

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

**Socialist coal miners and
garment workers meet**

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 64 NO. 2 JANUARY 17, 2000

Chechnya stakes rise for Moscow, Washington

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

"We have been fighting all over Chechnya, but Grozny is the first place we have come across such intense resistance," said Russian army Lt. Konstantin Kukhlovets January 1. The Russian forces that invaded the territory of Chechnya in September are engaged in tough combat in the capital and in the south near the Caucasus mountains.

The day before, President Boris Yeltsin resigned from the post he has held for over nine years. "I have signed a decree placing the duties of the president of Russia on the head of government, Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin," said Yeltsin. "In three months presidential elections will take place," he said, and "I don't doubt what choice you will make at the end of March 2000."

After being named prime minister last August by Yeltsin, Putin publicly campaigned in support of the war. At one point he employed a barracks-room phrase to emphasize his position, stating that he would wipe out Chechen rebels even if they were killed in their toilets. In the December elections for the parliament, or Dumas, Putin gained ground when parties supporting him increased their vote by around 30 percent.

Following Yeltsin's resignation, Putin
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Farmers build march in Atlanta to press fight

BY MARY MARTIN

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association (BFAA) has issued a call for farmers and supporters to join their contingent in the January 17 Martin Luther King Day march in Atlanta.

The farmers are marching to protest worsening conditions they face; refusal of the government to implement a March 1999 consent decree settlement that is supposed to award damages to farmers who have suffered racist discrimination by the government; and continuing harassment at the hands of government farm agency representatives.

Melvin Bishop, a cattle farmer and president of the Georgia chapter of BFAA, said, "Working people in the cities have a stake in the fight of the Black farmers. Georgia BFAA is organizing to let working people know that the lawsuit is not settled, that we haven't got the money in our hands."

The farmers and their supporters will be leading off the annual King Day March in Atlanta. The day is a federal holiday, won through massive protests and the only one to honor an African-American. The Atlanta parade is a sizable event each year, and the farmers' struggle will add a political and fighting aspect to the celebrations as a whole.

Bishop said the farmers will form up their contingent January 17 at 11:00 a.m. at Peachtree and Ellis Streets in downtown Atlanta. The march will step off at 1:00 p.m.



Militant/Stu Singer

Nearly 100 farmers and their supporters rallied in Lafayette Park in Washington, D.C., December 13 to protest the U.S. Department of Agriculture's discriminatory policies.

and rally at the King Center on Auburn Avenue around 2:30 p.m.

"Prior to the march there will be a 9:00 a.m. breakfast meeting at the First Iconium Baptist Church on Moreland Av-

enue," Bishop added.

The government signed the consent decree and touted it as a victory for farmers against racist discrimination by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Through their struggle the farmers forced the government to admit extensive racist practices that crippled the ability of thousands of farmers who are Black to remain on the land. Under terms of the ruling the government was to pay plaintiff farmers \$50,000 each. Few farmers have in fact received any money to date.

In a phone interview, Gary Grant, president of BFAA, said, "My understanding is we will be a lead contingent in the march. This call for action is for Black farmers to join in the King Day march and celebrations to help bring forth to national attention the second time the check has been mailed and returned marked 'insufficient funds.' Too many

Continued on Page 4

'Anti-terrorist' raids target democratic rights

BY JOANNE PRITCHARD

MONTREAL—The police here have announced that they are on a mobilization footing against "Algerian terrorism" in the wake of the arrest December 14 in Washington state of an Algerian, Ahmed Ressay, as he was driving his car across the border from Canada. Authorities claim Ressay possessed materials that could be made into a bomb. Two days

later police here said they had dismantled a network of thieves whose crimes served to finance Algerian terrorist activities.

Police evacuated 400 people in the working-class neighborhood here after locating Ahmed Ressay's truck, claiming more bombs could be found. No explosives turned up however.

On December 19 Lucia Garofalo and her

Algerian companion, Bouabide Chamchi, were arrested in Vermont after entering the United States from Canada. The press dropped all pretense of presumption of innocence and reported that "Garofalo led such a strange life that the FBI, the CIA, the RCMP, and Montreal police can't rule out that she is involved in terrorist activities."

The incident is being used by Ottawa to gain acceptance for broader use of its secret police, the Canadian Security Intelligence Service (CSIS), and intrusions into the rights of working people. In the midst of a media barrage and Y2K threats hype, the CSIS called for a law to crack down on so-called "terrorist fund-raising" by charitable organizations in Canada. CSIS director Ward Elcock said that 50 "terrorist" organizations have a presence in Canada and that 350 individuals are being tracked.

Leon Benoit, immigration spokesperson in Parliament for the opposition and rightist Reform Party, has called for tighter immigration restrictions by the Canadian government. Benoit called the current regulations "a sieve" that allows "terrorists and others into the country."

Washington is also stepping up pressure on Ottawa. The chairman of the House Subcommittee on Immigration, Lamar Smith, a Republican from Texas, told the media that the arrests in the state of Washington were "the best wake-up call" about the "porous shared border" between Canada and the United States.

An aide said Smith "has made it clear that he would like to work cooperatively with the Canadians—but so far the response has not been encouraging."

The U.S. Justice Department has raised that Canada should start demanding visas from more people traveling from abroad.

A number of voices are speaking up to defend democratic rights and against the anti-immigrant attacks. A prominent article in *La*

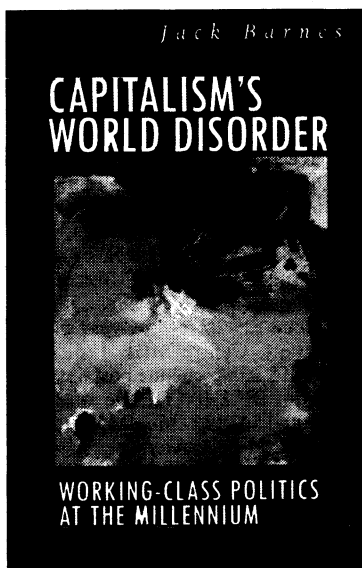
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Pathfinder volunteers make Scan 2000 goal

BY JERRY GARDNER
AND WARREN SIMONS

The Pathfinder Reprint project closed out 1999 with significant advances in all areas of its work. The biggest accomplishment is that Scan2000, the campaign to finish the first stage of the international effort to prepare Pathfinder books for the presses, was completed on time. In addition, December was the volunteers' best month ever for making books ready for print.

Eighteen months ago, supporters of the Socialist Workers Party undertook the project of converting all of Pathfinder's titles from film to CD-ROM's so that they can be rapidly prepared for printing using new computer-to-plate technology. Now, the Reprint Project is a volunteer effort of more than 100 volunteers in eight countries. They are working together to

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Ivory Coast army cracks down

General Robert Gueï who assumed power in the Ivory Coast after a military coup December 24, announced a shakeup of the army command five days later. He vowed to "slash throats of those we have put in custody," if supporters of deposed President Henri Konan Bédié attempt to restore him to power. Opposition figure Alassane Ouattara, prime minister of the country from 1990 to 1993, returned to the capital Abidjan from Paris five days after the coup. Ouattara served as deputy managing director of the International Monetary Fund in Washington until declaring his intention to represent the Rally of the Republicans party in presidential elections next year.

The former colonial rulers of the Ivory Coast in Paris initially proposed to reinforce their base of 550 marines near Abidjan with hundreds of soldiers from Gabon and Senegal. Gueï refused their entry, threatening a blood bath. Paris has offered Bédié asylum but has not demanded that his regime be restored. An official at the U.S. embassy in Abidjan praised General Gueï for "making the right noises" after he promised to honor the country's huge foreign debts.

Argentine workers resist layoffs

On December 20 state workers in the Argentine province of Corrientes began receiving several months' back wages they are owed. A week earlier hundreds of workers had blocked an important bridge to demand their pay. Federal police fired on the protest, killing two, after the federal government assumed control of the bankrupt province. Federal "intervener" Ramón Mestre coupled his order for the payment of the back wages with an announcement of a program of deep-going cuts in public spending, including wage reductions and layoffs.

A group of several hundred workers chanted "Murderers" at Mestre and other officials as they entered the Corrientes government house on the day of the announcement. That night, 3,000 workers affiliated to the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) demonstrated to oppose the austerity drive. Corrientes is the latest Argentine province to erupt in protests.

Panama takes over the Canal



Crowds celebrate during the December 31 ceremony to transfer ownership of the Panama canal from Washington to Panama. The occasion felt like "Independence Day" commented participants to one reporter.

Kashmir focus of hijack

Tensions between the Indian and Pakistani governments surfaced during a hijacking drama in Kandahar, Afghanistan, which began December 24. Several hijackers diverted an Indian Airlines jet from its route, demanding the release of 36 people held by the Indian government. One passenger died of stab wounds and the Taliban government in Kabul surrounded the aircraft with dozens of soldiers and several military vehicles. On December 31 New Delhi agreed to free three Kashmiri prisoners in a deal that allowed the hijackers to leave the country after they released the remaining hostages.

The hijackers had demanded the release of Masood Azhar, who calls for the independence of Kashmir and is a leader of the Harakat ul-Ansar or Partisan movement. He has been slan-

dered by Washington as a "sponsor of terrorism." The Indian and Pakistani rulers have clashed many times over control of the Kashmir region, where working people have waged a decades-long struggle for self-determination. The coalition government in Delhi, led by the rightist Bharatiya Janata Party, tried to whip up support for its refusal to bow to the hijackers' demands against the wishes of relatives of the hostages. They have arranged meetings between journalists and widows of soldiers killed during battles in Kashmir last summer.

Jakarta workers protest vs. Nike

Some 8,000 protesting workers from two Nike factories in Indonesia demonstrated December 22, during negotiations over their holiday payments. "We want larger holiday bonuses and the 10 percent tax imposed on the bonuses to be canceled," said a protester. The workers make shoes for the U.S. company in factories in Tangerang, near the capital city of Jakarta. The protest also demanded that an election be held for a union representative.

Other workers organized actions on the same issue. The union office in the PT Adis plant was damaged during a struggle waged by 6,000 workers who forced their employers to fork out the bonus, which is usually equivalent to a month's salary. Many employers traditionally pay the bonus at the time of the Idul Fitri celebrations, during which millions of working people travel from the capital to their home towns and villages. The Indonesian Minister of Manpower [Labor] said that most com-

panies paid out this year. In 1998, he said, 147 companies were allowed to defer payment, citing the monetary crisis.

Scandal rocks German party

A financial scandal involving Germany's most prominent politician of the last two decades is rocking the Christian Democratic Union and embarrassing the country's capitalist rulers. On December 29 prosecutors in Frankfurt said they would begin a criminal investigation into funds managed by Helmut Kohl, chancellor of the country from 1982 until his defeat in December of 1998 by the Social Democratic Party.

The revelations of secret bank accounts have already become a target of muckraking frenzy in the media. Kohl, dubbed "Europe's most powerful leader for most of this decade" by the *New York Times*, still plays a major role in the Christian Democratic Union. The furor around Kohl adds to the problems of the rulers of Europe's largest economy, which remains mired in slow growth and high unemployment.

Many stocks decline in boom

If the U.S. economy is still growing in February its expansion will have lasted nine years and be the longest on record. Much of the continued growth is driven by trading in newer "high tech" companies. Most companies, however, in the Standard and Poor's index of 500 stocks have declined in value. On the New York Stock Exchange and the Nasdaq index, which features high tech companies, two-thirds of stocks are down 20 per cent or more from their peaks.

Speculative trading plays a major part in sustaining the market's growth, as shown by the rise of many Internet-related companies. In 1999 some 73 percent of IPOs or Initial Public Offerings earned no profits—an extraordinarily high figure. The earnings of Internet startups are even more meager: 93 percent had no profits in 1999.

Students protest in Jordan

Some 500 university students rallied in the Jordanian capital of Amman on December 8. The action was called to protest the government's deportation on November 21 of four leaders of Hamas, a bourgeois-nationalist organization that has gained a following among Palestinians in the region with its stance against Israeli occupation of Palestinian lands.

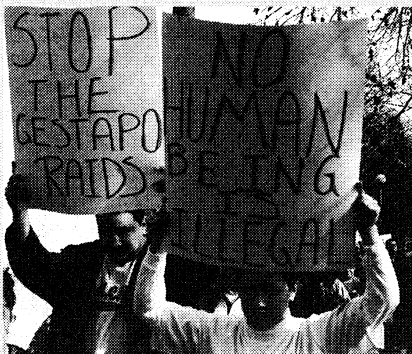
Most of the participants in the protest, a rare event in Jordan where most such activities are banned, were affiliated with the Muslim Brotherhood Movement. Jordanian police deported the Hamas leaders, who are Jordanian citizens, to Qatar, claiming that they had been involved in military training. Hamas leaders denied the allegations. Authorities closed Hamas offices and banned activities of the organization in a crackdown which began in late August.

—PATRICK O'NEILL

THE MILITANT

Oppose Washington's witch-hunt

The U.S. rulers are witch-hunting immigrants from countries where the Islam religion has many followers. They frame up workers, alleging "Islamic terrorist" plots with no evidence. The 'Militant' exposes these baseless allegations, and calls for equal rights for immigrants and an end to cop harrassment. Don't miss a single issue!



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China "spy scare" frame-up targets rights

BY JIMALTENBERG

SAN FRANCISCO — Offering no evidence but the word of an FBI agent, Los Alamos National Laboratories physicist Wen Ho Lee has been framed up by U.S. government officials amidst slanderous charges about passing nuclear weapons secrets to China.

The government campaign, and big business media coverage of the frame-up and jailing of Lee, targets democratic rights and dovetails with Washington's preparations for military confrontations with the Chinese workers state down the road.

Lee was fired from his job at the lab last March in the wake of a government investigation into China's development of a sophisticated, miniaturized nuclear weapons delivery system said to be similar to Washington's W-88 nuclear warhead, which allows multiple atomic weapons to be loaded onto a single missile.

Washington has a strategic advantage over China in the number of nuclear weapons and quality of its missile delivery systems. China is reported to have 20 intercontinental missiles, capable of carrying only a single warhead each, that can reach North America.

According to the *New York Times*, the Navy puts five of the W-88 bombs on each of 24 missiles carried by the Trident nuclear submarine, for a total of 192 of the thermonuclear weapons per boat. The "Navy is adding them to its Pacific fleet, so in the next few years the W-88 is likely to be aimed at China," the *Times* reports.

Although Lee has never actually been charged with espionage, he was arrested December 10 on 59 felony counts of mishandling classified information stored on computers at the government lab. After a three-day hearing, U.S. District Judge James Parker denied Lee's application for bail, spurring the government's smear that Lee might pass secret nuclear weapons information allegedly in his possession to another country if he is not kept behind bars.

Unnamed "experts" at Los Alamos now claim that Lee downloaded the equivalent of some 800,000 pages of information on Washington's nuclear weapons, enough to "change the world's strategic balance," as one claimed. FBI agent Robert Messemmer, the chief government witness, added to the story by stating that Lee had called another scientist on the phone in 1982 who was "under investigation" for espionage.

Unbeknownst to Lee, the FBI had taped

his phone call. Messemmer further charged that Lee had met with scientists and officials from China over a decade ago, and that he used false data to get around Los Alamos computer security systems when copying material labeled "secret."

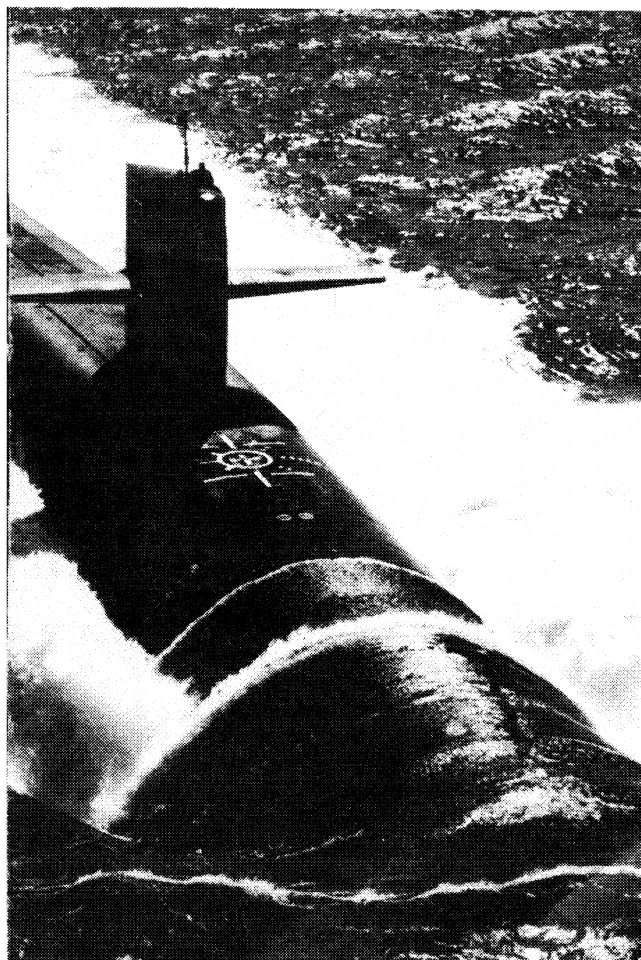
The government never produced evidence at the time Lee was fired from his job that Lee's meetings with Chinese scientists were prohibited. Lee's attorneys have explained that missing computer tapes the government alleges to have been passed to China had been destroyed. His use of lab computer data fell within legal guidelines, Lee's lawyers said.

Academic freedom

California Democratic party Senator Dianne Feinstein added her voice to the frame-up climate by charging that the University of California, which operates the Los Alamos lab as well as the Lawrence Livermore lab in northern California, were not serious in guarding against leaks of secret information. At a June 1999 closed-door Senate hearing, which featured Attorney General Janet Reno testifying on the Lee affair, Feinstein said academic freedom seems to have jeopardized national security.

In an attack on the day-to-day collaboration that takes place among scientists, Feinstein questioned whether the "culture of interaction" at the national labs, encouraging employees to participate in symposiums and share information with nonlab colleagues, is "an appropriate framework for America's essentially deepest and darkest nuclear secrets."

Lee is being held in solitary confinement near Santa Fe, New Mexico, where he may stay for as long as a year while his trial is prepared. He is allowed visits only from his immediate family and attorneys. Visits are limited to one hour a week. A guard remains



The U.S. Navy's Trident submarine. Navy maintains forward patrols of these vessels, which are fitted with 192 nuclear weapons, near Russia. Workers states, especially China and Russia, are long-term military targets of the U.S. rulers and their armed forces.

by Lee's side in the visiting room.

At Lee's bail hearing, Messemmer told the judge that Lee had to be isolated from others because "a single utterance" might give away national secrets, and that the Chinese language itself was structured for deception. While Lee's supporters laughed in protest at the cop's racist allegations, the federal judge agreed to prohibit him from speaking Chinese with his family. Reporters at the bail hearing filled out the picture, echoing longstanding racist images of Chinese as mysterious, emotionless, and timid people.

'Prejudice and overkill'

Asian-American civil rights and scientific organizations, from the National Asian Pa-

cific American Bar Association to the Chinese Physics Association and the Asian American Manufacturers Association, have begun to come to Lee's defense. They view Lee as having been singled out because he is Chinese. Some point to the U.S. government's increasing hostility to China in creating a climate of anti-Asian prejudice.

"We're going to support him morally and monetarily," said Bill Chang, president of the Chinese-American Engineers and Scientists Association of Southern California, which has more than a thousand members. "I'm not saying he's not a criminal, but that this has to be proved beyond a reasonable doubt and the process has to be fair," Chang said.

"From what I've seen so far, this looks like prejudice and overkill. We've never done anything like this before, but I've been getting a lot of calls from our members. They're very scared and angry. They're really upset about what this means for them."

Meanwhile, nine workers at the Lawrence Livermore Laboratory in the Bay Area have filed a lawsuit charging the lab with discrimination against Asian-Americans in hiring, promotions, and pay rates. The workers told the *San Francisco Chronicle* that their fight was "part of the continuing fallout from the treatment of Wen Ho Lee" in Los Alamos. Lee and his wife Sylvia are also suing the Department of Energy, which operates the labs, as well as the FBI and Justice Department for giving confidential information on them to the news media in violation of federal privacy laws.

The "spy scare" being whipped up around Lee comes as Washington steps up its ongoing campaign to weaken and ultimately overturn the Chinese workers state. This includes moves to install a missile defense system in south Korea, Taiwan, and Japan, which would enable the United States to launch a first strike nuclear attack on China without fear of retaliation.

In 1995, U.S. warships sailed through the narrow Straits of Taiwan in a demonstration of U.S. naval power off the Chinese coast. Last year, Washington announced plans to beef up the Taiwanese military forces with Aegis destroyers and advanced jet fighters. An earlier "spy scare" in 1997 led to the conviction of another Taiwanese-born scientist, Peter Lee, for supposedly leaking secret information to China. The documents in question turned out to be declassified after all.

UAW 411 members say 'No' to Terex Crane (again)

BY JOE SWANSON

SHELL ROCK, Iowa - A big cheer could be heard outside the Boyd Building on main street here December 28 as union officials announced the results of the vote by over 200 members of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 411.

UAW members struck Terex Crane, located in Waverly near here, December 6. Most of the strikers are assembly workers and build "man lift" cranes that are used for construction and maintenance work. The strikers are fighting for better wages, health care, and pension benefits.

"I think we'll turn down by a sizable majority the most recent offer by the company," said Mike Dunbar, a 32-year veteran of the plant. The strikers had stepped outside for a smoke and fresh air while the votes were being counted.

"The only thing they have offered in the most recent negotiations is a retirement plan allowing workers to retire at age 55 if they have 30 years of service," said Dunbar. "There is no offer of a higher wage and the cost of the health care package to the members actually adds up to a wage cut."

Dunbar explained that the union recently negotiated with the company after the bosses threatened to seek a court injunction limiting the number of strikers at the plant gate. "We thought the court would likely go along with the company for only three strikers at the gate and we got the company to agree to six," he said.

Almost all the strikers had big smiles and slapped each other on the back after hearing the results of the vote. "They offered us nothing," said Randy Henson who has worked for the company for five years. "We showed the company what we think of their latest offer. The vote is how the members feel; the insurance package they offered is horrible," he said. "The vote was 196 against the contract and 6 for," Henson said.

Mike Ahrenholz, who looked to be in his early twenties and worked for Terex for about a year before being laid off shortly before the strike, said he thought the "vote was right. It shows we are serious and together."

'Shows how strong we are'

Gary Freerks, a 35-year veteran of the plant, said there were 60 laid-off workers, mostly young, before the strike began. "They have the right to vote on the contract but can't receive strike assistance pay. Many of them have part-time or other jobs since being laid off."

"What the result of this vote showed is how strong we are together," said Freerks. "The company had offered us earlier in the contract negotiations a \$500 bonus if we accepted their offer. They said the laid-off workers would get an additional \$500 when they are called back."

"You know what Terex thinks of us," said Terry Duckworth, a 27-year veteran of the

plant, referring to the "low boys," 40-foot flatbed semi-trailers, they have in the plant right now. The company was loading up cranes while union members were voting on their latest offer.

"They knew we were voting this morning," he said. "That is why I think the vote was even a wider margin today then before we walked out." Duckworth went on to explain that the vote before the strike was about 87 percent against the contract and "this morning it was 97 percent against."

On the road to Waverly we spotted three "low boys" with cranes on trailers. Visiting the picket line and the union hall, workers explained that there have been "gobs of cops" when the company had hauled out the cranes, "but that was when we had pickets up," according to Duckworth who works in the union hall kitchen.

In a strike in 1995, "we were out one week. The contract vote carried by four votes and we only got a 25-cent an hour wage increase per year," said Dick Hazilt, who has worked at the plant for 34 years. "Things are different now. We are more solid and serious about the contract issues," explained Hazilt.

"Solidarity has come from workers and unionists from simply visiting the picket line to one worker from Waterloo, Iowa, who said he was a member of UAW Local 838 which organizes the John Deere plant," said Local 411 member Jim Carlsen at the union hall. "He donated \$2,100 to buy 238 turkeys for every member of the local. He did not leave his name. He just wanted to offer his support for the strike."

When asked what he thought about

the outcome of the vote, Carlsen said, "I loved it. I think the worker who donated the money for the turkeys would love it to."



United Auto Workers Local 411 members voted on another contract offer from the company January 2.

"The latest offer was rejected by 88 percent," said striker Charles Murray. "The company offered only a small wage increase. The union members want a \$1 an hour wage increase for each year of the contract," Murray said in a phone interview. "The company offered 50 cents for welders and 65 cents for assembly workers and a four year contract." Currently the average wage is \$12.31. On December 28 the company offered 30 cents per hour each year over four years, according to Murray.

A central issue remains the cost of health insurance to union members. Murray said the company does not want to put a cap on any future increase in cost. "In other words, we would be taking a wage cut any time health insurance goes up," he said.

"The company wants the right to give your job away if you happen to call in sick, even if only for a day," Murray said. "If some supervisor doesn't like you, for example, the company can give your job to anybody that holds the same job classification. It would be like throwing away your seniority rights."

"The vote means that the negotiating committee goes back to the table," the UAW member said. "This is the best support we have ever had from the Waverly townspeople and from other unionists."

Joe Swanson is a member of UAW Local 1672 in Des Moines. Jennifer Ponce, a member of UAW 1672, contributed to this article.

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Miami rally opposes Haitian deportations

BY BILL KALMAN

MIAMI—Chanting, “No, no, we won’t go, if you make us go, we will return!” 250 Haitians and their supporters rallied here January 3 to protest the U.S. government’s decision to return a boatload of immigrants to Haiti.

The day before, 400 mainly Haitian protesters demonstrated at the Miami Beach Coast Guard station demanding, “Justice! Equal treatment!” On New Years Day the Coast Guard intercepted a 60-foot wooden vessel transporting 389 Haitians, 16 Dominicans, and 2 Chinese immigrants. The boat left Haiti with no radio, navigational lights, or lifejackets.

After the vessel ran aground on a reef a mile off the Florida coast, the Coast Guard sent cutters to take those on board into custody. U.S. immigration officials later decided to return all but four of the group of 406 to Haiti.

Leontes Joseph, a landscape worker in Miami, said he came to the action because “maybe I know some of them [on the boat]. I want to help.” Like others there, Joseph first heard about the protest on Creole-language radio stations in Miami. The Haitian rights group Veye Yo organized rides to the Coast Guard station protest.

The January 2 protest began as other demonstrations for Haitian rights: Haitian and Haitian-American working people arrive first and spontaneously march and chant. People brought handmade signs reading, “Coast Guard—Free My People” and “Equal Treatment for Haitians.”

A few people wore union T-shirts from the Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees and the Service Employees International Union.

About an hour after the protests began the entourage of speakers entered the fenced-in area. The speakers’ platform was chaired by U.S. Rep. Carrie Meek, along with her son, state Sen. Kendrick Meek, both prominent Democrats who are African-Americans. They have participated in other Haitian protests.

What was different from past actions in defense of immigrant rights was the character of the speakers’ platform. Besides Meek, other speakers included Miami-Dade County Mayor Alex Penelas; Bishop Victor Currie, pastor of New Birth Baptist Church

and now president of the Miami NAACP; and U.S. Rep. Lincoln Díaz-Balart. In particular Díaz-Balart, a Republican and one of three Cuban-Americans in Congress, is a bitter foe of the Cuban revolution.

These big business politicians were joined by two Cuban-American rightists: José Basulto, leader of the counterrevolutionary group “Brothers to the Rescue,” and Ramón Sanchez of the Movimiento Democracia [Democracy Movement], another rightist Cuban outfit. Both groups are well known for staging provocations against Cuba’s sovereignty. The Brothers to the Rescue banner was prominently displayed on the stage.

‘Works directly with the imperialists’

While previous protests championed the demand “Amnesty for All,” most of the speakers at this protest raised fighting for “due process” and “the right to individual interviews.” No Haitian spoke until an hour and a half into the program, when a Haitian-American city councilwoman was allowed to address the rally. A leader of Veye Yo was given the last slot as many people were leaving.

Díaz-Balart called for “solidarity with our oppressed brothers and sisters,” and led a chant “One South Florida.” Basulto was introduced as a “great freedom fighter fighting against the reign of Castro the Terrible.” Basulto said that his pirate outfit would begin aiding Haitians at sea.

Reginald Meteus, one of the protesters, was not impressed. “Everybody should stand up for justice,” he said, “but he [Basulto] is a hypocrite. He works directly with the imperialists.”

The appearance of anti-Castro politicians and organizations at a Haitian rights activity is a new development in this city. While an estimated 780,000 Cubans comprise 35 percent of the population of Miami-Dade County, Haitians number about 115,000, or 5 percent. But the Haitian population is growing, and a small middle class has emerged. For example, in El Portal, just north of the city line, the city council is now majority Haitian, the first in the United States.

In the absence of a rising labor movement, many Haitian small businessmen, elected officials, and religious figures see their interests tied to wealthy layers and the two-



Haitian immigrant workers and supporters protest outside Coast Guard station in Miami against U.S. gov’t decision to return 406 immigrants to Haiti.

party system as the road to further social advances. For example, Rep. Carrie Meek, speaking to these aspirations, told the crowd, “You have the power now.” Marleine Bastien, the main leader of the Haitian-American Grassroots Coalition, told the *Miami Herald*, “We’re not saying that every one should be allowed in. We’re just saying, give them the chance to make their case.”

The super-wealthy rulers here have an interest in developing a “responsible” leadership that speaks in the name of all Haitians in the city. Various big business politicians, and even well-known Cuban-American rightist figures, are seeking to advance this course, as well as gain political advantage of their own.

Socialist candidate offers another view

Rollande Girard, the Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Miami, launched her campaign in the midst of these protests and discussions. Girard, an aerospace worker, is a member of the International Association of Machinists. A special election has been called for March.

Girard was interviewed by 610 AM NewsRadio at the January 2 protest. She also spoke in Creole to demonstrators at the Janu-

ary 3 rally.

“The U.S. government,” Girard said, “does not need to interview Haitians to know why they are leaving. The U.S. is directly responsible for the exploitation and domination of the Haitian people, which is why people are forced to leave their homeland.”

“We can’t put our faith in the hands of the Democratic and Republican parties,” the socialist candidate said. “We need to depend on ourselves and our allies, and to keep mobilizing. My campaign demands amnesty for all, end all deportations, and open the U.S. borders!”

Girard said in an interview that fighters against deportations and for immigrant rights “need to oppose Washington’s attacks against the Cuban revolution. The U.S. government uses immigration as part of its 40-year drive to topple the revolutionary government there and take back the island for U.S. corporate interests.

“Those who attack Cuba and side with Washington are not friends of working people here standing up to the assaults on our rights, unions, and social gains,” she said.

Bill Kalman is a member of United Transportation Union Local 1138.

Pathfinder volunteers achieve Scan2000 target

Continued from front page

put the entire arsenal of Pathfinder titles into digital form. This is making it possible to reprint books on Pathfinder’s backlist in a timely and cost-efficient manner.

Now, all the scanning of books and pam-

phlets is done putting them in initial digital form. Only three of the titles—French language editions of the *New International*—have to be massaged, a stage in the process that readies the titles for being sent to the proofreaders.

Farmers organize march in Atlanta

Continued from front page

Black farmers are being denied payment.”

Recent articles in the big-business press, including the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*, have presented a picture of a settled fight.

Jet magazine, for example, ran an article on December 13 entitled, “Black Farmers Receive Settlement Checks in Class-Action Lawsuit.” The magazine asserts that some 2,400 farmers have received checks. But of the original six plaintiffs only two have received any compensation.

Tim Pigford, for whom the suit against the USDA *Pigford v. Glickman* is named, has not received a cent.

Sherman Witcher, a tobacco farmer from Rocky Mount, Virginia, said the march “is a much needed event to increase awareness in the whole country—not only for Black farmers but also for whites as well—if we are to get anywhere.”

Tobacco farmers continue to be hit by the government system of quotas, a system that regulates how much tobacco they are allowed to grow. “Farmers know how to weather storms,” Witcher said, “but there is only so much you can weather if you have no financing. Eight years ago when I started

this fight I was told I didn’t have a leg to stand on and to go home.

“Now I’m standing on both legs and they are running! The government and the bill collectors keep telling me, ‘You and your brother you each have to just look out for yourself.’ I say, ‘No! Me and my brother have to look out for each other!’”

Witcher, who has been denied loans and has been unable to farm for the past several years, is a plaintiff in the farmers’ class-action suit.

The idea for the march originated at the end of the successful December 13 farm protest in Washington, D.C., which was called by BFSA and the National Black Farmers Association (NBFA). Farmers present also called for another protest in Washington at the end of February.

The annual Martin Luther King day celebration honors the contributions of civil rights leader Martin Luther King, Jr., in the fight against racist discrimination and for Black equality in this country. The event is sponsored by the King Day Committee.

Mary Martin is a member of International Association of Machinists Local 1759.

There are several steps to making the hard-copy book digital and ready to be used by Pathfinder’s new computer-to-plate printing technology. These stages are (1) scan and message, (2) proofreading, (3) formatting, (4) graphics, and (5) indexing.

Scanning creates the digitized file from the hard-copy book page, and massaging is a quality control process done to ferret out common errors introduced during scanning. The massagers prepare files for proofreading and help rationalize later stages of production.

The volunteers who took on the assignment of scanning and massaging have been working feverishly since September to get all the books and pamphlets assigned to the department done by January 1, 2000. The scan and message volunteers worked on about 220 titles and 54,000 pages, spending over 3,500 hours at their computers and scanners.

This huge effort was sustainable because the volunteers know that laboring now on digitizing Pathfinder’s books and pamphlets ensures that future fighters can find answers on how to resist and fight back, and to develop the capacities, the virtues, and the habits that will allow for the development of a self-confident proletarian leadership capable of charting a course forward for humanity.

Eight additional titles, *Ultima lucha de Lenin*, *Eastern Airlines Strike*, *My Life*, *History of American Trotskyism*, *Introduction to Marxist Economic Theory*, *Structure and Organizational Principles of the Party*, *Organizational Character of the SWP*, and *Fidel Castro on Chile*, were put onto CD and delivered to Pathfinder in December.

This brings the total to 61 titles that have

been prepared on CD. Volunteers have a long-term goal of producing 10 CDs per month, and are now getting closer to reaching this target. During December, the volunteers also completed proofreading and format checking of *Making History* and worked on a rush order for *Origins of the Family*, *Private Property*, and *the State*. This title will be finished the first week of January.

Those who have been working on scanning and massaging will now be able to help with other aspects of production. A small team of three volunteers will take a month or so to double-check all the work submitted since September and then pass it on to proofreading.

The dozen volunteers who have been carrying out the job will take new assignments in the other departments. So far three have agreed to move on to the formatting area, one to graphics, two to proofreading, and two to indexing. Additional volunteers continue to be recruited to the project, including three from Sweden who have experience producing *Ny International*, the Swedish language version of the Marxist magazine *New International*.

All who worked on the scan and message effort should be congratulated! All who struggle for or support the ultimate goal of the Reprint Project should be encouraged that we are one giant step closer to realizing that end.

Warren Simons organizes the Scan and Message department of the Pathfinder Reprint Project. Jerry Gardner is a member of the Steering Committee of the project. Anyone wishing to participate in the Pathfinder Reprint Project should contact Ruth Cheney by e-mail at ruthchen@flash.net.

“The book has clarified what the Cuban revolution is”

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

In the first week of the new year reports are rolling into the *Militant* office of sales and placements of *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working Class Politics at the Millennium*.

Pathfinder Press published this title in mid-1999. It contains speeches by Jack Barnes, the national secretary of the Socialist Workers Party and author of several Pathfinder books. The chapters and the photos in the book cover major political developments which set the scene for the 21st century. The stock market crash of 1987, the new boldness of a vanguard of the reactionary right like Patrick Buchanan, and the precipitate decline in the weight of Stalinism in the workers states and the labor movement are among the key questions covered in the book, captured in the give and take of experience and discussion its pages record. Most important, the book records the sea change in working class politics that is weaving “a new pattern ... in struggle today as working people emerge from a period of retreat.”

In the last third of 1999 socialist union-

ists organized a national campaign with *Capitalism's World Disorder*. They introduced the book to working people and youth they met at picket lines, farm protests, factory gates, and university campuses. They followed suggestions of books and libraries to visit. Dozens of copies of the book have been placed on the shelves of such outlets, making it accessible to a larger potential readership. Campaign supporters have been able to place and sell other Pathfinder titles, including the newest publication *Making History—Interviews with four generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces*, as part of this effort.

The accompanying chart, recording sales and placements of *Capitalism's World Disorder* organized by workers active in a range of unions, shows the progress—and unevenness—of the campaign. The reports below indicate that no Y2K bug brought the campaign to a halt; instead, it is continuing into the new year. At national planning meetings in Pittsburgh on the weekend of January 1 and 2, socialists in the garment and textile unions and in the mines decided they want to continue the effort into the early months of 2000.

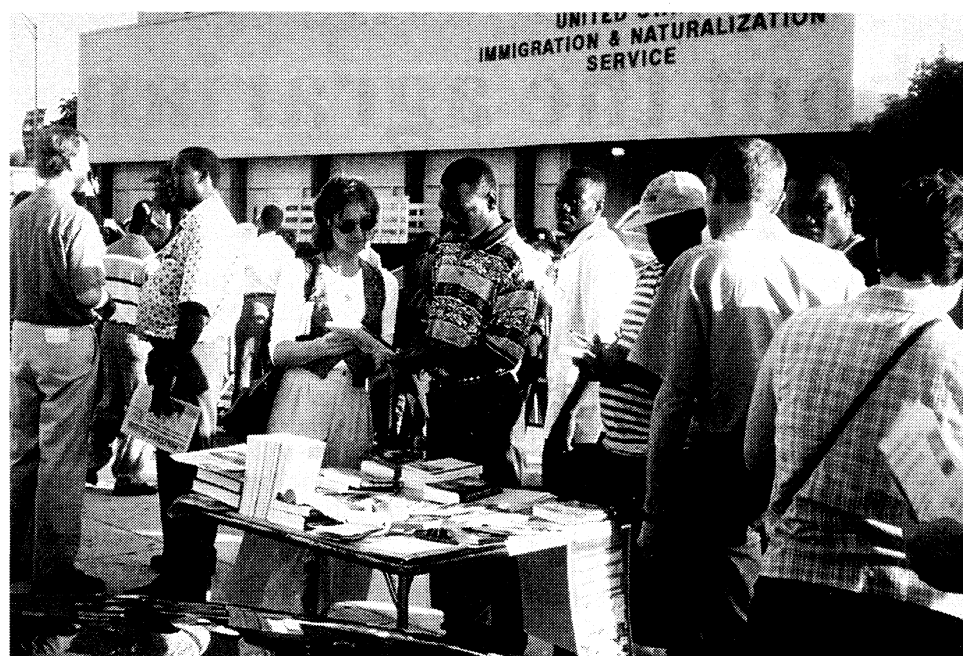


Florida teams reach out

BY ANGEL LARISCY

MIAMI—Socialist workers and young socialists who are supporters of Pathfinder Press in Miami had a number of successes over the past week in selling copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder* as well as placing the book and others in Florida bookstores while reaching out to farmers and fighters.

They met with a farmer from Plant City, Karl Butts, who is planning to visit Cuba with a group of U.S. farmers, and with an activist from Tampa in Ft. Meyers to discuss speeches by Fidel Castro on the first and second agrarian reform in Cuba. Each bought a copy of the new-



Militant/Angel Lariscy

Rollande Girard, Socialist Workers Party candidate for mayor of Miami, discusses Pathfinder titles at Jan. 3 rally in Miami to defend rights of immigrants from Haiti.

est Pathfinder title, *Making History*.

Following the meeting, the volunteers visited the local outlet for a large bookstore chain based in the south. The visit followed one of a couple of weeks earlier, when the store took one copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder*. The one copy had been sold, and the store's buyer decided to take two more copies and another eight titles in Spanish.

Two other volunteers visited a vegetable farmer in Palm Beach county who is a part of the class action lawsuit by Black farmers against the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) for decades of racist discrimination. He bought a six-month subscription to the *Militant* and said he hoped to attend the January 17 protest called for Atlanta to demand payments of the monies promised in the settlement with the USDA and to continue the fight for the right of Black and all farmers to keep their land.

Before visiting his farm, the two stopped at a bookstore that caters to the Black community. The manager decided to order five books, including two copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder*.

Socialist workers and a young socialist wrapped up the week by setting up literature tables at the two protests called to demand the release of over 400 Haitian immigrants who were intercepted off the coast of Florida by the U.S. Coast Guard and held in detention before being sent back to Haiti. They sold a dozen copies of the *Militant* newspaper, one copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder* and three copies of the Marxist magazine *Nouvelle Internationale*. Three

titles on revolutionary Cuba were also sold.



“It's a great book” says unionist

BY CAPPY KIDD
AND HARVEY MCARTHUR

“Holly and I have been working our way through *Capitalism's World Disorder*. It's a great book,” said Tom Smith, a member of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 974. Smith, who works for the Caterpillar Corporation in the Peoria area, has for years been a member of the tactical response team, better known by its nickname, the Blue Shirts. He spoke with *Militant* reporters at a union-sponsored Christmas dance.

Since a hard-fought strike against Caterpillar ended in 1995, it has become a tradition for the Blue Shirts to lead their local in organizing solidarity with other workers on strike. Christmas socials in solidarity with other UAW locals are part of that tradition. On this occasion, however, the party was organized not in support of another local, but in solidarity with newer members of their own local who have been forced by Caterpillar onto a permanent and much lower pay scale. This was the issue at the center of the strike.

“I have been reading the *Militant* every week,” said Smith, “but to tell you the truth I skipped over the Cuba part and focused mainly on the labor solidarity articles. Reading the book has clarified what the Cuban revolution is all about. Now when I read the *Militant*, I read the Cuba articles as well.”

Campaign to sell <i>Capitalism's World Disorder</i> to workers and farmers		
	Placements	Individual Sales
Union	Goal/Sold	Goal/Sold
IAM	75/80	50/73
UAW	40/12	35/10
UFCW	42/14	39/26
UNITE	35/13	25/28
USWA	40/43	30/24
UTU	65/74	35/44
TOTALS	307/229	224/203

U.S. gov't to return boy, maintain anti-Cuba stance

Continued from page 16

U.S. government official said one reason they would like to see Gonzalez come to Miami is to “ease the concerns among Cuban-Americans that he currently is not free to speak his mind because of Cuba's tight controls over its citizenry,” furthering a slander that the father is not free to speak his mind in Cuba.

Throughout the entire episode, the Clinton administration continued to perpetrate the lie that Cubans live in a totalitarian state and are not free to leave the country. But it is U.S. government policies that limit legal immigration from Cuba and encourage illegal and hazardous trips across the Florida Straits.

‘Free men and women’

In a speech on May 1, 1980, Cuban President Fidel Castro told a rally of 1.5 million people in Havana during the wave of emigration from the city of Mariel, that by allowing free passage out of Cuba “we were rigorously, strictly complying with our watchword that anyone who wanted to go to any other country that would accept them could do so and that the building of socialism, the work of the revolution, was a task for free men and women. Don't forget this principle,” he said. “Don't forget this principle which has tremendous moral value.”

In 1994 Washington signed an immigration accord with Cuba to “ensure that migration between the two countries is safe, legal, and orderly.” The U.S. government said that “migrants rescued at sea attempting to enter the United States will not be

permitted to enter the United States,” and that it had “discontinued its practice of granting parole to all Cuban migrants who reach U.S. territory in irregular ways.”

Washington also agreed to allow a minimum of 20,000 Cubans to emigrate to the United States each year, not including immediate relatives of United States citizens, but has failed to live up to this pledge according to Cuban government officials.

The Cuban Adjustment Act was adopted by Congress in 1966. The measure encourages Cubans to take risky boat trips because those who reach U.S. shores are allowed to obtain U.S. residency within a year, giving Cubans preferential treatment over other Latin American or Asian immigrants who are usually deported or remain in limbo for years.

This week the political character of Washington's immigration policies and how they are used as a weapon against Cuba was demonstrated when the INS immediately moved to deport 400 Haitians, Dominicans, and Chinese people who were shipwrecked while attempting to reach U.S. shores (see article page 4).

The Cuban government also had to scramble two MiG fighter jets this week when Ly Tong, a right-wing Vietnamese-born U.S. citizen, piloted an unauthorized flight from Florida to Cuba and over Havana, dumping thousands of anti-Cuban leaflets on the city.

Tong fought in Washington's war against the people of Vietnam as a pilot in the South Vietnamese air force. He became a U.S. citizen in 1988 and four years later hijacked

a Vietnam Airlines flight from Bangkok to Ho Chi Minh City. He was released from jail in 1998 and returned to the United States.

A Customs Service radar center tracked Tong's flight after leaving U.S. airspace. He was released without charge after returning to the United States.

A Cuban government statement pointed

out that the pilot could have intended to drop “explosives on us, flammable material, or viruses or bacteria.” It added the “provocation took place as always in Havana, the capital of Cuba, the little revolutionary neighbor which for four decades has been the target of blockade, pirate attacks, and political, economic, and military aggression.”

USWA members fight wage freeze

BY JORGE LEDESMA

CARLSTADT, New Jersey—Members of the United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 8228 are in the second month of a strike against vinyl manufacturer General PMC Corporation.

When the contract expired a year ago the union agreed to extend it for 12 months. But on November 18, workers walked out under threats that the company would close the factory, said Hector Lopez, a striker. The 48 strikers are fighting for a wage increase and to defend their health care benefits. The company is demanding workers go another three years without a pay raise.

Roberto Rodriguez, a shop steward, said he also objected to the treatment by management of the majority Latino work force. USWA member John Murillo added that the company has not yet paid the yearly Christmas bonus workers are due.

Murillo said strikers have taken initiatives to win support for the struggle, such

as organizing to get all the strikers to sign a letter explaining their fight to a local Spanish-language TV channel.

On December 30, six strikers joined the nearby picket line set up by Teamsters fighting for union recognition and a contract at Overnite trucking. Some 60 members of the Teamsters union turned out for an expanded picket line event featuring William Bradley, a Democratic party candidate for U.S. president.

After Bradley departed, 15 Teamsters, some of them on strike against Overnite in Long Island, New York, decided to car caravan to the steelworkers picket line to return the show of solidarity. Several members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees from area garment shops and textile mills joined the picket line as well.

Jorge Ledesma is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial, and Textile Employees.

'We want to learn about the agrarian reform in Cuba'

BY ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

ATLANTA— "When I get to Cuba, I would like to thank comrade Fidel Castro for helping to free Nelson Mandela," said Eddie Slaughter, a Buena Vista, Georgia, farmer and paper mill worker who will be participating in a February 13-20 fact-finding trip to Cuba by U.S. farmers.

"ABC, CBS, and NBC has us thinking America did it," he told a meeting here to publicize and raise funds for the trip. "But thousands of Cuban troops did the job," along with freedom fighters from Angola and the African National Congress of South Africa, when they defeated a massive invasion of Angola by the army of the racist, white-minority apartheid regime in 1988.

The Cuban internationalist volunteers "put the finishing touches on in it in the battle of Cuito Cuanavale, a town in Angola. That opened a new chapter in the freedom struggle. That led to Mandela's release from prison," Slaughter said.

"I want to go to Cuba," he said, "because I would like to understand exactly how they do it: how they fight racism, bigotry, and hatred when it can't be done here."

The farmers will be hosted in Cuba by the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP), which represents the economic and social interests of Cuban peasants. It was founded in 1961 and has 200,000 members including over 28,000 women. They will meet and exchange experiences with Cuban farmers, visit different kinds of farm cooperatives, and learn about the Cuban revolution.

Slaughter, who is also the national vice-president of the Black Farmers and Agriculturists Association (BFAA), chaired a December 18 meeting attended by 40 people. The event was sponsored by the Atlanta Network on Cuba (ANOC) which is organizing the farm delegation.

"It has been a long-term dream of mine to see the normalization of U.S. relations with Cuba," said Reverend Tim McDonald in welcoming the group of farmers, workers, and activists to the First Iconium Baptist Church. "To have that cause married

with the cause of the Black farmers is almost unbelievable." Meeting participants came from Atlanta, , Birmingham, Tampa, Miami, as well as southern Georgia.

At the meeting each of the farmers explained why they decided to join the delegation, and about their struggle to hold onto their land in the face of the worst worldwide farm crisis in decades.

Lee Dobbins told the meeting that both his father and his grandfather were sharecroppers in Greensboro, Georgia. "I would like to be a farmer," said Dobbins, who is the secretary of the Georgia chapter of BFAA.

Dobbins explained that his views on Cuba "changed 360 degrees" after meeting Luis Morejón and Itamys García, two Cuban youth leaders who toured the U.S. in the spring of 1999. While in Georgia, Morejón and García met members of the Georgia BFAA and toured several farms that belong to the South Georgia Vegetable Producers Cooperative.

"Those young people were vehement about Cuba. They were unconditionally and unequivocally pro-Cuba," stated Dobbins. "When people in the audience tried to debate them, they stood their ground. They gave quick, accurate answers, such as, 'Hey, this is our country, we know what's going on.'"

"This didn't line up with what I'd been told about Cuba. I knew these were the real people of Cuba. When I gave Itamys a BFAA button, she was deeply moved. When we disturbed a seed of corn when we were on the farm, Luis didn't relax until I planted that tiny seed back into the soil. My heart went out to them. I want to go to Cuba and see the whole thing for myself. The Cuban people suffer from an embargo of one type and the American people suffer from an embargo of factual information," he said.

Gladys Williams, a member of the Federation of Southern Cooperatives and the South Georgia Vegetable Producers Cooperative, also spoke. "I live in a small town in southwest Georgia," she told the meeting. "The conditions are very bad; the people



Militant

Farmers who spoke at meeting in Atlanta who will be participating of a delegation to the in Cuba by the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP),

are in distress. We have no medical care and some of us can't read. We are poor and there is brutality by the police."

"We got very curious," the farmer said, "when we learned that in Cuba young people went into the mountains to teach everyone, young and old, and in the smallest towns how to read. It shows us that it is possible to solve a problem— all you have to do is want it bad enough. We like the idea that rent is 10 percent of your income, instead of having to pay most of what you make, like the government housing in this country."

"Most of all we want to learn about the agrarian land reform, how it was achieved, and how those same methods can be applied here in my own country and community," Williams said. "It impresses us that 40 years later, the small farmer still is the owner of the land in Cuba."

1959 agrarian reform in Cuba

Williams was referring to the 1959 agrarian reform law, which more than any act defined the character of the workers and farmers government established by Cuban working people after overthrowing the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. Millions of acres of large landed estates held by U.S. and Cuban ruling families were confiscated and hundreds of thousands of peasants received titles to the land that they worked. Since the victory of the Cuban revolution, no working farmer has been foreclosed on for nonpayment of debts or forced to sell their land to someone else.

"Look at the tremendous hypocrisy of America. They try to get us to believe that they were bombing Yugoslavia to protect the Albanian minority, while back in America, they have stolen 13 million acres of land from the Black farmers," added Slaughter. "I was born in America, and raised in America, and I have been chasing this American dream."

"But I can't stand this capitalism with all of its injustices, living off its ability to exploit somebody. If I can't be a capitalist, I might as well see the world, and go to a country where farmers are respected, where cultivating the soil is considered important."

A government of workers and farmers

Karl Butts, a vegetable farmer from Plant City, Florida, explained that what attracts him most about the trip to Cuba is "the chance to see a government which is not the paid representatives of a few wealthy families, but a government of workers and farmers. We want to tell others when we come back about a different set of values, of the human solidarity and culture that Cuba has."

The delegation has decided to apply for a license from the U.S. Treasury Department to travel to Cuba. In 1999, over 2,800 individual licenses to Cuba were granted, including many to individuals involved in agriculture— primarily representatives of giant agribusiness corporations that are interested in opening up trade to Cuba to sell wheat, rice, soybeans, and other farm produce. But some delegations have also included a few working farmers.

"What do the U.S. Grains Council, the American Farm Bureau, Archer Daniels Midland, John Deere, and the U.S. Wheat Associates have in common?" asked James Harris, a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) and the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party, who will also participate in the delegation.

"They have all gone to Cuba this year, and been given licenses with the full blessing of the U.S. government. Why shouldn't workers and farmers who want to go also be given a license or at least the same opportunity? The decision to get a license for this trip sets a good precedent," Harris said.

While in Cuba, the farmers plan to publicize the recent class-action lawsuit against the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) which was initiated by farmers who are Black in response to extensive racist discrimination by the government agency. More than eight months after the farmers forced the government to admit guilt and promise a financial settlement, the vast majority of farmers haven't seen any change in government lending policies or any money as of this date.

Worsening conditions on farm

Since the settlement in the farmers' suit, conditions have actually worsened. A case in point is that of Willie Head, a Georgia vegetable farmer and plaintiff in the suit who will also be making the trip to Cuba. Like thousands of farmers, Head has not received the \$50,000 promised by the government's consent decree. Now he is having a difficult time getting any new loans or credit because the banks and creditors believe he has already received a settlement check. To make matters worse, he wasn't receiving loans or credit in the first place. Head was unable to attend the ANOC meeting due to the press of daily work necessary to sustain his farm under these conditions.

Melvin Bishop, president of Georgia BFAA, invited participants at the meeting to join the farmers in a protest on January 17 in Atlanta. "We are asking you to join with us because we will be marching and demonstrating. We demand to know why the USDA doesn't discipline its people in the field who have violated the Black farmers' rights," Bishop said. "We will be uniting with striking truck drivers and everyone else marching for fair treatment on the Martin Luther King Day holiday."

Bernardo Gómez, coordinator of the Atlanta Network, says the committee is organizing speaking engagements for the farmers when they return. "The farmers will be in an excellent position to clearly explain how the agrarian reform works and the benefits it has brought to farmers and the Cuban population in general. It is our hope," Gómez said, "that Cuba solidarity groups, farmers' groups, colleges and universities, and grassroots organizations will host these meetings. We have already gotten some initial requests for presentations by the farmers. I also want to acknowledge the Committee on Cuban Youth and Education, based in Los Angeles, which organized the speaking tour for two Cuban youth last spring. Without their efforts, we would not be in a position to organize a farmers trip to Cuba one year later."

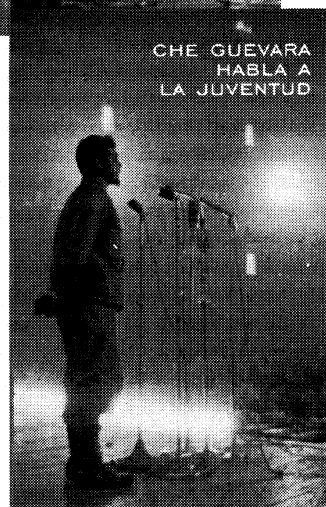
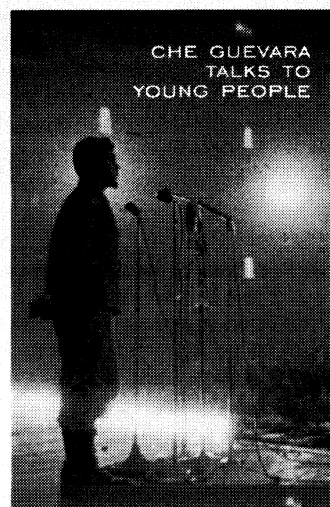
"The national tours, and the collaboration between Cuba solidarity groups, students, workers, and farmers is important, and we shouldn't underestimate the results of this work," Gómez said.

For more information on the fact-finding trip to Cuba contact: Atlanta Network on Cuba, P.O. Box 5560, Atlanta, GA 31107.

Arlene Rubinstein is a member of the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association. Gladys Williams from Quitman, Georgia, contributed to this article.

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—Che Guevara, July 28, 1960
(from *Che Guevara Talks to Young People*)

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New Jersey farmers fight for their land

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

BUENA BORO, New Jersey—Three women here are waging a determined struggle to defend their right to farm and against sex discrimination by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

"I'm a squatter," declared Anna Marie Codario, who remains on the land despite government foreclosure on her farm. "I want my land back and compensation for the 22 years I have fought to get it back."

Codario and Mary Ordille, two farmers in Atlantic County, New Jersey, and Mary Visconti, a farmer in nearby Cumberland County, filed claims in 1997 against the USDA for sex discrimination. A few years ago they learned about the fight being waged by farmers who are Black against racist discrimination by the USDA and contacted them. The three women joined that struggle and have spoken at several rallies organized by the Black Farmers and Agriculturists Association and the National Black Farmers Association.

"We have always supported the Black farmers. We are in the same boat," said Codario. "We went to Washington in support of all farmers who have suffered discrimination from FSA," said Ordille.

The FSA (Farm Service Agency) is an agency of the USDA. It replaced the Farmers Home Administration (FmHA), which loaned money to farmers who could not qualify for conventional loans from banks and other lending institutions, and was seen by many farmers as the "lender of last resort," Codario explained.

"In 1910 my grandfather and father came from Sicily, Italy, to Landisville, New Jersey, to farm vegetables," said Codario. "I have worked on the family farm since I was six and was trained by my father."

In 1972 Codario's brother, Angelo DeFelice, owned the farm. "He lost the entire crop of about 125 acres valued at \$100,000 due to a wet spring, Hurricane Agnes, and heavy hail. The next year hail damaged 80 acres of fruit and he lost another \$100,000 in revenues," Codario explained. He received a paltry \$5,000 from the FmHA as disaster relief payment for one year.

"I couldn't even buy a pack of cigarettes," DeFelice said. These disasters forced him to borrow from the FmHA for operational and other expenses. His troubles continued with low crop prices and bad weather.

The FmHA accelerated the payment schedule on his loan in 1976-77, began foreclosing on the farm, and denied him loan services to restructure his debts. In 1977, Codario applied for an FmHA loan to purchase 127 acres of the family farm to prevent the foreclosure. She had taught school since 1958 while still working on the farm, then left her teaching job to start farming full-time.

"From the beginning of my contact with Farmers Home Administration, I was denied servicing, due process, and support on the basis of my sex," she explained. "The FSA representatives were annoyed that I jumped in to help my brother."

"When I met with the FmHA county supervisor, his opening remark to me was 'You're a school teacher, what do you know about farming,'" Codario said. "I had ruined the plans of some farmers and the FmHA to get their hands on our land."

Meeting mortgage payments

Codario said the county supervisor denied her request for a full mortgage package through the FmHA at 5 percent interest. Instead, half the mortgage was placed through the Federal Land Bank (FLBA), at variable interest, which at times reached 9 percent, increasing her payments substantially.

"In July 1978, I planted 50 acres of fall vegetables. My farm plan was prepared as a prerequisite to signing my mortgage payment," Codario said. Income on the harvest was low due to low market prices, but she paid the bank and FmHA mortgages for 1978.

In August 1979, hail destroyed her fall crop, forcing her to miss the mortgage payment due in January 1980. No one at FmHA advised me that disaster relief payments were available due to the loss of my fall crop at anytime in 1979 or 1980," said Codario.

"The mortgage with FLBA was always current but when I fell behind with FmHA the state director insisted I pay FmHA the arrears, instead of advising me of the moratorium program," she said.

The moratorium allows farmers experi-

encing disaster conditions to defer payments to the FmHA, giving them time to get their finances in better shape. "When I went to the FmHA for the moratorium they denied it existed," said Codario.

Meanwhile, operating costs for seeds, fertilizer, and pesticides were rising while prices she received for produce were falling below the cost of production.

In the fall of 1980, Codario sold her parsley crop and later that year stopped farming. She was bankrupt, her car was repossessed, and telephone disconnected.



Farmers at December 13 protest in Washington, D.C. From left to right are Anna Marie Codario holding sign, Mary Ordille, and Mary Visconti. At far left is Gary Grant of Black Farmers and Agriculturists Association and to the right of Codario is John Boyd of the National Black Farmers Association.

She landed a job at the New Jersey Department of Agriculture the following year and was informed by the FmHA county supervisor that he would begin foreclosure proceedings. In February 1982, the federal agency informed her that the loan repayment schedule was being accelerated and the FmHA state director claimed she "was not a legitimate farmer."

The Federal Land Bank, which had a lien on the property, foreclosed on the farm in 1984 and the FmHA purchased the farm and placed it in its inventory. "I was forced into foreclosure because of the lack of servicing by the FmHA as well as being forced to pay them the money I had saved for my first mortgage," Codario asserted.

"I have been actively complaining about FmHA's discriminatory treatment of me," said Codario. "Those county agents knew Angelo was in trouble and they were like buzzards honing in on the farm."

'They have taken everything'

"Because we raised so much Cain we're still living on our land. They've taken everything else," declared Mary Visconti, a vegetable farmer. "I'm a squatter also," she added referring to the statement by Codario.

Visconti has been involved in farming for nearly 40 years, which included working on the farm owned by her mother and father. She and her husband John obtained a loan from the FmHA and purchased some 195 acres of farmland in Cumberland County, New Jersey, in 1977.

Shortly after they received the title to their farm Visconti says the former FmHA district director declared, "I don't know how you got this farm, it was already promised. I'm going to see that you lose this farm." In the summer of 1979 the FmHA district director and the county supervisor visited the farm. "In voices loud enough for our laborers to hear, they began accusing us of being delinquent in our payments to FmHA," said Visconti. "At this point the men stopped packing and began listening intently. We had to convince them they would get paid."

In 1978 and 1979 the Viscontis lost about \$80,000 because of weather conditions. When they applied for an emergency loan in 1980, the county agents "insisted that it was poor management on our part and that we should not be granted the loan," Visconti explained.

When the loan was finally granted it was too late to plant spring crops. This loss of income together with low yields and low prices pushed them behind in payments on the FmHA loan.

In 1982 the Viscontis were forced to put up their farm vehicles and farm equipment as collateral to apply for another emergency

loan. They said that the FmHA district director attempted to stall the loan by claiming the titles submitted on the equipment had been lost. He insisted the Viscontis get replacement titles or they would be denied the loan. The loan was finally approved at an astronomical 16 percent interest rate.

The district director also put himself in the position of having the sole authority to release checks on the produce sold by the Viscontis. Vineland Produce Market, which bought their crops, would not issue checks to them. "I would sometimes have to sit in

the office for hours until he gave the permission to sign the checks," said Visconti. "It was stressful and humiliating. I would see other people come in to have their checks signed and go out while I was still waiting."

In 1988, the Viscontis filed for bankruptcy "because we kept getting threats from the FmHA. We continued to farm, although the farming became a single operation for me when my husband became disabled in 1989."

The farm experienced more weather disasters in 1990 and 1992. "We were awarded disaster payments," Visconti explained. "At one meeting with the FSA I asked to assume the mortgage and they asked who would sign with me. I told them at my age, 47, that wasn't necessary." When she asked whether as a woman she should be considered a minority, the FSA official remarked, "you're the wrong color."

The FSA has withheld the disaster relief check pending an appeal with the National Appeal staff. "They bang you down so bad," said Visconti. "No one has unlimited funds to fight the government."

In 1993, they lost title to their farm when it was foreclosed on by the first mortgage holder, Equitable Life Assurance Society. "I was always current with Equitable," Visconti explained. "But the government forced us into foreclosure" by denying much needed servicing.

"I have filed numerous complaints of discrimination on the basis of my sex, female, and national origin, Italian American, against the USDA for violations of the Equal Opportunity Act of 1972 and numerous other statutes," Visconti stated. In 1987, she sought out Codario and they linked their struggles together to defend their right to farm.

Visconti said her son John has tried to make a go of farming but also faces discrimination by USDA officials. For three years he has applied for loans but has not received any aid.

A bureaucratic nightmare

"Why is our government so determined to destroy us?" asked Mary Ordille of Hammonton, New Jersey. "We have all suffered far too long and at a very high cost to our lives, families, and financial stability. This should not have happened to people who only wanted to work hard to better themselves and their families."

Ordille said filing a discrimination claim with the USDA's Office of Civil Rights had become "another bureaucratic nightmare, similar to the one in the FSA."

For six years Ordille and her husband Richard had rented a 72-acre farm, which had 42 acres of blueberries. She worked the

farm while her husband worked another full-time job at Atlantic Electric as a field supervisor. When the owner decided to sell the property in 1982 for \$175,000, the couple decided to apply for a loan to buy the farm.

"There were farmers who wanted our land," Ordille explained. One farmer who owned the adjacent land offered the sellers \$10,000 more, raising the purchasing price to \$185,000, she said. He was the brother of the Atlantic County FmHA supervisor at the FSA office. The farmer on the other side of Ordille's farm was a board member at the FSA office in Mays Landing.

Ordille explained how this maneuvering alarmed her and her husband so they asked for their loan application to be processed at another FSA office. The county supervisor at the other FSA office demanded that she and her husband be co-applicants for the loan. The Ordilles had asked that Mary be the sole applicant, since she would tend to the farm while her husband worked his regular job.

"For six years I had worked hard, but we had no idea of the nightmare the next 16 years would bring to our family," she remarked.

The terms of the FmHA loan included interest of 13.25 percent and the Ordilles were forced to put up their home and the farm as collateral, a total of \$375,000 to secure a \$185,000 loan. "I do not believe that we would have been treated that way if I was not a female and the principal operator of the farm," she explained.

Uninformed of disaster relief programs

From 1982 to 1985 the farm operations were successful. In 1987, however, a bad freeze cut production by 50 percent. Ordille, Codario, and Visconti were never informed by FSA officials about disaster relief programs, grants, moratoriums, or set-asides to offset bad weather conditions. Only later did they learn that other area farmers were given these servicing options and that they had been treated differently. In 1988, the crop did not recover from the previous years' freeze and the Ordilles fell behind in mortgage payments. They succeeded in getting the interest reduced to 8.25 percent. Later they won approval for a farm program that gave them a new mortgage rate of 5 percent. But the FSA officials stalled on granting the new rate and the interest on the loan continued to accrue. Two years after being approved for the program, the FSA had still refused to grant them the new rate and the interest on the FmHA loan ballooned to \$14,000.

The FSA continued their machinations. At a meeting in 1990, Ordille said a FSA agent proposed they have someone buy the farm or take over the mortgage. The agent further suggested selling it to the son of the FSA board member whose farm was adjacent to theirs. Faced with mounting pressures of foreclosure, the Ordilles applied for a conveyance deal in 1994, which would transfer the title of the farm to the FSA. The agreement would allow them to keep their home, which was not on farm property. The county supervisor sent instructions, Ordille said, insisting they sell their farm equipment before the conveyance could be considered.

Meanwhile, the FSA had the farm appraised at \$283,000, a price that was too high for the prospective buyer who had hoped to get good land at a cheap price. Ordille said the FmHA district director said they had to sell their home to pay off the FSA debt before he would consider the conveyance. In 1995 the Ordilles sold their farm equipment and completed the sale of the farm in 1998.

"We paid the FSA a total of \$370,712.36 to pay a \$185,000 loan and still have a balance due of \$90,000," said Ordille. "You could get a better deal from a loan shark."

Ordille heard about the battles waged by Codario and Visconti in the local papers and decided to join their struggle. "We need to bring this out in the media in Washington, D.C., so our government officials will take notice and stop ruining our lives," she said.

All three women stated their intentions to continue fighting for their right to farm. "I can honestly say I will not give up my fight for what is due my family and me otherwise there will not be any family farms left," said Visconti.

"I intend to make this whole thing as public as possible, reach out to other farmers, and pressure the government to give us back our land," Codario stated. "The Black farmers did not get their settlement and we have not gotten ours either."

Socialist coal and garment workers meet

BY TED LEONARD AND JACOB FOX

PITTSBURGH—Progress in building units of communist workers in the coal mines and in garment and textile plants across the United States was registered in a series of meetings in Pittsburgh over the New Years weekend.

At the heart of the reports and discussions was the interconnection between workers and their unions in the coal and garment industries in the coal mining regions.

Miners from the northern and southern Appalachian coalfields, the booming western coal areas, the anthracite region of eastern Pennsylvania, and the coal-rich area of the lower Midwest came together to discuss developments in their industries and unions and chart a course for deepening communist work there. They were joined by garment and textile workers from many of these same regions as well as other cities across the United States.

About a year ago, the Socialist Workers Party decided to rebuild its presence in the coal mines and the garment and textile plants, as well as in the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) and Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE).

Along with rebuilding its presence in the meat-packing plants organized by the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW), these moves were made possible by the bottoming-out of the retreat by the working class in the face of a decade-long drive by the employing class to increase their profits. For some time, there has been convincing evidence that workers and family farmers are now willing to stand up and fight or are looking for ways to do so.

"The reality we face at the millennium is like the first line of Charles Dickens's novel, *A Tale of Two Cities*: 'It was the best of times, it was the worst of times,'" said James Harris, a worker in a UNITE-organized warehouse in Atlanta. "The big-business media crows that we live in the best of times, the biggest and best economic expansion since World War II. But this push for increased corporate profits has been fueled by driving down millions of workers and small farmers in a way not seen for generations."

Jack Ward, an underground miner in the Midwest, reported to a joint meeting of the miners and UNITE fractions that there is growing resistance to the bosses' offensive in

the mines and garment and textile shops, in factories and working-class communities around the country, and especially now among small farmers. Most of these struggles are scattered and often end in defeat or stalemate.

But in almost every case, he pointed out, there are individuals or small groups of fighters that arise out of these struggles determined to continue the fight. These workers and farmers are thinking about broader politics, are on the lookout for other fighters to ally with, and are open to reading communist books. This is true in every region of the country.

"The best example before us of this fact of politics today," Ward said, "can be seen among small farmers who are Black. They have fought for years against discriminatory practices that have led to many being driven off their farms. The recent settlement of their discrimination lawsuit against the government, which held the false promise of a solution, at first disoriented many. But as the scope of the government's duplicity in this settlement becomes clear, farmers are coming together again to press their demands." He proposed the socialist workers help build upcoming actions organized by the farmers to continue their struggle.

Ward described the social impact of the employers' offensive in the coalfields. "The bosses are closing down the union mines and opening up nonunion mines at a rapid clip. More coal is being mined with less workers. In most cases this means that wages are slashed dramatically, the pace of work is in-

tensified, safety conditions in the mines have been weakened, and we're working long hours each week."

Contract labor is increasingly used as a way to drive down wages and conditions and divide miners, Ward pointed out. Some large underground and surface mines in the West and in the southern Midwest are run entirely by subcontractors. In other mines, contract workers are brought in to work side-by-side with miners employed by the mine company.

The contract miners, of course, get sharply lower pay and benefits. Of all the socialists working in the mines at the meeting only one of them was making more than \$10 an hour.

Jeremy Friend, a coal miner in Alabama, reported to the meeting of socialist coal miners held after the joint meeting that in nonunion mines in Alabama it is now common for new hires to be brought in as "independent contractors" for months and

sometimes years before they are hired on as mine employees. These workers get no benefits of any kind, and the company avoids paying Social Security and unemployment taxes.

Especially hard-hit has been health care benefits, explained Fred Forrest, a coal miner in the Pittsburgh area. Thousands of miners are now working without medical insurance. "It is not unusual to hear fellow coal miners explain that they couldn't take a sick child to the doctor because they couldn't afford it," he said. The coal bosses continue their drive to overturn lifetime medical benefits won by union coal miners. The black lung programs are being gutted, he said, and hospitals and clinics in coal areas are being forced to shut down.

Forrest described a developing struggle to keep the Mann Hospital in southern West Virginia open. "This is currently the only hospital located in the three main coal-producing counties in southern West Virginia. There have been protests with up to a couple hundred people in front of the hospital demanding that it stay open," he reported.

"Just think what it means to miners in the area if there is an accident in the mine and someone has to be rushed to the hospital," he said. "Or what it means for any of the rural workers and poor farmers in the area who need immediate medical attention. They will now have to drive 50, 60 or maybe 100 miles."

Disparity between city and country

The impact of the bosses' offensive is especially severe in the countryside, explained Ward. "As we get more people hired into the mines, we see firsthand the growing disparity between urban and rural living conditions." While the Clinton administration touts the low levels of unemployment nationally, some counties in the southern Midwestern coalfields now report unemployment rates over 10 percent, he explained. "Added to this, the deflationary pressures driving down the price of basic farm commodities are having a devastating effect on family farmers, who are being driven into poverty and off their land."

The attacks against coal miners and their union are beginning to meet with resistance, said Ward to the meeting of socialist coal miners. "There are stirrings underneath the surface that reflect the beginnings of a social movement in the coalfields and a fight for the life of the United Mine Workers union."

Ward pointed to the effort by mine workers in western Pennsylvania and southern Illinois to circulate petitions defending health benefits for miners as one reflection of this social movement. This campaign follows a series of mass meetings organized by the UMWA last fall to press the government and the coal bosses

to maintain lifetime health care for miners. Others described meetings that are being organized in coalfield regions to respond to massive layoffs.

Like most miners today, many of the socialist miners are working in nonunion mines. "The bosses use temp agencies and contractors to keep the union out," explained Harriet Melor, a coal miner in the western coalfields. "But union miners are in all of these nonunion mines and they talk about the union." Socialist coal miners noted that in the mines where they work there are a number of young miners in their first jobs, as well as experienced miners, many with union experience.

"With this New Years conference, we can celebrate our success in rebuilding a presence in the coal mines," said Ward. "We have gotten into both underground and surface mines in five of the main coal centers and all signs point to our fraction of communist workers growing substantially in the coming months. This will put us in a good position to participate in the struggles unfolding today and the bigger ones that will surely come."

Connection between garment and coal

A separate meeting of socialist garment and textile workers continued the discussion begun in the joint meeting on the connection between garment workers and coal miners. Diana Newberry, a sewing machine operator and a member of UNITE, works in a shop located in the coalfields near here. She and another socialist sewing machine operator started talking to coworkers about a front-page story in the local newspaper about a coal miner who had been killed in the Canterbury mine not far away.

"We found out," Newberry said, "that we had coworkers who had relatives who were working in that mine and others that knew the miner who died." The mine closed a few days later. Nonunion now, the mine had been organized by the UMWA in the 1980s.

"A couple of coworkers talked about the fights at that mine led by the UMWA in the mid-80s. We found coworkers, who we had never before talked to about the role of unions, who spoke up in discussions in the lunchroom about the importance of unions," she said. Much of the activity and statements by the officials of UNITE are focused on protectionist schemes such as their "anti-sweatshop" campaign. In the union, among garment and textile workers, and student youth, the union tops portray workers in other countries as victims of greedy corporations, not as fellow fighters. The campaign draws workers and young people in this country deeper into believing our problems can be solved by working together with our bosses and their government.

Recently some 1,300 UNITE members waged a four-day strike at 12 New Jersey dye houses. Andy Buchanan, a textile worker in New Jersey, quoted a UNITE official from a newspaper article published shortly before the strike took place. The official said that textile workers there can't compete with China or even with North and South Carolina.

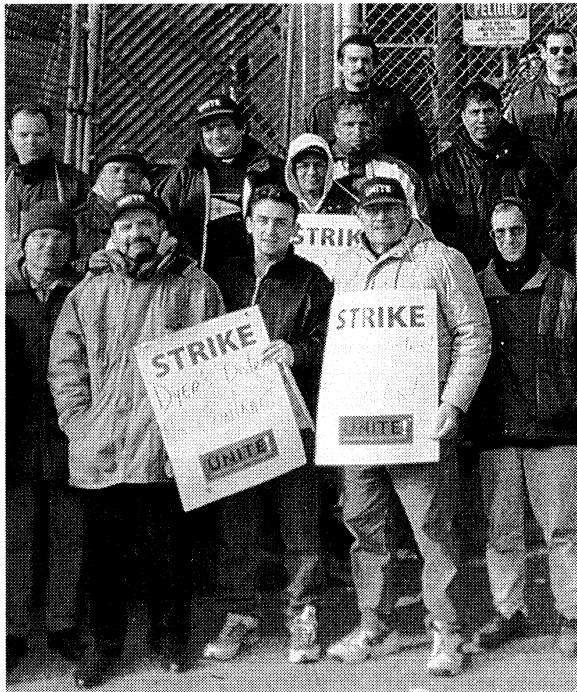
At the meeting the garment workers discussed that taking such questions up is central to functioning as communists in the union. "The goal of the unions and the struggle of working people is to eliminate the dog-eat-dog competition that capitalism foists upon us," said Greg McCartan, a textile worker from Boston. "We can raise with workers a perspective of revolutionary struggle to form our own government and overturn capitalism," he said.

"The 'threat of Chinese imports' theme by the union officialdom aids Washington in its long-term drive to overturn the workers state in China," McCartan raised. "Explaining the conquests of the Chinese revolution and why we need to defend it against Washington is part of our job in the unions."

Jorge Ledesma, a sewing machine operator and UNITE member from Newark, described getting out to a picket line by Teamsters at the Overnite trucking company along with two textile workers, one of whom has recently met socialists on the job.

After participating in classes on communist politics at the local Pathfinder Bookstore, joining socialists selling the *Militant* to dye workers during and after their strike, and joining in several picket lines, he told the socialists that he could "see how to build your

Continued on the next page



Militant/Neel Measel

Workers at Trio Dye and Finishing in Paterson, New Jersey, picket line of December 22.

Reprint project achieved tremendous victory

The following is a message from Warren Simons to Pathfinder Reprint volunteers on New Years Day. The note was read to the socialist workers participating in the Pittsburgh meetings who decided to send a return message as well.

Dear Comrades,

The final results for our drive to get all the books into the computer are in. All the titles we are responsible for are scanned, OCR'd, run through check recognition, and saved as Word files! All the titles except four French-language New Internationals are massaged and ready for proofreading.

Two of the French NIs are being massaged as we speak and we aim to have the other two completed in January. This one slight shortfall in Scan2000 is solely the result of not having enough volunteers who are fluent in French.

These results are a tremendous victory! All who have worked on it should pause for a moment and contemplate the glory of our labor. I've attached to this e-mail a small excerpt from one of the books I massaged during our work and then went back and read cover to cover, *Cosmetics, Fashion, and the Exploitation of Women*. I especially like this item and it speaks to us as we sit at our computers and scanners. Evelyn Reed said that labor was the most honorable, the most necessary, the most useful and beautiful of all human attributes. Laboring now to ensure that today's and tomorrow's fighters can find answers on how to resist, to fight back, and to develop the capacities, the virtues, the habits that will allow them to fight effectively and win is a deeply satisfying experience.

Congratulations to all of us!

Warren

P.S. I need to find out ASAP what each of you will want to do next. For those of you who have contacted Tom or myself please disregard this request.

To the reprint project volunteers

Pittsburgh, PA
January 2, 2000

Dear Comrades,

The Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists members in the UNITE and coal miners' fractions, meeting here in Pittsburgh on January 1-2, salute your achievement of completing Scan 2000, the first phase of the digitizing project of Pathfinder books.

This task completed on schedule by volunteer labor is a model for revolutionaries to follow. The further achievement of presenting nine Pathfinder titles to the print shop in December marks another leap forward in keeping in print the revolutionary history of our class.

This meeting marks for the first time in many years, that the party and YS are building UMWA and UNITE fractions that are organically connected and mutually reinforced by the struggles developing in the coalfields. The central importance of having Pathfinder titles ready and available is indispensable as we deepen our fraction building through mass work with others in struggle such as the Overnite strikers, the rural proletariat, and students and youth.

The opportunity to win recruits to the revolutionary movement is now on the agenda. Your continued efforts on this project will make available the ideas and lessons needed to build a party that can advance the worldwide struggle for socialism.

Comradely,

Harriet Melor and Paul Cornish

Venezuela faces social disaster after rains and mudslides

BY ANGEL LARISCY

MIAMI—With the death toll up to 50,000 and 500,000 homeless, mud slides precipitated by torrential rains in the northern Caribbean coast of Venezuela have become the worst disaster since an earthquake hit the country in 1967.

Venezuelan President Hugo Chávez has received special wartime powers by the Constituent Assembly to deal with emergency tasks. Chávez has given the military a greater role in the disaster areas while working people in that country go through the deepest economic crisis in more than a decade.

In mid-December, massive mud and rock slides buried thousands of people and villages after 10 days of heavy rains. Only a few thousand bodies have been recovered and 23,000 homes were destroyed.

Chávez, a former colonel in the military, was elected less than a year ago under the banner of fighting corruption and addressing the country's deep-going social crisis. He has relied heavily upon popular resentment against the parties that dominated Venezuela's political scene for more than four decades. Despite the continuing economic crisis he has been widely popular.

Chávez has visited numerous sites dressed

in camouflage fatigues and a paratrooper's red beret. He acts as a classic Bonapartist politician, who in times of sharp crisis presents himself as the "man of destiny" who can stand above social classes and the muck of traditional politics to rescue the nation and bring social peace.

The trademark of his presidency has been appeals for national unity regardless of class in the face of crisis. "The fisherman, the farmer, the rancher, the store owner—they are all working to rebuild the Venezuelan family," Chávez stated when the disaster first unfolded. "This is a moment of union; it is a moment of solidarity."

"We will emerge from below and from the mud!" Chávez declared in a speech delivered aboard a flatbed truck in the town of Macuto at the end of December.

Chávez has faced criticism that the government delayed warning people about the potential dangers of the rainstorms in order to push through a vote on a new constitution, which took place December 15. Government officials contend they did not issue warnings or urge evacuations because rains over the previous two weeks caused no safety hazards.

In a letter to the *Miami Herald* complaining about criticism of the government,



Vehicles buried by the mudslides in the seaport of La Guaira near Caracas.

Venezuela's ambassador to the United States, Alfredo Hardy, contended the problem wasn't the warnings of the rains but poverty. "Local governments should have reinforced their duties in controlling building-construction permits," contended Hardy. "This urban anarchy was inherited by the Chávez administration and is one of the challenges of his government."

Venezuela, a country with the largest oil reserves outside of the Middle East, is rife with massive poverty—nearly 80 percent of the 23 million people live below the poverty line. The country has an official unemployment rate of over 15 percent and reports of unemployment as high as 64 percent with

600,000 people losing their jobs this year. Venezuela currently owes more than \$23 billion in debt to imperialist banks.

The present economic situation is worse than anytime since 1989 when during the administration of former President Carlos Perez the economy shrunk by 8.9 percent. Perez launched a "free market" austerity drive that led to antigovernment protests of tens of thousands of people. The Perez administration responded with a bloodbath, deploying cops and troops who slaughtered as many as several thousand people.

In the midst of this social turmoil, Col. Hugo Chávez led other lower echelon members of the officer corps in a coup against the Perez government in February 1992. The coup failed and Chávez and others were jailed.

Upon becoming president, Chávez pushed for the election of a National Constituent Assembly. Convened in July, its main task has been to write a new constitution for the country. Chávez also launched a campaign against corruption in the judiciary by firing and suspending 300 judges and court workers.

On December 15, Venezuelans ratified the new constitution by over 71 percent, with 54 percent of the population abstaining on the vote.

The new constitution increases Chávez's term of office from five years to six and allows him to be elected for consecutive terms. It also eliminates one of the chambers of Congress, reduces civilian control of the military, and expands government management of the economy.

'Market economy with human face'

The Chávez administration has stated it is striving for a "market economy with a human face." Chávez's goal has been to cultivate an image of a savior and champion of the downtrodden while seeking to keep protests and anger among the working class at a minimum. As recently as late November, 4,000 workers at Venezuela's largest steelmaker went on strike demanding pay raises. Oil workers have carried out numerous strikes and protests over the past year.

As Venezuelans attempt to recover from the recent flooding disaster, dozens of countries have sent aid as working people around the world have responded. The tragedy has surpassed the destruction of Hurricane Mitch in Central America last year and the 1985 earthquake in Mexico City.

The minister of foreign affairs, José Rangel, reported that \$30 million received in international aid will be allocated for housing construction. The governments of Canada and the Dominican Republic have been recent contributors to relief funds. Saudi Arabia has committed two planes in humanitarian aid. Spain Italy, Chile and Brazil have pledged to help in the construction of houses.

Rangel said it is uncertain if any grants are available and that it will be necessary to seek loans from the Inter-American Development Bank, the World Bank, the United Nations, and the European Union.

On the other hand, the revolutionary government of Cuba has sent more than 400 medical staff, doctors, nurses, hospital workers, to help mainly in the state of Vargas. Doctor Raúl Pérez, vice minister of health in Cuba, said that the Cuban medical personnel "will stay as long as the Venezuelan government considers it necessary."

The United States Defense Department sent water purification equipment and thousands of body bags to Venezuela.

Coal miner killed in roof collapse

BY DIANA NEWBERRY

APOLLO, Pennsylvania—Robert Francisco, a 47-year-old coal miner from Avonmore, Pennsylvania, was killed December 23 at Canterbury Coal Company's DiAnne #2 underground mine when a roof collapsed on him. At the time of the accident, Francisco was operating a continuous mining machine about one mile from the portal. This was the first death in this western Pennsylvania coal region since another roof-fall death in July 1997.

The company reported Francisco was working alone at the time of the roof collapse

and that 45 other miners were then in the mine.

In its preliminary report, the federal Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) said Francisco was killed after a 15-foot-long rock fell on him. The report said no other miners were injured in the roof fall. MSHA will release its final report in the coming weeks, which will be available to the public.

One week later, on December 30, Canterbury closed the DiAnne #2 mine, citing "low productivity" and "bad geological conditions." The company refused to say how many will lose their jobs because of the closing. As late

as October the company had plans to expand the mine by 16,000 acres and was waiting for approval from the state Department of Environmental Protection.

Canterbury Coal is the ninth largest underground mining company in Pennsylvania. It employed 138 miners. The closing comes in the wake of recent closings of United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) mines in the same coalfields.

These mines were owned by Consol Energy, the largest underground coal company in the United States. With the closing of Canterbury, some 1,000 coal miners have been thrown out of work in the past two months. This is a huge blow to this largely rural area where mining has been a mainstay for decades.

An emergency meeting of the Pennsylvania Coal Caucus, composed of 52 state legislators, will meet on January 5 in Indiana County to discuss the recent layoffs.

'We're all fired'

"I'm fired. We are all fired." one young miner told a *Militant* reporting team at the mine portal December 30. He said this was his first job.

The miners went into work that day with no information on the closing and very little on the death of their coworker. One miner said that when they got ready to go underground they were told that the mine was closed and they were without jobs. Other miners on their way out of the mine stopped by to explain their anger in being told by the company that they were not even entitled to the 60-day notice law.

The law requires companies to give 60 days notice before closing. They said they didn't accept the company's word on this and were going to go and find out if they could do something about it.

One miner explained he was on strike at this mine in 1985 and 1990. In response to the closing, this miner said, "This is not over." Canterbury broke the UMWA at this mine in a long strike in the mid-1980s and has run the mine nonunion since then.

The death of Robert Francisco was the 33rd mine death in the coal mining industry in the United States in 1999. According to MSHA, 11 miners were killed during September and October. The federal agency called it a "dramatic increase in mining fatalities." Twenty-nine miners were killed in mine accidents in 1998.

Diana Newberry is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees in Pennsylvania.

Socialist coal miners and garment workers meet in Pittsburgh

Continued from the previous page
party now."

Lisa Potash from Chicago told about a shop floor struggle around piece-rate wages, pointing to the opportunities for workers to join together to fight to transform the unions as they enter into struggles and build ties among themselves.

Tony Prince, a garment worker from Cleveland, discussed how he was part of organizing solidarity with steelworkers at Armco. "We translated a flyer and got a good number of signatures on it. Workers contributed \$30 to give to the strikers when we went to the picket line," he said.

While socialist workers seek to work in shops and mills organized by UNITE, they are also getting hired at nonunion shops where there are no UNITE-organized plants. Several participants spoke to the opportunities to discuss the same politics on the job, and the fact the union question is posed. Janet from Houston said that many workers have been in union shops and that the drive by the company to speed up work and cut wages means "workers at the shop where I work come into daily conflict with the bosses."

A Militant Labor Forum on Saturday night entitled "Capitalism's World Disorder and the Prospects for Socialism in the Twenty-First Century" was given by Norton Sandler, a member of the national committee of the SWP.

Participants in the coal miners and UNITE fraction meetings also discussed the campaign to sell *Capitalism's World Disorder*. For the last four months communist workers have been working to get the book in the hands of fighters through individual sales, street tables, protest actions, on picket lines, and sales at plant gates.

Out of this work they get referred to get orders from bookstores, outlets, and libraries where fighters buy their books. Meeting participants voted to propose the campaign be extended until the end of February since the effort has proved useful in finding workers, farmers, and youth interested in the perspective of revolution.

It will also allow communist workers a chance to take advantage of the soon-to-be released Spanish-language and French-language editions of the book. This extended effort could incorporate distributing more widely Pathfinder's two newest titles about the Cuban revolution: *Making History* and the upcoming *Che Guevara Talks To Young People*.

Paul Cornish, a warehouse worker in a UNITE-organized distribution center and a member of the Young Socialists from Atlanta, described how he and other socialist workers had gone to the Teamsters Overnite picket line in Atlanta. Through political discussion and active follow-up they sold a copy of *Capitalism's World Disorder* to one of the pickets.

Cornish also described how socialist workers in Atlanta had participated in a recent fund-raising dinner by some farmers in Georgia who are planning a factfinding trip to Cuba in February. The farmers are also active in the fight against the racist discrimination of the United States Department of Agriculture that has forced thousands of farmers off their land. At the dinner they met a young Black woman who the next day came to the Pathfinder Bookstore. She bought *Capitalism's World Disorder* and is now attending some classes based on the book.

Declassified files expose Washington's routine massacres of civilians during Korean war

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Newly declassified U.S. government documents bring to light more information on the extent of the military attacks against Korean war refugees heading south into areas controlled by Washington.

The files detail the facts about orders given to U.S. military pilots to gun down civilians fleeing the war zone in the early months of Washington's 1950-53 war against Korea.

"Some people in white clothes were strafed three to four miles south of Yusong," an after-mission report by four U.S. squadron pilots noted on July 20, 1950. A spotter aircraft "said to fire on people in white clothes," the report stated.

Some of these pilots in recent interviews expressed concern about being ordered to machine-gun noncombatants. "We were concerned, very concerned," said an Air Force retiree, Herman Son. He said that it "was by no means clear on the surface who these people were." A report by pilots in Mr. Son's Fighter-Bomber Squadron said, "Leaflets should be dropped on them warning them to keep out of sight or that they will be strafed."

Following their victory over Japan in the second inter-imperialist world slaughter, Washington set up a puppet regime in the southern part of Korea in a deal with the government of Joseph Stalin in Moscow to divide the country. In the south Washington worked to suppress the revolutionary struggles of working people in the wake of the liberation of the country from Japanese colonial rule.

In the north, these struggles led to the breaking of the domination of the landlords, with land being distributed to tenant farmers and other rural toilers. The mines and other industrial centers were nationalized and the Democratic People's Republic was established in 1948.

Washington mobilized its armed forces in mid-1950 in response to the southward movement of Korean troops from the north and mobilizations of workers, peasants and youth who rose up against Korean landlords, usurers, capitalists, and their cops and political agents.

The justification of the targeting of refugees by Washington is that troops from the north, disguising themselves as peasants, had infiltrated the civilian movement southward.

Last September the Associated Press, based on interviews with ex-GIs, reported on the slaughter carried out by U.S. military forces at the No Gun Ri railroad bridge from July 26-29 1950. U.S. warplanes killed about 100 refugees and U.S. Army troops then killed about 300 more.

The Pentagon had no comment on the latest revelations. Spokesperson Kenneth



Right, students at June 2, 1995 protest against U.S. military forces in south Korea. Above, U.S. Marines advance in Korea after U.S. warplanes bomb hillside. For nearly 50 years the U.S. government and Seoul have tried to cover up the facts about the slaughter of civilians during Washington's war against the Korean people. U.S. saturation bombing resulted in the deaths of more than 3 million people on the Korean peninsula.



Bacon said they are still looking into the report on No Gun Ri and will decide later "if other incidents warrant further study."

For nearly 50 years Washington and Seoul had tried to cover up the facts about this carnage and other massacres carried out by U.S. forces against the people of Korea. Since the report about No Gun Ri was pub-

lished, the south Korean Defense Ministry has received petitions for investigation or compensation for at least 37 other such incidents.

"I want to ask the U.S. government why," said a survivor, Hong Won Ki, who is demanding an accounting from Washington for strafing and napalm attacks in which his par-

ents were killed. "It was clear that we were refugees." Many witnesses said that they had refrained from speaking out for decades because they feared reprisals from the south Korean military, which ruled the country until 1992.

In one assault U.S. pilots killed about 300 south Korean civilians on Jan. 20, 1951, at a cave where they had taken refuge in Youngchoon, 90 miles southeast of Seoul. Four planes dropped incendiary bombs near the cave's entrance, villagers said. Most of the inhabitants were suffocated by smoke. "People yelled and cried for their children," said survivor Cho Bong Won. Earlier that same week, another 300 south Korean refugees were killed by a U.S. air attack as they crammed into a storage house at the village of Doonpo, according to survivor Kim In Tae.

These incidents provide a glimpse of the scope of the devastation imposed by Washington on the people of Korea through the course of this war. The U.S. rulers conducted saturation bombing of northern cities, factories, and mines as well as many areas in the south, resulting in the deaths of 2 million north Korean civilians, 1 million civilians in the south, and 500,000 north Korean soldiers out of a total population of 30 million. Some 5.7 million U.S. troops were involved in the war and 54,000 were killed.

Despite this onslaught, Washington failed to win the war or achieve its goal of reversing the anticapitalist revolutions first in the northern part of Korea and then in China. The Korean peninsula remains divided to this day, with a massive U.S. military nuclear-armed force stationed in the south.

Socialist Workers candidate launches campaign for Oakland city council

BY JIMALTENBERG

OAKLAND—Omari Musa, a railroad worker and member of the United Transportation Union, has been placed on the ballot for the at-large seat on the Oakland City Council.

"I'm running for Oakland City Council to present to working people in Oakland and the Bay Area a socialist alternative to the slash-and-burn policies being carried out against workers and farmers by the ruling rich

and their governments from Oakland to Washington, D.C.," Musa told the *Militant*. "We bring to working people in Oakland the perspective of a revolutionary struggle by workers and farmers to form our own government," he said.

In the preceding days, supporters of the socialist campaign hit the streets in Oakland gathering more than 125 signatures, way above the 50 required to place Musa on the ballot for the March 7 election. Signers included a coworker of Musa's and several members of the International Association of Machinists at the Oakland airport.

Musa and a team of socialist campaigners joined a spirited rally of 450 youth demanding freedom for Mumia Abu-Jamal, a Black rights fighter and journalist facing the death penalty in Pennsylvania who was framed-up on charges of killing a Philadelphia cop. The socialist candidate also addressed the crowd.

While campaigning outside of a union meeting involving hundreds of Oakland teachers December 14, Musa learned of the school district's scheme to try to get teachers to accept layoffs of classroom support staff to finance a pay increase for teachers.

"There should be more teachers in the schools, not less. Class size should be sharply reduced. Support staff, including teacher aides, school psychologists, nurses, and others should be increased," Musa said.

Interest in a perspective of revolution

"We're getting a little taste of the interest workers and young people have when we present a perspective of revolution in response to the problems confronting us," Musa said after campaigning on a busy street in downtown Oakland.

Twenty-one people bought copies of the *Militant* there from two socialist campaign teams December 27 and 28.

Musa noted that the main questions people asked him were what his campaign has to say about the rapidly rising housing costs in the Bay Area, and the lack of jobs.

A young Black man the socialists met on the first day returned on the second for more discussion, and helped the team distribute campaign leaflets. Altogether 11 people signed up for more information on the socialist campaign.

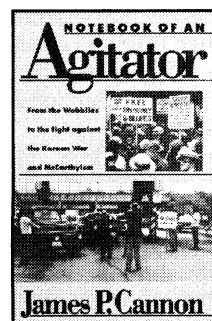
"We're seeing some important resistance to the bosses' attacks by workers and farmers in this country today," Musa explained. In Puerto Rico, a broad section of the population has stood up to the U.S. Navy and has at least temporarily forced it to halt its bombing of Vieques. Teamsters at Overnite Trucking are fighting hard for a union, while their fellow unionists at Basic Vegetable in King City, California, continue to confront cops and company thugs as their strike stretches into its sixth month.

Farmers who are Black are in the forefront of the struggles of working people today. Facing falling prices and soaring production costs that are squeezing all farmers, they are fighting to hold onto their land in the face of blatant discrimination by government and private lending agencies. Coal miners and others in the coal field communities have begun to hold meetings, protests, and strikes to push back moves to gut miners' health care and pensions, as well as hard-won improvement in safety in the mines.

"These struggles by workers and farmers increasingly overlap and reinforce each other," Musa said, "and fighters involved increasingly seek one another out to learn and figure out what to do next. These are some of the people who will be most attracted to the socialist campaign."

Campaign supporters are planning an active few weeks leading up to the March election, which will include campaigning on city street corners, factory gates, as well as high school and college campuses. A socialist campaign rally in Oakland featuring Musa is set for January 22.

Jim Altenberg is a member of the United Transportation Union.



from Pathfinder Notebook of an Agitator From the Wobblies to the Fight against the Korean War and McCarthyism

James P. Cannon

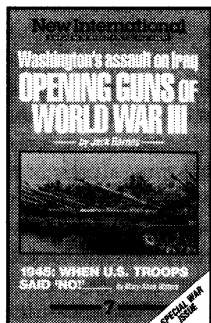
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Union activist at Caterpillar protests suspension

BY CAPPY KIDD

CHICAGO—The Caterpillar corporation suspended United Auto Workers (UAW) member Bill Wheat December 23, and is threatening him with termination.

Wheat was notified of this company attack while conducting a plant-gate collection for members of UAW Local 2036 in Henderson, Kentucky, who have been locked out by the Accuride corporation for 22 months.

Caterpillar claims Wheat threatened a boss on the plant floor over safety conditions in the factory.

On December 17, UAW member John Stein was injured while loading scrap steel into a railroad gondola at Caterpillar's LL Plant in East Peoria. Stein's arm was crushed when the load shifted and he died in surgery the next day.

The cause of death was listed as blood clots in the heart.

The following Monday, Wheat spoke with union officials in the plant, raising the need for an investigation by the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA). According to Wheat, he was confronted the

next day by the East Peoria vice president of Caterpillar, Jim Despain, who took issue with the health and safety T-shirt Wheat was wearing and told him, "This plant has an excellent safety record."

Wheat responded that he believed the injury was responsible for Stein's death. According to Wheat, Despain replied, "No, he died of a heart attack," and threatened Wheat with termination for his tone of voice and body language.

Leader of Blue Shirts

Bill Wheat has a long history as a militant union fighter. He is a founding member and central leader of the Tactical Response Team, also known as the Blue Shirts, which grew out of the struggles and strikes by the UAW against Caterpillar's antiunion drive over the past decade.

The Blue Shirts have continued to reach out to back other struggles of working people in the area.

In the two weeks prior to Wheat's suspension, they had helped to organize a Local 974 Christmas party in solidarity with a layer of workers at Caterpillar's Morton, Illinois, parts



Michael Reeser

"Illegally terminated" strikers from Caterpillar. Bill Wheat is in the third row, on the far left. Wheat is a leader of the Blue Shirts and active in building solidarity for workers in struggle elsewhere in the region. He is fighting suspension by Caterpillar, who "had it out for him for a long time," according to another union activist.

facility who are on a much lower second tier pay scale. They also organized to drive a load of presents to UAW Local 2036 in Kentucky and paid a solidarity visit to the Christmas dance of Local 1969 of the United Mine Workers of America in Girard, Illinois.

Fellow Cat worker and Blue Shirt Tom Smith said the suspension of Wheat is "a cheap shot by Despain. He has had it in for Bill for a long time."

Wheat said he has filed a grievance through

his union local, along with an unfair labor practice charge with the National Labor Relations Board, and a complaint with the human rights Division of the EEOC.

Messages of solidarity may be sent to UAW Local 974 at 3025 Springfield Road, East Peoria, IL 61611. Fax: (309) 694-3199.

Cappy Kidd is a member of the United Auto Workers Local 890 in Morton Grove, Illinois.

New York cops, FBI, raid building in Algerian's arrest

BY DOUG NELSON AND PETER THIERJUNG

NEW YORK — For three nights prior to December 30 a small plane circled low, menacing the predominately Muslim Midwood neighborhood here in Brooklyn, reported Tariq Khokhar, a Pakistani rights activist and resident.

Midwood residents also reported that federal agents were noticeable throughout the community for several days moving about in unmarked cars. The provocative cop presence caused concern and became the center of a discussion at a December 29 Rahmaddan service of 2,500 at the Makki Mosque. Khokhar and other community leaders called on residents to be vigilant.

On December 30, FBI agents and New York police orchestrated a massive operation that raided an apartment building here and led to the arrest of Abdel Ghani. The raid followed the December 14 arrest of Ahmed Ressay at the Canadian border near Seattle for allegedly bringing bomb materials into the United States. A criminal complaint accused Ghani of having "knowledge of a terrorist network of Algerian nationals" and of having a connection to Ressay.

Three others have been arrested since then on immigration charges while authorities attempt to link them to Ressay. Lucia Garofalo and an Algerian man were arrested December 19 in Vermont as they tried to enter the United States. On December 24, Abdelhakim Tizegha, another Algerian, was arrested in Bellvue, Washington, for an alleged illegal

border crossing a week earlier.

The most recent arrest here occurred on January 1, when Abdelwahib Hamdouche was picked up at Kennedy International Airport. He is being held by authorities without charges.

A January 3 hearing for Hamdouche before Federal Magistrate Judge Michael Dolinger to hear the complaint was held in secret. The judge refused a request by the *New York Times* to open the hearing and gave no explanation. Currently there are about 20 people in the United States, almost all Arab, who are being held in jail without charges on secret "evidence" stemming from arrests in previous years, according to the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee.

A worker who is Muslim in Midwood told

the *Militant* that the most recent arrests have had a chilling effect on the immigrant community.

"New Yorkers should condemn this injustice," Khokhar said. "This is straight harassment. There is no proof presented. The people in the community feel this is a fabrication."

"The issue here is not just an individual alone, but how they make the whole Muslim community the criminal," Khokhar explained. "It is the classic evil way of the media, how the media characterizes a whole community. I'm against this and I am protesting to the governor and the mayor not to destroy our personal character."

Khokhar reported that this assault on the Muslim community is not new and is part of an ongoing campaign by New York authori-

ties against Muslims. The community activist recalled past attacks on the Muslim community including the 1995 frame-up of Sheik Omar Abdel Rahman and nine others for the 1993 bombing of the World Trade Center under the seditious conspiracy statute. Rahman and the defendants were not convicted of a criminal act, but of "conspiring" to overthrow the US government. The case rested on false testimony by an informer who was paid \$1 million by the FBI. Rahman is in prison serving a life sentence.

Khokhar stressed that the American people need to know what the U.S. government is doing to Muslim people around the world. "The media doesn't let people know the truth. The truth will come out by our efforts," he said.

Anti-terror raids target rights in Canada

Continued from Page 1

Presse reported that an organization of Muslims held a press conference to respond to the "anti-terrorist" campaign being whipped up by Washington and Ottawa. Spokesperson Mostafa Ben Kirane denounced the moves as "hate propaganda being aimed at the whole Muslim community in Montreal."

Workers from the Middle East and of Arab origin at work sites around the city are also speaking out. A presser in a garment shop here who is Kurdish and a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Em-

ployees (UNITE) opposed the government moves by pointing out that since the beginning of the Kurdish movement for independence the Turkish government has labeled them terrorists.

The Canadian Arab Federation explained in a statement, "We are concerned with possible overreaction by authorities that could lead to a disregard for civil liberties. The Canadian Arab and Muslim community fears a repeat of the Gulf War experience when the community felt targeted and misrepresented."

The Communist League issued a statement

explaining that "the anti-Arab, anti-Muslim chauvinist campaign is aimed at dividing working people. It is part and parcel of the efforts of the ruling billionaire capitalist families that run the governments in Washington, Ottawa, and other imperialist capitals to increase the use of police powers against working people." These attacks, the statement says, are part of "their response to the increasing resistance of working people to the growing disorder of world capitalism."

Joanne Pritchard is a member of UNITE.

Basque fighter deported from Miami

BY RACHELE FRUIT

MIAMI—Ramon Aldasoro Magunacelaya, a fighter for the independence of the Basque country, was extradited from Miami to Spain the week of December 19.

The U.S. government's move came despite arguments by Aldasoro's federal public defenders that he faces possible torture while awaiting trial on frame-up charges in Spain. The Spanish government claims that Aldasoro aided in the killing of a retired Spanish air force general and two cops in a mortar attack on a civil guard's barracks in 1988, and that he is a member of the ETA (Basque Homeland and Liberty), which fights for the independence of the Basque country from Spain.

The Basque are an oppressed nation of about 3 million people who live in northern Spain and southern France. About 25 percent of the people in the Basque country, or Euskal Herria, speak Basque, although it is not recognized as an official language by either the French or Spanish governments.

Aldasoro was arrested on December 1, 1997, in Homestead, Florida, by the FBI's joint terrorism task force, working with the Spanish police agency Interpol and the U.S. State Department. He was imprisoned in Miami's Federal Detention Center until the extradition.

Defense attorneys explained that all of the Basque "witnesses" who initially implicated Aldasoro did so under torture and subsequently recanted their testimony. In 1998, federal judge James King in Miami ruled against extradition, agreeing that the evidence against Aldasoro was not credible. This ruling was overturned on appeals. This fall the U.S. Supreme Court declined to take the case.

In a letter to U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright seeking to block the extradition, defense lawyers said, "There is evidence of gross violations of the human rights of Basque detainees in Spain. A consistent pattern of violations justifies denial of extradition."

New International

The second assassination of Maurice Bishop

by Steve Carter



FBI ON TRIAL

The Victory in the Socialist Workers Party Suit against Government Spying

EDITED BY MARGARET JAYKO

The victory in the case fought from 1973 to 1987 "increases the space for politics, expands the de facto use of the Bill of Rights, increases the confidence of working people that you can be political and hold the deepest convictions against the government and it's your right to do so and act upon them" — from the introduction. \$17.95

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*

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Chechnya war intensifies, stakes mount

Continued from front page
signed a decree shielding the former president from criminal charges and granting him a lifetime pension, housing, bodyguards, and medical care for his family. Yeltsin will receive a pension equivalent to 75 percent of his salary, which was \$40,000.

The deal throws a little light on social relations in Russia, which after a decade of market “reforms” remains a workers state. Yeltsin has been a member of the ruling bureaucratic layer in the Soviet Union for all of his adult life. But he must still appeal to the state to provide health care, housing, and income in his retirement.

U.S. President William Clinton stated that Putin’s succession is “encouraging.” According to the *New York Times*, Clinton administration officials say the president elected in March might “negotiate with authority Washington’s proposal to modify the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty.”

“Russia has objected to changes,” the article went on, “that the United States wants to allow both nations to field national defenses against limited long-range missile attacks. Moving up the election could buy both sides three more months to resolve the dispute before next summer, when President Clinton is to decide whether to begin building a missile defense.”

Washington is pressing ahead with the development of a system designed to shoot incoming enemy missiles out of the sky. The deployment of such systems would give the Pentagon the ability to carry out a first nuclear strike while fending off a retaliatory attack.

Putin and other Russian officials have refused to bow to Washington’s demands for changes to the ABM treaty, recognizing that the Russian and Chinese workers states are the ultimate target of the new weapons systems.

Washington’s military preparations stem from the recognition by the U.S. rulers that capitalism will not be reintroduced into Rus-

sia by means of loans and investment alone, but will require military pressure, and ultimately, force.

Oil reserves are focus of conflicts

The major oil reserves that are already being exploited by the Russian government and some foreign oil companies in the regions of the Caspian sea and the Caucasus mountains have also whetted the appetite of the imperialist governments.

Moscow is a competitor for the exploitation of these reserves. Washington has concluded a deal to route a pipeline through Georgia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, and Turkey from the oil-rich Caspian sea. Meanwhile, Moscow is constructing a diversion of its current pipeline to bypass Chechnya, claiming that theft of the oil is common in the “lawless region.”

While Washington proceeds with its more confrontational course, it also entertains hopes that Putin and his allies may provide some openings for new inroads on the social and economic relations that prevail in Russia.

Following the December parliamentary elections, Clinton stated that his administration would not seek to block economic aid to Moscow. On December 28 the World Bank granted the country a \$100 million loan. “We support this disbursement of funds, which will be used to restructure the coal sector,” said a Clinton administration official. “It is fully consistent with the common objective of promoting market reforms in Russia.”

The money, in fact, is earmarked for closing down mines considered by capitalist concerns to be “inefficient.” Publicly, some of the funds are to be used for payments to miners who will be laid off in the 116 mines that Moscow has agreed to close.

Now attention is focused on a \$640 million loan to Russia, frozen by the International Monetary Fund in September amidst criticism of the war in Chechnya.

“He has been a prime reformer,” said U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright of Putin’s record. In a paper released last year Putin espouses his support for the kinds of “economic and political reforms” that Albright refers to. “How can we make the new market mechanisms work to full capacity?” he asks in the lengthy document.

Beyond the rhetoric, however, Putin lists statistics that indicate the deep crisis in the Russian economy. Russia’s Gross Domestic Product “nearly halved in the 1990s,” he writes, “and its [Gross National Product] is ten times smaller than in the USA and five times smaller than in China.... Productivity... is extremely

low.... It rose to well nigh the world average in the production of raw materials and electricity, but is 20-24 percent of the U.S. average in the other industries....

“This is the result of the consistently dwindling national investments.... And foreign investors are not in a hurry to contribute to the development of Russian industries. The overall volume of direct foreign investments in Russia amounts to barely \$11.5 billion. China received as much as \$43 billion in foreign investments.”

Putin reports that “the overall monetary incomes of the population, calculated by the UN methods, add up to less than 10 percent of the U.S. figure. Health and the average life span, the indicators that determine the quality of life [have] deteriorated.”

Most Russian politicians avow support for “reforms” and integration of the Russian economy into the world capitalist market. In his document, however, Putin hints at the social relations which have stymied attempts at the reintroduction of capitalism to date. “The majority of Russians are used to connecting improvements in their own condition more with the aid and support of the state and society than with their own efforts, initiative and flair for business. And it will take a long time for this habit to die.”

This “habit” is a legacy of changes wrought by the socialist revolution in Russia, which triumphed under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party in 1917.

Working people fight for social rights

Although the Stalinist regimes that held sway from the 1930s crushed the initiative of working people and rolled back many of their gains, they did not overturn nationalized property. And working people in Russia are determined to hold onto the social rights they have won—rights that stand in the way of the triumph of the “free market.”

Calling for “Russian renewal,” Putin states that the country “was and will remain a great power.... Russia needs a strong state power and must have it.” Putin is presently laying out his qualifications for the role of strongman ruler in the crisis-ridden country. In one statement he called for a 57 percent increase in military spending. He left no doubt of the importance he attaches to the offensive in Chechnya when he visited the front on his first full day as acting president. On his return to Moscow Putin said that “everything we have done so far has been justified.”

The Russian commanders themselves report that Moscow’s forces are facing stiff re-

sistance inside Grozny and in the south of the country.

“Our first real losses started when we entered Grozny,” 20-year-old private Aleksei Lyulin told reporters on January 1. He had previously been stationed in Alkhan-Yurt to the west of the capital. Another private, Sergei Chigayev, said, “You can see from the way the villagers stare at us that they really don’t want us here.” Russian forces attacking Grozny behind heavy artillery fire and air strikes face ambushes and sniper fire. Official figures place the death toll at 10 a day. “Soldiers are killed by the dozen,” said one soldier, complaining that “we are hit by our own mortar fire.” Hospitals are “filling up fast with the wounded,” according to one report.

Moscow’s generals plan occupation

Larger-scale combat was also reported on January 3 when Chechen rebel forces launched an attack westward from Grozny to the towns of Alkhan-Kala and Alkhan-Yurt, occupied by Russian forces for a month. Two days later Chechen fighters attacked Russian troops in Grozny’s northern outskirts. After these kinds of clashes Russian soldiers point to the “fearlessness” of the city’s defenders. An Associated Press journalist reported, however, that “the Chechen offensive could be short-lived. The rebels in Grozny are reportedly short of ammunition.”

“The period of the Russian army’s triumphant march through Chechnya is over. A turning point in the second war in Chechnya is about to occur,” stated Chechen presidential administration chief Apti Batalov in a rare publicized statement of the Chechen forces. Moscow’s invasion has targeted not just the Chechen military forces but the official elected government of the territory, which has held sway since the defeat of the Russian offensive in 1995.

“After the operation is completed... a full army division will remain. A full brigade of Interior Ministry troops will ensure the maintenance of constitutional order on this part of Russian territory and border troops will seal the state border,” said Col. General Valery Manilov, a senior officer on the Russian General Staff on December 28.

The stiff resistance mounted by Chechen fighters may force the generals to redraw those plans. It also buys time for the erosion of the popular consensus in Russia that has so far allowed the war to proceed with little organized opposition. Vladimir Putin’s electoral prospects, and a great deal more besides, rest on the outcome of the fighting in Chechnya.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

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Prospects for Socialism in the 21st Century. Speaker: Jake Perasso, Young Socialists. Fri., Jan. 14, 7 p.m. 1223 N. Milwaukee Ave. Donation: \$4. Tel: (773) 342-1780.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

What’s Behind U.S. anti-China Campaign and the Targeting of Wen Ho Lee? Fri., Jan. 14, 7:30 p.m. *Pathfinder Bookstore, Codman Square, 683 Washington St., Dorchester.* Donation: \$4. Tel: (617) 282-2254.

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U.S. Navy Out of Vieques! Independence for Puerto Rico! Speaker: Jeff Hamill, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Jan. 14, 7:30 p.m. 2533 16th Ave. South. Donation: \$4. Tel: (206) 323-1755.

BRITAIN

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'Developing' nations will never become industrial powers

The excerpt below is taken from "So far from God, so close to Orange County," a report given at a regional socialist educational conference held in Los Angeles, California, over the 1994-95 New Year's weekend. The report was discussed and adopted by delegates to the SWP's 38th National Convention, held July 8-12, 1995, in Oberlin, Ohio. The entire talk 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 biggest nightmare in Latin America is not what President [Ernesto] Zedillo in Mexico, or President [Fernando Henrique] Cardoso in Brazil, or President [Carlos] Menem in Argentina have been waking up to in recent days. The real nightmare is the economic and social reality that hundreds of millions of workers and peasants wake up to each and every morning. Actual nightmares, of course, are unpredictable, chaotic. But the

from the pages of Capitalism's World Disorder

one unfolding across the Americas and elsewhere is not born of chaos. It is the product of the lawful, predictable, irreversible, and unreformable inner workings—the "value relations"—of the world capitalist system.

No Third World country can or will develop today into an economically advanced industrial power with the class structure of the United States, Canada, the countries of Western Europe, Japan, Australia, or New Zealand. No new centers of world finance capital are going to emerge. That has been settled by history. That is one of the great lessons of the twentieth century. It hasn't changed since Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin summed up the scientific conclusion of the communist workers movement seventy-five years ago. The imperialist world, Lenin said, has been "divided into a large number of oppressed nations and an insignificant number of oppressor nations, the latter possessing colossal wealth and powerful armed forces."

It must have seemed unbelievable to many people when Lenin, Leon Trotsky, and other leaders of the Soviet Communist Party and Communist International insisted on this conclusion at the time. After all, it had not been true for that long. It had not been true in the previous century. Only seventy-five years before Lenin spoke those words in 1920, Germany was still one of the most economically backward regions in Europe; it wasn't even a united nation-state at the time. And even just a decade or so prior to the turn of the century, no one could have accurately predicted that coal- and oil-poor Japan—just beginning to emerge from feudalism—would soon develop into an imperialist power, while Argentina would end up among the oppressed not the oppressor nations in the world.

More, not less dependent

Since the consolidation of imperialism at the opening of this century, every action by finance capital in relation to the more economically backward countries ends up further warping the economies of the colonial or semicolonial countries. That is the effect of every bank loan to their ruling classes; every investment in landed, industrial, and commercial capital; every purchase of bonds issued by a semicolonial administration; every trade pact; every scheme to peg the value of weaker currencies to stronger ones. Every one of these moves makes the oppressed nations of Latin America, Asia, and Africa more, not less, dependent on capital, technology, and imports from the imperialist nations. Their currencies are ever more reliant on, and vulnerable to, the U.S. dollar, the British pound, the German mark, the French franc, or the Japanese yen.

Capitalist classes do arise in these countries, and they do come into conflict with

the imperialist overlords over division of the surplus value produced by the peasants and workers. But the national bourgeoisies are ultimately too weak to come out on top in these conflicts, short of the kind of working-class and peasant mobilizations that would threaten the privileged classes' own wealth and power in the process. That is why as long as the bourgeoisie remains in power in a semicolonial country, national sovereignty cannot be achieved.

When you read or hear the terms "developing countries" or "emerging economies," be sure to notice the "-ing" on the end of the adjectives—"develop-*ing*," "emerg-*ing*." That is the tip-off that not one of these "developing" countries has developed into an advanced industrial power in the twentieth century. Not one "emerging" economy has emerged from bondage to the big banks and strong currencies of the ruling families of finance capital. Emerging forever; emerged...never. Not one.

It is not surprising, in face of this reality, that many workers and young people initially conclude that the deepening crisis that surrounds them must be a symptom of chaos. Everything seems to be out of control. Everything seems unpredictable.

Others suppose there must be a conspiracy. I am sure all of us will be talking to workers over the next few weeks who will tell us something to this effect: "I didn't expect miracles in Mexico, but I thought things were getting a little better. I thought there would be some progress. What happened? How could it be so sudden? There must have been some kind of a plot."

That is not an unreasonable assumption. Workers know from bitter experience that the employers and their politicians scheme and plot all the time. They scheme to cut wages and extend the workday. They plan ways to cut social programs the working class has fought for and won to the benefit of all. They are always cheating on the edges; they are always plotting to one degree or another. They lie as a matter of course. And workers learn never to trust them.

Workings of capitalism

But no plot is necessary to explain what is happening in Mexico—or in Orange County either, for that matter. Nor is what is happening chaotic. It is the outcome of the lawful workings of capitalism in the imperialist epoch. It can all be understood and explained to other workers. Our point—the point of the politically conscious vanguard of the working class—is not that something *didn't* work, but that this is *how* it works.

Capitalism by its very laws of motion operates to take tools and land away from working farmers and other small producers. It operates to amass the wealth produced by the toiling majority in the hands of the propertied minority. It operates to produce and reproduce not only commodities and the profits from their sale, but also the entire class structure and social relations of subordination that make this system of exploitation possible.

As I was leaving to catch the plane to come out here this morning, a comrade in New York handed me a copy of Lenin's *Imperialism*. He urged me to reread it during the flight. Given what had begun happening in Mexico, he said, I was bound to find something useful in preparing for this meeting. He was right.

When Lenin used the term "imperialism"—and Marxists still use the term the same way—he was not just speaking in a political and military sense about the aggression and oppression imposed by the rulers of a handful of wealthy and powerful nation-states on colonial peoples. He was not just referring to the colonial system and related forms of semicolonial exploitation. That is a permanent aspect of imperialism, but Lenin was referring to something more fundamental.

Imperialism, Lenin explained, is the final stage of capitalism. He described its features. Reading *Imperialism*, I discovered once again, is well worth the effort. The chapter that struck me in a new way this time is the one entitled, "The Parasitism and Decay of Capitalism."

Lenin wrote the booklet in 1916, just a year before the Russian revolution. At that stage in the development of world capitalism, he explained, "The income of the bondholders is *five times greater* than the income obtained from the foreign trade of the greatest 'trading' country in the world [Britain].



Demonstration in Jujuy province of Argentina in May 1997, supporting unemployed workers leading occupation of highway. Rebellions exploded around Argentina that year demanding jobs, unemployment benefits, housing, and health care. The same combativity surfaced in a number of struggles during 1999. In a world "divided into a large number of oppressed nations and an insignificant number of oppressor nations," Argentina is one of those countries "emerging forever; emerged... never."

"This," Lenin said, "is the essence of imperialism and imperialist parasitism."

For that reason, Lenin added, Marxists should not object to those at the time—including some bourgeois commentators—who had begun to refer to the major capitalist industrial powers of the day as "rentier states" or "usurer states." The rival imperialist powers remain industrial giants and fight over markets for their exports, Lenin said. But at the same time, "The world has become divided into a handful of usurer states on the one side, and a vast majority of debtor states on the other."

Since Lenin's time, of course, the absolute increase in the industrial output and exports of manufactured goods by the imperialist powers has been enormous. But Lenin would not have been at all surprised by the even greater relative increase, especially over the past two decades, in the income capitalists derive from interest, dividends, commissions, royalties, and returns on a widening range of paper securities—what Marx called "fictitious capital."

Lenin would not have been surprised that the world's quantity of bonds, stocks, and other paper values since 1980 has grown two and a half times faster than the national income of the major imperialist countries, and that the volume of trade in these securities has accelerated even more. He would not have been surprised that international sales and purchases of U.S. Treasury bonds alone shot up from \$30 billion in 1983 to \$500 billion in 1993, nor that the ratio of international currency transactions to world trade in actual industrial and agricultural goods rose from 10 to 1 in 1983 to 60 to 1 in 1992.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



January 17, 1975

St. Louis—The fourteenth national convention of the Young Socialist Alliance, which met here Dec. 28-Jan. 1, signaled a major turning point for the YSA.

The delegates voted unanimously to throw the YSA's forces into a nationwide campaign against the racist attempts to block school desegregation in Boston.

A determined fight to defend the rights of Black youth to an equal education, YSA leaders asserted, has the potential to galvanize the student movement. It can initiate a dynamic new civil rights movement of the 1970s, whose logic will point toward challenging the very foundation of racism: the capitalist system itself.

Another element in the excitement and enthusiasm that pervaded the convention sessions was the YSA's confrontation with the FBI.

In the weeks before the convention, news media throughout the country and especially in St. Louis followed the YSA's court battle to bar FBI surveillance of the convention.

The FBI won an eleventh-hour delay in complying with a court order against its surveillance, pending a decision on the entire suit filed by the YSA and SWP against government harassment.

Nevertheless, convention participants felt the fight had done a lot to expose the ille-

Nor would Lenin have been at all surprised by the much-talked-about proliferation of "derivatives" on Wall Street in recent years—basically, bets placed on the future rise or decline in the prices of stocks, bonds, or other pieces of paper—whose total value has now reached some \$20 trillion. In fact, he would remind us that such speculative devices always become necessary to the capitalist rentier class at a certain point. When the total yield from their bonds goes down, they always attempt to float new kinds of paper that turn a heftier profit.

Yes, bonds are just pieces of paper. But as long as capitalism exists, they are the most important pieces of paper in the social world. And if you want to know what happens when you do not show the bondholders the proper respect, just ask the Mexican bourgeoisie or the officials of Orange County!

"The creditor is more permanently attached to the debtor than the seller is to the buyer," Lenin approvingly cites that assessment from a book on British imperialism by a bourgeois writer. And it remains true today.

1. V.I. Lenin, "Report of the Commission on the National and Colonial Questions" to the Second Congress of the Communist International, July 26, 1920, in *Collected Works*, vol. 31, p. 240 (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1966). It can also be found in Pathfinder's *Workers of the World and Oppressed Peoples, Unite! Proceedings and Documents of the Second Congress, 1920*, vol. 1, p. 212.

gal repressive actions of the government, and laid the basis for winning even broader



support for civil liberties in the future.

January 16, 1950

Probing for a vital spot in the mine owners' solid front, the coal miners on Jan. 9 began striking at the "captive" pits of the major steel companies which have been the main hold-outs in the seven-month battle of the United Mine Workers for a new and improved contract.

In spite of their magnificent solidarity and militancy, the miners so far have failed to make any significant breach in the operators line. They are now concentrating on the steel companies, which are operating at close to capacity, in hope they can force a settlement before their depleted resources reach exhaustion.

The long struggle appears headed for a show-down. The mine owners, backed by the whole capitalist class and government, are plainly seeking to impose a crushing defeat on the coal miners.

Time and again in the past decade the miners have pioneered far-reaching demands, like company-financed pensions, which have inspired the struggles of other sections of labor. Time and again their militant methods have won gains that have spurred the rest of labor to action. Above all the miners have relied on their own strength rather than on the government for their gains.

Government targets rights

While all the hype around Y2K disasters has faded fast, Washington's campaign around "terrorist threats" has not.

Leading up to the turning of the clocks into the new millennium, Washington issued a number of "worldwide terrorism warnings" as it beefed up the cops at its border. The arrest of several individuals who were originally from Algeria fits in with the rulers' drive against immigrants, and its slander of toilers who hail from parts of the world where Islam is a leading religious belief.

Pakistani rights activist Tariq Khokhar is absolutely correct when he points out, "The issue here is not just an individual alone, but how they make the whole Muslim community the criminal."

In the name of combating "Islamic terrorism" the U.S. rulers and their cops show utter contempt for established legal and civil rights. Slander, innuendo, paid informers—all have been used in the absence of evidence.

Some are being arrested for visa violations and then charged in the media with being part of an international terrorist network. The rulers want us to assume those rounded up and arrested are guilty who must prove their innocence. But you're innocent, innocent, innocent—unless they can prove you're guilty.

When Abdelwahib Hamdouche was picked up at Kennedy Airport on New Years Day, the judge ordered that the complaint against him be held in secret. This is part of an increased use by the government of secret trials and secret evidence. Some 20 individuals remain incarcerated in U.S. prisons without even knowing what they are being charged with.

The arrest and imprisonment without bail of the Taiwanese-born scientist, Wen Ho Lee, is another govern-

ment frame-up that should be condemned. Lee is essentially accused of downloading classified information from government computers while being of Chinese descent. The campaign against Lee fits into Washington's increased economic and military drive against the Chinese workers state.

Despite Washington's anti-terrorism hype, it is the biggest source of state organized terrorism in the world today—from the bombing of Iraq, which continues to this day; to the recent bombardment of Yugoslavia; to the decades-long economic embargo of Cuba.

The rulers are probing and setting the stage for deeper attacks in the future against workers and farmers resisting the growing disorder of capitalism. They hope to foster the belief that the government should curtail democratic rights in order to protect "us" in the United States against "them."

The raids conducted in Montreal and Brooklyn and the calculated propaganda offensive over the new year are designed to intimidate us. But such campaigns do not necessarily have the intended effect, as evidenced by those who have spoken out in protest against them. Working people, including those who are immigrants, are not inclined to allow themselves to be cast as outlaws.

The labor movement needs to take a stand alongside these allies to help organize them in political action. This is the road forward toward overcoming the divisions fostered by the rulers that weaken our ranks. "We" is working people the world over who are exploited and oppressed by "them"—the billionaire ruling families who are driving against our rights at home and toward more military assaults abroad.

Support farmers march

The January 17 march in Atlanta affords unionists and fighting farmers the opportunity to strengthen alliances, step up the heat on the federal government on the consent decree, and highlight the crisis facing working farmers today.

Reports in these pages over past several months help bring out the facts about the devastating crisis farmers face today. With falling prices paid by the grain and food monopolies for the products of farmers' labor—including hogs, milk, wheat, cranberries, and more—farmers are being driven more deeply into debt slavery. The story of the three farmers in New Jersey told in this issue is not unusual: they faced the added strike against them of sex discrimination in obtaining loans needed to keep their farm operations going.

A product of the farm crisis is the decisions by some farmers to fight back, thus helping to forge an important

ally for the continuing strikes and actions by workers and their unions resisting assaults today. When a wave of farmers struggles rose in the 1980s the labor movement was in serious retreat, unable to reach out and reinforce the farmers' battles in a common struggle against the corporations and their government.

Many farmers, and workers as well, have learned of and been inspired by the struggle waged by farmers against racist discrimination at the hands of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. While facing the same squeeze all farmers do, farmers who are Black have to battle practices aimed at driving them off their land in even greater numbers.

Utilizing the coming weeks to get out the word about the January 17 march, and another planned for February in Washington, D.C., is a way to concretely strengthen all our struggles.

An awesome achievement

Congratulations and celebrations are in order! *Militant* readers have been following with keen interest the progress of the Pathfinder reprint volunteers. The disciplined and collective work that made possible meeting the Scan2000 goal on time deserves a working-class salute.

The completion of Scan2000 releases their labor power and skills for formatting and other work. Having achieved this milestone this volunteer brigade is setting its sights on the next one. In the same month that Scan2000 was brought home the "digitizers" turned over 8 complete books—a huge step towards their aim of producing 10 a month, and grounds for confidence they will make it.

This work represents an immense contribution of time, energy, and funds. It is driven by the political commitment and confidence of the individuals involved. They know deeply the irreplaceable value of the titles that Pathfinder produces and will produce as coming revolutionary struggles provide their own po-

litical and literacy acquisitions.

This is ongoing, long-term work of immense value to socialist workers around the world. As the garment workers and coal miners point out, the historic lessons of the struggles of working people contained in Pathfinder titles are an essential component of forging a communist leadership out of the struggles of worker and farmers.

Ensuring the continued and expanded distribution of these books for fighters around the world who want to discover the real history of the modern working-class movement and its communist vanguard is the goal of the Pathfinder volunteers. Their political consciousness, organization, and determination to make sure those who want to educate themselves to be prepared for the struggles of today and tomorrow can find the historical record distilled in the books and pamphlets published by Pathfinder Press is a real example to fighters everywhere.

We encourage any readers who feel they can contribute to this project in any way to contact the organizers, listed at the end of the news article starting on page one.

Keep fire on Washington

In his letter on the facing page, reader Steve Patt poses important questions for fighters: why is the U.S. government the number one enemy of working people? Is it possible to fight against capitalism in general without fighting against the capitalist government in the country where you live?

Supporters of the *Militant* and members of the Young Socialists and Socialist Workers Party mobilized in Seattle to discuss revolutionary politics with thousands of

DISCUSSION WITH OUR READERS

youth and workers who showed up because they are sick and tired of the normal functioning of the capitalist system. Many mistakenly believed that the demonstrations and actions offered a way to fight the brutalities that capitalism brings to the world.

The *Militant* sharply took on the reactionary, economic nationalist, pro-U.S. imperialist character of the events and their leadership—including union officials and liberal political figures. We sought to provide a revolutionary perspective to all who were interested, and found many who were.

There is a wealth of experience in the workers revolutionary movement to draw on concerning Patt's questions. V.I. Lenin, the central leader of the Bolshevik party that led tens of millions of workers, peasants, and soldiers in history's first socialist revolution, wrote in August 1917:

"The unheard-of horrors and miseries of the protracted war are making the position of the masses unbearable and increasing their indignation. An international proletarian revolution is clearly rising. The question of its relation to the state is acquiring practical importance." This involves, he wrote, "the problem of elucidating to the masses what they will have to do for their liberation from the yoke of capitalism in the very near future."

Not only must the existing capitalist state be shattered, wrote Lenin, but "the proletariat needs state power... both for the purpose of crushing the resistance of the exploiters and for the purpose of guiding the great mass of the population—the peasantry, the petty-bourgeoisie, the semi-proletarians—in the work of organizing a socialist economy."

These same questions were addressed in a similarly revolutionary fashion in a speech by José Ramón Balaguer to an international workshop on "Socialism on the Threshold of the Twenty-First Century," held in Havana, Cuba, in 1997. Balaguer is a member of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party.

Balaguer argued that "socialism will not appear on the historical scene through a modernization of present society, but through a revolutionary transformation of its dominant structures. In this sense, the question of the seizure of power remains a basic requirement."

Until the victory in the Russian revolution every state functioned as the instrument of the minority ruling class to defend its interests against the majority. The capitalist state in Washington defends the interests of the tiny handful of billionaire families that rule the United States. The government acts as the executive committee of this brutal ruling class, rather than as the handservant of the social system of capitalism in general, as Patt states.

It was a mark of the anti-WTO actions that U.S. President William Clinton could come to Seattle and not find a single protest against any aspect of the assault his administration has carried out—either at home or abroad. Instead, he was able to trumpet the protests' demands against child labor, destruction of the environment, and for labor laws in other countries, and turn them to Washington's advantage against the governments in the semi-colonial world and workers states.

Washington is the chief world cop of capitalism; U.S. imperialism is the most brutal, exploitative, and oppressive power humanity has ever seen. Its record is literally unrivaled from its wars of annexation, to two inter-imperialist world wars, to the more recent assaults against the peoples of Iraq and Yugoslavia.

But this enormous center of capitalism has also brought into being the most potentially powerful working class in the world, that, together with proletarians in rural areas, can mount a revolutionary struggle where fighters in their tens of millions can take power out of the hands of the ruling rich and, as Lenin explained, guide the great mass of the population to abolish capitalism and join the worldwide struggle for socialism.

Tens of thousands of those in the streets of Seattle, including much of the trade union officialdom sponsoring the nationalist actions, were—verbally at least—in favor of struggles against the evils that abound today and for measures such as canceling the third world debt, a shorter workweek, or a substantial increase in the minimum wage. But for vanguard fighters and young people being drawn toward the working class today such important demands need to be linked to a revolutionary perspective.

—GREG MCCARTAN

Overnite strikers rally in Atlanta to demand union recognition

Supporters of the *Militant* are contributing weekly updates on the strike by drivers and dock workers at Overnite Transportation, the largest nonunion trucking company in the United States. The walkout began in Memphis, Tenn., October 24 and involves some 2,000 workers across the country. We encourage weekly updates from strikers and their supporters in as many areas as possible in order to present an up-to-date assessment of this fight to the broadest possible number of workers, farmers, and youth. Notes and articles can be sent to the *Militant* at 410 West St., New York, NY 10014; by fax to (212) 924-6040; or e-mail to TheMilitant@compuserve.com. Please include your union or school identification if possible.

BY DON PANE

ATLANTA—One hundred and fifty strikers and their supporters at Overnite Transportation rallied at the company's terminal here Dec. 21 to demand the company recognize the Teamsters as their union and to negotiate a contract. Drivers and dock workers here voted in their majority for the Teamsters five years ago, but the bosses have refused to negotiate with the workers

and their union.

As has become a feature of the picket lines around the country, Teamster members from other trucking companies joined the rally and picket line. Sandra Collier is a member of Teamster Local 728 and works at Roadway as a relay driver in Atlanta. From 1990 until June of this year, Collier worked for a nonunion outfit driving trucks across the 48 states and Canada.

"I'm here to show my support to the union cause," Collier said. "I know what it means to drive nonunion. A union contract with higher wages makes it possible to take time off. When I drove nonunion it was paid by the mile. It was very unsafe. We got paid a pittance for loading and unloading. It was enforced servitude. The union contract allows us more time at home and enough wages for me to buy a house."

A delegation of several religious officials led by Tim McDonald, President of Concerned Black Clergy, walked onto company property. After asking to speak with the company representatives they met with the service center manager. McDonald spoke to the rally after the meeting and said the manager was sympathetic to the strikers' cause.

Karl Bryant, a worker at Overnite for 20 years, said after the rally that the strikers are



Militant/Don Pane

December 21 in Atlanta, around 150 striking Teamsters union members and their supporters marched and rallied in support of their demand that the company recognize the union. The strike began October 24 and involves 2,000 workers across the country.

"here for the long haul. I'm not going back in until we get a contract. Five years ago we voted in the union and the company put us on hold. I'll be here on the picket line until we get a contract."

BY CAPPY KIDD

BEDFORD PARK—"Overnite's freight is

drying up," said Gordy, a striker at the Overnite depot here outside Chicago. "There is a lot of activity as far as trucks going in and out, but they are mostly empty. We followed one scab truck that left here the other day. It drove around for seven and a half hours without making any stops."

"Our ambulatory pickets are having an impact," he said. "We'll send a couple of guys to patrol an area. When they spot an Overnite truck in a loading dock, they go in and talk to the shipping clerk. They explain our rights to picket that truck while it's in their loading dock. Once we set up an ambulatory picket, no other union carriers will cross our picket line. They drive right by."

Gordy explained that some "companies have said right there, 'We don't want any problems.' They don't want to get backed up before Christmas. We don't tell the customer not to ship with Overnite. That would be illegal. We do let them know that it's their decision, but they could face a picket line."

"The hub in South Holland, Illinois, is not doing much work," he said. "It is a bulk freight interchange."

At the Bedford Park depot the company had maintained sixty-five local routes, but now two-thirds of the drivers are out on strike. "The younger and older drivers are bonding on the picket line and getting stronger," Gordy said. "Sears Merchandise is sending in trucks to pick up freight at the Overnite loading docks. They are the biggest offender crossing our picket lines."

SabreTech found guilty of violating hazardous materials regulations

BY RACHELE FRUIT

MIAMI—In the first criminal conviction related to a U.S. airline disaster, a Miami jury on December 6 found maintenance contractor SabreTech guilty of recklessly violating hazardous materials regulations and failing to properly train workers in the May 1996 crash of ValuJet 592.

The jury, however, exonerated the company on charges of conspiracy, making false statements, and willingly violating hazardous materials regulations, and acquitted two former SabreTech employees of all charges.

SabreTech handled the oxygen canisters that are believed to have ignited the fire

that caused the Everglades crash, which killed all 110 passengers and crew.

The jury found SabreTech's former mechanic, Eugene Florence, not guilty of one count of conspiracy and two counts of making false statements; Daniel Gonzalez not guilty of one count each of conspiracy and making false statements; and SabreTech not guilty of 14 counts of conspiracy, making false statements, and willfully violating hazardous materials regulations.

The jury found SabreTech guilty of eight counts of recklessly causing the transportation of hazardous materials in violation of federal regulations and one count of failing

to properly train its employees in hazardous materials. Each count carries a penalty of up to \$500,000, for a possible fine of \$4.5 million for the now-defunct company.

SabreTech separately faces state charges, including 110 counts of third-degree murder, 110 counts of manslaughter, and one count of unlawful transportation of hazardous materials.

Jury forewoman Dorothy Alexander told the *Miami Herald* the jury found the individual defendants not guilty because they could find no evidence of intent to do wrong.

In defense of SabreTech, attorney Jane Moscovitz pointed to maintenance records of the 27-year-old DC-9 that show 45 mechanical problems in the five months preceding the crash, including 22 electrical ones and six auto-pilot failures, five of them during the plane's final week.

The 1996 crash highlighted the disregard of safety not only of the airline bosses, but of the government agency that is supposed to oversee them. Three internal reports by the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) just a few months before the disaster detailed a laundry list of problems, from the lack of structural inspections of aging aircraft, to the use of the wrong training manuals, to inadequate maintenance procedures.

In September 1996 the U.S. Department of Transportation cleared ValuJet to resume operations over the objections of the Association of Flight Attendants, which challenged the carrier's safety record.

The company, since renamed AirTran, has continued to fly despite further findings of major safety violations by the FAA.

Flight attendants picket Northwest Airlines across the country

BY MARY MARTIN

WASHINGTON, D.C.—Flight attendants at Northwest Airlines who are members of Teamsters Local 2000 held informational picketing at several airports across the country on December 15 to press their demands for a just contract. According to a union hot line message, the union members handed out thousands of flyers to travelers.

Flight attendants from Sun Country Airlines and workers at Northwest Airlines who are members of the International Association of Machinists joined the actions in some cities. The flight attendants, who are working under a contract which expired more

than three years ago, are fighting for improvements in working conditions, job protection measures, and pay and pensions.

Last August, some 70 percent of the flight attendants rejected a tentative agreement with Northwest Airlines. Northwest flight attendants do not have parity with their peers at other major U.S. airlines, ranking 17th in starting pay and 15th in pay after six years of service.

They can be forced to work up to 18-hour-duty days. The company has taken a hard-line stance against the flight attendants' demands, calling them "unrealistic" in letters sent to the flight attendants.

— LETTERS —

Main enemy of workers?

In its effort to distance itself from protesters in Seattle, the *Militant* erroneously describes the U.S. government as "the number one enemy of working people in this country." Surely it is capitalism itself which is the number one enemy of working people, not just in this country but the world over. The U.S. government did not create capitalism, it does not control capitalism, it is merely the hand servant of capitalism.

To be sure, making demands on ones' own government is generally the correct strategy. The WTO pro-

test, however, offered an opportunity for worldwide protests against capitalism itself, or at least its excesses. Why not support that segment of the protesters moving in the right direction, instead of merely denouncing those who aren't?

Steve Patt
Cupertino, California

Group needs literature

I am incarcerated in Southport Correctional Facility and I am writing for a free subscription to the *Militant*. This is a special housing unit in which we are all locked down 24 hours a day with the exception of one hour a day exercise

in a single-man dog cage these neozis call the yard. We are unable to earn prison wages as we are not allowed to work, and lack funds. We do have an informal study group in need of progressive literature and a subscription to the *Militant* would be of great help. Whether you are able to provide this or not, thank you for your time.

A prisoner
Pine City, New York

'Prisoner Resource List'

I retrieved your address from the "National Prisoner Resource List." Please send me a copy of your socialist newsletter. Let the record

show that if a fee is required for the requested material, please enclose the cost by way of a price list.

A prisoner
Cresatown, Maryland

Enjoy reading your paper

A partner of mine shares his copy but we are soon to move on. I'm 20 years of age and really enjoy reading the news and facts you publish.

A prisoner
Hagerstown, Maryland

Read a long time ago

I would like to know how am I to go about receiving your paper? I had the opportunity to read an ar-

ticle of yours once a long time ago and I have been trying to find the paper since. I hope you can and will help me. If you give discounts to prisoners would you inform me of it also?

A prisoner
Auburn, New York

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.

PRISONER SUBSCRIPTION FUND

The *Militant* offers reduced subscription rates to workers and farmers behind bars. A six-month subscription to the *Militant* costs \$6, and one year costs \$12. We send a free sample copy on request.

Contributions make these special rates possible for those who cannot afford regular rates. Please send your donation to: **Militant Prisoner Fund, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.**

As British rulers debate Ireland new space won in fight for freedom

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON—In a series of Christmas and New Year messages British ruling-class figures, capitalist politicians, and the big-business media have put forward assessments of the recent developments in Northern Ireland, in particular the establishment in December of a new executive for the Northern Ireland assembly.

Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Peter Mandelson said, "After 30 years of violence Northern Ireland now has an administration that represents all its people, an executive in which former enemies sit together to produce programs and policies to benefit all."

The *Irish Independent* editorialized that an "equitable settlement" has at last been found, registering "the futility of violence and the art of compromise." TV and radio chat shows featured round-table discussions and call-in shows on what the United Kingdom's head of state, Queen Elizabeth Windsor, described in her Christmas message as "the very welcome progress in Northern Ireland."

The executive, provided for under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement, includes leaders of all the main Northern Ireland political parties: the Loyalist forces that backed British rule, the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) and the Ulster Democratic Party (DUP); the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), which sought collaboration with British imperialism; and Sinn Féin, which fights for a free and united Ireland. The executive is allowed to make decisions on issues such as health, education, and housing.

What is known as the "Six Counties" remain part of the United Kingdom. Budgets and overall political boundaries continue to be set by the Westminster government, which in turn maintains control over all decisive questions such as army deployment and policing.

For over a year the pro-British UUP and DUP had blocked the establishment of the executive under the slogan of "no guns, no government." The Irish Republican Army (IRA), they insisted, would have to give up weapons before Sinn Féin would be admitted. Opponents of the Irish freedom struggle charge Sinn Féin with being the "political wing" of the IRA, a claim Sinn Féin denies.

The UUP dropped this demand at a November meeting of the Ulster Unionist council when 58 percent of the 829 members present voted in favor of joining the council



The RUC batoned protesters against the Loyal Orange Orders march off the Lower Ormeau Road last August. Resistance by fighters for Irish freedom has pushed back British rule and sharpened divisions among unionists.

amid public recriminations. In the face of public criticism by the UUP, the DUP continues to maintain its opposition, refusing to sit on the executive when Sinn Féin is present. It has also orchestrated protests by students against Martin McGuinness who was appointed minister of education.

Similar Unionist infighting has been in evidence in the face of demands by local residents to reroute rightist marches by the Orange Order and other sectarian organizations through Catholic neighborhoods. A protest of the rerouting of a march last July by the government-appointed Parades Commission fizzled when a small fraction of the 10,000 people expected turned out and Loyalist leaders divided among themselves over the action.

A bulwark of reaction

The future of the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC), a bulwark of reaction in the occupied north of Ireland, is an example of the ongoing struggle in Ireland.

As recently as three years ago, Loyalist mobilizations across the Six Counties, which included sealing off Belfast airport, were the foundation for violence against Catholics by the RUC to help force an Orange march down Garvaghy Road, which runs through the middle of a large Catholic

community.

This past September thousands of Orangemen turned out when the Parades Commission approved a similar march by the rightist Apprentice Boys targeting the Catholic area along Lower Ormeau Road in Belfast. Resistance by the residents to the march, and the violence used by the RUC to open the road for the Loyalists, simply fueled the fire of those campaigning for disbanding of the RUC.

Christopher Patten, chairman of the Independent Commission on Policing, issued a series of proposals that fall short of the demand by nationalist fighters for disbanding of the RUC. Patten is a former Tory government minister and the governor of Hong Kong who presided over lowering of the Union flag over the ex-British colony.

Patten's proposals are substantial, however. They include cutting the number of cops from 13,000 to 7,500; a change of name to Northern Ireland Police Service; an end to flying the Union flag over police stations and to the oath of allegiance to the Queen; the provision that officers wear their names on their uniforms; and the demilitarization of police stations. Patten also demands the closure of special detention centers for alleged terrorist suspects, famous for torture of Republican prisoners.

The shattering of the once-solid Ulster Unionist bloc upon which British rule over Northern Ireland has rested is an expression of the broader weakness of British imperialism faced not only with the continued resistance by Irish nationalists but also with sharpened competition from its imperialist rivals. This has put the traditional bipartisan approach to the Irish question under severe strain. A united response by the Labour and Conservative parties in Westminster greeted the establishment of the Northern Ireland executive.

But the Conservative Party leadership has, at various times over the last year, sharply rebuked the government with demands to halt the release of Republican prisoners. It has also forced a House of Commons division over alleged IRA violence and a delay in implementation of the Patten proposals on the RUC.

A debate among Tories has opened on Ireland, part of a broader crisis of the party. A number of newspapers associated with the Conservative Party right have warned against the logic of the measures being implemented. An editorial in the *Daily Telegraph* wrote of Patten's RUC recommendations: "Instead of being rewarded for holding the thin, rifle-green line in the face of tremendous adversity, the RUC is now effectively to be disbanded. Even by the tawdry standards of late imperial retreat this is a great betrayal."

Commenting on the road traveled by Martin McGuinness in taking his executive post, the *Telegraph's* Philip Johnston writes: "The only possible conclusion is that he believes that the ambitions of Irish republicans can be achieved by entering the democratic forum. He has good reason for holding this view: at every turn, it is the Unionists rather than Sinn Féin, who have had to compromise their position."

To guard its flank the Labour government had the Queen award the RUC the George Cross, the highest civilian medal for gallantry bestowed by the head of state. Meanwhile, Peter Mandelson, has held meetings with the Orange Order over its demand to parade down Garvaghy Road.

The government has also sought to make clear its commitment to defend British imperialist interests in Ireland by authorizing the surveillance and bugging of Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams during the negotiation process, and by insisting that British troops remain in the Six Counties indefinitely.

But army deployment is itself becoming part of the debate. Currently 15 percent of the UK's 102,400 soldiers are deployed in Northern Ireland. At the height of the imperialist assault on Yugoslavia last year, a further 47 percent was committed overseas, a post-war high. As Britain seeks to be a player in the European Union's projections for a 60,000 troop rapid reaction force, pressure is building to reduce an over-stretched commitment elsewhere.

In an end-of-year message to readers of *An Phoblacht/Republican News*, Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams wrote, "When this century began Britain had an Empire. As Empires go it could swagger about the planet as well or better than most other Empires. Now it swaggers no longer. The Empire is finished... Unionism as we have known it is finished."

"The face of Britain's involvement in Ireland as we have known it is finished also," the republican leader said. "Whether these changes amount to no more than the modernizing of British rule and as a consequence the modernizing of unionism is entirely dependent on whether we, *An Phoblacht* readers and others, are up to the challenges that are coming." Adams posed that the test "is whether we can establish in the opening decades of the next century the republic which was proclaimed at the beginning of this one. I think we can. I believe we can."

U.S. gov't decides to return boy to Cuba

BY GREG MCCARTAN

The U.S. Immigration and Naturalization Service announced January 5 "that Mr. Juan Gonzalez of Cuba has the sole legal authority to speak on behalf of his son Elián regarding Elián's immigration status in the United States."

INS Commission Doris Meissner said therefore "Elián should be reunited with his father."

Washington's decision comes some 40 days after the six-year-old boy was rescued at sea. Since then he has been a political hostage of the Clinton administration, used as one more avenue of aggression and slander against the Cuban revolution.

Elián was plucked from the ocean November 25 off the coast of Florida. He had been clinging to an inner tube for more than 24 hours. Elián was taken from Cuba by his mother who joined thirteen others in a doomed attempt to reach Florida. She was among the eleven people who drowned when the boat sank.

Although Elián's father, who, even according to the INS "had a close and continuous personal relationship with his son," and both sets of grand parents live in Cuba, Washington

spurned Gonzalez's request that Elián be returned. Instead, they turned over the boy to distant relatives in Miami, sparking weeks of anti-Cuba propaganda by capitalist politicians and the media.

Gonzalez appealed to the Cuba government for assistance. Through Havana's diplomatic stance and the daily mass mobilizations in Cuba, it was clear to Washington that the Cuban people would not back down in face of the provocation.

Militant reader Al Cappe reported in a letter to this paper that while visiting Cuba he witnessed "daily mobilizations of up to 300,000 people in Havana which grew to one of 2 million in 17 cities on December 10." The *New York Times* reported on a student-led march of tens of thousands January 3 in Santa Clara demanding Elián's return.

Washington has not swayed public opinion on the case, as polls indicate a majority in the United States thought the boy should be returned to his father and immediate family in Cuba. Opponents of the U.S. embargo of Cuba also organized a number of small demonstrations opposing the U.S. government stance. The U.S. National Council of Churches also

sent a delegation to Cuba. After meeting with Gonzalez council leader Joan Campbell said, "We are convinced more than we ever were that this boy belongs with his family in Cuba."

The Conference of Catholic Bishops of Cuba issued a statement stating that "the case can be resolved in accordance with the most strict right universally accepted, in which the boy's custody belongs to his parents and in the absence of one of them, to the surviving parent."

New York Newsday said State Department spokesperson James Rubin encouraged Gonzalez to travel to Miami to pick up his son, hinting that the Cuban government might not issue an exit visa.

Ricardo Alarcon, president of Cuba's National Assembly, said Gonzalez "should do whatever he wants. And we will help him. But if I were him I would ask, for what reason: to finally return the boy or to delay and delay?"

Newsday also reported an unidentified U.S. government official said one reason they would like to see Gonzalez come to Miami is to "ease the concerns among Cuban-Americans that he currently is not free to speak his

Continued on page 5