included allocating up to \$10.5 billion for constructing new prisons while mandating inmates remain locked up for at least 85 percent of their sentence.

## Gay soldier beaten to death

On December 10 an army court martial sentenced private Calvin Glover to life imprisonment for the slaying of a gay soldier. Glover confessed to bludgeoning a sleeping Barry Winchell to death with a baseball bat last July. Winchell had endured months of harassment from fellow soldiers while his company sergeant looked on. The murder has focused attention on the "don't ask don't tell" policy that President William Clinton instituted in 1993. Under this policy gay recruits are in theory not obliged to reveal their homosexuality. If they do reveal it, in word or deed, they are forced to leave the armed forces. Under these guidelines, the number of gays kicked out of the forces actually increased from 682 in 1993 to 1,149 five years later.

After the slaying Clinton said the policy is "out of whack," blaming the military brass for implementing it incorrectly. He did not call for its repeal. Hillary Rodham Clinton, who is running for the senate in New York, announced that gays should be allowed to "serve" openly.

—MAURICE WILLIAMS  
AND PATRICK O'NEILL

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# EU summit reflects increased rivalries of imperialist powers in Europe, worldwide

BY CARL-ERIK ISACSSON

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—The enlargement of the European Union (EU) into eastern and central Europe was the question the Finnish government, which currently holds the EU presidency, wanted to top the agenda at the EU summit in Helsinki December 10-11. But leading up to the meeting other questions dominated the European Union, reflecting increasing rivalry between the main imperialist powers in Europe and in the world. These included:

- An alarming slide in the common currency the euro to near parity with the U.S. dollar;

- The refusal of the French government to accept an EU ruling and lift its ban on the import of beef from Britain;

- London's rejection of the proposed plan to equalize taxes on capital gains within the European Union by collecting taxes on Eurobonds purchased in the United Kingdom;

- And a new proposal by Paris and London to form a 60,000-troop European fighting force fully deployable within 60 days—a scheme that polarizes politics for the supposedly "neutral" governments of Sweden, Finland, Ireland, and Austria and puts a strain on relations within the U.S.-dominated NATO military alliance.

The EU summit in Helsinki also followed the ministerial meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Seattle, which ended in a fiasco. The Seattle gathering registered the limits of the imperialists' aggressive trade policies that they hoped could fuel expansion of the world capitalist system on weakening of trade and capital regulations in the semicolonial countries and the workers states. Increasing rivalry between the imperialist powers themselves is also blocking further expansion of trade and capital flows between these countries.

## Planned expansion of EU

The 15 governments who are currently members of the EU agreed to open entry talks in February with the governments of Latvia, Lithuania, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, and Malta. Membership talks are already under way with the governments of Estonia, Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Slovenia, and Cyprus. But the targeted dates for EU membership keep being pushed further into the future. The EU Commission has ruled that the earliest possible entry date now is 2003.

The same is true for proposed changes in the EU constitution, which have been discussed since the Amsterdam meeting in 1997, to prepare enlargement by making it harder for small states to block the votes of large powers in the Council of Ministers. How could the largest imperialist powers that dominate the EU reach agreement on constitutional changes when Paris defies the decision by the EU commission to lift the ban on British beef imports and London will not obey the EU decisions on taxes?

The entry talks serve mostly to try to open up the perspective member countries—most of which are workers states where capitalism was overturned following World War II—to the further penetration of capital and changes in the judiciary and police forces, in hopes of restoring the rule of the market system. But 10 years after the collapse of the Berlin wall, it is proving impossible to impose the capitalist social relations needed to make imperialist investments there profitable and pave the way for capitalist expansion worldwide, short of defeating the workers in each of these countries in bloody struggles.

The summit also decided to accept Turkey as a candidate for EU membership, but with many conditions and no date to begin talks. Although the Turkish government in Ankara has applied for membership since the 1960s, it has never been seriously considered. The reasons are obvious. If agriculture in Turkey received subsidies from EU funds under the same criteria as in Greece, Spain, France, Ireland, and other current member states, the EU's budget would have to be substantially increased. Such a capital flow into Turkey—a predominately Muslim semicolonial country with a population of

65 million—from the main imperialist powers in Europe is not what the EU powers want. Instead, the imperialist rulers want to suck in the wealth produced by workers and farmers in Turkey.

The Greek government, the only imperialist power in the Balkans, has opposed Turkish membership to strengthen its domination in the region. The German rulers have also previously opposed Turkey's membership as it would put a further strain on the European Union funds, of which Berlin pays the largest share.

The imperialist powers in Europe have veiled their oppressive relation with Turkey with democratic imperialist diplomacy, accusing the Turkish government of human rights abuses as the reason for not dealing with Ankara's application for EU membership.

## Debate over membership for Turkey

The U.S. government has supported the Turkish application. Ankara is a member of NATO and served an important role in backing U.S. interests in the 1990-91 Iraq war and especially the war over Kosovo in 1999. The German rulers have also recognized this, and are looking to play a bigger military role in the Balkans. This had weight in the final outcome of the Helsinki summit.

The Turkish rulers, however, are far from meeting the EU membership criteria, such as lowering budget deficits and inflation. Turkey's inflation rate is currently about 65 percent. The government would have to impose deep austerity measures against workers and farmers in Turkey before becoming a member of the European Union.

As part of the agreement for this promise of consideration, Ankara may have to submit its territorial disputes with Athens to the imperialist-rigged International Court of Justice in the Hague and Ankara has to recognize the Greek Cypriot regime as a legitimate applicant for EU membership. This got a negative note by the Virtue party in Ankara, the largest opposition group in parliament. The Ukrainian government had also requested to apply for EU membership, but was not approved at the meeting in Helsinki. Among the unstated reasons was the imperialists' concerns that such a move would provoke sharper conflict with Moscow.

The Helsinki summit adopted the proposal submitted by London and Paris to form a force of 60,000 troops to be used in a "crisis zone" such as Bosnia or Kosovo. The command and planning staffs, the intelligence base, and the decision-making and deployment apparatus for this force are to be in place by 2003.

## China takes back Macao



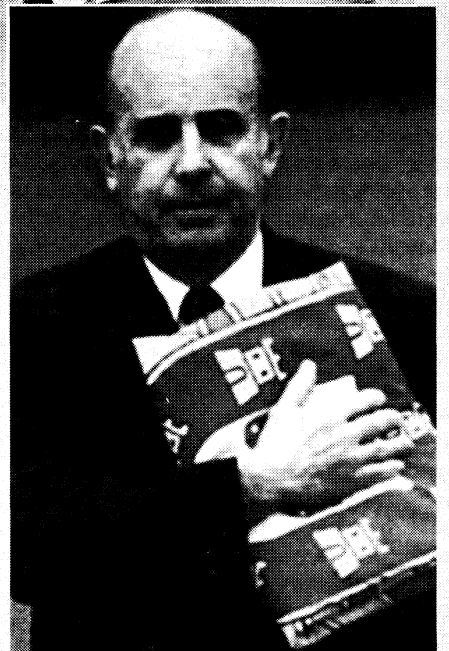
Above, women from Macao practice fan dance planned as part of December 20 celebration of the nation's reunification with China and end of Portuguese colonial rule. Portuguese governor, Gen. Vasco Rocha Vieira, at right, clutched the Portuguese flag.

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Fireworks and other festivities in Macao highlighted the December 20 ceremony celebrating that country's return to China. Beijing claimed sovereignty over the territory marking the end of 442 years of Portuguese colonial rule. By midday thousands cheered some 500 Chinese soldiers who marched into Macao.

The event was another step toward the reunification of all of China, including Taiwan. Hong Kong, the former British colony, was handed over in July 1997. Macao will be joined with the 1.2 billion people on China's mainland.

With the return of Macao, said Chi-



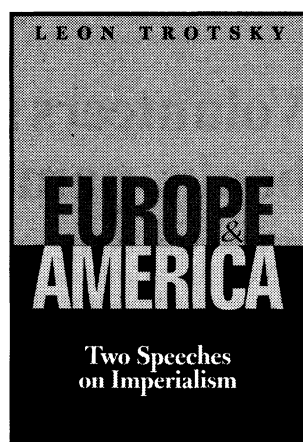
nese president Jiang Zemin, "the great endeavor of reunifying China will take a big step forward. Under these circumstances, the task of resolving the Taiwan issue [will] appear increasingly urgent."

Washington has been urging its imperialist allies in Europe to increase and upgrade their military forces, complaining that its NATO partners were far behind U.S. military might in the Yugoslav war. U.S. officials did not voice objection to the plan decided on in Helsinki,

but stressed their concern that any EU military force not dilute the strength of the NATO structures, which Washington controls.

Carl-Erik Isacsson is a member of the metalworkers union in Södertälje, Sweden.

For further reading

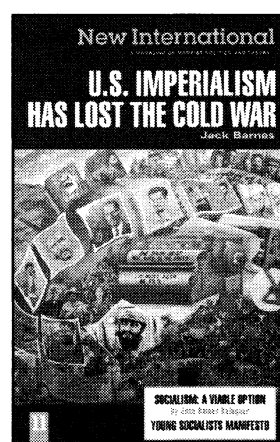


### Europe and America

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Leon Trotsky

In two speeches in the mid-1920s, Russian Bolshevik leader Leon Trotsky explains why the emergence of the United States as the dominant imperialist power is the decisive factor in world politics. He describes the sharpening conflicts between Washington and its European rivals and highlights the revolutionary prospects for the workers of the world. \$6.00



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# Young Socialists reach out to farm workers and students in Arizona

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

Email: 105162.605@compuserve.com

BY WILLIE COTTON

TUCSON, Arizona—On December 8 the Young Socialists here kicked off a week of activity with a program at the University of Arizona titled, "What Were the WTO Protests All About?" As a participant in the team of socialist workers and Young Socialists who intervened in the discussions at the Seattle actions, I gave a retrospective of the events surrounding the WTO conference and their impact on future labor, environmental, civil, ethnic, and international struggles.

Six people attended the campus meeting, including students, workers, and a farmer who had lost his farm. After a 20-minute talk, the discussion lasted for two hours with questions ranging from the national chauvinist aspects of the protests to the viability of socialism in the future. The discussion concluded with the selling of the *Militant*, the pamphlet *Farmers Face the Crisis of the 1990s*, and three names of people who are interested in discussing more politics with the Young Socialists.

Betsy McDonald, a member of the Socialist Workers Party, SWP supporter Marta DeLeon, and I participated in La Gran Marcha December 11. Sponsored by the immigrant rights coalition Derechos Humanos, La Gran Marcha is a march and rally to draw national attention to the problems Mexican workers and farmers face at the U.S./Mexico border. There were more than 500 hundred people in attendance. The three of us marched with the sign, "Stop the Deportations! Equal Rights for

Immigrants!"

During the rally of speakers and music, there was a constant flow of discussions and sales at the Pathfinder literature table. The first thing we sold was the only copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder* we brought. The team also sold a copy of *New Internationalist* no. 7, featuring "The Opening Guns of World War III"; the pamphlet titled *Peru's 'Shining Path': Evolution of a Stalinist Sect* in Spanish; two pamphlets on Che Guevara; and five copies of the *Militant* newspaper. Three people said they were interested in staying in contact with the YS and the SWP.

On December 14 Betsy McDonald and I attended a rally to support the Eurofresh tomato workers at their union representation drive, two hours away in Willcox, Arizona. The rally was sponsored by the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW). More than 100 tomato workers came after work.

Sixteen eight-foot-long tables were stacked with clothes collected by UFCW members from around the Tucson and Phoenix areas. In solidarity with the Eurofresh workers, who went on strike for more than a week in November, UFCW members from a closing Rosarita plant donated 1,000 pounds of beans, even though they were facing unemployment. I gave a solidarity greeting in Spanish, prepared the night before. The Pathfinder literature table, which was stocked only with Spanish titles, sold *State and Revolution* by V.I. Lenin, *Pompo: A Man of Che's guerrilla* by Harry Villegas, and some issues of *Perspectiva Mundial*.

The next day Jason Alessio, a YS member from Santa Cruz, California, helped McDonald and I staff a Pathfinder literature table at the University of Arizona campus. Ryan Krug, who consistently participates in a weekly political discussion group, also worked at the table

## Dye workers win strike in New Jersey



Militant/Ned Measel

**Members of Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) picket December 22 in front of Trio Dye & Finishing plant in Paterson, New Jersey. Some 1,300 striking fabric dyers ended their four-day walkout after workers voted to accept a contract later that day. The bosses at 12 textile finishing plants in the area agreed to a 30-cent per hour pay hike over three years, no cuts in health benefits, and a \$300 signing bonus. Earlier, four companies signed contracts giving workers a 75-cent pay increase over three years. The employers, who had formed themselves into two associations that included 18 companies in several New Jersey counties, were pressing the workers to swallow a 15 percent pay cut, elimination of all company-paid medical coverage, and a five-year contract. The textile workers' last strike in 1993-94 ended with the employers winning substantial cuts in wages and benefits. This time many workers were determined to resist the demands for givebacks. "My shop was not on strike," said Muzafer Ramadani, of Coral Dye. "But I was on the picket lines anyway from five in the morning to six in the afternoon."**

for several hours.

The table was slow because students were taking their final exams, but it picked up around 11:30 a.m. with some insightful discussion and sales. A new student from New York stopped by the table to say that she really enjoyed the *Militant*. She had been reading Lenin and was very enthusiastic about participating in a political discussion group next semester. She stayed and talked politics

at the table for more than an hour. When the table closed down at 1:00 p.m., we had sold one copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder* and a catalog to a person from Japan who was attending a conference on campus, in addition to several *Militants*.

Later that same day, Alessio, Krug, and I met with Rito Gutiérrez, a leader in the Eurofresh walkout, in Willcox. The discussion revolved around the horrible working conditions that precipitated the walkout. During our meeting, a former worker at Eurofresh walked over to Gutiérrez and expressed his concerns about the union drive. For about 20 minutes Gutiérrez explained to the concerned man why they must fight for a union and how they can win.

We also talked about the importance of the strike by workers at Basic Vegetable in King City, California. Gutiérrez said he used to be a lettuce and grape field worker in California and that he was thinking of returning back to California, but now that there is an opportunity to fight for a union he will be staying longer.

*Willie Cotton is a YS member and student at the University of Arizona.*

# San Francisco mayor wins re-election in run-off between liberal Democrats

BY JESSIE LUDLOW

SAN FRANCISCO—Mayor Willie Brown easily won re-election against challenger Tom Ammiano in the run-off vote here December 14. Ammiano, president of the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, won 25 percent of the vote as against Brown's 39 percent in the November 2 mayoral election forcing the December 14 run-off.

Ammiano surprised many when he launched a write-in campaign three weeks before election day and received nearly 49,000 write-in votes, beating out the top challengers whose names appeared on the ballot.

In the run-off, Brown won 59.8 percent of the vote over Ammiano's 40.1 percent.

Ammiano, who was put forward as the more "progressive" Democrat against the liberal establishment Democrat Brown, organized an active coalition of gay and lesbian rights activists, tenants rights groups and many middle class layers in the city. He attracted support from some youth and workers also.

"My voice may be high. I may be gay. My politics may be left, but we are right," Ammiano told supporters as he conceded the election to Brown at the Roccapulo nightclub.

Brown claimed victory amongst hundreds of supporters at the Longshoreman's union hall.

Though there was very little difference

in the political positions of the two candidates, the national Democratic Party leadership worked closely with the Brown campaign to insure his victory. In addition to the support of the San Francisco Democratic Party, San Francisco Labor Council, and virtually all the city's elected officials, Brown received support from President William Clinton, Hillary Clinton, California's Gov. Gray Davis, and the state's two U.S. senators, Dianne Feinstein and Barbara Boxer. Many voters received taped phone messages from President Clinton and Jesse Jackson.

Brown also won the endorsement of the Republican Party in San Francisco.

Some of the issues of key concern to workers in this city are the extremely high rents (San Francisco is among the top three cities in the United States for housing costs), low wages, and public transportation.

Brown says he is be credited with city employees making no less than \$9 an hour. He says he supports the idea of a living wage ordinance. Ammiano initiated "Living Wage" legislation in May 1999 that would require all nonprofit agencies and businesses with city contracts to pay their employees at least \$11 an hour plus health benefits.

Although both claim to be in favor of affordable housing, neither candidate put forward any concrete proposals to lower rents and provide housing to those who have none.

"Vacancy control is illegal under California state law and not the way to create new affordable housing. Neither is having the city order landlords to lower existing rents," stated the Ammiano-for-Mayor web page, responding to a "rumor" that he wanted to "institute vacancy control and roll back rents."

Both candidates put at the center of their proposals to "reform" public transportation, which amounts to scapegoating workers in the

city transit system, known as MUNI.

"Tom has always been a strong advocate for MUNI reform and opposed the bizarre policy of allowing MUNI drivers to skip out on work," said the Ammiano campaign, referring to contract provisions that used to allow workers to miss an occasional day of work without penalty. Ammiano's campaign made much of the fact that he takes the bus to work.

"Brown ended MUNI driver 'miss-outs'," stated the Mayor's campaign.

## Volunteers strive to put all Pathfinder books, pamphlets in electronic format

BY TOM TOMASKO

OAKLAND, California—"The prognosis is good to excellent" that all of Pathfinder's books and pamphlets will pass through the first step in being converted to electronic form by Jan. 1, 2000, said Warren Simons.

Simons is the organizer of a team of volunteers who scan books into computers. Pathfinder Press is on a campaign to convert all its titles to electronic form. Using modern computer-to-plate technology in publishing, it is quicker and cheaper to print books that are on compact disks than previous prepress methods. Other teams of volunteers are concentrate on proofreading, formatting, and preparing graphics for the books that are being scanned.

As of mid-December there are just 14 books left to scan and all those are now being worked on, Simons stated. Volunteers who have up to now been involved in scanning will soon be involved in other aspects of the work. Of the dozen scanners, three have asked to help format books and one wants to join the graphics team. The others are still giving some thought to it.

On another front of the campaign, Path-

finder reports that several college professors have ordered dozens of copies of the *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* by Frederick Engels. But the book — in which Engels uses discoveries by early anthropologists to show that early humanity did not know private property or the state, and that women were not an oppressed sex until the development of agriculture and the resultant surplus of food beyond daily necessities — is out of print.

The Reprint Project's steering committee has committed to get this book on a CD by the first week of 2000 so Pathfinder's print shop can deliver it in time to fill these orders. Bobbi Sack, who organizes the team of graphics volunteers, said, "We should pull out all the stops so this book can be printed in time. This important book has a gorgeous cover and getting it into the hands of so many students will result in sales of many more Pathfinder books."

*Tom Tomasko is a member of the Reprint Project steering committee and a member of the International Association of Machinists Local 1781.*

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# Volunteers distribute book all over Atlanta

BY DON PANE

ATLANTA—On December 9 at the concert performance in downtown Atlanta of the rock band Rage Against the Machine, several socialist workers, Young Socialists, and supporters set up a table to sell socialist books and literature to the thousands of youth who attended. Two copies of the book, *Capitalism's World Disorder*, and 24 copies of the *Militant* were bought.

Rage Against the Machine is known for its political songs with lyrics that protest police brutality and racism. They display a large Che Guevara banner on stage during their concerts. Thousands of high school students from around Georgia and other states came to the December 9 concert in Atlanta. Thousands of young workers also attended.

The socialist literature table was set up next to one of the entrances to the concert and in addition to Pathfinder books, the table displayed the *Militant* newspaper, *Perspectiva Mundial* the Spanish-language sister publication of the *Militant*, and leaflets advertising the Militant Labor Forum taking place the following night on "U.S. Navy Out of Vieques." Two hundred of these leaflets were passed out, and five young people signed up to find out more about

the Young Socialists.

"We need these kinds of books at the store I work at," said a young man named Joey. He explained that he is an employee at a popular store in town which sells videos, music cds, cassettes, as well as books. Joey gave the details on his workplace and urged socialists staffing the table to visit the store.

A volunteer Pathfinder book distributor made an appointment to meet with the store's buyer three days later. Joey was working there at the time and introduced him to the buyer.

Although the buyer said the store normally does most of its book ordering nationally through a distributor, he agreed to the suggestion that he place a direct order. He ordered five copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder* as part of an order totaling some \$350. He also took a poster of *Capitalism's World Disorder* for display purposes.

Experiences like this one have resulted in placements of 35 copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder* so far in bookstores and libraries in the Atlanta area. The campaign to sell the book, based in Atlanta, has been extended to rural areas of Georgia over the last four months.

Twenty-eight additional copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder* have been sold

by socialists in Atlanta along with others who have stepped forward to volunteer to help to place Pathfinder books in the stores and libraries where workers, farmers, and young people go to read and buy books.



BY MARK FRIEDMAN

LOS ANGELES—Thirty-six copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder* (see ad on front page) have been placed in bookstores and libraries in the Los Angeles area in recent months. Forty-one copies of the book have been sold by socialist workers to co-workers on the job and to strikers, students, and fighters at political actions.

Although the campaign to sell book in the Los Angeles area got off to a late start, it is clear we have only begun to scratch the surface of the possibilities that remain ahead of us to visit bookstores recommended by co-workers and others. So far only a few of the area campus bookstores and libraries have been visited by volunteers placing Pathfinder books, and these volunteers are anxious to tackle the gigantic county and city library system.

We are discussing continuing our efforts into next year to build on the 31 placements and 13 individual sales that socialists in the trade

unions have organized to get here.

A recent order placed by a San Diego bookstore of two copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder*, and five placements in the last two weeks at area bookstores and libraries have been the latest accomplishments in the campaign here.



BY SUSAN LAMONT

MEMPHIS, Tennessee—The 250 strikers and supporters who attended a December 18 rally here to support the strike of Teamsters who are employed by Overnite, bought 26 copies of the *Militant*, two introductory subscriptions to the paper, one copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder*, and two copies of *Teamster Rebellion*.

In addition, one Yellow Freight worker who bought a copy of *Teamster Rebellion* by Farrell Dobbs last week purchased the other three volumes in the series published by Pathfinder Press: *Teamster Power*, *Teamster Bureaucracy*, and *Teamster Politics*. These four books describe the 1930s strikes and organizing drive that transformed the Teamsters union in Minnesota and much of the Midwest into a fighting industrial union movement. The author was a leader of these battles and of the Socialist Workers Party.

## Trial of New York cops

Continued from front page

in the city during the upcoming election year. According to 1997 census estimates, only 9 percent of the residents of Albany are Black, compared to 38 percent in the Bronx. Half of all Bronx residents identify themselves as Latino. And the average income in the New York City borough is substantially lower than in Albany, the state capital, located three hours north of here.

The judges claimed that the cops couldn't get a fair trial anywhere in the city. They described the extensive news coverage of the killing and protests against it as "prejudicial publicity to such an extent that even an attempt to select an unbiased jury would be fruitless." In addition to various press articles, the judges cited a recent advertisement by the American Civil Liberties Union that included the image of 41 bullet holes and read, in part, "On February 4th, 1999, the NYPD gave Amadou Diallo the right to remain silent. And they did it without ever saying a word.... [T]he police killed an unarmed, innocent man. Also wounded that night was the constitutional right of every American to due process of law."

The court cited a poll in which 81 percent of Bronx residents asked said that there is no possible justification for shooting at someone 41 times who is unarmed. This fact highlights the city rulers' true concern—not that a fair trial is impossible, but that an acquittal is highly unlikely.

The cops may not face a jury at all. Under New York state law after a jury has been selected, the cops have the option of requesting a bench trial, that is trial directly by a judge. That is the course Francis Livoti, the cop who choked Anthony Baez to death in 1994 after his patrol car was accidentally hit by a football, chose in his state trial, where he was acquitted. After an outcry of protests, Livoti was convicted in a federal jury trial of violating Baez's civil rights.

The decision to move the trial of the cops who killed Diallo infuriated many working people in New York. A demonstration took place at the Bronx Courthouse the day after the ruling, with 40 people protesting the decision.

Some 500 people rallied there December 21 calling for federal intervention to make sure the cops are brought to justice.

"It's outrageous," said Kadiadou Diallo, the mother of the slain man. "We don't want our agony prolonged.... We respect the rules, but we ask the DA to appeal this."

Callers to a WLIR radio program right after the decision expressed deep anger and likened this to the trial of the cops who beat Rodney King in California. In 1991 King was brutally beaten by four Los Angeles police officers in an incident captured on video and widely shown on TV. The cops were acquitted in a state trial that was moved to the wealthy Simi Valley area, sparking anti-cop riots in Los Angeles.

The cops and their supporters hailed the decision. Mayor Rudolph Giuliani, who is an undeclared candidate for U.S. Senate, stated, "There was a concerted effort on the part of numerous people to make it impossible to have a fair trial in New York. When you start marching, demanding that people be indicted, when you get out in front of courthouses and demand that people be indicted, that's like the Old West."

The decision was rendered by an all white panel of judges that includes a close personal friend of Burt Roberts, the attorney of one of the cops charged and the lawyer who submitted the motion asking the court for a change of venue.

Despite these moves the outcome of the trial is by no means certain, as a result of the protests mounted demanding justice in this case and others.

Less than two weeks ago Justin Volpe, the New York City cop who tortured Abner Louima with a broom handle nearly two years ago, was sentenced to 30 years in prison for his crime. The police officer convicted with him, Charles Swartz, and two others are scheduled to go to trial on January 3 for conspiring to cover up this act.

The trial of the cops who killed Diallo will also take place in the context of increasing strikes and other actions by workers against attacks on their standard of living by the bosses and the capitalist government around the country. In New York 33,000 transit workers just went through preparations for a possible contract strike, and are still discussing and voting on the proposed settlement. Many of these workers and others support the call for justice for Amadou Diallo.



Five hundred people demonstrated outside the Bronx courthouse December 21 called for federal intervention to ensure the cops who killed Amadou Diallo are brought to justice, after state court moved the trial to Albany.

## New Jersey: garment workers place books, join in event at book shop

BY JANE HARRIS

PERTHAMBOY, New Jersey—Settled in the downtown district of this town 20 miles south of Newark is the Lucaya Bookstore, a Spanish-language store just celebrating its second anniversary.

In October the owners were visited by two volunteer distributors of Pathfinder Press who work at a nearby garment factory. The proprietors ordered some books, and have displayed some of the titles in prominent spots in the store.

Lucaya often organizes evening gatherings to celebrate and discuss various books in the shop, and invited Martín Koppel, editor of the Spanish-language translation of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions*, to speak about that book.

Lucaya produced a flyer inviting its customers to the December 17 event. "This work is dedicated to workers, students and intellectuals who are seeking explanations and alternatives to the violence and brutality that permanently affect the world and that are sharpening as the new millennium begins," read the leaflet in Spanish.

The two garment workers who placed the initial Pathfinder order came to the event with two other workers from the plant, members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees. At the end of the evening, one left the store with the book in hand.

Koppel pointed to *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* as a handbook for those resisting the brutal effects of capitalism and seeking solutions to the racist discrimination, women's inequality, national oppression, and other reactionary social relations reproduced daily by this system. There is a new mood of struggle among workers and farmers today, he said, pointing as one example to the fight of 33,000 New York City transit workers to win a decent contract.

Koppel's also touched on how the Clinton administration has been leading the attack on workers' social wage, the rise of incipient fascist currents in the United States such as Patrick Buchanan, and the struggle of the Puerto Rican people to get the U.S. Navy out of Vieques.

"The working class is potentially stronger than ever today," Koppel said. He pointed to the strengthening of the working class through the biggest wave of migration ever, the fact that the fall of the Stalinist governments was not a victory but an historic defeat for U.S. imperialism, and to workers' struggles in this country linking up with one another and with working farmers.

A lively discussion period, both formal and informal followed among the 15 people in attendance, including exchanges on the Cuban revolution and on the transit workers' battle for union rights.

### Campaign to sell *Capitalism's World Disorder* to workers and farmers

Union	Placements Goal/Sold	Individual Sales Goal/Sold
IAM	75/67	50/65
UAW	40/12	35/10
UFCW	42/14	39/26
UNITE	35/13	25/25
USWA	40/41	30/23
UTU	65/72	35/44
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>297/219</b>	<b>214/193</b>

# UAW strikers resist concessions at Terex plant in Iowa

BY RAY PARSONS

WAVERLY, Iowa—Nearly 200 workers, members of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 411, went on strike here against Terex Crane on December 6. The company is a division of Terex Corp., a major manufacturer of surface mining and construction equipment.

"We've given up all we can, now it's the company's turn to give back," said striker Charles Murray. The unionists are fighting for higher wages, a return to free health-care benefits, and for healthcare and pension benefits for retirees.

More than 60 workers were laid off at the plant earlier this year. Before the walkout, workers rejected a Terex contract offer by a margin of 83 percent. Striker Mike Dunbar, who has 32 years in the plant, said, "There was a lot of fear among workers in the 1980s, but that is disappearing in the '90s."

Stan Stoppelmoor has 20 years in the plant. He said, "Corporate greed has taken

over." About Terex bosses, he said, "Ask them anything, and you better have a Bible. They'll look you in the eye and stab you in the back at the same time. They'd make good politicians."

Terex is trying to maintain production during the strike using management and office personnel. Strikers say very few machines have been shipped out and the union is fighting a court injunction limiting the number of unionists at picket sites.

The Waverly plant produces lifting equipment, from \$50,000 aerial work platforms to large truck-mounted cranes that sell for more than \$350,000. When *Militant* reporters visited the strike picket lines much of the equipment seen stockpiled inside the plant was equipped with tires from Titan Tire.

Members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) are on strike at Titan's plants in Des Moines, Iowa, and Natchez, Mississippi. Strikers we talked to were in-



Militant/Ray Parsons

UAW members on picket line against Terex Corp. in Waverly, Iowa

terested in making contact with the Titan workers to link up their fights.

At the UAW Local 411 hall in Waverly, large signs register the support the strike has received already, including over \$500 contributed by members of Teamsters Local 650 who work at the Nestlé plant in town. Numerous groups and individuals have contributed food, coffee, and other supplies.

Unionists from another plant owned by Terex have visited the picket lines to show their support.

The union and company met December 14 for the first time since the strike began.

Ray Parsons is a member of USWA Local 310 in Des Moines. Joe Swanson, a member of UAW Local 1672, contributed to this article.

## The 10 Commandments shouldn't be posted in schools

BY JEREMIAH ROSE

HARRISBURG, Illinois—In a split decision, the school board here voted in a closed session December 6 to reverse two earlier votes to post a version of the Biblical Ten Commandments in the district's four schools. Board President Roger Angelly changed his earlier vote. According to the *Southern Illinoisan*, the leading daily in southern Illinois, Angelly said while he supports the idea of posting the religious document the issue has tormented him and his family.

The following day the paper's liberal editors heaved a sigh of relief, proclaiming

### AS I SEE IT

"Hallelujah. The Harrisburg School Board has seen the light" and buried the issue in a committee. Harrisburg parent Alexandra Romanov told the paper she was pleased the board "finally did the legal thing."

Rev. Terry Gwaltney, organizer of Raise the Standard, a local group that campaigns for the posting, declared "it's not over."

Following a public meeting of 800 people on November 16 the board first narrowly voted not to reverse a unanimous October decision to post the religious document. That decision openly defied U.S. Supreme Court rulings upholding the U.S. Constitution's provisions guaranteeing the separation of church and state and freedom of religion.

A town of just over 9,000 people, Harrisburg, Illinois, is a farming community that lies in the heart of the Midwestern coal mining region.

Rightist political forces are using the issue to drive a wedge dividing working people. The *Southern Illinoisan* quoted Molly Wilson, a Harrisburg student, who said the issue "has divided the school exactly in half."

Claiming it is an historical document, the school board first voted to post the set of holy rules in the schools, along with the Bill of Rights and the Magna Carta, at the urging of Darrell Scott from Littleton, Colorado. His daughter, Rachel, was one of 15 people shot to death at Columbine High School earlier this year.

Scott had spoken at two rallies and a school board meeting in the town. He argued, "some-

thing has got to be done other than gun control and turning our schools into prisons," referring to measures advocated by many politicians in the aftermath of the Littleton shootings—measures that attack democratic rights.

#### A right-wing campaign

Gwaltney and his Raise the Standard group earlier presented petitions with 2,500 signatures urging the board to post the religious document in classrooms. Gwaltney, a rightist demagogue, is pastor of the Family Life Center Church.

Some houses, churches, and businesses in the town display yard signs with the Ten Commandments and a white ribbon campaign has been organized in support of the earlier school board decision.

Between the first two meetings, Judy Cape, a local attorney and an outspoken defender of separation of church and state, was sworn in as a new member of the board. Cape moved to rescind the October decision. Cape, along with her daughter Emma, a junior high school student, has publicly spoken out against the posting, including at a forum sponsored by the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) at Southern Illinois University in Carbondale.

The overwhelming majority of the 800 people at the open November meeting supported the posting. Some people wore T-shirts emblazoned with the Ten Commandments and a crucified hand and the words "post my ten" under it.

Gwaltney announced that the Liberty Counsel, the American Center for Law and Justice, and the Rutherford Center had pledged to pay for the legal defense of the board's decision. All are rightist outfits that in the name of defending religious freedom attack civil rights of gays, oppose women's right to choose abortion, and organize against teaching evolution.

Liberty Counsel president and general counsel founder Matthew Staver recently wrote that Christian rightists must "take America back." He said the country has become a "rotting corpse" because "evolution is king" and God has been kicked out of the schools.

A handful of young people at the November 16 meeting, including Emma Cape, wore red, white, and blue ribbons to show they support separation of church and state.

In the discussion several people, including Leonard Gross of the ACLU, spoke against the display. The ACLU raised the possibility of filing suit.

#### Separation of church, state is a right

Working people cannot rely on the courts or political maneuvers to protect our rights. The rightists are counting on being able to clog judicial machinery and reverse previous rulings. Freedom of religion and separation of church and state are hard-won gains of the First American Revolution. A broad campaign to defend these rights needs to be organized.

When I was in grade school and through

much of junior high school in Pennsylvania, a state law (passed in 1949 as part of the anti-communist witchhunt) required the school day be opened with a reading of 10 verses from the Bible and a recitation of the Lord's Prayer. Teachers could be fired for failing to comply. Students who declined to participate faced harassment.

The purpose these exercises served was to instill blind obedience, conformity, and discipline. The Supreme Court finally outlawed those compulsory religious exercises in 1963 after lawsuits by the Unitarian family of Edward Schenck in Abington, Pennsylvania, and Baltimore atheists Madalyn Murray and her son.

What's wrong with posting the Ten Commandments? Harrisburg dentist Michael Cook, who addressed the board, said the Ten Commandments should be posted to "remind our students there is a standard of moral conduct."

It's not true that the Ten Commandments are just good rules to live by. They are ancient statutes codifying compulsory monotheism. Posting them in public schools a violation of the fundamental right of working people to freely decide their religious views.

The Ten Commandments are a small portion of an elaborate set of ancient laws recorded in the Old Testament. Among other things this body of law spelt out that the penalty for violating strictures on worshipping one almighty God was death by stoning.

Monotheism reflected the emergence of the father-dominated family, private property, and classes.

The state developed as the supreme power through which the ruling class oppressed and extracted tribute from all others. Monotheism provided the ideological heavy artillery of the oppressing classes by hallowing the family patriarch, governing authorities, and priesthood, and the state headed by priests.

The Tenth Commandment is abbreviated in the Harrisburg version as "Thou shall not covet." In its unabridged form it sanctified private property, which was still a new, and difficult to impose, social relation in ancient times. This holy mandate classified women and slaves as chattel, along with oxen and donkeys.

Class-conscious workers defend the democratic right of believers of all faiths to practice their religion free from discrimination. Imposing a religious document on all those attending a public school is the opposite of this right.

In the culture war the rightists seek to roll back women's rights and the rights of all working people and youth—often in the name of defending "Christian values." One student was heard commenting after the meeting, "These are the same people that want to take away abortion rights." This is part of the employers' drive against our wages, health care, and union rights, and part of the rulers' drive to war.

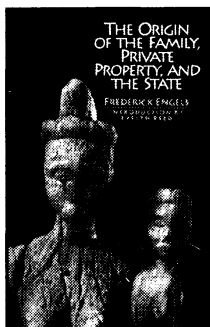
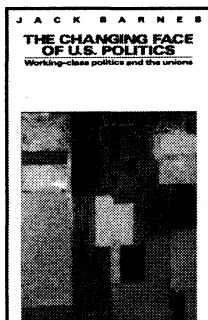
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# Overnite strike

Continued from front page

have been forced to get other jobs. One of the themes of the rally was the importance of beefing up the picket lines, and especially increasing participation by Overnite strikers.

Most speakers at the rally, which started at the strikers' big yellow tent near the picket line, were rank-and-file Overnite strikers. "This struggle is for everyone," said Larry Campbell, 48, who has worked as an over-the-road driver at Overnite for 11 years. "If it's going to be Christmas next year, I'll still be out here," Patrick McCracken told the crowd, to loud applause. McCracken has worked at Overnite for 22 years.

## Five workers fired

Strikers in Memphis are also fighting to win back the jobs of five union activists fired last year on bogus charges.

One of them, Paul Holder, a dock worker who's been at Overnite 18 years, told the rally that "people thought the members didn't care because of the small picket line. And some people did get scared by the picket line and the ambulatory pickets." Ambulatory pickets follow some of the scab trucks to their destinations and set up picket lines at the companies that are using Overnite.

"But no one else has gone back in," since the early days of the strike, Holder said.

"We're here today to encourage our other members. Together, we'll win."

The vote for the union at the 1996 representation election was close—219 for, 201 against—but only 10 workers have crossed the picket line to return to work, strikers report.

Ardella Blandford, a member of United Auto Workers Local 1155 at PEMCO Aerospace in Birmingham, Alabama, got a warm welcome, as she read a message of solidarity signed by several dozen co-workers.

After the brief speeches, the crowd marched down E. Brooks Road past the Overnite picket sites, shouting, "Teamsters! Contract!" and "What do we want? Contract!" The younger strikers led the way on getting the chants going. There was a loud surge of chanting as the rally passed the gates.

After returning to the tent, IBT Local 667 secretary-treasurer Henry Perry told the crowd that each day Teamsters from a different company would help on the picket line, including Teamsters from UPS.

## Tupelo strikers

After the rally, James Malone, 52, who has worked as a driver for 10 and a half years, told the *Militant* about the strike in Tupelo, Mississippi. "There are about 17 workers in Overnite in Tupelo," he said. "Four are on strike. We got organized sev-



Militant/Janice Lynn

Teamsters on picket line at Richmond, Virginia, Overnite terminal December 1. From left are Jim Smith, John Mathis, Paul Shrader, and Andrew Moore.

eral years ago, in a close vote—seven to six."

Recently the company tried unsuccessfully to decertify the union in Tupelo. "The future of the young kids who are just getting hired is dependent on us," Malone said. "It's time for us to do some fighting, like others did before us. This strike is either the rebirth of the unions or the death of us all." Because the Tupelo terminal is so small, Memphis strikers regularly come down and help staff the picket line.

Paul Holder also spoke with the *Militant* after the rally. "We had our first union election in 1995," Holder said. "Overnite won by 74 votes. But when the vote was held again in 1996, the union won."

Forced overtime is a big issue for the strikers, he said. "They come to you at the last minute, with no notice, and say, 'You've got to work over.' We worked 10 weekends straight this summer. There's constant pressure to 'hurry, hurry, hurry,'" Holder said. It was after the 1996 vote in Memphis that the union-organizing drive took off around the country, he added.

The fight to organize the 8,200 drivers, dock workers, and maintenance workers at Overnite has gone on for more than 20 years. Since 1995, the union has been voted in at 37 worksites, representing 45 percent of the workforce, according to Teamsters officials.

Holder was fired on Sept. 1, 1999, for supposedly threatening someone during the one-week strike held by the Overnite workers in July. Four other union activists were fired between April and September, he added.

Susan LaMont is a member of United Steelworkers Local 2122 in Fairfield, Alabama. Cheryl Goertz and Patti Iiyama contributed to this article.

## Foundry workers in Indiana discuss outcome of strike, next stage in struggle

BY HARVEY MCARTHUR

AUBURN, Indiana—Some 300 workers and family members took part in an enthusiastic Christmas party in Waterloo, Indiana December 12 for workers at the Auburn Foundry who had just ended a bitter six-month long strike. The event was sponsored by United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 164 at the Eaton Corp. plant in Auburn and United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 715 at the Goodrich-Michelin plant in Woodburn. Workers from these and several other USWA and UAW locals were particularly active in supporting the striking foundry workers, building picket line rallies and raising substantial amounts of money for the strike fund.

Some 675 members of the Glass, Molders, Pottery, Plastics and Allied Workers International Union (GMP) Local 322 struck Auburn Foundry's two plants here May 3. They challenged the company over issues of safety and the bosses' demands to impose speedup and cut costs through attacks on seniority, attendance policies, and other workers' rights on the job. Auburn Foundry bosses immediately announced they would replace the strikers and began hiring large numbers of scabs, turning to the cops, courts, and private security guards to keep the foundry running.

On November 21, strikers voted to accept the company's harsh terms and ended their strike. By then, the bosses had 490 strike-breakers working, as well as 190 former GMP members who crossed the picket lines. The bosses only agreed to recall 150 strikers within six months, and the remainder by the end of the contract in 2003.

The day before the Christmas party some GMP members had received letters from the company, informing them that when they were recalled they would be "suspended pending termination" for allegedly "engaging in picket line misconduct." The employers are pressing this attack despite the November 21 strike settlement that provided for the union to drop unfair labor practice charges filed against the foundry in exchange for the company dropping charges against strikers. GMP member Larry Chapman told the *Militant* at least 26 strikers had received such notices, and that the union was planning to challenge the company's action.

In addition, by mid-December only seven strikers were back at work and others had no idea when they would actually be recalled. Discussions at the party reflected deep anger at the Auburn Foundry bosses and the determination of many workers to look for ways to continue the fight begun last May.

"The company never intended to negotiate," said Earl Back, Jr., a 32-year veteran

of Auburn Foundry. "They want to take away all our rights and weaken the contract we had won in previous years."

"They brought in Vance Security who tried to antagonize us, who pulled guns on us, and even assaulted strikers on the picket line. Their aim was to try to get us to react and justify the courts issuing an injunction against picketing."

Early in the strike there were often 30-40 strikers present at noisy picket lines. But on May 29 the courts ordered the union to limit the pickets to two people per entrance. Later, the courts also brought charges against the GMP and a nearby USWA local for organizing support rallies near the plant.

"Police harassed and threatened us even when we weren't on the picket line," noted Glenn Martin. "They pulled me over and searched me and my car for no reason at all." Referring to the family who owns Auburn Foundry, he said, "The Finks work hand in hand with the local politicians. The rich folks always help each other. And the chief of police's son hired out as a scab."

Harassment and provocation by strike breakers and the company's security force were ignored by Auburn police, GMP members reported.

"Scabs could yell at us, threaten us, run stop signs, drive without lights at night, and the cops just stood by and did nothing," said Stephen Wilger. "But they stopped strike supporters who just waved at us, threatening them with tickets for 'improper hand signals' or 'failing to keep two hands on the wheel.' And they did issue tickets to dozens of strike supporters just for honking their horn as they passed a picket line."

Meanwhile, on December 14 Auburn Foundry officials announced they had settled out of court with plaintiffs in six federal discrimination suits filed against the company. Black workers had filed lawsuits over racial harassment in the plant and company discrimination several years ago, strikers reported.

"Foundry management is prejudiced," noted Chapman. "For years they never hired any Blacks, and at the time of the strike there were only about 10 or 14 working in the plants, out of 675 workers."

This was an important issue in the strike, as Foundry bosses hired hundreds of Black workers, many from nearby Fort Wayne, as strike breakers.

"They only brought in Black workers after the strike began," Chapman said, "trying to get us on using racial slurs. They knew this is a prejudiced area." And indeed, one of the claims made by the company in obtaining the court order restricting picketing was that strikers yelled racial epithets at strike breakers.

Chapman also noted that although some

Black workers were among the 190 GMP members who broke ranks and crossed the picket lines during the strike, other Blacks "stuck with the rest of us to the end."

Strikers had picketed strike breaker hiring sessions organized by the PMI temporary labor agency in Fort Wayne, trying to convince applicants not to take the jobs.

"Not all the scabs were bad people," striker George Paul said in an earlier interview.

Continued on Page 11

## Teamsters picketing Overnite: 'Every driver should be union'

BY NED MEASEL AND KATHIE FITZGERALD

MOONACHIE, New Jersey—Jerry Schlosser drove for Overnite Transportation for 10 years and was part of two organizing drives to have the Teamsters union recognized there. He now works for another Teamsters-organized carrier, but walks the picket line at the Overnite terminal here every day. He worked at this terminal and knows the drivers, several of whom he worked closely with during the organizing drives. In the last union recognition election, the union lost by two votes of the 55 workers.

In an interview, Schlosser explained why he is committed to winning union recognition at Overnite. He believes it will strengthen the whole union. "If we can win this fight with Overnite then we can deal with all the companies from a position of strength." This is important leading up to the expiration of the National Master Freight agreement, he says. If Overnite, the largest nonunion truck carrier and subsidiary of Union Pacific Railroad, can be organized, the fight to organize other nonunion carriers will be on the agenda.

Schlosser described some of the actions that Overnite took to divide workers and keep the union out. "The company has always played guys against one another. They've used race. When we were trying to organize they tried to pit the dock against the drivers. They tried to pit drivers against drivers." Arbitrary work assignments and discipline, including firings, aimed at known union supporters were common.

This is a strike based on solidarity, Schlosser said. Since Moonachie is not a union terminal, the drivers and dock workers at the Moonachie terminal are still working. The picket line is com-

posed of Teamsters members from other companies and supporters, including retired drivers and members of other unions. Most Teamsters locals in the area have weekly collections for the strikers. A number of former Overnite drivers are regulars on the line.

As with other Overnite locations, this is an "ambulatory strike." Pickets follow trucks leaving the terminal and picket Overnite's customers as deliveries are made. If a Teamsters driver arrives, most often they will refuse to deliver, pack up, and move on until another time. This is fine with many of the Overnite drivers who support the union and come out of the terminal with Teamsters buttons on and waves for the picket line.

Schlosser explained the importance of working to win the drivers to the side of the union if they're not already and keeping good relations between pickets and drivers. When he was working at Overnite and fighting to get the union in he convinced many Teamsters members to approach nonunion drivers with solidarity, not scab-baiting. Other drivers "started to get friendly with the guys and it changed the attitudes of a lot of different drivers I talked to. It was a little easier for me to talk to them about the union."

Schlosser said, "I'm hoping with the way things are going, with Teamsters and other unions coming out, maybe unions will start working together and we can deal more from strength.... It doesn't make sense to cross anyone's picket line."

Ned Measel is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees. Kathie Fitzgerald is a member of the United Transportation Union.

# 'The university should color itself black, mulatto, worker and peasant'

Che Guevara speaks to students on eve of first anniversary of Cuban revolution

Ernesto Che Guevara presented the following speech at the Central University of Las Villas in Santa Clara Dec. 28, 1959, on the eve of the first anniversary of the triumph of the Cuban revolution.

Guevara, an Argentine-born revolutionary, had joined the July 26 Movement in Mexico in 1955 as the Cuban revolutionaries were preparing to relaunch the insurrectionary struggle against Batista. In the course of the revolutionary war, Guevara became one of the central commanders of the Rebel Army.

At the time of the revolutionary victory, the class composition of the student body and faculty at Cuba's three universities—located in Havana, Santiago, and Santa Clara—reflected the exploitative society Cuban workers and peasants were now striving to leave behind.

As the accompanying article by Mike Taber points out, Cuba's revolutionary government, from its earliest days, instituted measures to begin redressing these class inequalities and the racist discrimination inherent in capitalist social relations. Che Guevara addresses the challenge of advancing this working-class course in Cuba's universities too, opening up these virtually all-white enclaves to sons and daughters of workers and peasants, and transforming their character and curriculum in line with the new revolutionary tasks.

A system of racial segregation stigmatizing blacks and mulattos was reproduced daily by the workings of capitalism in prerevolutionary Cuba. Africans had been brought to Cuba as early as the Spanish conquest in the 1500s. For more than 300 years they toiled as slaves on sugar plantations, and the wars to win the island's independence from Spain in the latter nineteenth century were intertwined with the fight to abolish slavery, which was eliminated only in 1886. Many former slaves fought as soldiers and commanders in those wars.

Throughout the opening six decades of the twentieth century, blacks in Cuba faced

the worst conditions in city and countryside whether in employment, education, health, or housing. A system of segregation modeled on the Jim Crow South of the United States prevailed in much of Cuba as well. Among the first steps of the new revolutionary government were implementing laws that confronted this racist inequality. Speaking to a rally in Havana on March 22, 1959, Fidel Castro, in a speech that appeared in the April 19, 1999, issue of the *Militant* as an earlier installment of this series, announced that discrimination against blacks in employment had been outlawed. Several weeks later, Law 270 declared all beaches and other public facilities open to

everyone—black, mulatto, or white. Clubs, businesses, and other establishments that refused equal access and service to blacks were shut down. These laws were enforced by the Rebel Army, the newly formed Revolutionary National Police, and the popular militias.

As noted by Guevara in the speech that follows, his visit to Las Villas coincided with the "First National Forum of Cuban Industries," organized by university students there. Since October 1959, Guevara had headed the Department of Industrialization of the National Institute of Agrarian Reform, and in November he was appointed president of the National Bank as well.

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BY ERNESTO CHE GUEVARA

Dear compañeros; new colleagues in the Faculty Senate and old colleagues in the struggle to liberate Cuba:

I must begin my talk by stating that I can only accept the degree bestowed upon me today as a tribute to our army of the people in general. I cannot accept it as an individual for the simple reason that anything that does not reflect what is really meant lacks any value in the new Cuba. How could I as an individual, Ernesto Guevara, accept the degree of Doctor Honoris Causa conferred by the School of Education, since the only education I have imparted has been that of guerrilla camps, harsh words, and fierce example? [Applause] And I believe such things certainly cannot be transformed into a cap and gown. That is why I continue to wear my Rebel Army uniform, even as I come and sit before you in this Faculty Senate, in the name and on behalf of our army. In accepting this designation—which is an honor for us all—I also wanted to present our message, that of an army of the people, a victorious army.

I once promised the students at this campus a brief talk presenting my views on the role of the university. Work, however, and a mountain of events prevented me from doing so. But today I am going to do it, bolstered moreover by my status as Professor Honoris Causa. [Applause]

**University: patrimony of Cuban people**

So what must I say about the university's fundamental duty, its article number one, in this new Cuba? What I must say is that the university should color itself black and color itself mulatto—not just as regards students but also professors. It should paint itself the color of workers and peasants. It should paint itself the color of the people, because the university is the patrimony of no one but the people



Ernesto Che Guevara addresses students at the University of Las Villas, Dec. 28, 1959.

Granma

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Granma

"Today the people stand at the door of the university, and it is the university that must be flexible. It must color itself black, mulatto, worker, peasant, or else be left without doors." Above, students at University of Havana, 1990s.



of Cuba. If this people, whose representatives occupy all the government posts, rose up in arms and broke through the dikes of reaction, it was not because those dikes lacked flexibility. Nor did reaction lack the basic intelligence to be flexible in order to slow the people's advance. Nevertheless, the people triumphed—a triumph that makes them feel even a bit spoiled—and they are conscious of their own power, that they are unstoppable. Today the people stand at the door of the university, and it is the university that must be flexible. It must color itself black, mulatto, worker, peasant, or else be left without doors. And then the people will tear it apart and paint it with the colors they see fit.

That is the first message—one which I would have liked to express in the first days following the victory, [Applause] in all three universities of the country, but was only able to at the University [of Oriente] in Santiago. If you were to ask my advice on behalf of the people and the Rebel Army, and as a professor of education, I would say that in order to reach the people you must feel as if you are part of the people. You must know what the people want, what they need, and what they feel. You must do a little self-analysis, study the university's statistics, and ask how many workers, how many peasants, how many men who make their living by their sweat eight hours a day are here in this university.

Once you have asked yourselves this, you must also ask yourselves, by way of self-analysis, whether or not the government of Cuba today represents the will of the people. If the answer is yes, if this government really represents the will of the people, [loud applause] then one must also ask the following: This government—which represents the will of the people—where is it at this university and what is it doing? We would then see, unfortunately, that the government represent-

ing virtually the totality of the Cuban people has no voice in the Cuban universities with which to sound the alarm, to provide words of guidance, and to express, free of intermediaries, the will, the desires, and the feelings of the people.

#### Industrialization, land reform

The Central University of Las Villas recently took a step forward to improve the situation. When it held its forum on industrialization, it turned not only to the Cuban industrialists but also to the government. We were asked our opinion and the opinion of all the technicians in the state and semi-state agencies. Because in this first year since liberation—and I can say this without boasting—we are doing much more than other governments did, and much, much more than those who pompously speak of themselves as “free enterprise.” Therefore, we have the right to state that the industrialization of Cuba, which is a direct result of the agrarian reform, will be attained by the revolutionary government, and under its guidance. [Prolonged applause]



Students celebrate the nationalization of private schools in Cuba in 1961. “The walls of the educational system must come down. Education should not be a privilege, so the children of those who have money can study. Education should be the daily bread of the people of Cuba.”

nience.

Now the government has stepped in, refusing to recognize this state of affairs. It claims for itself any company set up with the people's money. If “free enterprise” means a few spongers enjoy all the money of the Cuban nation, then this government states quite clearly that it is opposed to “free enterprise,” to the extent the latter is dependent upon state planning.

#### Revolutionary government

Since we have now ventured into the thorny area of planning, let me say that only the revolutionary government, which plans the country's industrial development from one end to the other, has the right to establish the type and quantity of

technical personnel needed in the future to meet the needs of this nation. The revolutionary government should at least get a hearing when it says it only needs a certain number of lawyers or doctors, but it needs five thousand engineers and fifteen thousand industrial technicians of all types, [prolonged applause]—and that they must be trained, they must be found, because this is the guarantee of our future development.

Today we are working tirelessly to transform Cuba into a different country. But the professor of education standing before you today does not deceive himself; he knows what he is capable of doing, whether as professor of education or president of the Central Bank. If he must perform one or another task, it is because the needs of the people require that of him. None of this is accomplished without the people themselves suffering, because we are still learning in each case. We're learning on the job. Since we hold new responsibilities and are not infallible—we weren't born knowing what to do—we must ask the people to correct the errors.

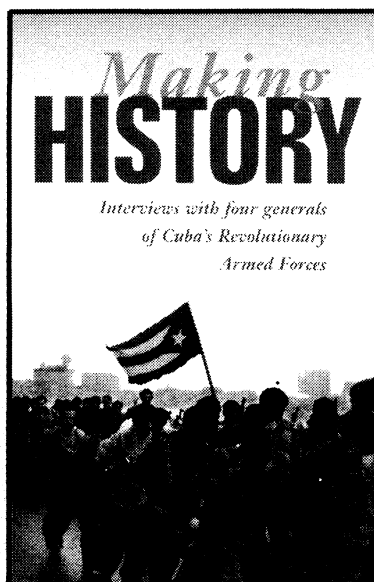
This professor standing before you was once  
Continued on Page 10

NEW

FROM PATHFINDER

## Making History

Interviews with four generals  
of Cuba's Revolutionary  
Armed Forces



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On January 1, 1959, men and women of Cuba in their millions ceased being simply the objects of history. They became its makers as well. By their actions they opened the door to the first socialist revolution in the Americas.

The human beings who fought to accomplish that feat were ordinary working people. Most were still in their teens or early twenties when they began. Who they were, where they came from, and the experiences that transformed them are the subject of this book.

Four outstanding generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces—Néstor López Cuba, Enrique Carreras, José Ramón Fernández, and Harry Villegas—talk about their lives. Through their stories we can see the class dynamics that have shaped our entire epoch. We can understand how the people of Cuba, as they struggle to build a new society, have for more than forty years held Washington at bay.

Edited and with introduction by  
Mary-Alice Waters.

## Cuban generals 'describe their reasons for joining revolution'

Preface by Juan Almeida to 'Making History'

Below we reprint the preface by Commander of the Revolution Juan Almeida Bosque to the new Pathfinder book *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces*. The preface will be published in the Spanish-language edition of the book by the Cuban publishing house Editora Política, and incorporated in the second Pathfinder edition in English, both scheduled for publication in January 2000.

*Making History* contains interviews with generals Néstor López Cuba, Enrique Carreras, José Ramón Fernández, and Harry Villegas of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba. The introduction by the book's editor, Mary-Alice Waters, was reprinted in the Dec. 6, 1999, issue of the *Militant*.

A former bricklayer from Havana, Juan Almeida Bosque participated in the assault on the Moncada garrison under the leadership of Fidel Castro on July 26, 1953. That action opened the revolutionary struggle against the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in Cuba. Almeida, one of the *Granma* expeditionaries, rose to the rank of commander in the Rebel Army during the revolutionary war that triumphed on Jan. 1, 1959.

He has served as head of the air force and vice minister of the Revolutionary Armed Forces. Almeida has been a member of the Central Committee and Political Bureau of the Communist Party of Cuba since its founding in 1965. Today, he is the vice-president of

the Cuban Council of State and the president of the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution.

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BY JUAN ALMEIDA BOSQUE

The interviews with four generals of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba contained in *Making History* present us, in simple language, the impressions of these combatants on the topics selected, based on their own experiences.

The four are examples of ordinary individuals from among the Cuban people, different only in their responsibilities and military specialization, as well as their origin and the historic role each has played during these forty years of revolution.

Through their answers and accounts, they identify important moments in our history, describe their reasons for joining the revolution, and tell of aspects of our people's struggle. One can perceive the simple honesty of these men, who deeply love the cause they fight for, who are loyal and fair toward Raúl in responding to questions about his work as minister of the FAR, and who stand firmly with Fidel as guide, educator, and central leader of our revolution.

I salute the effort of the interviewers and anticipate that readers will be grateful for, and moved by, the living recollections of these four generals.

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a doctor, and by force of circumstance was obliged to take up arms, and after two years graduated as a guerrilla commander—and will later on have to graduate as a bank president or a director of industrialization of the country, or perhaps even a professor of education. [Applause]

This same doctor, commander, president, and professor of education wishes that the studious youth of the country prepare themselves so each of them in the near future may occupy the positions assigned them, without hesitation, and without the need to learn on the job.

Education should be daily bread

But this professor here before you—a son of the people, forged by the people—also wants this very same people to have, as a right, the benefits of education. The walls of the educational system must come down. Education should not be a privilege, so the children of those who have money can study. Education should be the daily bread of the people of Cuba. [Applause]

Naturally, it never occurred to me to demand that the current professors and students of the University of Las Villas perform the miracle of enrolling the masses of workers and peasants at the university. We still need to travel a long road, to go through a process all of you have lived through, a process of many years of preparatory studies. What I do hope to accomplish, however, basing myself on my modest background as a revolutionary and rebel commander, is for the students at the University of Las Villas to understand that education is no longer anybody's property, and that this campus where you carry out your studies is no longer anybody's property. It belongs to the people of Cuba as a whole, and it will either be given to the people, or the people will take it. [Applause]

I began the ups and downs of my career as a university student, a member of the middle class, a doctor who shared the same horizons,

the same youthful aspirations you have. In the course of the struggle, however, I changed and became convinced of the imperative need for revolution, and of the great justice of the people's cause. That's why I would hope that you, who are the masters of the university today, would turn it over to the people.

I am not saying this as a threat, to forestall you from taking it over tomorrow. No, I am simply saying that if the masters of today's University of Las Villas, the students, turn it over to the people as represented by their revolutionary government, that would be another of the many beautiful examples being set in Cuba today.

And to the professors, my colleagues, I have something similar to say to you: You must color yourselves black, mulatto, worker and peasant. You must go to the people. You must



Top: Militant/Joseph Hansen

Left: Bohemia

Above, peasant militia marches in Havana, April 1960. Agrarian reform and industrialization were possible only under revolutionary government, Guevara explained to students in Las Villas, who were holding a forum on Cuban industries. Left, students at Association of Rebel Youth School of Revolutionary Instruction, 1962.



live and breathe as one with the people, which is to say, you must feel the needs of Cuba as a whole. When we achieve this, no one will be the loser. All of us will have won, and Cuba will be able to continue its march toward the future on a stronger footing.

And it won't be necessary to include, as a member of your faculty, this doctor, commander, bank president, and now professor of education, who bids you all farewell.

## Series marked key steps by the Cuban revolution

BY MIKE TABER

This is the final piece in a series that has appeared in the *Militant* each month throughout 1999 celebrating the 40th anniversary of the Cuban revolution. The series features speeches by central leaders of the revolution marking turning points and accomplishments as the workers and farmers of Cuba pressed ahead in the opening years of the revolution, defending their interests against the capitalists, landlords, and imperialist rulers in the United States.

The revolutionary struggle that toppled the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista on Jan. 1, 1959, was led by the July 26 Movement and the Rebel Army commanded by Fidel Castro. These organizations had mobilized Cuba's toilers to bring down the bloody regime, throw off the yoke of Yankee economic and political domination, and initiate radical land reform. Also opposing Batista were substantial bourgeois forces, most of whom did little to bring down the dictatorship but were energetic in seeking to block the Rebel Army's victory.

When it became clear this could not be prevented, these forces—in league with Washington—set their hopes on buying off and corrupting the revolutionary leadership. They confidently expected to engineer the sequence of events often seen elsewhere in Latin America throughout the 20th century: that the July 26 Movement's program would remain only a piece of paper, while in practice the interests of Washington and of Cuba's landlords and capitalists would be secure.

Eventually, they anticipated, the situation would "stabilize" enough so that the bearded rebels could be discarded altogether and more reliable political and military forces reinstated.

They were wrong. From the beginning, Washington and its Cuban bourgeois soul mates underestimated the political caliber, class firmness, and repeated bold initiatives of the leadership forged by the Rebel Army, and the determination of

Cuba's workers and farmers to defend their interests.

The first government that came to power in January 1959 was a coalition of the revolutionary forces led by the July 26 Movement and bourgeois opposition figures, among them the new president, Manuel Urrutia. Fidel Castro remained commander-in-chief of the Rebel Army. He had no position in the new government.

The July 26 Movement and Rebel Army forces under Castro's leadership, both inside and outside the government, continued to mobilize the toilers to carry out the program they had fought for. As the revolution deepened, Fidel Castro became prime minister in mid-February.

Among the measures decreed by the government in early 1959 and implemented in practice by the Rebel Army at the head of the workers and farmers vanguard were the dismantling of the military and police forces of the Batista regime; the eradication of the extremely profitable U.S.-dominated gambling and prostitution operations; the outlawing of racist discrimination in hiring and social services; and the slashing of rents and prices for other basic goods and services, such as telephone and utility rates, that consume most workers' income.

Most decisively, in May 1959 an agrarian reform law was implemented. Millions of acres of large landed estates held by U.S. and Cuban ruling-class families were confiscated, and hundreds of thousands of peasants received title to the land they worked. To implement the land reform, the new government established the National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA) and Castro was named INRA's president.

These measures provoked a sharpening class polarization inside Cuba, including within the coalition government. During the summer and fall of 1959, as the land reform advanced, Washington's economic and military hostility escalated. As Cuban workers and peasants responded, they deepened their determination to defend their gains and realize their dreams. Under popular pressure, the representatives of capitalist forces resigned from the government one after the other. These included Urrutia, who was re-

placed as president by Osvaldo Dorticós, a prominent lawyer with ample credentials as an anti-imperialist and anti-Batista fighter and a member of the July 26 Movement.

The July 26 Movement as well as other groups that participated in the fight against Batista were profoundly affected as procapitalist forces split away. More than a few joined armed counterrevolutionary organizations. By November 1959, the last of the bourgeois forces had left the government. Washington launched a full-scale political, economic, and military campaign to overthrow the workers and farmers government.

From August to October 1960, in direct response to the escalating U.S. attacks, Cuba's working people mobilized by the millions to support and implement government decrees nationalizing the factories, refineries, mills, and other holdings of U.S.- and Cuban-owned corporations. The domination of capital was broken and the foundations laid for beginning a transition to socialism. In April 1961, the day after U.S.-organized bombing assaults on Cuban airfields and on the eve of the landing of U.S.-trained and -financed mercenary troops at the Bay of Pigs, the socialist character of the revolution was proclaimed. The invaders at the Bay of Pigs were defeated in 72 hours.

The standoff between the two irreconcilable forces represented by Havana and Washington, which continues to this day, has marked much of world politics throughout the last 40 years.

Most of the speeches that have been included in this series will appear in books that Pathfinder is preparing for publication. These include two volumes of speeches by Fidel Castro from the first decade of the revolution, *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*, and a new edition of *Che Guevara and the Cuban Revolution*.

Some of the speeches that will appear in these books have never be-

fore appeared in English. Others have been out of print for many years.

*Militant* readers who are interested in helping with the translation are invited to contact Pathfinder Press at (212) 741-0690. Messages can also be sent to [pathfinderpress@compuserve.com](mailto:pathfinderpress@compuserve.com) or mailed to Pathfinder at 410 West Street, New York, NY 10014.

### Miss part of this series?

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■ Cuba's first war of independence, the revolutionary struggle against slavery, and the forging of the Cuban nation — Ricardo Alarcón, Oct. 10, 1998 (February 1 issue)

■ The social aims of the Rebel Army — Ernesto Che Guevara, Jan. 27, 1959 (March 22 issue)

■ The battle to end racial discrimination — Fidel Castro, March 22, 1959 (April 19 issue)

■ "Imperialism misjudged the courage of the Cuban people, the strength of the revolution" — Fidel Castro, on the anniversary of the U.S.-organized invasion at Bay of Pigs (May 10 issue)

■ The First Agrarian Reform — Fidel Castro, June 1959 (May 31 issue)

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You can order these articles for \$1.50 each from the *Militant*, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.



# Steelworkers confront company threats and violence baiting in Ohio lockout

BY TONY PRINCE

CLEVELAND—Local and federal police agencies have seized on recent incidents of violence related to the lockout of 500 workers at AK Steel in Mansfield, Ohio, to launch investigations aimed primarily at United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 169. The Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms; the Federal Bureau of Investigation; the sheriff's departments of Richland, Morrow, and Paulding Counties; and the Shelby, Ontario, Lexington, and Mansfield police departments are all involved in these investigations.

"We're pretty sure at this point it's union-related," asserted Paulding County Chief Deputy Keith Baird, who added he has no physical evidence, just a gut feeling.

More than 50 union members, including one member of USWA Local 8530 from Ideal Electric, and several from Local 549 of the United Auto Workers at General Motors in Ontario, Ohio, appeared in court December 21 on a variety of charges related to the lockout. Some of the workers were arrested for carrying out peaceful and legal picketing in front of the homes of supervisors in the town of Shelby. Local 549 president John McCune complained to the *Mansfield News Journal* that the police are one-sided in issuing citations for incidents, targeting only Local 169 members and their supporters.

Recent incidents have included police arresting a union member on December 10 for allegedly dropping jack rocks (made of bent nails) in front of the plant, and the bombings of a salaried employee's mail box and a truck used by the Luntz Corp., which supplies AK with scrap steel.

Police took a saliva sample from a Local 169 member on December 13 to see if his DNA



November 20 solidarity march in support of AK Steel workers in Mansfield, Ohio.

matches a sample found on a burned cigarette they claim to have found in two unexploded firebombs on September 25. The cops said they targeted the worker because company guards videotaped him making comments that indicated he might know something about explosives. The sample turned out negative.

"The police could have easily set the guy up," remarked Local 169 member Larry Pugh. The AK Steel bosses are trying to use these incidents to turn public opinion, which has been solidly behind the locked-out work-

ers, against Local 169. The company paid for a full-page advertisement in the December 17 *News Journal* with the huge headline, "Help End the Terrorism" accompanied by a picture of a nail bomb. In the ad the company offered a \$100,000 reward for anyone who helps turn in a person for putting bombs on company property.

"They want us to lose community support, which has not been successful," said Raquel Curry, referring to this ad, in an interview at the Mansfield courthouse December

21. Curry is one of the locked-out workers who faces charges of violating an injunction to stand 350 feet from the plant gate. "The amount of support—people stopping by to see how it's going, making donations, and offering anything we need—is just incredible," she said.

The *News Journal* is promoting the bosses' campaign against the union. In a December 12 editorial referring to a man arrested for allegedly dropping jack rocks, the paper says, "We hope the maximum penalty is imposed."

Pugh commented that "the *News Journal* very seldom says anything negative toward the company, but almost always says something negative toward the union."

Ray Delarwelle, another activist in Local 169, felt that the *News Journal* is "mostly fair," but noted that "they'll make a mistake on the front page, and then the retraction will be almost hidden on the second page." He also pointed out that the paper insinuated that the union member arrested on December 10 on charges of dropping jack rocks was responsible for all of the jack rock incidents related to the lockout.

Union officials have denied that union members are responsible for the incidents that have occurred. Local 169 staff representative Bill Collins told the *News Journal* that the union only wants to reach a contract agreement with the company and wouldn't stoop to acts of violence that would undercut those efforts.

Pugh pointed out that AK Steel's goons threw jack rocks on the grass where union members parked when they did picket duty. "They ruined my tire, ripped the sidewall," he said.

He described another incident when AK thugs tried to run his car into a semi. When Pugh called the police, the cop said, "I might have known," on learning that Pugh was a locked-out worker. The prosecutor wouldn't pursue the case, claiming that there were no witnesses.

Union members continue to reach out to build support for their struggle and other labor battles. Several members of Local 169 went to the Detroit suburb of Grosse Pointe during the week of December 13 to join with striking steelworkers from Titan Tire in picketing the house of Maurice Taylor, the owner of Titan Tire.

On December 17 the company and the union agreed to allow an arbitrator to determine if union workers are entitled to medical benefits. In the meantime, benefits will be restored. But if the company wins during arbitration it would be allowed to recover the medical care costs directly from employees, it claims.

Tony Prince is a member of Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees. Eva Braiman contributed to this article.

## U.S. officials use 'antiterrorism' campaign, spy scare to target rights

Continued from front page  
rity adviser, Samuel Berger, issued a similar warning for within the United States as well. "If they see something suspicious, or see packages or activities that they think are unusual, they should obviously let law enforcement people know," he said. Despite this hype, U.S. Attorney General Janet Reno admitted December 16, "We have no specific information concerning specific attacks."

In Pakistan the government has arrested more than 200 people, mostly Afghan nationals, supposedly as a precautionary measure to avert attacks on U.S. citizens. Authorities in Jordan also rounded up 14 people—12 Jordanians, one Iraqi and an Algerian—under similar pretenses.

On December 14, U.S. border cops arrested Ahmed Ressam, who was originally from Algeria, after he crossed the border by ferry from Canada into Port Angeles, Washington. They claimed he was driving a car

containing nitroglycerin and other materials that could be made into a bomb.

According to a December 21 *Washington Post* article, Algerians living in Montreal, who face routine discrimination from the police, commented on the stepped-up harassment they expect to face in light of Ressam's arrest. "They treat us now like they treat the Blacks in the U.S.," stated one unnamed Algerian immigrant. "If you have an Algerian passport, it's like having a bomb in your hand," said another. "They look at us all as if we are terrorists."

In Vermont, at the Beecher Falls border crossing to Canada, U.S. police on December 19 arrested Algerian-born Bouabide Chamchi and a Canadian woman named Lucia Garofalo. Authorities claimed that trained dogs detected traces of possible explosives in their car. A thorough search of the car, however, turned up nothing. They are now being accused of trying to enter the United States with allegedly false documents.

Meanwhile, a U.S. weapons scientist, Wen Ho Lee, a naturalized U.S. citizen born in Taiwan, was arrested December 10 and is being held without bail. He pleaded not guilty to a 59-count indictment that accuses him of downloading classified data from the computers at the Los Alamos National Laboratory where he worked.

Amidst a government-orchestrated campaign charging the Chinese government with obtaining nuclear secrets through a 20-year campaign of espionage, Lee was fired from his job in March. U.S. officials admit they have no evidence to charge Lee with being a spy for Beijing.

Lee's son and daughter said that members of their family have been allowed to visit him in jail for only an hour a week, in the presence of an FBI agent. While both children were raised speaking to their parents in Chinese, they said FBI agents insist that all jail conversations be conducted in English.

The family has filed a lawsuit against the FBI and the departments of Energy and Justice for leaking confidential information to the press that has been used to whip up the campaign against Lee.

According to documents obtained by a Senate Judiciary subcommittee, some 250 other individuals had access to the same information for which Lee has been indicted. Earlier this year the U.S. Energy Department announced that it might order polygraph tests for as many as 10,000 people employed at nuclear weapons laboratories. In response to an uproar by scientists, the department announced that it has scaled back this project but still plans to require 800 scientists to undergo these tests.

Brian Williams is a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 2609 in Sparrows Point, Maryland.

## Auburn Foundry

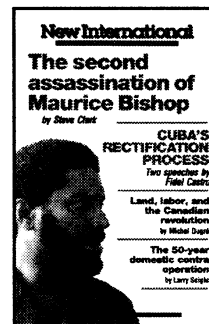
Continued from Page 7

view with the *Militant*. "But many had been misused by bosses in other jobs, or were making only \$8 or \$9 an hour. They saw an ad for a job paying \$14 an hour and it looked good. Then they came into the strike situation without knowing what was going on."

In addition to discussing lessons of their strike experience, some GMP members at the Christmas party were beginning to make plans to continue the struggle, including supporting other workers on strike. Chapman and others talked enthusiastically of their trip to Mansfield, Ohio earlier this fall, where they had joined a rally supporting Steelworkers locked out by AK Steel, and a trip to the picket line of striking foundry workers in Decatur, Indiana.

"A bunch of the guys want to go back to Mansfield," said Chapman, "and we hope to do it soon, taking advantage of the fact that many of us are still off work."

Harvey McArthur is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 100 in Chicago.



### In New International no. 6 Washington's 50-Year Domestic Contra Operation

LARRY SEIGLE

As the U.S. rulers prepared to smash working-class resistance and join the interimperialist slaughter of World War II, the national political police apparatus as it exists today was born. Documents the consequences for the labor, Black, antiwar, and other social movements and how the working-class vanguard has fought over the past fifty years to defend democratic rights against government and employer attacks. In *New International* no. 6. \$10.00

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*The Victory in the Socialist Workers Party Suit  
against Government Spying*

EDITED BY MARGARET JAYKO

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# Chechnya invasion and imperialist hostility

**Continued from front page**  
capitalists. "The Communists and nationalists who dominate the lower chamber have frustrated many attempts to pass more market-oriented economic legislation," he wrote on December 19. "[They] have fought each other to a bitter stalemate over creating a land code to fill one of the many gaps in the quest to become a market economy."

*New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman wrote, "While Russia still has a long way to go before it gets what I believe it needs most, the rule of law and institutions that must undergird any free market.... [The] Communists' stranglehold over the ...Duma, which has blocked the legal and tax reforms Russia needs... will be broken."

## Capitalists hope for 'reform'

"Russia Votes Right," announced the *Wall Street Journal* in an approving headline. The *New York Times* editors noted that "Unity, allied with President Boris Yeltsin and Prime Minister Vladimir Putin, built its success on jingoistic exploitation of the brutal Russian military campaign in Chechnya." The editorial added that "moderates could end up with more than half the total seats. Those gains could help bring economic reform back to life."

These commentators hope the new parliament can kick start the opening up of Russia's economy to profitable capitalist investment. They falsely identify the Communist Party as the main block to such "reforms," and the fragile coalition around Putin as a potentially powerful ally.

But social relations in Russia do not blend with the priorities of capitalist investors. There is no native capitalist class that can self-confidently seize the social assets—the factories, mines, farms, and other means of production—and impose the conditions of labor demanded by the profit system. Workers and peasants, accustomed to minimal rights to employment and social services, defend those rights against the prerogatives of capital. The ruling layers in Russia fear the resistance of working people. Many also fear for their own privileged positions should capitalist relations triumph.

For electoral purposes the Communist Party portrays itself as a defender of working people's interests in the Duma. But its roots do not lie in the revolutionary vanguard of workers and peasants built by revolutionaries in Russia, which led working people in a victorious struggle for power in 1917 and in the first years of the revolutionary government. In that tumultuous period the workers and peasants government expropriated the landlords and capitalists and established the basis of a nationalized economy, state monopoly of foreign trade, and economic planning.

Rather, it is a decrepit shadow of the political machine that developed out of the political counterrevolution of the late 1920s and early 1930s, which for decades represented the interests of privileged bureaucratic layers in the former Soviet Union. The conditions of extreme hardship and civil war that prevailed in the young Soviet Union in the 1920s weakened the Soviet-based power of the toiling masses. Such difficulties provided a basis for a parasitic layer to rise to a leading position, including in the Communist Party. The bureaucracy

seized power by killing and imprisoning millions, including the most politically conscious and experienced workers and peasants. Great Russian chauvinism and oppression of the peoples of the Caucasus and Central Asia reemerged, in a reversal of the course charted by the Bolsheviks under the leadership of V.I. Lenin of championing the right of oppressed nations to self-determination.

This brutal exclusion of working people from political life also drastically weakened the economic gains of the revolution. Washington and other the imperialist powers relied on the Stalinist murder machine to police the workers and peasants and drive them out of politics. Although the bureaucratic apparatus served as an instrument for transmitting capitalist values, the post-capitalist property forms remain, even in the midst of generalized crisis and want.

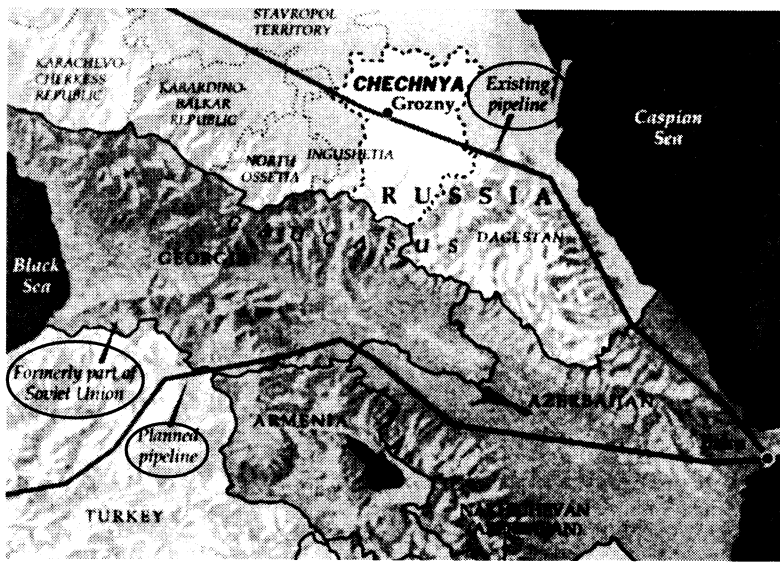
The ruling classes of the imperialists powers entered the 1990s with expectations that the decline of CP-led regimes and the election of pro-capitalist politicians would unlock the Russian economy—and others like it—to capitalist exploitation. As the "reform" process has stalled the imperialists have become frustrated.

Washington has struck a more hostile stance to Moscow and to its erstwhile ally, Boris Yeltsin. The U.S. rulers have boosted their military strength in Europe, stationing thousands of troops in Yugoslavia and expanding the borders of NATO, the military alliance they dominate.

Recently the two powers have clashed verbally over the U.S. military's development of a missile system designed to provide it with a first-strike advantage in a nuclear conflict. On December 21 Putin called for the ratification of the Start II treaty to limit the number of nuclear arms, but "noted" some "serious obstacles," reported the *New York Times*.

## Washington boosts nuclear force

Less than two weeks earlier, Yeltsin pointedly stated during a visit to Beijing that in attempting to pressure Moscow the Clinton administration should not forget "that Russia has a full arsenal of nuclear weapons."



Washington's oil grab: map shows existing oil pipeline passing south of Grozny and U.S.-proposed route that would bypass Russia.

Putin cited Washington's proposal to build a "limited defense" against missiles launched by "rogue states."

"Skeptical military officials in Russia and China" reported the *Times*, "argue that the United States' real goal is to build a defense against the shrunken nuclear force that Russia would possess once ... arms-control treaties are implemented." Beijing and above all Moscow control substantial nuclear arsenals.

The development of new weapons systems is now openly discussed in Washington. The *Washington Post* reported on December 10 that "A blue-ribbon scientific panel... has recommended... the design [of] a new, billion-dollar plutonium weapons plant and... [of] new warheads for the first time in more than a decade." According to the *Post* the findings are "likely to be welcomed by members of Congress who... recently voted to reject the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty."

When Moscow invaded the breakaway Caucasian republic of Chechnya in 1994, Washington gave its tacit support. Not so this time. "The Russians are self-isolating from the rest of the international community," said U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright on December 17 at a meeting of government representatives from the "Group of 8" nations, at which Yeltsin joined representatives of the seven most powerful imperialist countries of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

"No sanctions but no aid" summarizes

the stance of the imperialist governments in Europe towards the military offensive of the Russian army in the Caucasian republic of Chechnya.

On December 21 Albright ordered the Export-Import Bank of the United States to deny an agreed \$500 million loan to the Siberia-based Tyumen oil company. The refusal stops "American companies from selling oil-drilling and environmental equipment to... a company that is 49.8 percent owned by the Russian government," wrote David Sanger in the *New York Times*, adding that the "Clinton administration has... slowed money to a trickle while insisting on major changes in the Russian economic and legal system."

## Oil wealth at stake

The oil wealth of the Caspian Sea and Caucasus area is also at issue in the tensions between the U.S. and Russian rulers. Capitalist oil companies have expanding interests in the region (see map above). The *Christchurch Press* from New Zealand commented in a December 22 editorial on the Chechnya conflict that were "Russia ...to widen the conflict to other parts of its sphere of influence ... the West might find its inter-

Continued on Page 14

## DEMONSTRATIONS

### Bloody Sunday: Let the Truth be Told

**London: Sat., Jan. 22**

Assemble: 12 midday  
Whitehall Place (Embankment).

Rally: ULU, Malet St.

Speakers: Sinn Fein leader,  
Bloody Sunday relative,  
Breandan Mac Cionnaith, Tony  
Benn MP.

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Assemble: 1 p.m.

Creggan Shops

Rally: Free Derry corner

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# Capitalism destroys the environment

The following excerpt is taken from "Capitalism's Deadly World Disorder," a talk given at a regional socialist educational conference in Greensboro, North Carolina, April 10, 1993, and the following day to a similar gathering in Des Moines, Iowa. The talks were followed by discussion periods; this selection was in answer to a question from a conference participant. The entire speech appears in *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*. Copyright © 1999 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY JACK BARNES

The modern communist workers movement has long had a position against capitalist degradation of the environment. [Karl] Marx and [Frederick] Engels wrote powerfully and convincingly about capital's destruction of the soil, the water, the air, and the basis for human

## from the pages of Capitalism's World Disorder

life and civilization. I do not think there is anything to take back from the foundation they laid.

Environmental pollution is a social question, a class question. Workers must not fall into accepting the common view that the environment — any more than "education" — is a "scientific" question, a "natural" question, that somehow hovers above classes and outside the class struggle. That is how many middle-class opponents of nuclear energy, and of nuclear weapons, for example, often present those questions. Many who call themselves environmentalists say the problem is "consumerism," or industrial development per se. But the workers movement has to explain the true source of ecological destruction and why the answer lies along the revolutionary line of march of the working class.

### Conflicting class interests

It is unlikely there will ever be "an environmental movement" as such, because conflicting class interests and perspectives will point to diametrically opposed causes and irreconcilable solutions. Young people, outraged by the abuses they see all around them and looking for answers, can become involved in activities and groups that are disconnected from any line of march that points to changing the class character of the state, to changing the class structure of the government and thus the character of society. Ultimately, such activity corrodes their initial motivations and too often develops into a search for middle-class nostrums for improving their own quality of life as individuals.

Of course, there can and will be broad action coalitions to act against specific dangers to the natural environmental and human health and safety: the incinerator you mentioned, a nuclear power plant, a toxic waste dump. These fights will often involve workers, farmers, students, people from the middle class, and others. Labor must join in these battles against the horrifying breakdowns that capitalism creates and help to lead these fights. But there will never be some general, classless environmental protection movement.

The working class must also reject all forms of fake science, exaggeration, and crankism. There is a decades-long record of such frenzied prophecies — the impending exhaustion of fossil fuels and other natural resources, the "limits to growth," and so on. These originate in sections of the bourgeoisie and are then picked up and propagated by petty-bourgeois reformers. They feed into the conspiracy nostrums that are floated in the working class and labor movement, taking workers' eyes off the true source of such social ills: the capitalists and their profit system. Such views usually end up as pseudoscientific rationalizations for reactionary, and often racist, "overpopulation" propaganda and calls for belt-tightening — with "equality of sacrifice," of course — to husband the earth's disappearing riches.

### Oppose 'environmental taxes'

In the name of protecting the environment, middle-class reformers join forces with bourgeois politicians to figure out ways for both the state and voluntary agencies to control the benighted masses who do not understand these questions. They call for steeper cigarette taxes and bans on smoking anywhere; they seek stiffer fines on individuals who do not recycle just right, while capitalists destroy entire rivers, lakes, and forests.

It is not unknown for the new First Lady herself to take this tax-and-scoold approach on a wide variety of questions. This has nothing to do with working-class politics or protecting the interests of working people. Instead, it has to do with the regimentation of the working class and the hysteria of middle-class social engineers.

Many things that are called environmental questions today are not. I live in New York City and work a lot of the time in a building on the Hudson River. Virtually all of what is called the environmental movement there thought it was a stupendous victory back in the 1980s when the renovation of the West Side Highway was held off for years by a federal judge because of the potential effects on the spawning of striped bass. But the whole thing was a con. I do not know the truth about the striped bass; maybe its spawning grounds needed to be protected. But I do know the fight had nothing to do with protecting the striped bass, much less with transporting working people in New York City.

Instead, it was a multibillion-dollar battle between two sections of finance capital. At issue were the conflicting interests of current and potential bondholders, big real estate developers with riverfront properties, and these and other capitalists weighing the likely tax credits and burdens. Billions of dollars were at stake — massive development funds and eternal interest transfers to coupon clippers.

So, a federal judge simply put the project on hold for a number of years until consensus was reached in the ruling class that rebuilding the West Side Highway was not in their best interests. And then everyone forgot about the fish.

### Effects of pollution on working class

It is important to remind ourselves of such examples, because similar considerations are at the heart of a certain amount of what passes for environmental questions. But if we translate everything commonly thought of as an environmental issue into how to advance the protection of the working class, and how the working class can extend that



Protesters march for three days in August last year against government plans to store nuclear waste in Sierra, Texas.

protection to all, then we can hardly ever go wrong. With that approach, we will increase the possibilities for concrete solidarity in fighting against ecological abuses and outrages.

The labor movement should expose the differential effects of pollution on the working class, including the even more devastating consequences for sections of the working class that are Black, Chicano, or foreign-born. We can point to the kinds of neighborhoods and parts of the countryside where waste dumps just happen to be located, and where incinerators just happen to be built. We can point to the impact on working farmers, and the connections with speedup and with health and safety on and off the job.

The workers movement must take the lead in actively exposing the destruction and dangers produced by capitalism and in organizing opposition to them. If labor does so, this effort can develop over time into a broad and powerful, working-class-led social movement like the CIO movement in the 1930s. It would help the working class galvanize our allies to fight for our common interests against the propertied families and their state.

True environmental horrors are accelerating under capitalism today (and the Stalinist regimes across Central and Eastern Europe and the USSR are responsible for unthinkable devastation as well). Revolutionary governments of the workers and farmers can and will reverse this deadly course.

Take a couple evenings and reread the Communist Manifesto; reread the sections in *Capital*

on capitalism's destruction of the natural environment. You will be stunned at how clearly this question is placed within the historical development of capitalism, its uncontrollable tendencies, and its social consequences. You will be stunned at how uncompromising, how committed the communist workers movement was from its origins to combating capitalism's ravaging of the earth and its atmosphere.

Marx explains how human creativity is turned into its opposite under capitalism, how advances in the forces of production simultaneously increase the forces of destruction of nature itself. How the sources of all wealth—land and labor—are increasingly the victims of the domination of capital. And, most importantly, why the working class-led struggle for a socialist revolution opens a way forward on this front as well.

1. For example, Marx wrote in *Capital* that "Capitalist production, therefore, only develops the techniques and ... the social process of production by simultaneously undermining the original sources of all wealth—the soil and the worker." And elsewhere in the same work: "The development of civilization and industry in general has always shown itself so active in the destruction of forests that everything that has been done for their conservation and production is completely insignificant in comparison." *Capital*, vol. 1, p. 638, and vol. 2, p. 322.

## —25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



January 17, 1975

New threats that the United States might go to war in the Middle East were voiced by Secretary of State Henry Kissinger in Washington last week.

Admitting that a U.S. attack on the Middle East would be "a very dangerous course," Kissinger nevertheless added, "I am not saying that there's no circumstance where we would not use force....

"The use of force would be considered... in the gravest emergency."

Kissinger's remarks appeared in an interview in the Jan. 13 issue of *Business Week* magazine. A White House spokesperson said that President Ford had nothing to add to the Kissinger statement.

Short of warfare, Kissinger outlined a four-point U.S. program to put pressure on the oil-exporting nations in order to restore imperialist control of world oil prices:

"One, a degree of consumer solidarity that makes the consumers less vulnerable to threat of embargo and to the dangers of financial collapse.

"Second, a systematic effort at energy conservation of sufficient magnitude to impose difficult choices on the producing countries.

"Third, institutions of financial solidarity so that individual countries are not so obsessed by their sense of impotence that they are prepared to negotiate on the producers' terms.

"Fourth, and most important, to bring in alternative sources of energy as rapidly as possible so that the combination of new

discoveries of oil, new oil-producing countries, and new sources of energy create a supply situation in which it will be increasingly difficult for the cartel to operate. We think the beginning of this will occur within two to three years."



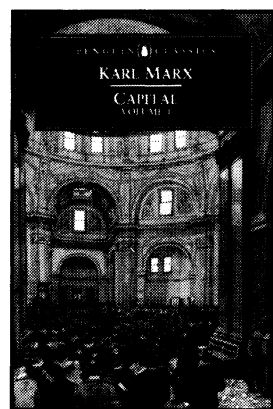
January 2, 1950

The Southern Coal Producers Association has demanded that Truman's National Labor Relations Board seek a Taft-Hartley injunction against the United Mine Workers to force the miners to work a five-day week instead of the present three-day week maintained by decision of the union.

In an effort to defeat the miners' attempts to get an improved contract and to halt any further possible strike action, the operators have called on the government to invoke a type of injunction that would operate for an indefinite period.

Previously the operators had asked Truman to procure an injunction under the "national emergency" clause of the Taft-Hartley Act. This is limited by law to 80 days.

But if the NLRB gets an injunction to halt "unfair labor practices," as the mine owners' legal sharpshooters have asked, the union could be restrained from operating on a three-day week or taking any other action which the parasite owners call "coercive" and in violation of the Slave Labor Law. It was this type of injunction which the NLRB secured against the AFL typographical union last year.



for further reading

## Capital

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# The Cuban revolution: a dangerous example

*"On New Year's Day, when we reach the year 2000, we won't be able to greet each other with a 'Happy New Century,' not in Latin America or many others parts of the world.... The reality that awaits us—which is manifest now before the turn of the century—is a reality of much effort and struggle."*  
—Fidel Castro, January 1994

In this world of capitalist disorder and brutality, and of continued working-class resistance, revolutionary Cuba remains an example for workers, farmers, and youth who want to change society into one fit for humanity.

Forty-one years ago, on Jan. 1, 1959, Cuban working people in their millions made history. Led by the Rebel Army and the July 26 Movement, they brought down the blood-soaked Batista tyranny backed by Washington, the world's mightiest imperialist power, which grotesquely poses as a champion of democracy around the world. Those who the parasitic capitalist minority views as the unwashed masses—workers and farmers—did what we're always told we're incapable of: they began to take the reins of society, and to transform themselves in the process. What have the Cuban people achieved in these 41 years?

Tens of thousands of young volunteers went into the countryside and launched a campaign that wiped out illiteracy in Cuba—something the world's richest power has not done and will not do here.

Peasants, with the support of their revolutionary government, carried out a sweeping land reform that guaranteed land to those who worked it. Since then, not a single working farmer has been driven off his or her land—in contrast to the scourge of foreclosures that thousands of farmers face in the United States and other capitalist countries.

In face of economic sabotage by the wealthy, workers demonstrated massively to demand the takeover of the factories, leading to their nationalization. The active involvement of working people in fundamental decisions affecting society, and their resulting self-confidence, has marked Cuba for 41 years.

Millions of Cubans have mobilized to defend their hard-won sovereignty and socialist revolution against U.S. imperialist attack—defeating U.S.-backed mercenary invaders in 1961, staying the hand of the U.S. warmakers in the October 1962 “missile” crisis, and confronting ongoing threats today.

Hundreds of thousands of Cuban volunteers have gone around the world to join internationalist campaigns—from helping defeat the apartheid invaders in Angola in the late 1980s to the voluntary medical brigades that are now in Venezuela giving selfless aid to flood victims.

These deeds are why the U.S. government has maintained a policy of aggression against revolutionary Cuba for the past 41 years—from a criminal economic embargo to its latest provocation of not returning a Cuban child back to Cuba. The foreign policy of the biggest imperialist power in the world is not set by a handful of right-wing Cuban-American businessmen in Miami. It is decided by the ruling class of billionaire families, whom Democrat William Clinton and his Republican cohorts faithfully serve. The example of the Cuban revolution to working people and the oppressed worldwide represents a mortal threat to the class interests of the U.S. rulers.

The new Pathfinder book *Making History: Interviews with Four Generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces*, gives readers a vivid picture of the men and women who have accomplished the deeds that Washington fears and hates. In conversations with fellow revolutionists from the United States, four revolutionary combatants—generals Néstor López Cuba, José Ramón Fernández, Enrique Carreras, and Harry Villegas—recount their experiences over four decades of the Cuban revolution, from the battles of the Rebel Army in the Sierra Maestra, to internationalist missions in Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, and Asia. Above all, they address fighting workers and young people—in the United States and elsewhere. They speak to those who want to emulate their example and make a revolution that can sweep out the exploiting classes and establish a government of workers and farmers. To those who want to join in the worldwide fight to put an end to capitalism, with its philosophy of plunder, and open up a socialist future.

Studying *Making History* and getting it into the hands of others who are searching for political answers to the world of 2000 is one of the most effective ways to tell the truth about the Cuban revolution, and to celebrate 41 years of workers and farmers in power.

# Defend Chinese workers state

BY CHRIS RAYSON

SEATTLE—In a letter published in last week's *Militant*, reader Matt Skiba wrote that he is “confused about... the reference to China and the former ‘socialist’ bloc as ‘workers states’” in the *Militant*. “[I]f workers truly did wield power in China,” Skiba asks, “then why do they have to battle cops when they are on strike, or why are workers who call for independent labor unions jailed?”

The ending of landlord and capitalist rule in China is one of the most important conquests of working people this century. This advance is described in a resolution adopted by the Socialist Workers Party in 1955, six years after the victory of the People's Liberation Army in the civil war.

“China was the chief prize for which the U.S. had fought the war in the Pacific....” explains the document. “Here was a matchless field for capital investments, a potential market for consumer goods, a rich reservoir of raw materials, an overflowing source of cheap labor. What the U.S. believed it

## DISCUSSION WITH OUR READERS

had won in the war... the revolution took instead.”

The peasants and workers “drove out the [pro-imperialist] Kuomintang regime, ended a century of imperialist freebooting in China. [They]... put an end to the country's dismemberment, uprooted the landlord and usurer domination of agriculture, destroyed the Asian relations in the family and swept away other feudalistic rubbish. The country has advanced materially and culturally.”

And in spite of the express policy of the revolution's Stalinist leadership, the toilers pushed beyond those nation-building tasks. As the document explains, the revolution “abolished the capitalist state, instituted planning on the basis of government ownership of the key branches of industry, finance, credit, and introduced the monopoly of foreign trade.” (See “The Third Chinese Revolution and its Aftermath,” in Education for Socialists Bulletin *The Chinese Revolution and its Development*.)

China had become a workers state, a state in which the exploiters have been expropriated, capitalism has been abolished, and the industrial proletariat forms the ruling class.

The Chinese revolution changed the relationship of class forces worldwide. U.S. imperialism was weakened in Asia, where it was unable to conquer all of Korea, and Paris was soon kicked out of North Vietnam after its crushing defeat at Dien Bien Phu. Washington's drive toward war with the Soviet Union was slowed as it had to confront the certainty of war with China if it proceeded. At the same time the Chinese revolution irrevocably weakened Moscow's political monopoly, beginning the breakup of the Stalinist monolith.

China's workers and peasants accomplished a great deal despite their rotten leadership. But the revolution was saddled with a bureaucratic leadership that had already been consolidated decades before the victory.

The Chinese communist movement had been formed by revolutionary-minded workers and peasants inspired by the Russian revolution. This Bolshevik-led socialist revolution inspired workers, farmers, and youth around the world.

Amid imperialist encirclement and pressure, and the delay in socialist revolution elsewhere, however, the revolutionary forces in the Soviet Union were supplanted by a bureaucratic layer personified and led by Joseph Stalin. Com-

## War in Chechnya

Continued from Page 12

ests endangered... supplies of oil from Kazakhstan might be at risk.”

Rising oil export revenues have helped to finance Moscow's war against forces in Chechnya that demand independence for the southwestern republic. Moscow's ability to at least minimally supply and feed its soldiers stands in contrast to the 1994 invasion. The Russian generals have held casualties down by relying on the heavy use of artillery and air bombardment first and direct clashes with Chechen forces second.

The dangers that lie in wait for a Russian attempt to take and hold the capital Grozny on the ground were revealed when more than a hundred troops in a tank column were killed in a battle on December 17. After that setback the Russian forces resumed their bombardment. Ground troops are sent to the edge of the city to try to determine the positions of the well-entrenched rebels. The Russian troops have set up roadblocks around Grozny and Chechnya more widely to control the movement of people.

Prime Minister Putin announced on December 18 that Russian troops had taken control of a key road linking the independent country of Georgia with Chechnya, claiming it is used by Chechen forces to move supplies. The Georgian government said on December 17 that Russian bombs had fallen near a Georgian village.

Putin presents himself as a “tough guy” dealing with “terrorism” in Chechnya. Moscow claims its invasion is aimed at “Islamic terrorists.” Putin claims that civilian casualties in the offensive, which has created 200,000 refugees and depopulated Grozny, “could be counted on one's fingers.” The parliamentary elections came at the right moment for this politician, who has tied his fortunes to those of the bludgeoning Russian offensive.

munist parties around the world, including in China, were forced to serve the interests of this counterrevolutionary bureaucracy, which continued to drape itself in the mantle of communism, and the Russian revolution. Mao Zedong, the most prominent leader of the Chinese Communist Party and government, was trained in the methods and policies of Stalinism.

The Maoist or Stalinist bureaucracy still dominates politics in China today. It rules with police-state methods, reflecting its fear of the potential power of working people, who created modern China.

What stance should communist workers take in conflicts between the imperialist powers and workers states like China? Leon Trotsky, a leader of the Russian revolution who opposed the Stalinist counterrevolution dealt with this issue in relation to the Soviet Union in the 1930s. Some of his most important writings on the question are collected in *In Defense of Marxism*, published by Pathfinder.

In “Again and Once More Again on the Nature of the USSR” Trotsky called for “unconditional defence” of the Soviet Union against the threat of attack by German imperialism. “What does [this] mean?” he asked. “It means... we do not lay any conditions upon the bureaucracy... independently of the motive and causes of the war we defend the social basis of the USSR, if it is menaced by danger on the part of imperialism.... If the Red Army menaces workers' strikes or peasant protests against the bureaucracy in the USSR shall we support it or not?... We have never promised to support all the actions of the Red Army which is an instrument in the hands of the ...bureaucracy. We have promised to defend only the USSR as a workers' state and solely those things within it which belong to a workers' state.”

Communists support workers and peasants protests and strikes against bureaucratic repression. Working people need to overthrow brutal rule of the Stalinist bureaucracy, and replace it with their own class institutions. Through these they can organize further advances in every field in collaboration with their sisters and brothers around the world. Trotsky used the term “political revolution” to describe this overthrow, emphasizing that such a movement would build on the progressive economic forms that lie at the heart of a workers state.

In his letter Matt Skiba recalls a “very interesting point” made by a volunteer staffing a Socialist Workers Party literature table in Seattle. “She gave a good comparison between the ‘labor bosses’ here and the Chinese ‘Communist’ bureaucracy that both essentially want to be capitalists, are capitalist minded, but have their base in the workers, and therefore have to talk (and make policies) out of both sides of their mouths. But does that mean that if [AFL-CIO president John] Sweeney and [Teamsters union president] James Hoffa held state power in the U.S. that this country would be a workers state?”

There are union-based parties that have administered capitalism, elected to office with the tacit support of big business or as a result of an accelerating class struggle. Such parties in fact occupy the government benches in the United Kingdom, France, and other imperialist countries today. But in every case these governments serve the ruling capitalist class in reining in workers and forcing through capitalist-imposed austerity. That's what a government of Sweeney and Hoffa would carry out. What differentiates a workers state from this is a revolution, like the one that transformed China.

Trotsky did draw an analogy between the workers state and a trade union. Both, he explained, are institutions of the working class. “In the final analysis a workers state is a trade union that has conquered power,” wrote Trotsky in the article cited above. The analogy is useful because most workers grasp the fundamental need to defend the union against the bosses' attack, no matter the character of its leadership. The same class obligation is posed in the defense of a workers state.

This does not mean putting aside the reactionary policies of conservative trade union officials, or Stalinist governments. Trotsky uses a powerful example to explain this: “A trade union led by reactionary fakers organizes a strike against the admission of Negro workers into a certain branch of industry. Shall we support such a shameful strike? Of course not. But let us imagine that the bosses, utilizing the given strike, make an attempt to crush the trade union and to make impossible in general the organized self-defense of the workers. In this case we will defend the trade union as a matter of course in spite of its reactionary leadership. Why is not this same policy applicable to the USSR?”

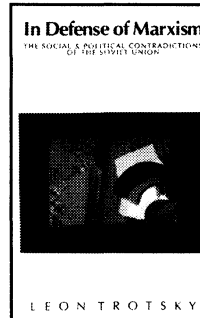
### In Defense of Marxism

*The Social and Political Contradictions of the Soviet Union*

LEON TROTSKY

Writing in 1939–40, Leon Trotsky replies to those in the revolutionary workers movement who were beating a retreat from defense of the Soviet Union in face of looming imperialist assault. He explains why only a party that fights to bring growing numbers of workers into its ranks and leadership can steer a steady revolutionary course. \$24.95

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# Meat workers in New Zealand resist concessions

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.

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand — Meat workers are resisting a serious attack on their wages and working conditions by two of the biggest meat-processing companies in New Zealand. The Primary Producers Co-operative Society (PPCS) and the Alliance Group have announced

creased kill, and in particular the speed up. In response, PPCS informed the Meat Workers Union December 20 that they would start up one of the closed production lines at its Canterbury plant in the new year.

On December 12 a combined meeting of the Makarewa and Lorneville workers voted to reject the wages and hours the Alliance Group is trying to impose as part of the shift system. Although the workers' stand has meant that the Lorneville plant will not start before Christmas, Otago/Southland Meat Workers Union secretary Gary Davis noted that they

## ON THE PICKET LINE

plans to increase their production by imposing shiftwork and speedup at their South Island plants. Both companies recently posted a sizeable drop in profits, after two years of drought in regions throughout the South Island severely curtailed the number of stock for slaughter.

In August the Alliance Group announced that it would introduce shiftwork slaughtering into its plants over the next two years. The bosses propose 10-hour shifts, with each worker putting in a four-day week, and increasing the kill from 3,500 sheep and lambs in an eight-hour day to 5,000 in 10 hours. The company also announced the end of sheep processing at its Makarewa plant near Invercargill and the merging of the Makarewa workforce into the nearby Lorneville plant. This plant, with the continuous shift system in operation, would be able to process 180,000 lambs a week. Another South Island plant is to be closed.

In response, PPCS, the Alliance Group's main competitor, has also proposed to increase production and introduce shiftwork slaughtering into its plants. Instead of lengthening the working day, PPCS, wants to increase the speed of the production lines from 8.3 carcasses per minute to 10 per minute. It also closed down three production lines at its Canterbury and Fairton plants, laying off more than 300 workers.

The lamb-killing season is now under way, but neither company has been able to put their proposals into effect due to the opposition of the workers. Meetings of workers at the six PPCS plants have rejected the in-

were fighting for the longer term. "The wages and conditions we are talking about are for our futures, not just this Christmas but for the next 10 or 20." Workers are concerned that the faster work pace and longer shifts will increase the already high rate of repetitive motion and other injuries. Many workers are also concerned that the increased kill will lead to a shorter season, possibly as little as 12 weeks work, for many workers who are normally employed from December through May.

### Florida tomato pickers strike for higher wages

IMMOKALEE, Florida—Hundreds of workers stopped picking tomatoes December 13 in this southwest Florida town in order to press their fight for increased wages. Organized by the Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW), 400 farm workers and their supporters turned out for the first predawn protest to call on others to stay off the job and join their struggle. Workers report that since then between a couple of dozen and a few hundred workers walk in the morning protests and evening marches as they continue to rally support for the fight.

A couple of dozen farm workers joined a December 17 overnight bus ride from Immokalee to the state capital, Tallahassee, for a rally to demand Gov. Jeb Bush to help bring the growers to the negotiating table.

From the first day of the struggle

here the growers have received the support of the local police. CIW protest organizer Greg Asbed was detained by police at 7:00 a.m. December 13, and three farm workers were arrested when they came to his defense. All have since been released. As of December 18, only the charges against Asbed have been dropped.

Ray Gilmer, a spokesperson for the Florida Fruit and Vegetable Association, claims that area growers have not experienced a shortage of workers in the fields as a result of the farmworkers' campaign. But farmworkers Guadalupe Artiaga Torres, Rigoberto Mesa Ortiz, and José Luis Sorriano say that in fact about half the work force has stayed off the job.

"We shouldn't have to live like this going into the next millennium," said Artiaga, who has picked tomatoes for three years. Workers receive 45 cents for a 32-pound bucket, and are demanding a raise to 75 cents. The growers have been selling a 25-pound box on the market for \$7.50 this fall, and for as much as \$11.88 per box last year at this time.

Mesa, a seven-year veteran of the south Florida fields, said that working hard at this rate brings him \$280 per week before taxes.

Many of the farmworkers in Immokalee are women. Sorriano em-

phasized the point that they are playing a leading role in the struggle. "The women fight hard, and they work hard," he said.

Soledad Hernández has been picking tomatoes for one year in Immokalee, and related that she had never been part of a struggle like this before. But the wages are so low, she said, that "we have to fight. I have no choice." She said working conditions are also an issue—sometimes the pesticides dropped on the crops are so powerful that workers have to leave the fields.

The current stage of the farm workers' fight began in 1995, when the growers tried to cut pay to \$3.85 per hour, less than the minimum wage. Workers responded with a strike that defeated the threatened cutback and won gains in the tomato picking piece rate. Since then there have been hunger strikes and other protests that have forced the growers to negotiate and scored some victories.

Sorriano, who has spent 14 years as a farmworker here, draws on his experience before coming to the United States as unionist in a textile plant in his native Mexico. He said that workers will "need a union" in Immokalee to advance their fight and win solidarity from fellow workers, whether in the factories or in the fields.

## Aluminum workers prepare possible strike



Members of United Steelworkers of America at Ormet Aluminum in Hannibal, Ohio, already have a picket shack built in preparation for a possible strike. They have been working without a contract since May 31, 1999. Above, workers participate December 21 in one of the daily informational pickets they have been holding during shift change.

## Metalworkers strike to defend union

MONTREAL—Since October 19, some 150 workers have been on strike against Mométal, a company that produces structural steel for major construction projects. Their last contract ended May 31. Parts built at the factory have been used in the expansion of the Dorval airport, at the Montreal Casino, and at the Molson Sports Center.

The employers, Arigo and Jos Cicarelli, refuse to recognize the union as the sole bargaining agent for the workers and want to establish a lower rate of pay for new hires who do exactly the same work as those already hired. The workers recently decided to leave the Steelworkers union and become part of the Metallurgy federation of the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN).

During a visit to the strike headquarters, located across from the factory, *Militant* reporters talked to workers, whose wages

range between Can\$8.50 and Can\$17 an hour (Can\$1=US\$0.67). Before the strike, workers said, the bosses were refusing to respect seniority and were giving individual increases to workers. The workers are demanding a raise of 12 percent over three years, posted job bids, and seniority rights. According to Mariano Ariete, the union president, "In the past we have accepted a wage freeze in good faith. The 12 percent that we are demanding today is only the wage catch-up that we feel we have the right to."

At a conciliation session November 30, the bosses refused to budge. According to the strikers, the bosses are sending a certain amount of work to subcontractors. They are building a new factory at Varennes for a cost of Can\$15 million.

As part of their efforts to force the employer to negotiate, workers have participated in a series of demonstrations at the factory and elsewhere. On December 15 they rallied in front of the Employers Council officers in downtown Montreal.

*Stuart Needham, a member of the Meat Workers Union at PPCS in Canterbury, New Zealand; Mike Italie in Miami; and Joe Young, a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 501 in St. Blaise-sur-Richelieu, Quebec, contributed to this column.*

## LETTERS

### U.S. prison labor

It's time to wake up! In the very near future the Federal Bureau of Prisons Industries' UNICOR will be in competition with every small and large business enterprise in the U.S. (40 cents per average man hour versus minimum wage).

Recently, in California a small business owner was busted by the INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service] for utilizing cheap, alien workers in a small so-called sweatshop. The owner and workers received combinations of federal imprisonment, fines, and deportation. The criminal act of the aliens was to be working to survive.

Those aliens that fought deportation or were found to have illegally reentered the U.S., or had outstanding warrants, soon became UNICOR workers once committed to federal prison. Those same individuals who could not work in free enterprise were now working in the federal prisons competing with the owners who were now also in prison for doing exactly what UNICOR

does—only UNICOR does this with the sanction and approval of the U.S. Attorney.

Aware of rising protest, the Bureau of Prisons recently printed a policy statement that now prohibits illegal aliens with any *announced* order of deportation to work in UNICOR. However, close scrutiny reveals the manipulation cover-up; INS does not ever review any federal prisoner until they are under their own jurisdiction.

*A prisoner  
Loretto, Pennsylvania*

### Vieques vs. U.S. Navy

I congratulate you on your recent article on Vieques and on your editorial favoring Puerto Rico's independence. Although you do mention Rubén Berrios camp at the Navy's firing range, very little of your article focuses on the Puerto Rican Independence Party's (PIP) efforts. Remember, Senator Berrios has spent more than eight continuous months at the firing range's beach, openly violating federal law, yet

the federal government has not arrested him. Remember that the PIP is a full member of the Socialist International (SI) and that in last month's meeting of the SI in Europe, Mr. Berrios was named as its "Honorary President." The Navy does not arrest Berrios or all the other protesters at the firing range for fear that the U.S. image will be tarnished before the international community.

Again, thank you for your article and editorial.

*César A. Matos-Bonet*

### WTO coverage

In the December 13 issue of the *Militant*, there was a "Discussion with Our Readers" column about the protests against the World Trade Organization (WTO). It presented four demands that can unite working people in struggle internationally. In brief: cancel the Third World debt, jobs for all, affirmative action, and stop the deportations.

Why didn't this list include

fighting imperialism's war drive? This seems inconsistent with the *Militant's* usual priorities.

Objectively, the fight against Washington's mailed fist is the single most important form of real solidarity that working people in the United States can contribute to the world class struggle. U.S. workers and farmers are strategically placed to widen the space that the world's toilers can use to fight, from modest union struggles to the social explosions that topple capitalist rule.

The fight to maximize this space is crucial to building united, international struggles strong enough to actually win the far-reaching demands put forward by the *Militant*.

Explaining all of this underscores approaching working people worldwide as fellow fighters who will take advantage of increased space to fight, not helpless victims who need self-appointed advocates.

Although the *Militant's* WTO coverage included a number of column inches on Washington's war moves against China, the fight against the

war drive didn't consistently get top billing as part of the class-struggle alternative to the phony sweatshop and environmental campaigns.

*Dave Morrow  
Oakland, California*

### 'Militant' on-line

I am glad to see that the *Militant* is now available on the Internet. I have been a long time without reading the *Militant* and would like to catch up. I have been working in Saudi Arabia, Algeria, traveling in Pakistan and Vietnam.

*Michael Maggi  
Bangkok, Thailand*

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.

## 'Stop Washington's attacks on Cuba'

### Protests condemn refusal of U.S. government to return Cuban child

BY ROLLANDE GIRARD

MIAMI—The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) has extended the U.S. government's provocation against Cuba by delaying a hearing on the case of six-year-old Elián Gonzalez. Four weeks after the Cuban child was rescued at sea, the INS announced December 22 that it was postponing a custody hearing until late January.

Cuban-American rightist groups and a number of politicians are waging a noisy campaign to keep the boy here, while his father in Cuba wants him to be returned. The Cuban-American community here is split, including relatives of the child who live here.

Elián was rescued November 25 off the coast of Broward County after he had been clinging to an inner tube for more than 24 hours. Eleven of the 14 people on the boat with him drowned, including his mother.

The INS released him to some of his relatives in Miami but he is still under the legal custody of the INS. The U.S. government delay in making a decision puts wind in the sails of opponents of the Cuban revolution, including the Miami Cuban right-wing organizations, which have made a political issue of the child's custody. This is part of the continued campaign by the U.S. government against the Cuban revolution.

Political consultant Armando Gutiérrez, who is the Miami relatives' spokesperson, recruited five lawyers including Spencer Eig, a former INS attorney, to campaign against the boy's return to Cuba. The lawyers have requested political asylum for the six-year-old, stating that he fears prosecution if he returns to Cuba.

Five members of the U.S. Senate, headed by Majority Leader Trent Lott, have asked the Congress to grant Elián citizenship. They requested U.S. president William Clinton further delay the decision on the boy's case. Elián has been a subject of the news here for the last four weeks, with the media accompanying him wherever he goes.

In Cuba, mobilizations of up to 2.2 million people took place daily around the island, protesting the provocation. The protests halted during immigration talks between U.S. and Cuban officials in Havana and resumed December 20.

Picket lines and press conferences have been held in a number of U.S. cities, from New York to Houston, Philadelphia, Minneapolis, Washington, and Tampa, Florida. In addition to calling for the child's return, some protesters also carried signs calling for "U.S. hands off Cuba." The American Indian Movement (AIM) in New Mexico held a rally de-



Protesters march to U.S. Interests Section in Havana, Cuba, December 6 to demand that Washington end its provocation and return Elián González to Cuba.

manding the repatriation of the Cuban child as well as the release of jailed AIM leader Leonard Peltier.

A picket line held here in Miami December 14 was covered by all the local TV channels. The next day discussions were polarized in the factories where some of the participants work, with some loudly expressing their disagreement with the picket line. Others were friendly.

At an jet engine repair station the December 14 *Wall Street Journal* was circulated, which contained two columns urging Washington to not send him back.

The majority of those who think he should stay here said that he would have a better life in this country, where there are more op-

portunities. If he goes back to Cuba, "he would be hungry and miserable" said a garment worker in Opa Locka who is originally from Cuba.

"He should return with his father" said a 31-year-old Cuban who came here five years ago. "The kid would be better there anyway."

Rachele Fruit, who works in the plant and was the Socialist Workers candidate for Mayor of Miami Dade County in 1996 took part in these discussions. Washington's refusal to carry out its elementary responsibility to return the child must be placed in the context of 40 years of hostility toward the Cuban revolution.

This is the latest of numerous provocations carried out because the billionaires who

rule the United States cannot reconcile themselves to workers and farmers holding power in Cuba. "We should demand that the U.S. economic embargo be lifted and the aggression against the sovereignty of Cuba ceased," she said.

Meanwhile on December 20, six of seven Cubans who held hostages in a Louisiana jail-house uprising were repatriated to Cuba. The six prisoners had served all of their jail time for crimes they were convicted of in the United States.

They were kept in prison because the INS now regularly deports immigrants who have criminal records, regardless of their immigration status, but there is no repatriation treaty between the U.S. government and Cuba. The detainees preferred going back to Cuba to staying in U.S. jail indefinitely, and were granted visas by Havana.

In another development, on December 8 a jury in the U.S. federal court in San Juan, Puerto Rico, acquitted five Cuban-American rightists of conspiring to assassinate Cuban president Fidel Castro when he visited the Venezuelan island of Margarita in 1997. Charges against two other defendants have been dropped.

Despite overwhelming evidence of many similar provocations, this was only first time the U.S. government decided to enforce its own laws and prosecute a plot to assassinate the president of Cuba.

A statement by the Cuban government on December 9 declared that Washington assumes the responsibility for "allowing those terrorist groups in Miami, tolerated by the authorities and with the complicity of that country's legal system, to freely plot and execute their plans to murder a foreign head of State."

*Rollande Girard is a member of the International Association of Machinists.*

## Cuban youth leaders speak in Montreal

BY CARLOS CATALAN

MONTREAL—Two Cuban youth leaders addressed hundreds of students and others in Canada in November.

Irisday Ramírez del Monte, a member of the National Secretariat of the Cuban Federation of University Students (FEU), and Niurka Dumenigo, president of the José Martí Pioneers Organization and a member of the National Bureau of the Union of Young Communists (UJC), visited Toronto, Vancouver, Montreal, and Ottawa during their November 14-28 visit.

Their central goal was to promote the Twelfth Congress of the Latin American Students Continental Organization (OCLAE), scheduled for Havana April 1-4, 2000. More than 20 organizations and student federations in Latin America and the Caribbean re-affiliated to OCLAE.

"The congress is open to anyone who wants to participate, with the exception of racists, who will not be welcome," said Ramírez to more than 70 people who participated in a conference at the University of Quebec at Montreal (UQAM) November 26. "We want a broad, pluralist, and democratic congress, open to all youth who want to discuss the problems that afflict us," she said. This includes discussing how to confront the attempts at deepening the capitalist exploitation of the semicolonial world sometimes termed "neoliberalism."

In addition to speaking at several campuses and public conferences, Dumenigo and Ramírez met with a number of organizations to invite them to build and to send delegates to the OCLAE congress.

The Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) invited them to address their annual convention, held in Ottawa November 24-27, to tell them about the OCLAE congress and about the conquests of the Cuban revolution. The Cuban youth leaders also met with members

of the executives of the Quebec Federation of University Students (FEUQ) and the Quebec College Students' Federation (FECQ).

Members of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union in Toronto and of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees in Montreal also were able to meet Dumenigo and Ramírez. A similar meeting was held in Vancouver with members of the International Association of Machinists.

### Democratic rights in Cuba, Canada

At the public meeting at UQAM, some students asked about democratic rights and freedom of the press in Cuba.

"We conquered our press and our media through the revolution. They are wide open for those who want to criticize the revolution in order to improve it. But those who aim to push reactionary ideas and who call for an insurrection have no place in our papers that belong to our people and our revolution," said Dumenigo.

"If journalists are in prison in Cuba it isn't because of their political ideas but because they violated the laws of our criminal code," she added.

Patrick Audy, a student from Maisonneuve College condemned the attacks on the education system by the Quebec government. "It's fine to talk about democratic rights in Cuba but look at what is happening to us here," he said. "The police have again arrested 70 students last week because they demonstrated against the privatization of education and an exclusive contract for Coca-Cola in this university. Since the beginning of the year more than 1,300 students have been arrested in Quebec in demonstrations for the right to education. Is this democracy?"

The discussion in the conference on democratic rights in Cuba reflected the intensified campaign by the government of Canada against the Cuban revolution in the name of

supporting "dissidents repressed by the Castro regime."

On June 29 the government of Canada announced that it was suspending all high level contacts with Cuba, professing concern over four opponents of the Cuban revolution who were charged with collaborating with counterrevolutionary forces in the United States.

The big-business media in Canada then waged an open campaign to urge Cuban athletes to defect during the Pan-American Games in Winnipeg earlier this year. The Cuban delegation responded with a declaration that "Cuban athletes would not permit anything or anyone to humiliate them... if their dignity was in question."

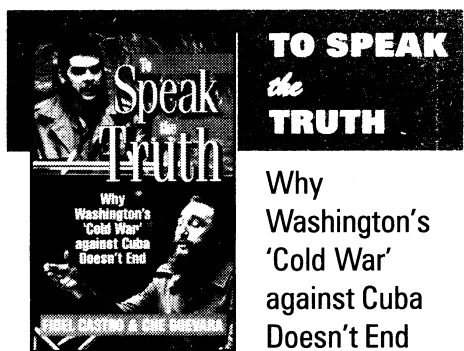
This fall the federal government in Canada opposed the opening of a new Cuban consulate in Vancouver. Minister of Foreign Affairs Lloyd Axworthy wrote to the British Columbia Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs rejecting any initiative that could be interpreted as an easing of the position of Canada vis-à-vis Cuba. Axworthy's letter makes clear that Ottawa's objective is to "promote an economic, political and social change in Cuba."

This campaign had an impact on the young people who met Dumenigo and Ramírez during their tour.

"I believe that our country, as opposed to what happened in the Soviet Union, survived because our revolution, as Fidel says, is a real revolution. A revolution of workers, of peasants and of students," said Ramírez explained during the conference.

In response to a conference participant who asked what kind of solidarity Cuba needs from the world's youth, Ramírez reaffirmed her invitation to the OCLAE congress and added, "Continue to struggle against all forms of injustice in the world and advance towards your own revolution."

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