

# THE MILITANT

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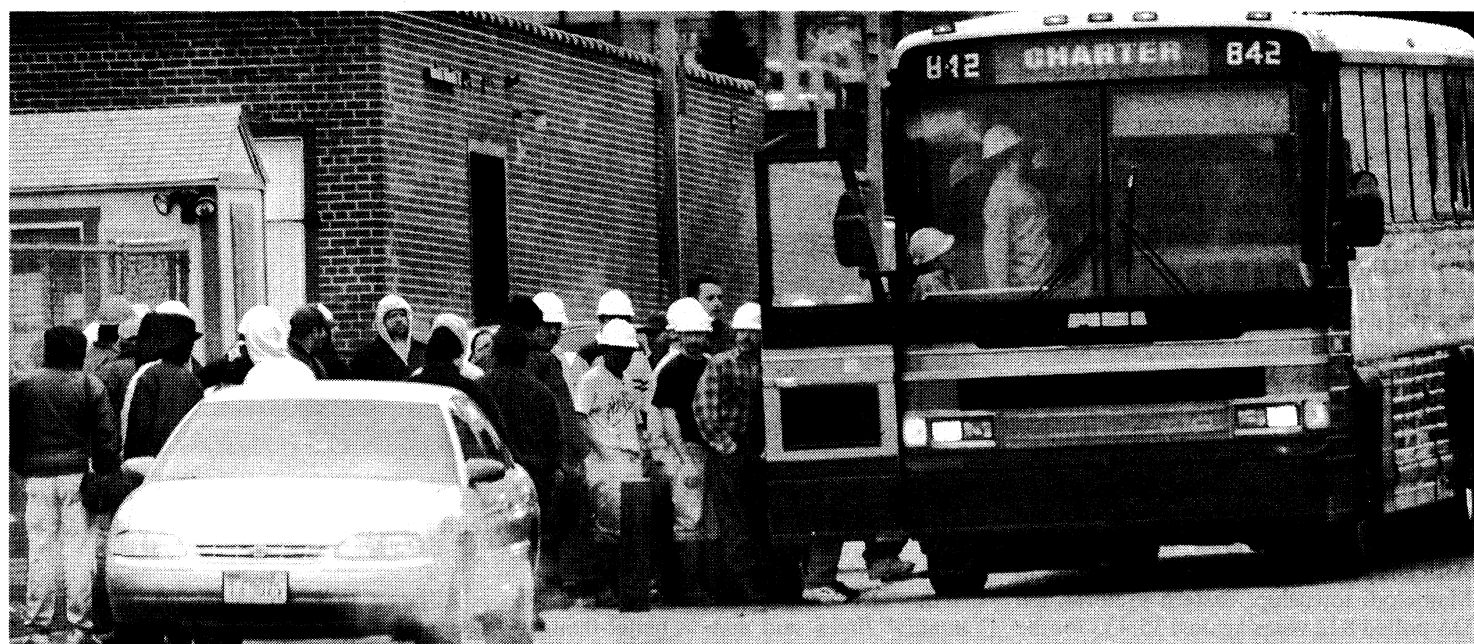
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 64/NO. 49 DECEMBER 25, 2000

## INS raid in Omaha targets meat packers' union drive

Union protests assault, workers organize against speedup



Omaha World-Herald/Phil Johnson

Workers being loaded on chartered buses after December 5 raid by INS agents, aided by Omaha cops and state troopers.

BY EDWIN FRUIT

DES MOINES, Iowa—Agents of the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and the U.S. Marshal's Service on December 5 raided Nebraska Beef Inc., a meatpacking plant where a union organizing drive is underway in Omaha, Nebraska. The agents surrounded the plant, shutting down operations, and herded workers into the cafeteria for an identification check. Two hundred immigrant workers suspected of being in the country without legal documen-

tation were arrested and bused to a facility in Council Bluffs, Iowa, where they were to be processed and then sent to INS holding jails in Texas for further deportation proceedings.

Nebraska Beef meat packers are among workers at several plants in the area attempting to organize into the United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW). The union has been working together with Omaha Together/One Community (OTOC) in this effort. Two days after the raid workers remaining at the plant walked off the line,

protesting line speed and understaffing.

The INS also arrested three managers and a recruiter for Nebraska Beef on charges of smuggling undocumented workers into the state and providing them with fake work documents.

This was apparently the first major raid in the Omaha area since 1997. Over the past several years, the INS, temporarily changed its tactics with "Operation Vanguard." Rather than arresting large groups of work-

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## Seattle newspaper strikers defend union

BY ERNEST MAILHOT

SEATTLE—On December 10, after two negotiating sessions in three days, talks between the striking members of the newspaper guild and the *Seattle Times* and *Seattle Post-Intelligencer* (P-I) broke off. Ron Judd, a union spokesman, said they had been "dealing with the same complete lack of good-faith bargaining for months" on the part of the company. The newspapers refused to schedule any further talks.

The striking newspaper workers oppose demands by the companies for a six-year contract with raises of \$3.30 an hour over the length of the contract. The union has countered with a call for \$3.25 an hour over three years. Communications Workers of America Local 7800 is also involved in the negotiations. They represent 80 composing room employees who are on strike as well. In addition, the drivers in Local 174 of the Teamsters are honoring the strike picket lines and have joined the picketing.

The Guild is made up of workers in the newsroom and the circulation and advertising departments. The *Times* and P-I have competing newsrooms but a joint operating agreement, with the *Times* responsible for production and distribution.

The owners of the *Times* and P-I have made clear they are out to force a substandard contract on the strikers that will weaken the Guild, the largest union at the papers, and send a message to the other unions. The Guild represents just under 1,000 workers at the two papers. Several other unions represent about 800 other workers. Most of these are not honoring the Guild's picket

lines.

Ralph Erickson, a negotiating committee member for the Guild, said the companies' threats to cut jobs if the strike goes on and their intransigence in the so-called negotiations have not weakened the strike. "It's not easy to be out," he said, "but we need to keep fighting for what we believe in. We have a lot of support around the country."

Before the strike Erickson was a circulation distribution adviser at the *Times*. He was glad to say that now he was helping to organize the distribution of the *Seattle Union Record*.

The *Record* is being put out three times a week by the strikers and has scooped the *Times* and P-I on more than one news and

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### Join special Pathfinder volunteer project

December 14 to 24, New York City

Volunteers are needed for an 11-day effort to take another step in facilitating the expanded sales and more efficient production of revolutionary books and pamphlets published by Pathfinder Press.

There will be mobilizations on the weekends of December 16-17 and 23-24; volunteers are needed during that week as well. There will be classes, forums, and social events, including a wind-up Christmas Eve banquet to celebrate completion of the effort.

If you are interested in joining this important project, please call a number in your area listed on page 12, or send an e-mail to nygd@usa.net. Further in-

formation is included in an article on this page.



## Pathfinder volunteer projects in full swing

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

As the *Militant* goes to press, supporters of Pathfinder have begun work on a project to transfer all inventory and financial records of the publishing house onto an Internet-based accounting program.

At the same time, the Pathfinder Reprint Project leadership is working with its indexing, formatting, graphics, and other teams to bring home a goal, set in July, to render into a print-ready digital form 30 more titles from Pathfinder's catalog by the end of the year.

Both projects aim to advance the ability of communist workers, Young Socialists, and other supporters of Pathfinder to efficiently produce and distribute as widely as possible the publishing house's revolutionary books and pamphlets. A key part of this effort is setting up a network and Internet-based computer system that can be used by a worldwide production team.

The first volunteers set to work at the Pathfinder building in New York December 14 at computer work stations are from Michigan, New York, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania in the United States, and Australia and Canada. They will be joined by many others through Christmas Eve when the project will be completed. A social is being planned for Saturday evening, December 16, and a combined celebration and holiday dinner December 24.

The data that has to be entered includes addresses and other details on all of Pathfinder's customers; the current inventory levels; and the basic title, author, price,

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## Forum discusses farm crisis and Cuba

BY ROMINA GREEN  
AND PAUL SILER

DES MOINES, Iowa—Two Midwest farmers discussed "the worldwide crisis of agriculture—from Iowa and Wisconsin to the United Kingdom and Cuba" at a Militant Labor Forum here December 2.

One speaker was Wisconsin dairy farmer Randy Jasper, who had just returned from a trip to the United Kingdom where he participated in a November 14 rally organized by farmers and truckers against soaring fuel prices. The other, Larry Ginter, is an Iowa hog farmer active in Iowa Citizens for Community Improvement and other struggles.

Ginter noted the national and international competition between agriculture-related corporations lies behind the economic squeeze on farmers, and workers as well. Jasper said that four companies now control 80 percent of cattle and hog slaughter, and three control 80 percent of grain production.

He noted that this trend toward consolidation of companies during the years of the Clinton administration is "going just as fast

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New Zealand fruit farmers protest low prices — page 12

# ANC keeps majority in South African municipal elections

BY T. J. FIGUEROA

PRETORIA, South Africa—Municipal elections took place across South Africa December 5. The poll was the fourth since universal suffrage was conquered in the battle to bring down the apartheid white-minority regime. Nonracial, democratic elections for the national government took place in 1994 and 1999, and a local government vote was held in 1995-96.

With virtually all the votes counted, the Independent Electoral Commission reported December 8 that the African National Congress (ANC) had emerged with 60 percent of the total vote.

The Democratic Alliance (DA) gained 23 percent of the votes and the Inkatha Freedom Party 9 percent, with the African Christian Democratic Party, United Democratic Movement, Pan Africanist Congress, and other smaller parties receiving the balance.

The ultraright fared dismally. In Pretoria, said to be a stronghold for parties such as the Freedom Front, a rightist coalition failed to win a single ward.

The ANC, the ruling party in the national government, will take control of the majority of local councils and five of six new metropolitan councils—Johannesburg, Tshwane (Pretoria), East Rand, Port Elizabeth, and Durban. The Democratic Alliance won a majority in the Cape Town council.

## End of apartheid-era town planning

This election marked the burial of the remnants of apartheid town planning, which divided the wealthy white cities and suburbs from working-class black townships and impoverished rural areas in terms of basic services such as water, electricity and sanitation. The number of municipal councils falls from 843 to 234. A number of district councils will now have powers over large areas surrounding cities such as Bloemfontein and East London.

In practice, this means another barrier has fallen for working people in black townships and rural areas to have access to basic services historically denied them.

The mostly white opposition parties, and "ratepayers' associations" in many areas, protested against the new demarcation, arguing that middle-class white areas should not have to "subsidize" townships and rural areas. They were overruled.

Such sentiment, however, crystallized in the vote for the Democratic Alliance—created by a merger of the Democratic Party, New National Party, and Freedom Alliance earlier this year. The merged entity acted as a lightning rod for resentment against the continuing deracialization of South Africa, in particular the fact that exclusive privileges for whites in employment, education, housing, and every other facet of life are coming to an end.

The DA campaigned against corruption and "crime," with an election poster that read, "Nail them and jail them." It also made much of a claim that it would provide free anti-retroviral drugs for people with AIDS in areas it won, attacking the position of the ANC-led government until recently that it would not provide such medication. They kept its opposition to affirmative action low-key.

The party drew support from a large number of so-called Coloreds—particularly in Cape Town—and Indians. A small number of Africans also cast their vote for the DA.

Claims by the Democratic Alliance, echoed in the big-business press worldwide, that the party's strength grew sharply among Africans are exaggerated. For example, in Mamelodi township, eastern Pretoria, the DA polled 822 votes against 35,433 for the ANC. In contrast, in the 28 mostly white wards the DA won in Pretoria, the ANC still managed to garner 23,653 votes.

"The ANC can no longer claim the mantle of credible change in the country...that must now go to the DA," crowed Democratic Alliance leader Tony Leon, a former propagandist in the apartheid military. The party's deputy leader and former head of the New National Party, Marthinus van Schalkwyk, claimed the results showed that the "liberation cycle" in South Africa would be much shorter than in other countries.



Militant/T. J. Figueroa

Members of the South African Municipal Workers Union march in Capetown, South Africa, May 27, 1996, to back the ANC, defend jobs, and to stand up for union rights.

In a December 8 editorial, London's *Financial Times* said that "a better-than-expected score for the opposition Democratic Alliance shows encouraging cracks. This is a welcome move towards a two-party democracy. The result should jolt the ruling African National Congress out of any complacency and provide encouragement to a hitherto fragmented opposition."

In contrast, Marco Granelli wrote in this city's major English-language daily, the *Pretoria News*, that "claims that the DA has made significant inroads into traditional ANC strongholds do not bear up to closer scrutiny." In contrast to Leon's assertion that the DA had secured a "foothold," Granelli said that "if anything, the party has managed to establish a 'toehold' in black townships."

The big-business press here presents a picture of declining voter numbers, which it said mark both apathy and a protest against the failure of the ANC to "deliver." In fact, while the percentage of the 18 million registered voters was lower than in both previous elections, it was almost exactly the same as that of the 1995-96 municipal election.

A common sentiment among African working people here is, "We will never vote for the party of our oppressors." Former ANC president Nelson Mandela told a rally of union members in Johannesburg on December 2, in reference to the Democratic

Alliance, that "no white party can run this country." He emphasized, "No matter how they cover up by getting a few black stooges, they remain the bosses ... they remain a white party."

It was noticeable, however, that many township residents stayed away from the voting booths. It is this fact that accounted for the increase for the DA of four or five percentage points in this poll compared to the total of its constituent parts last year.

## Decisive majority for ANC

At a victory celebration attended by several hundred people on December 7, ANC president Thabo Mbeki said, "The truth is that the ANC has won the votes of 60 percent of our people, a decisive majority achieved despite the complacency of many of our supporters." He added, "The ANC has achieved a popular victory in the face of a coordinated attack carried out by an unholy alliance of many parties, united by hatred for the ANC, rather than any commitment to serve the interests of the people."

Reiterating the ANC's commitment to providing basic economic services to the majority, Mbeki said, "By the positions they have taken in free and fair elections, the people have made the categorical statement that: they are opposed to the continued racial divisions and disparities in our country and stand for a nonracial South Africa."

## THE MILITANT

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# German rulers move to outlaw fascist party

BY CARL-ERIK ISACSSON

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—The fascist German National Democratic Party (NPD) organized a march of nearly 2,000 people through central Berlin November 25 to protest government plans to outlaw the party. They tried to portray themselves as victims of government repression, carrying placards such as “arguments instead of bans.” Originally the ultrarightists had planned to march through the Brandenburg Gate, once used for processions by Nazi soldiers. But city officials, pressured by mounting antifascist sentiments in the German capital, rerouted the march. This was the second march by fascists in Berlin in just a month.

The NPD march was escorted by police forces in riot gear that outnumbered the marchers who were mainly young men, with many skinheads participating.

Counterdemonstrations of some 3,000 people were held at the same time, including one at Berlin's City hall, which was backed by government politicians, labor unions, and the capital's Jewish community.

At Alexanderplatz, hundreds of antifascists blocked the way and refused to move, stopping the police-escorted fascist march. The police then broke up the march and put participants on trains out of the city.

As fascist violence has escalated this year in Germany, the social democratic coalition government is trying to take advantage of the political polarization to crack down on democratic rights. Their main move so far has been to ban the NPD. After a recommendation by 14 of 16 ministers for domestic affairs in the state governments in Germany, the upper house of parliament (Bundesrat) demanded the German constitutional court ban the NPD. The government hopes the lower house of parliament (Bundestag) will also back the demand.

On *Kristallnacht*, The Night of Broken Glass, on November 9, a march of 200,000 in central Berlin commemorated the victims of the Nazi pogrom of Jews in Germany on that day in 1938. The march was backed by unions, political parties, churches, the Jew-

ish community, and others.

Political space for the fascists in Germany has opened up more lately as Friedrich Merz, the leader of the parliamentary group of the conservative Christian Democratic Union/Christian Social Union (CDU/CSU), sparked a debate on “German lead culture” when he said that Muslims have to accept that women are seen as equals in Germany and that immigrants should not be allowed to build parallel communities with “other” norms and values than “German” ones.

The CDU/CSU minister of domestic affairs in Bavaria, Günther Beckstein, said in mid-November that “there should not be any minarets in Bavarian villages.” Edmund Stoiber, a CDU/CSU head of government in the state, said, “The multicultural society is hard, fast, cruel, and has very little loyalty.”

*Carl-Erik Isacsson is a member of the metal workers union in Södertälje, Sweden.*



More than 25,000 people demonstrate in Dusseldorf October 28 against racist attacks. As fascist violence has escalated over the past year, the German social democratic coalition government is trying to take advantage of the political polarization to crack down on democratic rights.

## Workers in Turkey conduct one-day strike

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Tens of thousands of workers conducted a one-day nationwide strike in Turkey on December 1 to protest rising unemployment, low wages, and cuts in social benefits that are part of an austerity package aimed at securing a new multibillion dollar loan from the International Monetary Fund. The loan is primarily aimed at ensuring that the Turkish government can continue to cover the interest payments on the nation's \$104 billion debt owed to banks in the imperialist centers.

Turkey, a country that straddles southeastern Europe and southwestern Asia, has a population of 65 million people.

The BBC News reported that a large demonstration took place in the center of the capital, Ankara, with protesters carrying banners criticizing the government and the IMF. Government employees participated in the work stoppage, even though they are banned from striking. Trains stopped operating and hospitals provided only emergency care.

The trade unions were protesting the inadequate 10 percent raise the government promised to public employees for the first half of 2001. Inflation in the country is running at about 44 percent for the year. Several days later some 265 workers at the Cayeli copper-zinc mine in the country walked off the job after contract talks collapsed.

The protest actions by workers came in the midst of a financial crisis that brought the country to the brink of economic collapse. A string of bank failures during the last two weeks of November impelled key interest rates to more than 1000 percent. The stock market lost 40 percent of its value. On the day of the nationwide strike, shares fell by 9 percent. For the year the market has lost more than 60 percent of its value. Eleven of the country's 81 banks have been placed in receivership over the past year.

### Capitalists drain national reserves

Capitalists from abroad with investments in the country rushed to sell their Turkish assets in a panic that started on November 17. They withdrew \$6.2 billion from the country, leading to surging interest rates and a further drain on the nation's monetary reserves.

Hoping to stem the economic slide, the International Monetary Fund announced on December 6 a \$10 billion financial package for Turkey. This includes a new \$7.5 billion in emergency loans as well as nearly \$3 billion available under previous IMF agreements, withheld by the imperialists because of Ankara's inability to fully implement the austerity measures demanded. This latest 11-month IMF package is Turkey's 17th

such arrangement with the IMF

The loan is being made available on the condition that the Turkish government speed up its plans for privatizing its telephone, airline, and electrical services. According to an article in the *Financial Times*, Ankara must announce plans by December 15 for privatizing 33.5 percent of Türk Telekom, the telecommunications giant valued at \$10 billion. It must also sell off a 51 percent stake in Turkish airlines, the national carrier worth around \$1 billion. Parliament is expected to also pass a law paving the way for the privatization of the electricity sector by the end of January, 2001. If these conditions are met, IMF officials said that the first installment on this loan will be turned over to Ankara.

A December 7 *Financial Times* article entitled “IMF optimistic Turks have learned

lesson from scale of danger,” quotes a “western official,” who bluntly warned, “Turkey came to the edge of a major crash. If they were to fool around with the [IMF] program again they could choke the economy.”

Also commenting on the imperialist powers' concern about Turkey's economy was a December 7 *Washington Post* article by Molly Moore. She wrote, “Financial analysts said the IMF action was critical to preventing a collapse of Turkey's precarious economy. Analysts said a collapse would not only threaten the country's fragile coalition government but could spill over to Russia and other struggling economies at a time when international investors have become increasingly skittish toward emerging markets. Both the World Bank and IMF cite Turkey and Argentina as two of the world's most perilous developed economies.”

## Sheepherders in Colorado charge employer with inhumane treatment

BY JAN MILLER

GRAND JUNCTION, Colorado—Sheepherders working on a ranch in northwest Colorado have filed complaints with the U.S. Department of Labor for being denied adequate food, water, and bathroom facilities and for suffering physical abuse at the hands of their employer. The complaint also says workers' passports and pay have been withheld.

On September 25 the Department of Labor filed civil charges against the rancher, John Peroulis and his sons, Louis Peroulis and Stan Peroulis. The Moffat County Sheriff's office reported it has received complaints about the Peroulises from herders since 1992.

According to documents from the U.S. district court in Denver, the Labor Department's inspectors found that the Peroulises “have been mistreating, and continue to mistreat their H-2A herders.” The documents cite several charges, including “abuse, confiscating herders' documents, preventing the herders from communicating with their families by telephone, withholding or destroying some of the herders' mail, and retaliating against herders who complained or supplied investigators with information regarding complaints.” To date the judge has not ruled on the case.

The sheepherders are mainly from Peru and Mexico. They are working in this country under the Immigration and Reform Control Act, known as the H-2A program. The law is crafted to have non-U.S. citizens fill

specific agricultural jobs as long as farmers show they can't find U.S. citizens to do the work.

According to John Bartlett, regional certification officer for the Labor Department, about 602 Colorado ranchers applied for H-2A herders and ranch hands this year. Under the program there is no limit as to how many workers the ranchers can request. Visas are issued by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and the Labor Department does not keep track of the number of herders in the state. Bartlett said that the sheepherders on the Peroulis ranch could not get to phones, and if they did call the INS or other government agencies there were no Spanish-speaking agents for them to speak to. Bartlett described the complaint system for H-2A workers as so difficult that “a normal human being would go crazy trying to get through.”

Carlos Velasco, the Peruvian consul general in Denver, also talked to the sheepherders. They reported being hit, kicked, spat on, given only rotten meat to eat, and having no suitable drinking water and no toilets.

The H-2A program doesn't allow the Labor Department to pursue criminal charges for violations of work, housing, or pay rules. However, federal officials announced the INS and the FBI have told the judge they are considering filing criminal charges against the Peroulises. The attorney for the Peroulis family has indicated that they want to settle out of court and not have the case go to trial.

## Miner killed in Colorado mine

BY ELYSE HATHAWAY

PAONIA, Colorado—The Friends Church here was so overcrowded for the funeral of Thomas Emmons that Ed Hinkle, a former co-worker from Deserado Mine in Rangely, couldn't get inside.

Emmons, a 37-year-old longwall tailgate shearer operator at Oxbow Mining's Sanborn Creek Mine, was killed December 4 when he was struck in the head and face by a high pressure hydraulic hose. Emmons had 13 years mining experience at several mines in the area, including Deserado Mine and Twentymile Coal Co.'s Foidel Creek Mine.

Don McGovern, another miner in the area of the accident, received minor injuries.

The accident happened during production in the morning hours when a hydraulic hose under 4,500 pounds per square inch of pressure broke at a joint, sending a 15-foot section of hose with 15 pounds of couplings on the end flying into the walkway.

“Tommy was a safe worker, never one to take chances,” said Hinkle. “They always find out what's wrong after the guy's dead.” In this case the 15-foot section of hose should have been secured so it could not whip freely in case of a hose or coupling failure.

Emmons is the 34th coal miner to be killed on the job in 2000. Last year at this time 31 fatalities were reported. This is also the 10th fatality this year classified as machinery, whereas last year at this time there were only four in this category.

Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) investigators were expected this week from West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Utah to start an investigation into the accident. The Sanborn Creek Mine was shut down for several days, but has since resumed operations even though the MSHA report could take a month to complete.

At the Willow Creek mine in Utah, where two miners were killed in a fire in July, the MSHA investigation is still pending. A total of 319 miners have been laid off since the accident which led to the sealing of the mine.

*Elyse Hathaway is an underground miner in Colorado.*

# YS members talk to students in Guadalajara

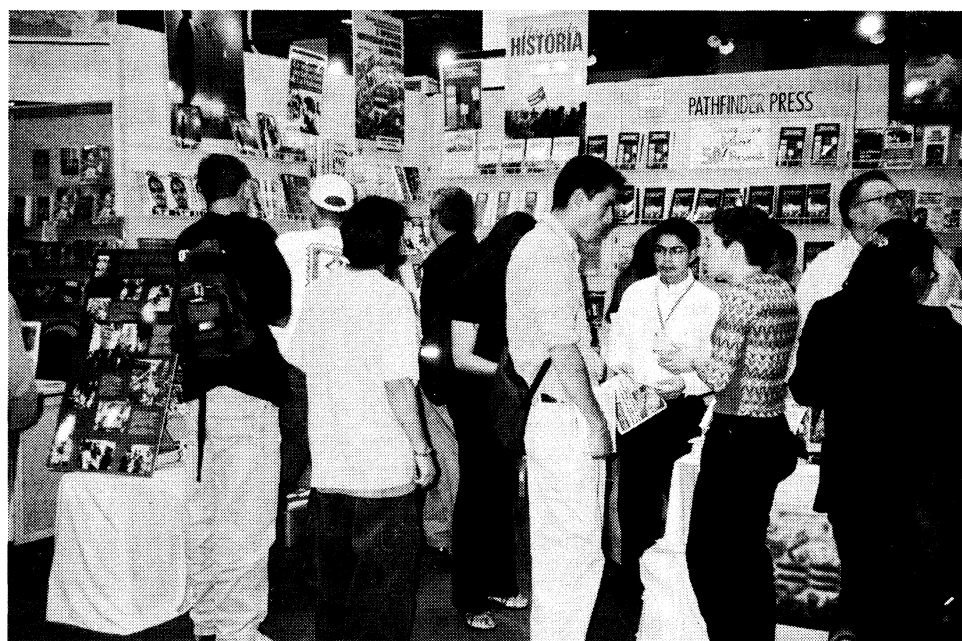
BOBBI QUINTANA

GUADALAJARA, Mexico—Young Socialists from several cities in the United States were part of a team staffing the Pathfinder booth at the international book fair in Guadalajara November 25–December 3. We had the opportunity to talk with hundreds of young people about the books Pathfinder produces, socialism, and the Young Socialists.

Two members of the YS, both meat packers in Iowa and Minnesota, were invited to speak to about 150 students in five classes at the *Preparatoria*, a high school that is part of the University of Guadalajara. We made a brief presentation on the working-class movement in the United States, the meaning behind the recent controversy in the U.S. presidential elections, the growing resistance of the working class, and about the Young Socialists.

Many students came up to speak with us after the class to continue the discussion and ask questions that they had wanted to raise. We brought some Pathfinder books with us from the book fair, so students could have an idea of the kinds of books members and supporters of the Socialist Workers Party and YS help to produce and distribute in factories and working-class communities, at plant gates, and on college campuses.

Many young people we spoke with had lived in the United States for brief periods of time and described the conditions they faced.



Militant/Janice Prescott

**Young Socialists staffed Pathfinder booth, and discussed politics with youth who attended the Guadalajara Book Fair in Mexico.**

Some of the questions that the students had were about the cause of discrimination against Blacks and Latinos in the United States and about the problem of drugs.

We raised that the so-called “war on drugs” is really an assault on the democratic rights of working people within the United States. It is also an excuse imperialism uses

to intervene abroad, such as “fighting the drug trade” in Columbia. This gives Washington a handle to extend its military presence in the region.

Young Socialists explained how immigrant workers are more and more part of the leadership in different plants across the United States in struggles for unionization

and against brutal working conditions and other social questions. Roberta Black, a member of the YS chapter in Minnesota, gave examples of the leadership roles of workers today. Black explained the ongoing fight by the meat packers in St. Paul, Minnesota, at Dakota Premium Foods, who organized a seven-hour sit-down strike on June 1 to demand the company lower the line speed.

They also fought the company to win recognition of the United Food and Commercial Workers union, and are now continuing their fight for a contract.

In speaking to students at the high school, we could see eye-to-eye with many on the question of the conditions workers face under the capitalist system. One student stated that the “problems that workers have in the United States are the same as those workers in Mexico face in the factories.”

What the Young Socialists accomplished in participating in the annual book fair in Guadalajara and in being invited to the high school was to deepen communication with young people in Mexico.

Many of the youth we met expressed interest in the YS. In addition, they stated their support for the Cuban people because they continue to have a victorious revolution. Many of the students said they were supportive of the ongoing resistance of workers today and of the perspective of having a government of workers and farmers.

## Volunteer work on Pathfinder projects in full swing

Continued from front page

and other information on each title. In preparation for this effort, printshop staff and several volunteers from New York mobilized on December 9 to count all the Pathfinder inventory and update records.

The effort is being organized out of the New York Garment District hall, which houses Pathfinder Books in the garment center. In order to involve workers and students who are laid off or taking days off work and school, there is a daytime shift starting at 9:00 a.m., as well as an evening shift so people can come after work for a few hours. Volunteers work in teams of two, reading, typing, and checking all the information entered.

Through this project in which thousands of hours of voluntary labor will be freely given to make possible this stage of the transformation of the production of revolutionary literature, Pathfinder's records necessary for inventory control, order fulfillment, and book-keeping will be transplanted onto the publisher's computer network. Keeping the accounts and customer records has until now required a number of stand-alone computers running software that was incompatible with the network.

**Volunteers still needed**

“This project is all about Pathfinder getting in shape to produce and promote the books that workers, farmers, and revolutionary-minded young people need,” said Norton Sandler in a December 13 interview. Sandler, who led the team of Pathfinder supporters who set up and staffed a booth at the Guadalajara book fair from November 25 to December 3, has worked since the fair ended to solicit volunteers for the project.

“Although there's been a big response to our appeal last week in the *Militant*, we still need more volunteers,” he stressed. “The New York and New Jersey Socialist Workers Party branches and Young Socialists are organizing forums, classes, and social activities, including a wind-up Christmas Eve social, as part of hosting the project volunteers.”

“Pathfinder has an ambitious publishing

program under way running through the early months of next year,” Sandler explained. “Among other publications in the pipeline, and alongside an ongoing program of reprints, the English-language *Pathfinder was Born with the October Revolution* has just rolled off the sheetfed presses.”



Militant/Hilda Cuzco

**Volunteer Glova Scott, left, works with Elvidio Mejia on the inventory of Pathfinder books.**

In that pamphlet Pathfinder president Mary-Alice Waters discusses the publisher's role of producing political weapons for workers, farmers, and revolutionary-minded youth.

“Early next year Pathfinder will print *Haciendo Historia*, the Spanish-language edition of *Making History*, which contains interviews with four veteran generals in the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces,” said Sandler.

“*Haciendo Historia* will be printed in time for the Havana Book Fair in February, where Pathfinder will have a booth,” he continued. Through this volunteer project effort Pathfinder will get in better shape to

sell and promote its titles.

The *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* will also benefit from the new system. Maurice Williams, the business manager for the two publications, explained that the financial records of their distributors will be entered into the new system.

“It will be a big improvement,” he said. “We've had a trial run with the new software, and found it simpler and less time-consuming to enter information. Maybe even more important is the fact that a number of people can use the system simultaneously. Only one person at a time could enter data into the old software, and you had to book time in advance.”

Williams was particularly impressed by one feature of the system. “Once you've updated a customer's account and prepared an invoice,” he said, “you hit a key to send it out by e-mail. That beats printing it out and using the post office.” Early next year the publications' subscription lists will be entered into the new system as well.

A number of Reprint Project volunteers have signed up for several days of the project. Maggie Perrier does second or final reads, and has just completed an assign-

ment of a couple of chapters of *Teamster Bureaucracy* by Farrell Dobbs.

In explaining her decision to join the effort, Perrier said she “was reading a *Militant* article on the Guadalajara book fair that reported the appearance of youth dressed up in Nazi regalia, and others who were looking for books by Hitler. At the same time the Pathfinder booth sold 570 socialist and working-class books and pamphlets. It gave an idea of the polarization there, and how these books are right at the center of the political challenges facing working people today.”

Perrier is expecting more proofreading assignments in the two and a half weeks up until December 31, as the Reprint Project drives to complete its 30-book goal.

“It looks good for making it,” said Jerry Gardner, a member of the Reprint Project steering committee, on December 13. Several of the seven titles that remain are close to completion. “We're also starting work to proofread and format the digital files for Pathfinder's edition of *Haciendo Historia*. It will be done in time to be part of Pathfinder's booth at the book fair in Havana,” he said.

## Unions defend workers' wages

Continued from Page 13  
do nowadays.<sup>1</sup>

Sixty years' experience of struggle have brought them round to some extent. Trades Unions have now become acknowledged institutions, and their action as one of the regulators of wages is recognised quite as much as the action of the Factories and Workshops Acts as regulators of the hours of work. Nay, the cotton masters in Lancashire have lately even taken a leaf out of the workpeople's book, and now know how to organise a strike, when it suits them, as well or better than any Trades Union.

**Wage slavery**

Thus it is through the action of Trades

<sup>1</sup>Landlords in Ireland were indignant at the attempts to curtail their lawlessness in respect of their tenants made by Gladstone's government in order to divert the attention of the Irish peasantry from the revolutionary struggle then developing in Ireland. The Land Bill of 1881 limited the rights of the landlords to turn tenants off the land if they paid their rent at the proper time; the amount of rent was fixed in advance for 15 years. Despite the fact that the landlords could sell their land to the crown at a profit and the rent was fixed at a very high figure, English landowners opposed the Bill in an effort to retain their uncurtailed domination in Ireland.

Unions that the law of wages is enforced as against the employers, and that the workpeople of any well-organised trade are enabled to obtain, at least approximately, the full value of the working power which they hire to their employer; and that, with the help of State laws, the hours of labour are made at least not to exceed too much that maximum length beyond which the working power is prematurely exhausted. This, however, is the utmost Trades Unions, as at present organised, can hope to obtain, and that by constant struggle only, by an immense waste of strength and money; and then the fluctuations of trade, once every ten years at least, break down for the moment what has been conquered, and the fight has to be fought over again. It is a vicious circle from which there is no issue.

The working class remains what it was, and what our Chartist forefathers were not afraid to call it, a class of wages slaves. Is this to be the final result of all this labour, self-sacrifice, and suffering? Is this to remain for ever the highest aim of British workmen? Or is the working class of this country at last to attempt breaking through this vicious circle, and to find an issue out of it in a movement for the ABOLITION OF THE WAGES SYSTEM ALTOGETHER?



# Socialists plan weekly sales at mines, plant gates

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

"We sold 30 copies of the *Militant* to workers at the Chrysler jeep plant in Toledo, Ohio, as they walked from their car to the plant," said Ilona Gersh from Detroit. Gersh, a member of the United Auto Workers, said more teams are being planned to sell the *Militant* and *PM* at other auto plants and facilities related to the industry in the Detroit area to talk with workers about layoffs and temporary plant closings announced by auto companies in response to slumping car sales (see article on page 6). The DaimlerChrysler bosses are planning to eliminate jobs and carry through other anti-union attacks at the Toledo jeep plant, which employs more than 5,000 workers.

Socialist workers across the United States are starting to expand and regularize a weekly presence at factory plant gates and mine portals in order to get the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and Pathfinder literature into the hands of working people. This is a key way socialist workers provide a working-class view on political issues, economic questions, and other developments facing workers and unionists.

In Birmingham, supporters of the socialist press went to the airport to talk to airline workers about the recent job action by pilots who turned down overtime as part of a fight for a contract. "In addition to the current issue we took previous issues of the paper with us, which featured coverage of workers at a number of major airlines demanding better pay and working conditions in actions across the country," wrote Bruce Trainor.

"We approached a few workers asking them what they thought about forced overtime and the pilots' fight. The first worker we met near the Northwest Airlines ticket counter was a ground service worker for Aviation Ground Services (AGS) who bought a copy of the *Militant*. He suggested we wait there in order to meet a few of his co-workers when they got off work. He was interested in the workers' actions in the airline industry as well as the coverage on South Africa."

Trainor said they saw one worker who had bought the paper reading it with one of the restaurant workers. "We spoke with another airline worker who is 20 years old and works at AGS. He said he supported the pilots. 'If the pilots don't want to work, you can't make them work,' he said. 'It should be their right to not work. People have families to go home to. They put you in a situation of having to choose between your family and your job.' He bought a copy of the *Militant* and said he would keep us posted if he hears

of other developments at the airport."

Jacquie Henderson from Houston said socialist workers there sold six copies of *PM* and three *Militants* at two local meatpacking plants. "Workers were very interested in the victory by the meat packers at Dakota Premium in St. Paul, Minnesota," she said.

Henderson explained another aspect of the work of branches of the Socialist Workers Party, which is to systematize sales and literature tables in a workers district in the city the branch is located in. "We set up a sales table about three blocks from the Pathfinder bookstore that attracted the attention of a worker from Mexico," she said. "He listened to our explanation of the pamphlet *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* and remarked, 'I'm surprised to see you here. When I came up here from Mexico of all the things I thought I'd see, I didn't expect to see people like you standing and talking about books like these.' He purchased that title and the newly printed *Pathfinder nacio con la revolucion de octubre* (Pathfinder was born with the October revolution)."

Henderson said that at the Militant Labor Forum four people bought membership cards for the Pathfinder Readers Club and participants at the meeting also purchased several titles, including *Teamster Power*, *Socialism on Trial*, *Pathfinder nacio con la revolucion de octubre*, and the Spanish version of *Che Guevara and the Fight for Socialism Today*.

In eastern Pennsylvania Candace Wagner reported that last Sunday afternoon socialists "knocked on doors across the street from the toxic dump containing 500,000 tons of car batteries in Throop, Pennsylvania. We



Militant/Carole Lesnick

Socialist worker selling *Perspectiva Mundial* in workers district of Sunset Park in Brooklyn, New York. Expanding the presence of the *Militant* and *PM* at plant gates and working-class neighborhoods are key ways to reach workers.

showed workers who live in the neighborhood some of the recent coverage in the *Militant* on environmental disasters in the area and nationally. They had mixed opinions on the dump—from confidence in the EPA's decision not to remove the waste, to anger about the existence of this danger so close to their homes. Two young men each gave us \$5 for the *Militant*.

In Upper Manhattan, Brian Williams said a young woman approached a literature

table they set up in the workers district in Washington Heights and remarked how she had bought a copy of the Marxist magazine *New International* no. 7 that features the article "Opening Guns of World War III," while she was in Cuba staying with a Cuban family. "I sold her a copy of the *Militant* and she said members of the Cuban family suggested she read the *NI* as an important step toward furthering her political education."

## Meeting prepares Pathfinder supporters to expand sales to bookstores and outlets

BY RUTH CHENEY

SAN FRANCISCO—Ten party supporters and members of the Socialist Workers Party participated December 2 in the first training session for Pathfinder sales representatives that has been held here in a long time. Party supporters who attended the class are all volunteers in the effort to put the full range of Pathfinder titles in digital form.

Meeting organizers asked those attending to come dressed as they would if they were keeping an appointment with the buyer for a bookstore or the person in charge of

purchasing for a city library. Most of us were still too casually attired, but two met the mark. We decided that men should wear ties and jackets and women very nice pants or a dress. The professional look of Pathfinder representatives helps put buyers at ease, receptive to what we say about the books.

Michele Smith opened the meeting and Barbara Bowman chaired and gave an orientation talk, emphasizing that our job is to convince buyers to place an order for Pathfinder books and provide whatever assistance they need in making that order.

Being on time for appointments is elementary; bringing several catalogues to use in presenting the books, as well as a case packed with books to show, is also basic. As professional book sellers, buyers will appreciate the high quality of the photos and covers.

We point out the presence of indexes, footnotes, and other features to show how serious Pathfinder books are. We should arm ourselves with information about what books sell and bring books on topics covered in local or national events. Also key is remembering that sales representatives do not try to recruit buyers to the political ideas inside Pathfinder books.

Michele Smith reported on recent visits to bookstores in the Bay Area that resulted in more than \$1,000 in sales. Her report detailed each sale so that those of us who had never done this before could learn as much as possible from it.

Bringing titles that Pathfinder has published in both English and Spanish is effective in placing Spanish-language titles. To encourage placements in bodegas with Spanish and French as well as English titles, Pathfinder has offered representatives the opportunity to offer expanded discounts and credit to those placing small orders. Explaining that all of Pathfinder's titles are being converted to digital form so that they can be kept in print easily will also convey the seriousness of Pathfinder Press. Sales representatives will be on the front line in getting the books out to workers who browse the bookstores in every city and town, a key

part of the new worldwide outreach plans of Pathfinder. Also very important is remembering to listen carefully to the buyer; she or he knows the business and what will work best in their bookstore.

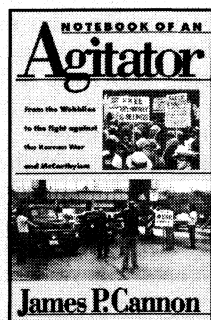
Near the end of the meeting, volunteers played the roles of book buyer and Pathfinder sales representative—a difficult exercise that provoked discussion about many of the points made in the initial reports, such as filling out the order form after the buyer has marked up what they want to order in the catalogue—a technique recommended by Mary Lipman, an experienced Pathfinder sales representative who helps to organize volunteers in San Francisco.

Participants in the class were urged to set aside two hours for each appointment, just in case the buyer is willing to talk about many of the books and place a large order. Sheets were handed out that explained some of the technical elements of sales work: discount policies, prepayments, shipping costs, book wholesalers used by Pathfinder.

Sales representatives experienced in this activity advised us to pay attention to details—like making sure to put the catalogue case containing the books and order forms up on a chair or a nearby table rather than the floor, so that as you reach inside the case to bring out the titles to show you are not bobbing up and down trying to hold a conversation.

Developing a long-term professional relationship with the buyers is very important too. As you get to know the buyer, you will get better at suggesting new titles or different ways to display titles that will assist their sales. Record keeping is also fundamental to the success of this political campaign to place Pathfinder books in stores and libraries. Every visit by a sales representative should be recorded on the form that will go into the log book. Without this information, the next visit to that buyer will not go right and an order is much less likely.

Michele Smith will be organizing assignments and keeping the log book up-to-date for San Francisco and the East Bay. Mary Lipman will do the same for the South Bay.



from Pathfinder

### Notebook of an Agitator

From the Wobblies to the Fight against the Korean War and McCarthyism

James P. Cannon

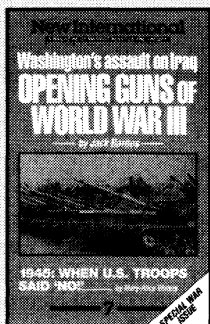
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Jack Barnes

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Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690. Fax: (212) 727-0150. When ordering by mail, please include \$3 to cover shipping and handling.

# Auto bosses set layoffs, close plants as profits drop

BY ILONA GERSH

DETROIT—As the year ends, the Big Three auto makers and parts manufacturers have announced plant closings and layoffs to drastically reduce production. Ford Motor Co. will cut first-quarter production by 10 percent, and General Motors Corporation (GM) by 14 percent. DaimlerChrysler is cutting fourth-quarter 2000 production by 21 percent.

The crisis of the auto companies comes after months of booming production while inventories piled up as auto sales slowed. Last month Ford's sales were down 6.2 percent; Nissan Motor's dropped 3.6 percent; Honda Motor's were down 5.6 percent; Toyota Motor's fell 5.7 percent; and DaimlerChrysler slid 8.4 percent. GM was the only company to report an increase in sales but admits this was only due to steep discounting and interest-free financing arrangements for automobile purchases. Even so, GM closed three of its 25 assembly plants in North America for a week or more.

GM also announced plans on December 11 to cut 10,000 jobs in North America and Europe—about 10 percent of the automaker's workforce in each region. GM's Vauxhall plant at Luton in the United Kingdom north of London is slated to be closed with a loss of 2,200 jobs. Production of the Oldsmobile model will also be phased out.

DaimlerChrysler temporarily shut three factories in the Detroit area to reduce their inventory, leaving 13,600 of 128,000 workers at its plants without jobs for a week. The company has shortened workweeks to four days at some plants, and production shifts to six hours at others in an attempt to reduce inventories without halting production completely. Altogether the company closed seven of its 16 factories in North America for at least a week.

These moves by the Big Three have an immediate impact on parts suppliers. Delphi, a parts supplier for Ford, laid off 1,700 of its hourly U.S. workers in Michigan, New York, and Ohio. Dana Corp. has laid off 3,500 workers already this year. Diesel engine maker Navistar International Corp. has put at least 1,100 on the unemployment lines. Textron, a major parts maker, has shut down some departments for a week at a time.

A slowdown in auto can have a big effect on the overall economy. Layoffs in the auto industry, which topped 51,000 in November, accounted for one out of every eight workers laid off last month. GM and Ford,

the world's two largest manufacturing companies, each account for more than 1 percent of U.S. economic output. Chrysler adds nearly another percentage point. Auto and related industries account for nearly a quarter of the combined economic output of Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana.

## Huge losses at DaimlerChrysler

DaimlerChrysler lost \$512 million in the third quarter and is expected to post a steeper loss in the last quarter of 2000. Seeking to stem the red ink, DaimlerChrysler bosses sacked a number of Chrysler executives and ordered sweeping reductions in the cost of parts supplied to the company. DaimlerChrysler told parts manufacturers that they needed a 5 percent savings by the end of this year.

Chrysler has announced it is requiring another 10 percent cost reduction from its suppliers by the end of 2002. The company buys \$40 billion in parts and services from its suppliers each year. To reduce prices this much, the auto parts industry will seek to enforce speedup, curtail wages, and carry out other attacks on workers and their union.

Heralding assaults to come on workers at Chrysler, officials at Deutsche Bank—DaimlerChrysler's major stockholder—said DaimlerChrysler's 129,000 workforce is about 30 percent, or 38,000, too large.

The effect of these changes has been rapid. For example, last year, Textron invested millions of dollars in a new plastic molding and assembly department. More than 100 additional workers were hired into the plant. The company set up 12-hour weekend shifts to keep the molding presses running all week long. The company never had a hard time filling the volunteer lists for extra weekend shifts, and there were few complaints about mandatory overtime since for most workers it was the only way to bolster their paychecks. Workers at the company earn about half the hourly wage of production workers in the big assembly plants.

The extensive overtime was part of a cost-cutting campaign by Textron that also included reducing the size of crews and speeding up the presses and assembly lines. The company's goal was to comply with DaimlerChrysler's Supplier Cost Reduction Effort program.

To justify the crew cuts and speedups,



Worker at Chrysler auto plant in Detroit. Layoffs in the auto industry, which topped 51,000 in November, accounted for one out of every eight workers laid off last month. Faced with slumping profit margins auto bosses are planning massive job cuts.

Textron organized several three-day workshops composed of both management and workers to give credibility to their plans for "Lean Management." Most workers didn't fall for it, dubbing workshop leaders "the lean meanies."

The overtime at Textron came to a grinding halt two weeks ago with the shutdowns announced by DaimlerChrysler.

## Assault on workers at Jeep

At the North Toledo Jeep plant, the bosses have begun to cut both wages and the number of workers. The plant is being replaced by a state-of-the-art facility located across town where a much-reduced workforce faces strict new work rules. A lot of their work is loading parts onto racks that supply robots that assemble the cars.

Workers at the old plant will continue to produce Cherokee and Wrangler jeeps at least until the middle of next year. But the company has cut the wages of some of the assembly workers by as much as a third after reclassifying 350 workers, all hired as temporary part-time workers between 1996 and 2000, as "transitional employees."

These workers all finished 120 days as part-time temporary employees and became full-time employees, members of the United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 12. Most were paid close to top pay before their hourly wages were cut in November from \$22 to \$14. They were also informed that when

they get laid off as production slows they will not have the same recall rights as other union members.

The layoffs in auto are already having an impact on Detroit's economy, which is built around the big assembly plants. The *Detroit News* published an article titled, "Metro economy falters. Slowing auto sales have a ripple effect on the overall local business climate."

Taking an upbeat attitude, the article stated, "Jobs are still plentiful, inflation remains in check and many consumers and business owners in Metro Detroit continue to live the good life. Take Leather and Fur by Design in Dearborn, for example. The shop at the Fairlane Town Center sold 17 Pershing reversible lamb coats this week at \$1,400 each."

Many workers, however, fear the initial layoffs and shutdowns in the auto industry are just the tip of the iceberg. "I was laid off for eight months last time, and I don't want to go through that again," said one production operator at Textron. "This time I might get another job." A maintenance worker who has worked at Textron for several years said, "I've had jobs I could retire from all my life. The problem is that I always get laid off. I feel like I'm always starting a new job."

*Ilona Gersh is a member of United Auto Workers Local 157 and works at the Textron Corp. in Westland, Michigan.*

# Women meat packers lead fight against speedup

BY ROSE ANA BERBEO

ST. PAUL, Minnesota—Workers at the Dakota Premium Foods slaughterhouse here continue to advance in consolidating their union, with women from the packaging department recently leading a fight against the company speeding up the production line, for better working conditions, and to be treated with respect by the bosses.

Workers at the meatpacking plant are members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 789. They voted to join the union last July after a seven-week organizing drive that began with a sit-down strike to protest conditions in the plant, especially the increase in line speed.

The company has appealed a National Labor Relations Board decision, handed down last month, to certify the union and to reject the company's charges that the union election was unfair.

The recent job action in the packaging department was organized by workers to protest being forced to work too fast. They explained that when one of the packaging lines breaks down—which happens frequently—the company's practice is to keep the other lines running. Once the line is started back up, the packaging workers have to pack both the piled-up meat and the meat coming down the line. In addition, supervisors were ignoring workers' requests to go to the bathroom.

On December 4, one of the women in the packaging department organized six other workers, three women and three men, to go to the manager's office and demand he stop

the double work from the line breakdowns. They also said that workers must be relieved on the line so they could go to the bathroom. The boss promised their requests would be implemented.

The next day, the line was running more slowly. Each time it broke down maintenance workers would immediately get it going again, workers reported. A few days later, however, the bosses had increased the line speed again. The lead people who were supposed to relieve workers for bathroom breaks weren't doing so. In addition, the department was unusually and unbearably cold, with ice covering everything, even the floor.

Once again organized by the women, six packaging workers made two more trips to the boss' office, to demand that the company slow down the line, that workers be relieved to go to the bathroom, and that the employers do something about the overly cold conditions.

On the way back to their posts, workers marched through the boning department and got loud cheers from other workers who had seen them confronting the boss. The following day, the line was slower and workers were being relieved to go to the bathroom, reported Bobbi Negrón, a packaging worker.

"People are going to think, 'What those women did, we have to do too,'" said Celia Grande, a packaging worker with three years at the plant who was part of the mobilizations to the boss's office. "They will see our fight and how we are fighting, and the company will be scared because women are ad-

vancing," Grande added.

"These actions are very important because they help show how to build the union, the possibility to fight for workers to control the line speed and working conditions, and the capacities of workers who are women to play a leading role in taking on the company's practices," said Amy Roberts, a boning worker and member of the union's Communications Committee.

That committee was recently established to improve communication between workers in the plant about the ongoing fight for the union, especially between workers in the boning and kill departments, who work different schedules.

The committee is also responsible for putting out the *Workers' Voice*, a paper written and distributed by workers at Dakota Premium and Long Prairie Packing, also owned by Rosen's Diversified, Inc.

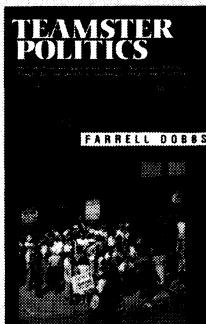
The previous week, Roberts and Obdulia Flores, a kill floor worker who is also on the Communications Committee, began visiting women workers at home to discuss ways they can get more involved in the union. One of the women they visited was part of the mobilizations to the boss' office, Flores noted.

"That was so great, wasn't it? Not to be afraid," Flores commented about the actions by the workers in the packaging department. "We're still fighting for the union. We don't have a contract yet," she added. Flores said that more house visits will be useful for the union and as well as recruiting more people to the Communications Committee.

for further reading

## Teamster Politics

Farrell Dobbs  
How rank-and-file Teamsters led the fight against antiunion frame-ups and assaults by fascist goons; the battle for jobs for all; and efforts to advance independent labor political action.



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Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12



# Workers at Olin plant in Illinois walk out

BY ALYSON KENNEDY  
AND MARTHA RESSLER

EAST ALTON, Illinois—More than 2,700 members of the Machinists union are on strike against the Olin Corporation here, about 30 miles north of St. Louis. The company has responded by hiring replacement workers in an attempt to keep the plant running.

Olin makes strips of metal alloy that are used in coins, faucets, floppy discs, and other items. They also make small caliber sporting ammunition.

Picket lines were set up after members of International Association of Machinists (IAM) Local 660 rejected the company's contract offer by a 2-1 ratio at a December 3 union meeting attended by some 2,000 workers. They then voted better than 3-1 to go on strike. Four other unions representing 450 workers at Olin voted to accept the contract but are refusing to cross the picket lines. Local 660 is part of District 9 of the IAM.

On the picket line on a bitterly cold first night of the strike, a big pile of neatly stacked firewood, as well as hot coffee and food stuffs, and constantly honking horns of passing vehicles, were evidence of local support for the strike. Workers walking the picket line told the *Militant* that one of the key issues is elimination of the two-tier wage scheme. Olin has hired 500 new workers in the last two years who make 70 percent of the top wage in the first year. It takes two years to make the regular rate. The company proposed increasing this to 80 percent the first year, which was rejected by the union membership.

"Every contract we've been giving back Olin more—cost of living, holidays, two tier. In this proposal Olin gave us back a little more, but not enough," said striker Darrell Belcher who has worked at Olin for 28 years. "They did not raise pensions enough. The last contract was for five years. Before that, we had three-year contracts. We are asking for a three-and-a-half year contract this time."

The unionists are also demanding a 5



Unionists picket Olin plant in southern Illinois. Some 2,700 Machinists are on strike.

percent wage increase each year. The company wants to raise the deductibles and other out-of-pocket expenses on medical insurance. The pensions currently contain four step increments. "If you work for the company 35 years, then you should get the same pension, regardless of your salary," said Robert Soutier, a Machinists union business representative.

Vickey Cannedy, a machinist laborer for 10 years at Olin, told *The Telegraph* of Alton, "We were offered a \$1,000 sign-on bonus, a 4 percent raise the first year and 3.5 percent over the next four. But with the high deductible and the new premium cost, our raises will be disposed of in four years. We need the cost of living back, because prices keep going up."

The company claims that 1,000 management and nonunion personnel are keeping the plant running. Workers said they saw bosses going into the plant with luggage on Sunday night. Olin has begun hiring replace-

ment workers. An ad appearing in *The Telegraph* on December 3 said, "Temporary people hired now will have first consideration for employment when vacancies occur after normal employment resumes." It offered a pay rate of \$17 an hour. The average hourly worker had been making \$16.62, not including benefits.

Within hours of the December 3 strike vote recent job applicants reported receiving phone calls asking them to cross the picket line and come to work. Olin set up a "Temporary Hiring Center" in a strip mall in East Alton. Applicants take a drug test, with results reported in 15 minutes, and are given a pair of work boots. The company says it plans to hire 200 scabs a week until they get up to 1,400. A union picket line has been set up outside this center.

One striker, who did not give his name, reported to pickets outside the caster gate that as many as two dozen applicants had been turned away from the hiring office the

previous day, and one youth came back from his home to return boots the company had issued. He reportedly told strikers: "I looked at the boots. I thought about what you said, and I decided it just wasn't right." Company officials assert that scabs will be given preference for any new hiring after the strike.

Meanwhile, the union has kicked off a fund and a toy and food drive that in just one day received commitments for thousands of toys and more than \$70,000 in cash. "The community response has been overwhelming," unionist Ellen Arbogast told the *St. Louis Post Dispatch*. Workers from area restaurants "are stopping by the picket lines and bringing soup, coffee, donuts and offering help. It seems to be coming from all over."

The last strike at this plant was in December 1977, when members of the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers and pipe fitters were out for 79 days. Members of the IAM honored the picket lines. The IAM last struck Olin in 1965.

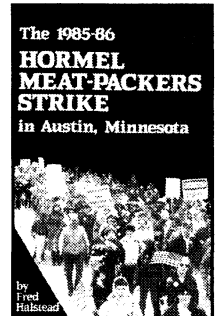
Alyson Kennedy and Martha Ressler are sewing machine operators and members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees Local 254-C in St. Louis. Jay Ressler contributed to this article.

FROM PATHFINDER

## The 1985-86 Hormel Meat-Packers Strike in Austin, Minnesota

Fred Halstead

The hard-fought strike against Hormel opened a round of battles by packinghouse workers that— together with strikes by paper workers, canner workers, and western coal miners— marked a break in the rout of the U.S. unions that began with the 1981-82 recession. Booklet, \$5.00



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## Meat packers in Massachusetts lose union vote

BY BROCK SATTER

BOSTON—Workers here at Kayem Foods Inc. lost a union election vote November 22. They were seeking to be represented by United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1445. The vote results were 109 for, 194 against, and 15 challenged ballots. This was the second attempt to organize in as many years.

Kayem Foods is the second largest meat processing plant in New England, making hot dogs, hams, roast beef, and other deli meats. The workforce is about three-quarters Latino with other workers from Poland, Bosnia, Viet Nam, and U.S.-born workers. About 30 percent of the employees are female.

"I was surprised with the outcome," said Wilmer Sosa, 28, one of the leaders of the organizing effort. "The company intimidated people. They said that people would lose their benefits, lose their insurance. That if the union came in everyone would start at zero. They scared people about immigration."

The company carried out a concerted antiunion campaign for several months leading up to the election vote. Weekly meetings were held during company hours to discourage workers from joining the union. A plethora of antiunion letters were also given to the workers. On the day of the election, "vote no" stickers were passed out by supervisors and placed on workers, sometimes without their consent.

The bosses successfully portrayed the union organizing campaign as an outside effort by paid union organizers who were only after the workers' dues money, not the attempt by workers to defend themselves against company abuse, speedup, and favoritism. The company argued that if a union came in there would be a strike and workers would be replaced. The nearly 100-year-old company has never had a union.

Upon hearing the results during the middle of the shift as polls closed at 9:00 p.m., many workers were surprised and dejected. No one went back to work until an hour later.

"I was surprised. We didn't reach out enough to those in the warehouse or involve women workers enough in the campaign," commented a pro-union worker. The ware-

house employees are predominantly English-speaking whereas most of those in production areas are Latino and eastern European in background.

"Next year it will be different. We did better than last year when we only got 62 votes," commented a worker, reflecting the continued determination of a layer of work-

ers here to fight for a union.

"If we keep talking to the people and explain to them their rights we should get the union some day. I am going to keep on fighting until we do," stated Sosa.

Brock Satter is a meat packer at Kayem Foods.

## INS raids packinghouse in Nebraska

Continued from front page

ers, the INS subpoenaed work records and then proceeded to interview workers individually. But it was not uncommon for workers to quit rather than be interviewed by the INS.

Bill Schmitz, the UFCW vice president and director of the union's Food Processing, Packing and Manufacturing Division, was quoted in a union news release as saying, "There workers are twice victimized. Once by the greed of the packing companies and then by immigration laws that terrorizes workers in the exercise of their legitimate rights under the law."

When the organizing drive began last June, Greg Denier, a UFCW official, said his organization had put the INS on notice that labor disputes exist at a number of Omaha packing plants. That meant, he said, that under the INS operating procedures the agency was prohibited from engaging in any enforcement action against employees.

The Nebraska Appleseed Center for Law in the Public Interest was quoted as saying, "Right now, in the INS custody, are workers who have been involved in union-organizing activities. It is certain other workers will remember what happened at Nebraska Beef."

Rev. Damian Zuerlein of the Our Lady of the Guadalupe church in Omaha was outraged at the pre-Christmas raid. "Imagine living in another country and being promised a better-paying job, housing, and transportation. You get here and you're a hard-working person—working 10 hours a day, five or six days a week. And then you get rounded up."

At a news conference held December 7, attended by community members, social-

service agency leaders, and others, the INS raid was condemned. Ben Salazar, publisher of *Nuestro Mundo* newspaper, said that it was an "outrageous display" of government power.

Reverend Zuerlein explained how he had spent that day talking to a single mother who was afraid to go to work for the last three days for fear that the INS would pick her up.

The same day workers walked off the line to demand the company reduce the line speed given the reduced number of workers to do the job. Carl Ariston, assistant to the UFCW regional director, said, "The company was having three people do the job of six." According to one worker, employees went to the cafeteria to negotiate a \$1 an hour raise and better health and insurance benefits. She and six others were fired for "inciting a riot." According to Ariston, the seven were fired by three of the managers who had been arrested on smuggling charges earlier by the INS. He said that the UFCW would file unfair labor practice charges the next day with the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB), defending the fired workers as engaging in a protected activity.

Ariston was also quoted as saying that the union met with 50 workers on Thursday night and that they would try to sign up all the rest of their co-workers to call for a union election.

In an election held several weeks ago, production workers rejected representation by the union at the ConAgra plant here. Maintenance workers voted in the union as their bargaining agent.

On December 15, 200 workers at the ConAgra Armour Swift-Eckrich plant will decide whether to be represented by the union.

Edwin Fruit is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1149 and works in Perry, Iowa.

## Freightliner workers prepare for strike

BY LAUREN HART

MOUNT HOLLY, North Carolina—Workers at the Freightliner truck assembly plant here are preparing for a possible strike when the current three-year contract expires December 15. The company declared December 8 that if the more than 1,700 United Auto Workers (UAW) members here do not accept its demands the plant will be shut down and most production moved to Mexico. Freightliner's proposal includes a three-year wage freeze for most workers. Only a few of the top-paid workers would see a pay raise.

In October, Freightliner laid off the entire third shift at the UAW-organized assembly plant, as well as shifts at two nonunion parts plants in the area—a total of nearly 2,300 jobs—citing slow sales. The union held a rally in September to protest the layoffs.

Production and maintenance workers at the Mount Holly plant voted to join the UAW in 1990. They won their first contract after a 17-day strike the following year. Workers going in for second shift December 8 told *Militant* reporters that they are prepared to walk out if need be. A van driver making a delivery also stopped to make sure there was not a strike, explaining he wouldn't cross the picket line.

# The capitalist ideological assault on women

## Rulers' political campaign aimed at reversing gains made by working class

Printed below are excerpts from the introduction to *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women* by Joseph Hansen, Evelyn Reed, and Mary-Alice Waters. The introduction, titled "The capitalist ideological offensive against women today" is by Waters. Copyright © 1986 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

During World War II women had been incorporated into the labor force in larger numbers than ever before. Even more importantly, they were hired to perform many jobs from which women had previously been excluded. This broadened the social and political horizons of tens of millions of women who had formerly been trapped in the stultifying confines of the home or employed only in jobs traditionally hiring female labor. This also brought irreversible changes in the way that both women and men thought about women's place in society. When the war was over, there were millions of women and men who wanted to maintain these newly conquered social and economic relations.

For the employing class, however, increasing economic independence and social equality for women is incompatible with intensified superexploitation of female labor power. Hence, the deliberate promotion during postwar years of the "feminine mystique," as it later came to be known. This extensive political and ideological campaign was aimed at rolling back the changes in attitudes about women's proper role. It was promoted in order to reinforce the idea that women—whether or not they are part of the labor force—should first and foremost be wives, mothers, and housekeepers. Thus women should accept employment at lower wages and under worse conditions. Women should spend less time on union activity or political concerns and should take less interest in them.

Women were not the only target of the rulers' ideological campaign. This reactionary assault, waged through the mass media, schools, and churches, was directed toward reversing the attitudes of both sexes concerning women's social role. But its impact on women was different. To a large extent women, like other oppressed layers of capitalist society, internalize the pressures on them. They place limitations on themselves, often unconsciously. They accept the socially prescribed roles, and, in fact, often promote the conditions that perpetuate their own oppression.

Through the "cosmetics" debate that took place among members of the Socialist Workers Party, we get a glimpse of the diverse, if not so subtle, ways in which the postwar period of reaction affected even women and men who were socialists and conscious champions of women's liberation. We see how the pressures affected the way people thought about themselves.

### Changes in women's social conditions

Since the early 1950s, of course, there have been extensive changes in the economic and social conditions facing women in the United States. The domestic and international political situation has been vastly altered, as well.

Most importantly, the accelerated expansion

of capitalism in the postwar years brought with it an even greater incorporation of women into the labor market than during World War II. In 1950, 33.9 percent of women sixteen years of age and over were in the labor force. By 1960 that figure had risen to 37.7 percent. In 1970 it was 43.3 percent. And by 1983, more than half of all working-age women—52.9 percent—were in the labor force. During that thirty-three-year period, the percentage increase of women who were in the labor market was



Militant/Stu Singer

**Striking members of United Steelworkers of America on picket line at shipyard in Newport News, Virginia, April 1999. A special goal of the bosses has been to keep women and oppressed nationalities confined to second-class status within the labor force and capitalist society as a whole.**

slightly more than the percentage increase during the seventy years between 1890 and 1960!

Women today account for 43 percent of the labor force, as compared with 29 percent in 1950. This marks a qualitative advance in the economic independence of women and consequently a change in their social status.

It is also important, however, to take a look at the changes in where women are employed. Two of the most carefully promoted myths are the notions that working women have generally "escaped" from industrial jobs, and that this represents a rising economic and social status for women. The reality is far more complex. The most important advances for women—although directly involving only a small percentage of women—have been precisely those that have integrated them more deeply into the most strongly organized, predominantly male, sectors of the industrial working class...

The goal of the bosses and their government is not to drive women out of the labor force, but to undermine their class consciousness and political self-confidence. The goal is to make women more willing to acquiesce in attacks on wages, working conditions, social services, affirmative action programs, and equality on the job. In this way, the employers are attempting to hold back the increase in the value of women's labor power (and thereby that of the class as a whole), and to enforce greater discipline and "productivity" by imposing speedup and more dangerous working conditions.

These attacks on women's rights are part of a broader offensive that the U.S. capitalist class has been waging for more than a decade. The target is all working people, and all those whose race, sex, language, or national origin is used by the ruling class to single them out for superexploitation and special oppression. The employers are determined to fundamentally shift the relationship of forces between capital and labor that was established following the post-World War II strike wave.

This intensifying capitalist offensive began with the 1974-75 world recession and picked up steam with the 1980-82 recession. It is directed against the wages, job conditions, democratic rights, and organizations of the working class. It is aimed at heading

off progress toward political independence by the working class—toward any notion that labor should develop and fight for its own positions on social and political questions, independent of and opposed to those of the bosses and bosses' parties.

This offensive has been registered in a rightward shift of the entire bipartisan structure of capitalist politics in the United States. It has been accompanied by a sustained ideological offensive aimed at dividing the working class more deeply between em-

ployed and unemployed, and along the lines of race, sex, age, "skill levels," language, and national origin. A special goal has been to reverse gains won by Blacks and women, who over the previous period fought their way through some of the barriers that keep them confined to second-class status in capitalist society in general, and within the labor force in particular.

Parallel to this domestic offensive has been an escalation of U.S. aggression abroad, especially in Central America and the Caribbean. As part of the preparations for war, there has been an enormous increase in U.S. military spending. We have seen a constant barrage of anticommunist propaganda, directed above all against Nicaragua, Cuba, and the Salvadoran freedom fighters, but also against Angola, Vietnam, the South African and Palestinian peoples. This has been accompanied by a domestic spy hunt and antiunion "industrial security" campaign. Through the concerted political drive on all these fronts, Wall Street and Washington are trying to bludgeon and con the U.S. working class into believing that their foreign policy is in our interests.

One result of this sustained economic and political offensive, with all its reactionary ideological offshoots, has been a deepening class polarization in the United States. Not everyone is suffering from the policies that the employers are putting into effect. To the contrary, tens of millions of individuals in middle-class and professional layers are benefiting from these policies. Some layers of the working class have also improved their situation—even if the insecurities and pressures that are common to their class also bear down on them. To varying degrees, all these social layers are being pulled to the right politically.

On the other hand, the big majority of workers and working farmers are taking stiffer and stiffer blows. The bosses' offensive has run into resistance, however. There has been opposition to two-tier wage scales, bank foreclosures on struggling farmers, and U.S. military intervention in Central America. Working people have mobilized in defense of Black rights. Struggles have been fought around women's rights, and immigrants' rights.

All of these are labor issues—issues on which the labor movement must have its own policies and defend its own class interests and those of its allies. All are questions

on which there is reflection, concern, and a growing willingness to take action on the part of workers. Broad and growing sectors of working people—on the farms and in the factories—are becoming aware that there are interconnections among these many battlefronts.

So far, defeats and setbacks for working people continue to outnumber victories, and the bosses and their politicians retain the initiative. But that has not put a stop to resistance. To the contrary, the willingness and desire of working people to fight back continues to assert itself.

The class polarization and the experiences that are generating it give an impulse to the politicization and radicalization of the most combative workers. But these same developments also embolden rightist proponents of national-chauvinist, racist, anti-Semitic, antiwoman, and antiunion prejudices, as well as other reactionary ideas.

This is the political context in which we need to place the current attacks on women's rights by the employers and their government.

### Bosses reinforce antiwoman prejudices

When the bosses go on a stepped-up offensive to shift the relationship of forces in their favor, they play every card in the deck—war and the threat of military aggression abroad; more naked use of the cops and courts at home (whether against Blacks, immigrant workers, farmers, or strikers); massive cuts in social services; tax hikes; union busting and concession contracts. At the same time, they wage a political campaign to justify their course as being in the interests of "all of us." They talk about "equality of sacrifice," the "national interest," "labor-management cooperation," and "common cultural values."

Within this framework, the rulers single out special targets as part of their broad frontal assault. One of these is always the progressive changes taking place in women's social status. The employers are aiming at the advances of working-class women especially, but the barrage is necessarily directed against all women. The second sex must be taught to know its place.

The attack on women's rights is fundamental to the success of the capitalist offensive. Discrimination against women is one of the most important ways in which the rulers work to deepen divisions within the working class. Its acceptance helps the bosses keep the labor movement shackled to a narrow trade union perspective, instead of thinking in broader social terms and acting politically to advance the interests of the oppressed and exploited. The perpetuation of women's subordinate status is one more obstacle along the road to independent working-class political action.

The employers aim to undermine working-class women's consciousness of themselves as workers, as part of the working class, and instead to heighten their consciousness of themselves as women—not in the feminist sense, but in all the retrograde ways that are drummed into women from childhood. The employing class seeks to reinforce the prejudices about women's proper place and domestic role. It seeks to convince women that they want to be dependent on a man, with the second-class status that entails.

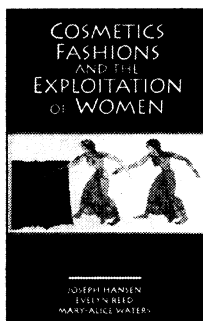
Such prejudices, and the ways women internalize them, go back millennia. But the rise and development of capitalism progressively undermines them, as it forces women out of the home and off the farm and pushes them as individuals into the labor market—with all the brutality inherent in the capitalist mode of production.

The capitalists' offensive against women's rights is not aimed at driving women out of the work force. That is historically precluded. The percentage of wage and salaried workers who are female has been rising, from one plateau to another, ever since the beginning of the industrial revolution. Instead, the aim is to make women more vulnerable to increased exploitation. The goal is not to push women out of the labor market but to push them down—to jobs with fewer paid holidays, more piece work, less safety, shorter lunch breaks, less union protection, and lower wages.

### Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women

Joseph Hansen, Evelyn Reed, and Mary-Alice Waters

How big business promotes cosmetics to generate profits and perpetuate the inferior status of women. In her introduction, Mary-Alice Waters explains how the entry of millions of women into the workforce during and after World War II irreversibly changed U.S. society and laid the basis for the advances women have won through struggle in recent decades. \$12.95





# Cuban authors discuss their work at Mexico book fair

BY ROBERTA BLACK

GUADALAJARA, Mexico—Two programs featuring Cuban novelists and poets were held here during the November 25–December 3 Guadalajara International Bookfair. This book fair, which attracts many publishers, book distributors, and librarians is also a place where authors from across the Americas gather to discuss their works. Each of the programs on literature in Cuba attracted some 90 participants, many of them in their early 20s or younger.

On November 29, Abel Prieto, Cuba's Minister of Culture, spoke on his novel, *El Vuelo del Gato* (The Flight of the Cat). Prieto said his novel compares the Cuba of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s to life in Cuba during what is called the "Special Period" of early and mid-1990s after Cuba's trade

with the Soviet Union collapsed. Life on the island was marked for several years by harsh economic conditions that necessitated a daily battle to put food on the table.

"The book," Prieto said, "is a narrative of the Cuban revolution. It explains another face, a different face, another dimension that was Cuba. It allows youth to reflect, because it lets them know about the times before. It has been made so the memories are not forgotten."

The work, he said, also includes the thoughts and expressions that the Cuban people experienced following the successful 1959 Cuban revolution in which the workers and farmers of that country overthrew the U.S.-backed dictator Fulgencio Batista, and opened the first socialist revolution in the Americas.

It also describes the relations the Cuban

government had with the Soviet Union in the ensuing years, and the changes and surprises that occurred in Cuba after trade with that country abruptly collapsed.

With some distance between now and the worst years of the Special Period, Prieto and other writers are taking a look back at the hardships the Cuban people endured. "The Special Period, it was a difficult time, with 12 hours with lights off," said Prieto. "However, people laughed about it. They found something that would allow them to resist. Cubans have to be open to the richness of their own conditions and of each other," he said. He compared the difficulties of the Special Period to the challenges that the Cuban people faced



Abel Prieto as he appeared in *Informador*. The novelist and Cuban Minister of Culture told the daily that even in the worst years of the Special Period, "Cuban people kept up their demand for culture."

during the U.S.-backed invasion of the island in 1961 at Playa Girón (The Bay of Pigs), and during the October 1962 missile crisis.

Prieto's presentation attracted prominent newspaper coverage here. He was interviewed about Cuba's selection as the featured country at the 2002 book fair. Spain was chosen this year, and Brazil will be honored in 2001. In an interview with the daily newspaper *Informador*, Prieto said, "Cuba is coming out of a terrible crisis. They were terrible years, of blockade, attempts to suffocate us, to isolate us. Our allies collapsed. The Soviet Union disintegrated."

Prieto added that in spite of the hardships, the "Cuban people kept up their demands for culture. In 1993, which was the worst in a truly difficult situation of blackouts, we hosted the [Havana] book fair. People rode their bicycles to buy books and they kept going to the movies and to the ballet. We kept having events in the middle of the crisis. A mediocre pragmatism of only being able to provide food for the people never advanced among us."

"People have a spirit," he said, noting that "we did away with illiteracy in 1961."

A panel of six Cuban writers and poets was presented on December 1. Antón Arrufat, author of *La noche del aguafiestas* (Night of the water festival) described his novel as a conversation between two young men. Antón explained how the narrator of the story observes the attitudes, personalities, and consciousness of these two individuals in the novel, "which offers a vision of how it is in Cuba."

Jorge Luis Arzola, the author of *La Bandada Infinita*, said his novel has the tradition of literature in Cuba in it, but also introduces new aspects. Arzola said it was difficult for him to live in Cuba during the Special Period and that he had to get a job cutting coal in the mountains in order to survive.

Ramiro Guerra, a dance choreographer and teacher of Cuban ballet explained that his book "is a collection of dances of Cuba." It is a classic book for choreographers and ballerinas, he said, emphasizing that "music and dance is one of the ways that best identifies Cuba for what it is."

Poet Lourdes González also appeared on the panel. González said that artists and writers in Cuba have the freedom to express their views, contrary to claims of the revolution's opponents. González too described Cuba's Special Period. "In order to live and have food and other necessities in the home, my family had to sell the doors of our home for food. My family had to sell the windows of our rooms for clothing. It was a very difficult time," he said.

Authors César López and Luis Alvarez Alvarez also spoke during the program.

Roberta Black is a meat packer in Minnesota and member of the Young Socialists. Norton Sandler contributed to this article

## Israel's Barak resigns, rulers' divisions deepen

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

The Labor Party's Ehud Barak announced his resignation as Israeli prime minister on December 9, forcing the calling of elections within the next two months. His decision preempted a move by the majority in the Knesset, or parliament, whose leaders were expected to vote to dissolve the body in the near future.

Barak has stepped down less than 18 months after he comfortably won the general election against the Likud Party by a wide margin. His opponent in that contest, Benjamin Netanyahu, is mustering support to mount a challenge for the Likud leadership and candidacy.

As Israeli politicians prepare for the sooner-than-expected election, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) have not relaxed their siege of Palestinian areas in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, known as the occupied territories.

### Barak's maneuver

Many have seen Barak's announcement as an attempt to avoid a repeat contest with Netanyahu, who comfortably leads both Barak and the present Likud leader Ariel Sharon in opinion polls. The former Likud prime minister is not a member of the Knesset, and under the specific conditions that pertain after the prime minister's resignation is not eligible to run without special parliamentary dispensation. Netanyahu's chances of overcoming this obstacle improved when a special bill drawn up to grant such dispensation was given preliminary approval on December 13.

Sharon's prospects of holding off Netanyahu's challenge for the Likud leadership look distinctly bleak. The party's central committee greeted Sharon's speech before them the same day with chants of "Bibi! Bibi!"—Netanyahu's nickname.

The election brings to the fore the divisions among Israeli rulers in the face of the continued resistance of the Palestinian people to Tel Aviv's brutality and denial of their national birthright. All the major parties support the continued brutal occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. But Likud spokespeople have often used harsher rhetoric in supporting military measures. On the other hand, voices within Labor—which poses as a "left" alternative to Likud—have urged more restraint and for a more rapid return to negotiations.

Barak defeated Netanyahu by presenting himself and his party as advocates of a negotiated settlement with the Palestinian leadership, which also had hopes that talks would lead to an Israeli withdrawal from substantial parts of the occupied territories. But talks in Egypt collapsed in July after Palestinian leader Yasir Arafat refused to grant the concessions demanded by Barak and U.S. president William Clinton. Barak's popularity slumped in the wake of that fiasco.

Barak's brief reign entered its last act when unrest broke out in late September throughout the occupied territories of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, and inside Israel. The prime minister gave the go-ahead for a crackdown. Since then the Israeli



Hussein Abu Bakra on his Gaza land after the Israeli army stripped it bare. He has defied the Israeli military orders to move, living in a tent which can be seen in the background.

armed forces have imposed a siege of Palestinian areas, used heavy firepower against demonstrators, and launched military strikes against targets associated with the Palestinian Authority and its most prominent figures. The failure of these measures to stifle the unrest has opened up opportunities for Likud and other Labor opponents.

### Costs of Israeli repression

As of December 13 the death from the Israeli brutality stood at 318, the overwhelming majority of them Palestinians. The Palestinian Health Ministry reports that of the more than 10,000 Palestinians wounded, about 900 have sustained serious physical or neurological injuries and will require long-term care. Other economic and social costs, from the lost income of at least 190,000 Palestinians unable to cross into Israel to get to their jobs, to the destruction of homes and farms by the Israeli military, are also rapidly rising.

Seven more Palestinians fell to the gunfire of Israeli security forces on December 8, one of them a 16-year-old in East Jerusalem and four of them policemen of the Palestinian Authority killed by Israeli tank shells near the West Bank city of Jenin. Three Israelis died that same day.

Barak stated, "We will stand and not be broken. A nation that wants to live in the Middle East must know how to withstand difficult moments." The Israeli military has fought many wars against its neighbors and against the Palestinian resistance since it was established on Palestinian land in the late 1940s.

Barak also warned that "none of those who harmed us will go unpunished." The Israeli military has targeted a number of Palestinian figures for assassination. At least five such killings have taken place to date.

"Severe environmental damage [from the occupation] is now also apparent throughout the West Bank and Gaza," wrote Amos

Harel in the Israeli *Ha'aretz* daily on December 12. The journalist described "orchards the IDF uprooted beside roads, ruined buildings, villages with all their access roads blocked."

According to Raji Sourani, director of the Palestinian Center for Human Rights, Israeli bulldozers have destroyed about 600 acres of agricultural land in the Gaza Strip alone. The Israeli forces have effectively reoccupied Gaza, after pulling out many units in 1994.

"Never before did we enjoy guided missiles, tanks, bombardments, gunships on the horizon," said Sourani. "This is the first time that the Israelis ever chopped us in half like butchers, making it mission impossible to move from south to north. And they don't only knock down the people, but the trees."

Sourani was referring to an Israeli policy of demolishing Palestinian houses and crops that allegedly serve as cover for attacks on soldiers and policemen.

One Palestinian farming family described losing their entire farm and home due to an Israeli government decision to carve an exit road for a Jewish settlement. "We took down on either side of it what we needed to take down so the settlers would have safe passage," an army spokesperson said. Under the Oslo agreement, he said, the territory fell under Israeli security control and so was "legally Israeli."

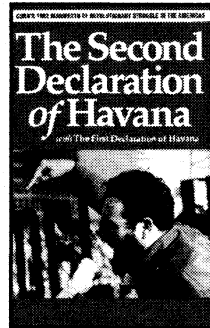
"For about 20 days before the incident, the Israelis were in our fields with their jeeps," said Donya Dhuheir. "That night...we heard engines come closer and closer to the house until they were in the house."

The family had no time to gather their belongings as they ran out the back door. The Israeli vehicles also destroyed hundreds of thousands of dollars worth of greenhouses and crops. "What does this teach my children?" said Omar Jaber Dhuheir to reporters. "It teaches them hatred of the Jews. That's not what we taught them."

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BY MARY-ALICE WATERS

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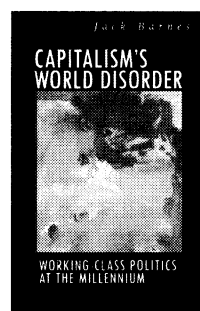
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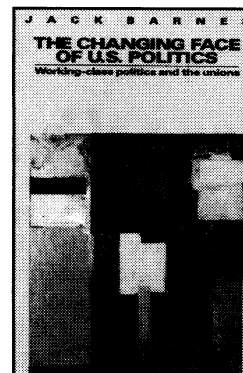
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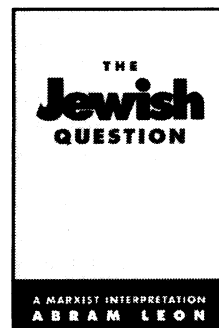
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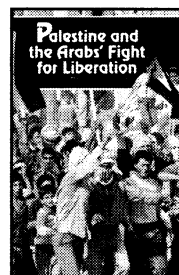
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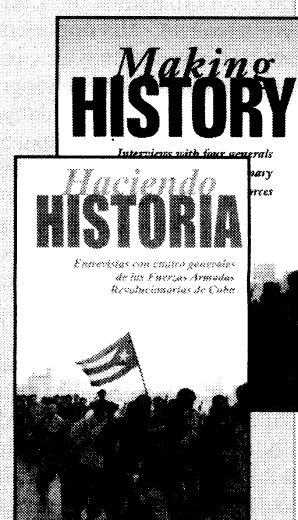


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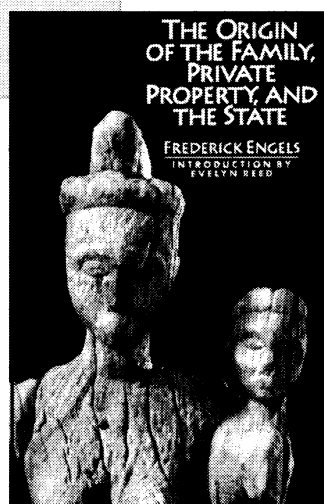
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# Minnesota protesters: 'Free Leonard Peltier'

BY TOM FISKE  
AND BILL SCHMITT

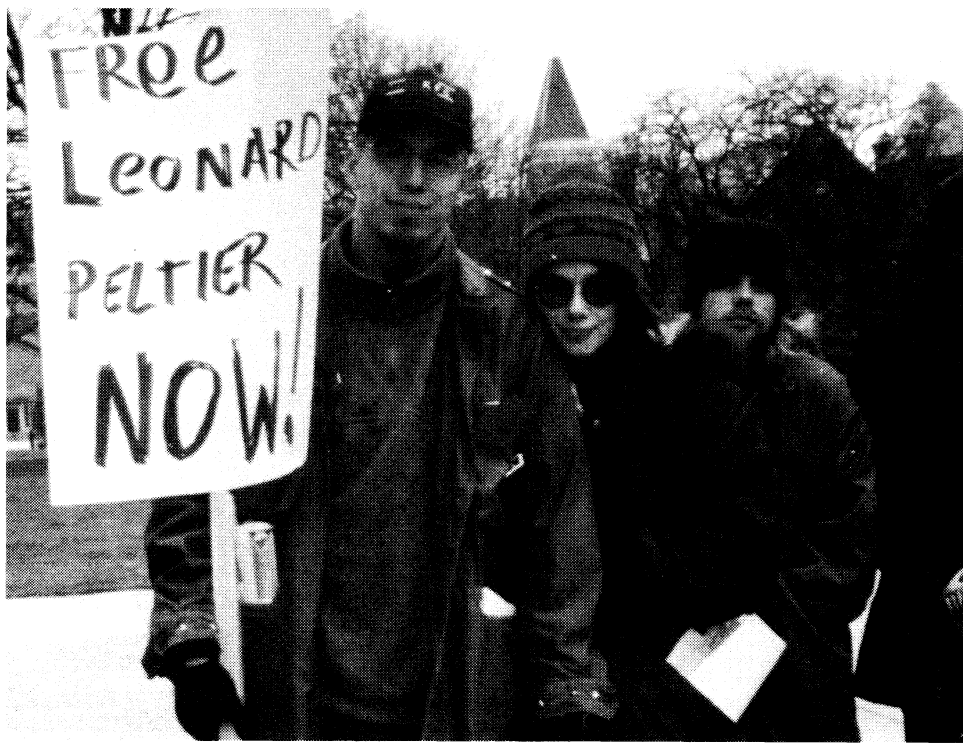
MINNEAPOLIS—"Who should be free? Peltier. When do we want it? Now!" chanted 150 people who braved extreme cold to demand the release of Leonard Peltier from prison.

Demonstrators, carrying five large and brightly colored banners, marched from the headquarters of the American Indian Movement in South Minneapolis to a Catholic church in downtown Minneapolis.

Native Americans on the December 10 march were joined by young people and other supporters of democratic rights. A number of demonstrators traveled 900 miles from an area outside of Winnipeg, Canada, where several struggles for Native rights have been taking place. They were joined by several people from Roseau River, also in Canada, who are members of the Anishinabe Nation.

Terence Nelson, a leader of the Lynx Clan of the Anishinabe in Canada, said at a rally before the march that the action marks "an important day for all of us. The outcome of this case will affect our struggles in Canada."

"Leonard Peltier is the victim of a frame-up. Even the U.S. government has admitted that they have fabricated evidence against him," said Clyde Bellecourt, who chaired



Protesters in Lansing, Michigan, demand Leonard Peltier's release, December 1998. Militant/Marty Ressler

the rally. Dick Bancroft, a longtime AIM supporter, spoke of his recent visits to Peltier in the Leavenworth federal prison in Kansas. "Leonard has physical problems. However, I can tell you his spirit is really strong."

A central leader of the demonstration,

Stephanie Autumn, pointed out that there "are lots of Native American, Latino, Black, and poor white people who are not in prison because of what they have done but because of the double standard of justice in this country. Our enemy is not each other but this

government which oppresses us."

Also speaking at the rally were the head of a local legal rights center and a leader of the fight for justice for Al Sanders, a Black worker who was murdered by the Minneapolis cops.

The demonstration took place in the middle of a broadening debate about the Peltier case, which has received support over many years from a growing number of organizations, governments, and individuals. News that President William Clinton may "review" Peltier's case for possible clemency brought a quick response from FBI director Louis Freeh.

Freeh wrote a letter to Clinton stating that the killings of FBI agents Ron Williams and Jack Coler, for which Peltier was accused and convicted, mark "the most vile disrespect for all that we cherish." He added, "Mr. President, there is no issue more deeply felt within the FBI." The letter was posted to the web site of the Judiciary Committee of the U.S. House of Representatives by its chairman, Rep. Henry Hyde of Illinois, and was subsequently covered as a news item in the big business media.

Taking the lead of Freeh and Hyde, other forces are demanding no pardon be granted Peltier. For example, in response to an editorial in favor of clemency in the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*, a major bourgeois daily paper here, the paper printed a long counter-editorial written by a member of the Ramsey County Sheriff's Department.

## How Peltier was framed

Leonard Peltier, an Anishinabe-Lakota, has spent the last 24 years in prison on frame-up charges of killing two FBI agents in a shoot-out at the Pine Ridge Indian reservation in 1975.

Peltier became involved in the American Indian Movement (AIM) in the early 1970s. He went to Pine Ridge, South Dakota, to assist local people under attack by goons organized by the Pine Ridge Tribal Council headed by Dick Wilson. With silent backing from the FBI, Wilson was carrying out a campaign of violence, including beatings and murder, against those in opposition to his policies. During this time the reservation had the highest ratio of FBI agents to citizens than any other area in the country. Despite this no murders or beatings were ever investigated.

AIM had been the target of federal authorities for years, including under the FBI's COINTELPRO (Counterintelligence program), which grew out of the government's attempts to disrupt the labor movement prior to World War II.

On June 26, 1975, shooting broke out between two FBI agents in unmarked cars and local residents, some of whom were members of AIM. The two agents and one Native man were killed. Three people went to trial for the deaths of the agents, one of whom was Leonard Peltier. No investigation of the Native man's death took place. Two of those who went to trial were found innocent on grounds of self-defense.

Peltier had been previously identified as an AIM leader by the FBI. Fearing that he had no possibility of a fair trial, he fled to Canada. Peltier was later arrested and extradited in response to affidavits manufactured by the FBI that the government now concedes were false and fabricated. He was tried in a different district from the first trial, and by a judge hand-picked by the FBI. Peltier was found guilty of first-degree murder and sentenced to two consecutive life terms.

According to the final decision of the 8th Circuit Court of Appeals, Peltier's trial and previous appeals had been riddled with FBI misconduct and judicial impropriety, including coercion of witnesses, perjury, fabrication of evidence, and the suppression of exculpatory evidence that could have proved his innocence.

In 1993 Peltier filed a petition for commutation of his sentence with the Department of Justice. Supporters of Peltier are seeking a presidential pardon by William Clinton before he leaves office.

—TOM FISKE

# Seattle newspaper strikers defend union

Continued from front page

sports story. It includes on its staff the most popular reporters and columnists from the two struck papers. *P-I* sports columnist Art Thiel is one of the main spokesmen for the Guild, as is *Times* columnist Ron Judd.

In its efforts to break the strike, the bosses hired replacement workers and a union-busting security firm, boarded up windows at their buildings, and put up chain link fences around their properties. They have also gone to court against the strikers more than once. On December 8 they won an injunction against pickets delaying trucks and other vehicles entering the companies' facilities. Judge Suzanne Barnett ordered strikers to get no closer than five feet from any car or truck entering or leaving *Times* properties.

Since the walkout began, the owners of Seattle's two largest papers have gone to great lengths to try to weaken the impact of the strike, including giving out the papers for free. On December 17 this practice will end and the daily papers will be available at 25 cents, half their pre-strike cost.

After the most recent refusal by the companies to bargain with the Guild, striking union members announced they would intensify their campaign to get people not to buy the struck papers, cancel their subscriptions, and have advertisers remove their ads from both papers.

The Guild is asking advertisers to instead purchase ad space in the *Seattle Union Record*. The Washington State Labor Council and the King County Labor Council announced they will be aiding the Guild in this effort to reach the newspapers' readers and advertisers through mailings, radio spots, and leafleting.

A number of the strikers explain that they originally didn't think the situation would come to a strike. Catherine Reller, a young striker who worked eight months in advertising before the strike, explained that she was raised never to cross a picket line. "But originally," she said, "I told my boss that I wouldn't picket. But then when they called us in and threatened us with firing if we went on strike I decided to be here." Many strikers do more than their assigned 20 hours of picketing a week.

Janet Pederson stood with a picket sign at her post in the almost freezing temperature that got colder with the wind. Referring to recent strike negotiations where bosses refused to budge on their so-called "last and final" offer, she said, "It makes me more determined. At this point I think the attitude of a lot of the strikers is to do the best we can for the greater good, not just for ourselves."

Ernie Mailhot is a meat packer and member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 81.



Seattle newspaper workers rally December 3 to defend their union. Militant/Lisa Ahlberg

## SWP vote totals in November elections

BY GREG MCCARTAN

Socialist Workers presidential candidate James Harris and running-mate Margaret Trowe received 10,644 votes in the November election.

Harris, 52, and Trowe, 52, were on the ballot in 13 states and the District of Columbia, two more states than in 1996. Reactionary legislation aimed at limiting ballot access prevented the SWP from obtaining ballot status in many states. Requirements that include submitting tens of thousands of signatures are not uncommon across the country. The SWP petitioning effort in New York, for example, collected 31,000 signatures, double the number required.

This was the SWP's 14th presidential ticket. Farrell Dobbs and Grace Carlson were the first SWP candidates for president and vice president in 1948, and the party has run a ticket in every presidential election year since.

This year the SWP fielded 11 candidates for U.S. Senate and 21 for the U.S. House of Representatives. Rebecca Ellis, 52, Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. Senate in Minnesota, received 13,781 votes. Ellis participated in a panel of five candidates for U.S. Senate in Minnesota, and was featured in a "Minnesota Citizens' Forum Candidate Quiz" that ran in the Minneapolis *Star-Tribune* for seven consecutive Sundays. Each week the candidates answered questions such as, "What would you do to improve

the rural economy and the prosperity of the family farm?"

In New York, senatorial candidate Jacob Perasso, 24, a leader of the Young Socialists, received 4,103 votes. And in New Jersey, the party's Senate candidate, Nancy Rosenstock, 51, a garment worker, received 3,219. The other SWP candidates for senate were write-in candidates.

Among the SWP candidates for U.S. House of Representatives, Paul Pederson, 24, who stood for the 12th Congressional District (CD) in Brooklyn, New York, received 1,271 votes; Maurice Williams, 43, running in the 10th CD in Newark, New Jersey, received 448 votes; Kari Sachs, 35, in the 13th CD in the Newark area, received 156 votes; Edwin Fruit, 53, a packinghouse worker running in the 4th CD in Des Moines, Iowa, received 612 votes; Sam Manuel, 50, running for District of Columbia representative to the House, a nonvoting position, received 1,419 votes.

Trowe and Harris traveled to 70 cities and towns in 35 states during the election year, and took their socialist campaign to Australia, Canada, Iceland, New Zealand, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. The campaign was able to break into the media in a number of cities, especially in newspapers. Much of this coverage, as well as articles and other information on the campaign was featured in the *Militant*. These items can now be found under "Search back issues," listed under the year 2000 at: themilitant.com.

# New Zealand fruit farmers protest low prices

BY FELICITY COGGAN  
AND COLIN PARKER

WELLINGTON, New Zealand—"The survival of the pip fruit industry is at stake," Peter Young told a rally of 150 orchardists and supporters on the steps of parliament. The rally, organized by the newly formed Grower Survival Group, which represents mainly middle-sized and small growers, followed a lively tractorcade through the main street of the city here December 6. Marchers gave apples away to passersby and carried placards calling attention to the problems facing the growers.

Most anger was directed at Enza, the organization that controls pip fruit exports. Set up as the Apple and Pear Marketing Board, it was originally run by the government. Following deregulation by the National-led government before the last election, the marketing functions of the Board were set up as a joint stock company, with shares distributed to growers.

Then, earlier this year, investment companies Guinness Peat Group and FR Partners took control of Enza through a purchase of 40 percent of the shares. Growers hold the remaining 60 percent.

Peter Young, chairman of the Grower Survival Group, described to the rally the new and lower rates growers will get for the 2000 season introduced by Enza. Royal Gala returns drop from NZ\$13.71 per carton in 1999 to NZ\$9.65 in 2000. (NZ\$1=US 40 cents). He brought his granddaughter to the protest. She held a placard saying, "Please don't let my granddad go broke or he'll have to come and live with us."

In addition, Enza recently announced sig-



Pip fruit farmers and farm workers protest December 6 in Wellington, New Zealand, against declining returns, limited markets, and risk of foreclosure.

nificant new restrictions on the size of apples it will accept. For the Royal Gala variety, the main crop in the key Hawkes Bay growing area, for example, this means 89 percent of the new crop would be rejected.

At present growers can sell their apples for export only to Enza, except for a small number who are granted permits for independent exports by the Apple and Pear

Board, as long as these do not compete with Enza's interests. About 90 percent of apples grown in New Zealand are exported.

The marchers, who came from around the country, demanded the government free up the granting of export permits to allow them to export more fruit independently of Enza. On the day of the march, however, Enza was granted a court injunction backing its right

to limit such exports.

Sylvia Beavis, a grower from nearby Wairarapa who spoke at the rally, said that for most sizes of fruit, the returns don't cover the cost of production. "Which part of the word 'broke' does the minister not understand?" she asked. "We must have returns that favor growers, not corporates."

Damien O'Connor, speaking for the Labour-led government in place of the Minister of Agriculture, blamed the growers' decision to sell their shares for their plight. This drew an angry response from the crowd, with some shouting, "Why do you think we sold them—because we can't grow, because we can't sell."

Speaking to the *Militant*, Bernie Cacciopoli, a grower who operates two acres of orchards after being forced to cut back over the years, estimated he would need returns of about NZ\$25 per carton to cover costs. About half the apple crop is used for juice, at a return of only NZ\$1.60 per carton, he said. He explained pip fruit growers don't necessarily want deregulation, pointing out how the deregulation of the egg industry had led to many being forced off their farms. He estimated that if growers' demands are not met, half the orchardists could soon be forced off the land.

After the rally, many of the participants marched in an orderly fashion up to the nearby Enza head office. They expressed their anger by leaving their placards from the march in the lobby.

Felicity Coggan is a member of the National Distribution Union in Auckland. Colin Parker is a meat packer in Auckland.

## Food workers win right to union representation at Goldman Sachs

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Some 180 cafeteria workers employed at six Goldman Sachs sites around New York City won the right in early December to be represented by a union.

The workers are employed by the investment bank's food-services contractor, Restaurant Associates, which has a long history of fighting unionization campaigns. After a year-and-a-half-long battle with Local 100 of the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees International Union (HERE), this contractor finally signed an accord to allow workers to form a union as soon as a majority of them sign cards saying they want to unionize.

"This is the best news that we have received this year," said Julio Morel, who earns \$9.30 an hour after working for three and a half years as a food preparation worker and server at Goldman Sachs. "I need a union because I need respect on the job, and I need better benefits for me and my family." Morel, who has three young children, said he could not afford to pay the \$3,100 in annual premiums for family health insurance under the Restaurant Associates plan.

The workers and their supporters have been holding demonstrations, vigils, and distributing leaflets up and down Wall Street publicizing the fact that they are paid too little to be able to afford health insurance while Goldman Sachs makes millions for its customers.

One union leaflet pointed out that the investment firm had received millions of dollars in tax incentives from New York City and Jersey City. It said, "Why is a billion-

dollar company receiving government assistance while food-service workers earn poverty-level wages without affordable family health-care coverage?"

According to union officials, in April 1999 when the organizing drive began, 76 out of 115 cafeteria workers then employed at Goldman Sachs signed cards saying they wanted to be represented by a union.

Some 95 food workers at the Metropolitan Opera, who are under contract by Restaurant Associates, are also involved in a protracted fight for union recognition.

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**Talking Politics in Mexico (A reportback from the Guadalajara Book Fair).** Roberta Black, a meat packer and member of the Young Socialists and United Food and Commercial Workers in Minnesota, returns from staffing the Pathfinder Press booth at Mexico's largest annual book fair. Pattie Thompson Sanchez will discuss aspects

of contemporary Mexican politics. Sat., Dec. 16, 7:00 p.m. Dinner 6:00 p.m. 1212 N. Ashland, 2nd floor (at the plaza of Milwaukee and Division) Donation: \$5 for program, \$5 for dinner. Tel: (773) 342-1780.

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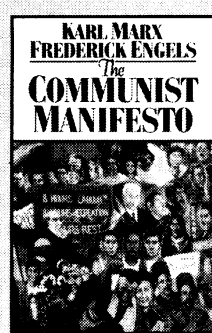
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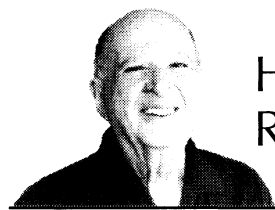
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**Do it, sisters and brothers!**—Students at South Pasadena High School, in the Los Angeles area, are organizing a union to win them a



Harry Ring

voice in the education process, as well as dealing with immediate school problems. Declared Justine Nakase, a co-founder of the organization: "The word union evokes

unity and gives us power."

**Capitalism at its best**—"The agricultural workers in California who help put nutritional fruits and vegetables on American tables themselves suffer from "a startlingly high" risk for chronic illnesses such as heart disease and stroke—probably because of poor nutrition. This is true despite the workers' relative youth and vigorous physical exertion, according to the most comprehensive study of farm workers' health ever done in California"—*Los Angeles Times*.

**Like we say, don't bend your knee**—In the late 1980s and early '90s, some 1,500 people in the

United Kingdom were fitted with artificial knees sold to 36 hospitals by a major supplier. Now they report that "hundreds" of these must be recalled (and, we trust, replaced) because they haven't lasted as long as expected and can cause bone injuries.

**So what do they do?**—In Turkey, hundreds of financially hard-pressed people are walking into hospitals and offering to sell their kidneys. A doctor at a national kidney hospital said, "We explain that it's illegal."

**A deodorant?**—In London, a team of cops sent flowers to an older couple they had earlier run out

into the street in their nightwear. The officers said they had broken into the wrong house because they had been given the incorrect address for a wanted gunman.

**Not to mention decent wages**—Despite a general rise in the economy, southern Iowa is still hit by poverty. In Decatur County, an estimated 20 percent of the people are living in poverty. A sociology prof pointed to lack of jobs, government spending, natural resources, and good roads.

**And the teachers?**—In North Andover, Massachusetts, high school principal Susan Nicholson wants to change opening classes

from 7:15 a.m. to 8:15 a.m. She said students are showing up bleary-eyed and cranky.

**Protecting them from themselves?**—The office of Nebraska's attorney general says prison inmates have no right to see their own medical records. And the mouthpiece for the prison system points out that prisoners can always try for a court order.

**A query**—News items like the previous make you steam? Good. One way to get such items around is to send clippings for use in this column. Send to Great Society c/o Pathfinder Bookstore, 2546 W. Pico Blvd. Los Angeles, CA 90006.

## Unions defend workers' wages, living standards

Printed below is the first part of an article entitled "Trades Unions" by Frederick Engels. It appears in the pamphlet *The Wages System*, made up of 12 articles that Engels wrote between May and August 1881 for *The Labour Standard*, a weekly trade union newspaper published in London. The item below was first published in the May 28, 1881, issue. The pamphlet, published by Progress Publishers, is available from Pathfinder for \$2. The footnote appears in the pamphlet. Subtitles are by the *Militant*.

BY FREDERICK ENGELS

In our last issue we considered the action of Trades Unions as far as they enforced the economical law of wages against employers. We return to this subject, as it is of the highest importance that the working classes generally should thoroughly understand it.

We suppose no English working man of the present day needs to be taught that it is the interest of the individual capitalist, as well

unorganised labour has no effective means of resistance. Therefore, in trades without organisation of the workpeople, wages tend constantly to fall and the working hours tend constantly to increase. Slowly, but surely, this process goes on. Times of prosperity may now and then interrupt it, but times of bad trade hasten it on all the more afterwards. The workpeople gradually get accustomed to a lower and lower standard of life. While the length of working day more and more approaches the possible maximum, the wages come nearer and nearer to their absolute minimum—the sum below which it becomes absolutely impossible for the workman to live and to reproduce his race.

There was a temporary exception to this about the beginning of this century. The rapid extension of steam and machinery was not sufficient for the still faster increasing demand for their produce. Wages in these trades, except those of children sold from the workhouse to the manufacturer, were as a rule high; those of such skilled manual labour as could not be done without were very high; what a dyer, a mechanic, a velvet-cutter, a hand-mule spinner, used to receive now sounds fabulous. At the same time the trades superseded by machinery were slowly starved to death. But newly-invented machinery by-and-by superseded these well-paid workmen; machinery was invented which made machinery, and that at such a rate that the supply of machine-made goods not only equalled, but exceeded, the demand. When the general peace, in 1815, reestablished regularity of trade, the decennial fluctuations between prosperity, overproduction, and commercial panic began. Whatever advantages the workpeople had preserved from old prosperous times, and perhaps even increased during the period of frantic overproduction, were now taken from them during the period of bad trade and panic; and soon the manufacturing population of England submitted to the general law that the wages of unorganised labour constantly tend towards the absolute minimum.

### Workers need to be organized

But in the meantime the Trades Unions, legalised in 1824, had also stepped in, and high time it was. Capitalists are always organised. They need in most cases no formal union, no rules, officers, etc. Their small number, as compared with that of the workmen, the fact of their forming a separate class, their constant social and commercial intercourse stand them in lieu of that; it is only later on, when a branch of manufacturers has taken possession of a district, such as the cotton trade has of Lancashire, that a formal capitalists' Trades Union becomes necessary. On the other hand, the workpeople from the very beginning cannot do without a strong organisation, well-defined by rules and delegating its authority to officers and committees. The Act of 1824 rendered these organisations legal. From that day Labour became a power in England. The formerly helpless mass, divided against itself, was no longer so. To the strength given by union and common action soon was added the force of a well-filled exchequer—"resistance money," as our French brethren expressively call it. The entire position of things now changed. For the capitalist it became a risky thing to indulge in a reduction of wages or an increase of working hours.



Militant/Monica Jones

**Meat packers on strike against Superior Poultry rally August 22 in British Columbia. Workers are hired at minimum wage and work mandatory 12-hour days, six days a week. Engels explained that without unions wages would tend to constantly fall and working hours constantly increase.**

Hence the violent outbursts of the capitalist class of those times against Trades Unions. That class had always considered its long-established practice of grinding down the working class as a vested right and

lawful privilege. That was now to be put a stop to. No wonder they cried out lustily and held themselves at least as much injured in their rights and property as Irish landlords

Continued on Page 4

### from the pages of *The Wages System*

as of the capitalist class generally, to reduce wages as much as possible. The produce of labour, after deducting all expenses, is divided, as David Ricardo had irrefutably proved, into two shares: the one forms the labourer's wages, the other the capitalist's profits. Now, this net produce of labour being, in every individual case, a given quantity, it is clear that the share called profits cannot increase without the share called wages decreasing. To deny that it is the interest of the capitalist to reduce wages, would be tantamount to say that it is not his interest to increase his profits.

We know very well that there are other means of temporarily increasing profits, but they do not alter the general law, and therefore need not trouble us here.

### Wages pushed down, hours extended

Now, how can the capitalists reduce wages when the rate of wages is governed by a distinct and well-defined law of social economy? The economical law of wages is there, and is irrefutable. But, as we have seen, it is elastic, and it is so in two ways. The rate of wages can be lowered, in a particular trade, either directly, by gradually accustoming the workpeople of that trade to a lower standard of life, or, indirectly, by increasing the number of working hours per day (or the intensity of work during the same working hours) without increasing the pay.

And the interest of every individual capitalist to increase his profits by reducing the wages of his workpeople receives a fresh stimulus from the competition of capitalists of the same trade amongst each other. Each one of them tries to undersell his competitors, and unless he is to sacrifice his profits he must try and reduce wages. Thus, the pressure upon the rate of wages brought about by the interest of every individual capitalist is increased tenfold by the competition amongst them. What was before a matter of more or less profit, now becomes a matter of necessity.

Against this constant, unceasing pressure

## —25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

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

December 19, 1975

WASHINGTON—"This is not an economic strike. It is a strike for survival," says James Dugan, president of press operators Local 6, International Printing and Graphic Communications Union.

It has been ten weeks since the management of the *Washington Post* forced the press operators out on strike October 1.

"We are dealing with a straight-out battle as to whether big business can completely dominate the unions," Dugan explains, "whether they can just throw us out whenever they get tired of us."

*Post* management refused to even negotiate with the press operators until just a few weeks before the contract expired September 30. Instead, the owners secretly sent more than 100 people to a scab training school in Oklahoma set up by a publishers' antiunion association.

The striking unions are not seeking any new contract gains. They only want to keep the provisions they already have.

*Post* management wants sweeping roll-backs in the areas of job security and working conditions. They want to eliminate the cost-of-living clause; do away with rest periods between back-to-back shifts; change the grievance procedures; eliminate time-and-a-half pay for double shifts; and reduce the number of press operators by 30 percent on the smaller presses and by 60 percent on the larger presses.

Although the Washington-Baltimore Newspaper Guild in its majority supports the strike, a slim majority of the *Post* unit of the guild has voted to cross the picket lines. Several hundred guild members form the nucleus of the work force putting out the *Post*.

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

December 25, 1950

A foretaste of the militarization of labor was given by the efforts of Truman, the U.S. Army and the federal courts to break the strike of 10,000 railway yardmen in 15 cities. Despite Truman's efforts, however, the strike showed sufficient strength to win concessions. A settlement covering 300,000 rail workers gave a 23 cent an hour wage increase, plus a quarterly automatic increase of 1 cent for every 1 percent in living costs. Working conditions were frozen for three years.

The yardmen's strike was an "outlaw" movement that spread from city to city. Though not endorsed by the railway Brotherhoods' officials, it showed every sign of beating the rail corporations. It was not powerful enough, however, to withstand Truman, the rail barons, the union of officials, and the press, all strike-breaking in the name of the "national emergency."

The union first took its demand through the tortuous procedure of the Railway Labor Board with no results. Then a Truman-appointed "fact-finding" committee considered the dispute. This committee proposed a 40-hour week with an hourly wage increase of 18 cents. Since this would have meant a weekly cut of approximately \$17 union negotiators turned it down. The ranks held out for the original demand. A strike was called for Aug. 28, 1950.

On August 21, Truman "seized" the railroads, ordered that no strike take place and put the U.S. Army in charge.

Army management of the railroads was a farce. Seven railway presidents were made "colonels"—only one had to be sworn in, six being reserve colonels—from Truman's previous phony railroad seizure.

# INS raid aids antiunion drive

Meat packers and other unionists should join with the United Food and Commercial Workers union in protesting the December 5 raid at Nebraska Beef by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, aided by Omaha police and Nebraska State troopers. The raid and the company's subsequent firing of workers protesting line speed is a direct attack on the union-organizing drive at the plant and on others in the region. A vigorous and united response can demand: Stop the deportations! End the raids! Rehire the fired workers! Recognize the union!

Many meat packers, as well as millions of workers in other industries, face not only the employers when they begin to resist brutal conditions on the job, low pay, humiliation at the hands of the bosses, and unsafe working conditions. Because they have been drawn into the workforce in the United States from around the world, they also must directly confront U.S. government agencies, such as the hated *la migra*. Making immigrant workers "illegal" and "alien," relegating them to a second-class and pariah status within the working class, and setting them up for victimization is an age-old divide-and-rule tactic of the bosses and their government.

The bosses profit handsomely from this arrangement by getting away with paying lower wages and through speedup, attacks on safety, and elimination of medical coverage, decent pensions, and other benefits won through unionization.

But the employers have a growing problem. Immigrant workers are part of the growing resistance of working people in this country, and they are becoming part of the leadership of a number of struggles in the meatpacking, garment and textile, and other industries. They have also

joined protest actions to demand an end to attacks on immigrant rights, for citizenship rights, an end to the threat of deportation, and to defend bilingual education.

Until the early 1980s the meatpacking industry was one of the highest paying, with wages in the \$15-\$18 range. Then the companies went on an offensive to lower wages, increase the line speeds, and worsen working conditions. The bosses hoped that through massive hiring of immigrant workers they could make even further inroads against workers and keep unions out.

The employers' antiunion drive forced a decline in unionization through the 1980s from 46 percent to 21 percent of the workforce. In fact by the early 1990s there were no union-organized meatpacking plants in Omaha.

The life and limb of workers is at constant risk. The state of Iowa reported that in 1998, the injury rate was 9.3 out of every 100 workers. For those in meatpacking the rate soared to 58.2 per 100 workers. There is no reason that the meatpacking industry cannot be as safe as other industries. It has to do with how the capitalist system exploits workers to increase its profit levels. And it has to do with the level of union control on the job and the degree of fightback by workers.

The fact that even after the raid a layer of workers at Nebraska Beef stopped work and walked off the job to protest the line speed shows the potential for union organization in the area. But workers and farmers, and the labor movement as a whole, will continually be set back without joining the fight to stand with immigrant workers as part and parcel of the working class in the United States, with equal treatment and equal rights under the law.

# Israel out of occupied territories

The daily brutalities the Israeli government inflicts on Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza Strip is a powerful testimony as to why all working people should call for Israel's immediate withdrawal from the territories it occupied in its 1967 war of aggression.

The death toll alone speaks volumes about the character of Tel Aviv's occupation. Israeli rifle and machine gun fire, tank shells, and helicopter-launched missiles have taken the lives of more than 300 Palestinians since the crackdown began at the end of September. Some 10,000 others have been wounded, many of them seriously and permanently.

Reports from Gaza describe another all-too-familiar side to this occupation. The Israeli government uses its domination over the occupied territories to target Palestinian workers and farmers. Government "security measures" and settlement expansion plans mean Palestinian farms and houses are often destroyed by armored cars and bulldozers, frequently destroying the livelihoods and life savings of thousands. In Gaza alone, hundreds of acres of farmland have been devastated in this way over the past several months.

These methods pursued by Tel Aviv are simply aimed at terrorizing working people who are Palestinian and reasserting by force the oppression of the Palestinian people. They are a continuation of the very means by which Israel was formed and expanded as a heavily armed garrison state—through the eviction of much of the Palestinian population, through wars of conquest against its neighbors, and through nonstop brutality against Palestinians inside Israel and in the region. This is the source of, and guarantees, further conflicts, wars, and bloodshed.

The great majority of Jewish people who live in Israel have no objective stake in this setup. The garrison state is a death-trap for Jews. The actions of the Israeli government and military, carried out falsely in the name of the Jewish people, divide Jewish and Palestinian working people from each other, in the absence of a leadership that speaks clearly of the need for unity in the fight against the capitalist regime. A Palestinian farmer who recently lost his land to the Israeli military's bulldozers summed up the problem: the government's actions "teaches [children] hatred of the Jews," he said. Adding, "That's not what we taught them."

The political questions tied up in the history and modern reality of the state of Israel, and the national struggle by the Palestinian people merit the closest study by vanguard workers and working farmers. The structure and character of an oppressed people on a world scale, and the concrete nature of the state of Israel as an oppressor nation, are important questions addressed in a number of titles published by Pathfinder. The books place both the fight against anti-Semitism and the Palestinian liberation fight in their true place, as part of the fight of workers and farmers to overthrow imperialist exploitation and capitalist brutality.

Several of those books and pamphlets are being offered at special rates to Readers Club members by the working-class publisher during the holiday period. We urge readers of the *Militant* to take advantage of these specials and to join together with others to discuss these books.

Doing so is part of the fight to win tens of millions around the world to the revolutionary struggle for a democratic, secular Palestine.

# Midwest farmers speak on crisis

Continued from front page

as it did under the Republicans."

Jasper explained how one consequence of this concentration is that farmers confront high prices from their suppliers and low prices for the commodities they sell. "My milk prices now are what they were 30 years ago," he explained. "Take your wages back 30 years and leave your rent and food prices alone—where would you be?"

Both farmers also took up the question of biotechnology—genetically engineered crops—under capitalism. Ginter noted that biotechnology has the potential to "solve the age old problems of hunger, sickness, and unsafe food." But it has a "sinister side or an ulterior motive of power and greed" as well. "It is truly the double-edged sword."

Thousands of farmers are facing problems with StarLink corn, which has not been approved for human consumption. Many farmers were not told of various problems with growing the corn and now cannot sell their crop because StarLink corn has been mixed in.

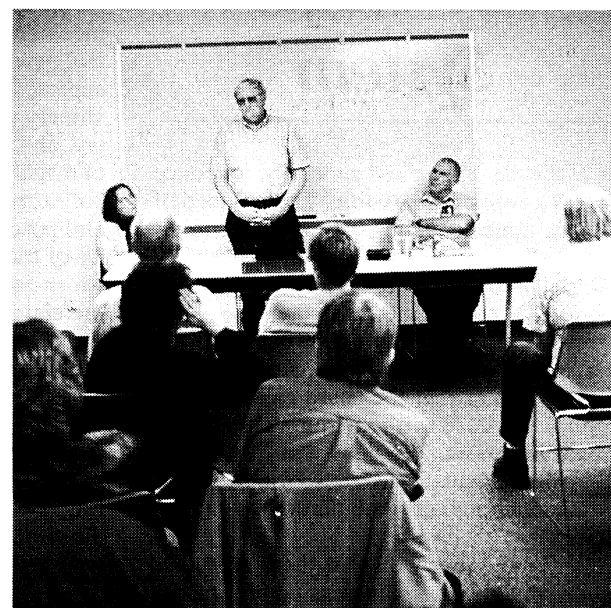
Ginter gave the example of the "aptly-named terminator gene," which sterilizes seeds to prevent them from being used again the following year to plant with. Many Third World peasant farmers who replant the seeds of their recently harvested crops, "would be forced to buy year after year from the agribusiness conglomerates," he said.

Jasper told of the big impact that the negative side of biotechnology had on him as an activist and fighter. "Everybody reaches a line in the sand," he explained. "For me, it was when Bovine Growth Hormone [BGH] came around." This substance speeds up the production of milk in dairy cows, he explained, but in a manner that endangers the health of the cows and the quality of dairy products.

Out of their experiences fighting the crisis conditions generated by capitalism on the land, both of these veteran activists have learned about the land reform and socialist revolution in Cuba, a country where unlike in the United States or United Kingdom, as Jasper put it, "Farmers are highly respected and make money."

Jasper's observations, based on his participation in a delegation of U.S. farmers and workers hosted by the National Association of Small Farmers (ANAP) of Cuba last Spring, were a particular focus of interest at the forum. He said there were 900 cooperatives represented at the congress, noting the high number of small farmers in the country.

Despite the collapse of trade and aid from the former Soviet Union in the early 1990s, something Cubans "called the Special Period—we'd have called it the disaster area—Cuban farmers have actually raised their production," Jasper explained. "They have their own school, health care,



Militant

Randy Jasper, a Wisconsin farmer, speaks at a Militant Labor Forum October 14 in Twin Cities.

doctor, a community building right on their farm."

"In reality," Jasper stated, "I think the Special Period probably made them a lot stronger. Because they've actually increased production considerably without chemicals."

"In reference to what we have," he said, "Cuba is a poor country. But they're happy. They have what they need, so they're not poor. About 80 percent of what they produce on their farms is sold to the government at a good price, where they make money. Five percent more is paid in taxes. Fifteen percent is sold on the open market."

Jasper was struck by the respect for farmers and farming shown by the people he met in Havana. He noted that delegates to the ANAP congress stayed with people in the city who volunteered to put them up.

The U.S. government "is scared of Cuba for one reason: the attitude of the people," Jasper insisted. "Because if people here felt the way people do there, the government we have, which is run by big business, would be in trouble. That's the fear of Cuba."

## Right to farm

"It's against the law to repossess a farm in Cuba," he explained. "If you're working that farm it cannot be repossessed. The government will send people out to help you. Twenty-five thousand families were put back on the land in Cuba last year alone. You tell the government you want a farm and they'll give you a deed to a chunk of

Continued on Page 15

## Puerto Rico: Independence Is a Necessity

Rafael Cancel Miranda

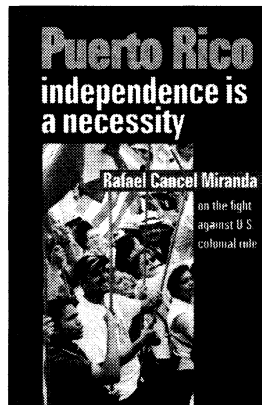
"Our people are becoming aware of their own strength, which is what the colonial powers fear," explains Puerto Rican independence leader Rafael Cancel Miranda. In two interviews, he speaks out on the brutal reality of U.S. colonial domination, the campaign needed to free Puerto Rican political prisoners, the example of Cuba's socialist revolution, and the resurgence of the independence movement today. In English and Spanish. \$3.00

## The Right of Nations to Self-Determination

V. I. Lenin

The working class advances and advocates the right of all oppressed nations to secede, Lenin explains, but it "values above all the alliance of the proletariat of all nations, and assesses any national demand from the angle of the workers' class struggle." In *Questions of National Policy and Proletarian Internationalism*. \$12.95

From Pathfinder



Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690. Fax: (212) 727-0150. When ordering by mail, please include \$3 to cover shipping and handling.



# The rightward shift in bourgeois politics

The following is an excerpt from a talk presented by Jack Barnes to participants in a regional socialist educational conference in Greensboro, North Carolina, and the following day to a similar gathering in Des Moines, Iowa. The talk reported the decisions of a meeting the previous weekend in New York City of the Socialist Workers Party National Committee, youth leaders of the SWP, and leaders of communist leagues in several other countries. The assessment it presents one year after the inauguration of William Clinton as president will be useful to readers to review, leading into a new Bush administration.

The entire talk appears in the pages of *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*, copyright © 1999 Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

Following the U.S. presidential elections in November 1992, the National Committee of the Socialist Workers Party organized public forums in New York and several other cities to discuss what the election showed. We subtitled these presentations—accurately, if wordily—“How the 1992 Elections Hid the Real Political Issues and Prepared Deepening Aggression by Washington.”

Remember the “analysis” promoted on TV and in the daily papers at the time about why Clinton won the election? Taking their cue from the Clinton campaign’s spin doctors, they explained how Clinton’s election “strategist” James Carville had put up a sign in the campaign headquarters in Little Rock, Arkansas, saying, “It’s the economy, stupid!”—and they had all been guided by that credo to the letter. (By the way, how is that for working relations among equals? “It’s the economy, *stupid*.” “That’s not the way to do it, *stupid*.”) We said we disagreed with that arrogant sign and the importance it was being assigned by the big-business media. The elections were *not* about economic policy.

What was behind the outcome last November were the defeats that had been dealt to Washington internationally, and the Bush administration’s incapacity to provide even the semblance of a stable political way forward for U.S. capitalism. Bush had lost the confidence of the majority of the U.S. ruling class coming out of the Gulf War. Despite the initial victory hype only months earlier when White House approval was at its zenith in opinion polls, Bush lost the

bourgeoisie’s confidence as the resulting fiasco became clear to them.

The most important political fact in the elections was the vote for a Bonapartist-type candidate. Ross Perot, a person few people had even heard of shortly before, had gotten nearly 20 percent of the votes cast. Perot moved into bourgeois politics from a different angle than Buchanan; his campaign did not have the direct thrust toward an incipient fascist movement. But he converged with Buchanan’s “America First” demagoguery and tried to tap the same kind of fears and insecurities in the middle class.

All the political trends we had seen during the elections, we said, would continue after the election. In fact, one of the best ways to look at politics today is that the election campaign is continuing.

Domestic politics during the Clinton administration is deepening the bipartisan assault on the social wage of the working class that marked the Bush White House and other Republican and Democratic administrations going back to the mid-1970s. This is proceeding along the lines argued by all the bourgeois candidates during the election campaign but pounded at most insistently by Perot. Just last month, *New York Times* correspondent B. Drummond Ayres pointed out that “some parts of Mr. Clinton’s speeches are beginning to sound like Ross Perot clichés. These days, the President talks almost as much as Mr. Perot about program cuts, bureaucratic bloat and government waste.”

Every adaptation to Perot by the Clinton administration, we noted earlier, will further embolden Perot and his supporters. Each time Clinton says to his critics on the right, “I’ve done a tremendous amount of what you’re arguing for,” the rightists take heart and reply: “Not enough. It’s not working, and you’re at fault.” Clinton has a disadvantage: he eventually has to *do something*. The right-wing demagogues, on the other hand, have a great advantage—they never have to do anything. Their aim is not to get their program carried out, not yet—they really have no short-term program in that sense. Their long-term aim is to shove aside the other bourgeois forces and bring themselves to political dominance playing on the battered hopes of the middle class for stability and security.

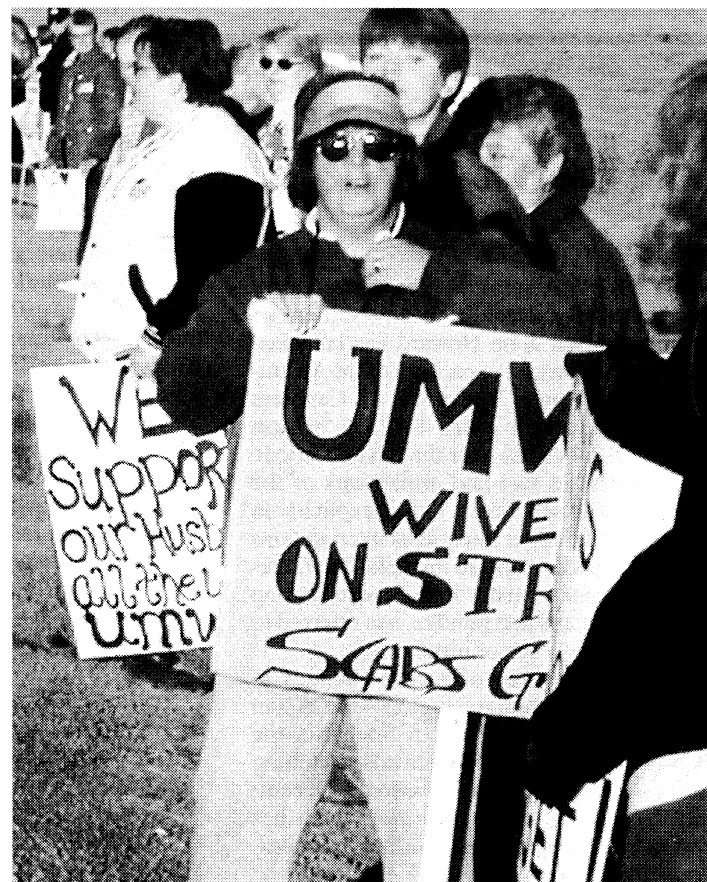
What is happening in U.S. politics today is not that rightists like Patrick Buchanan or Ross Perot are pushing Bush, Clinton,

and other Democratic or Republican politicians to the right. To the contrary, it is the failure of capitalism and the rightward drift of the two parties that provides these demagogues with the themes of their campaigns and makes other capitalist politicians so vulnerable to them. They simply state forthrightly the reactionary presumptions behind the politically more right-wing direction that politicians in *both* parties are taking, even as they spar with each other over how fast and how far to go right now in their assault on the freedoms and living standards of working people and the oppressed.

How many politicians, Democratic or Republican, for example, are willing to answer Buchanan’s rightist demagoguery by saying that they are for quotas when necessary to combat racist and antiwoman discrimination and move toward equality in hiring and education? Or that they welcome all those who choose to immigrate to the United States? Or that they are not for “America First”? The truth is that regardless of platitudes about world peace and cooperation, a harsher and harsher bourgeois nationalism increasingly marks the language of capitalist politics across the board in the United States (and throughout the imperialist world).

That is why we said Clinton will be a war president, that the elections prepared expanding world aggression. His administration, we said, will be marked by efforts to find new ways of threatening to use, and if necessary using, U.S. military force. The U.S. rulers try to use their small allies as surrogates in some cases. During the National Committee meeting last week, communists from New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and Sweden listed the places around the world where troops from these countries are currently stationed: Lebanon, Cambodia, Bosnia, Somalia, and elsewhere.

But when push comes to shove, it is the U.S. armed forces that will dominate any sustained, large-scale military operation. And after initial enthusiasm and grudging support for our boys, a fight at home will open that will begin to transform politics in



United Mine Workers picket line at Kemmerer mine in June. “What is on the agenda is the further unfolding of this world pattern: growing class tensions, political polarization and radicalization, and class differentiations and conflicts within all nations and nationalities.”

this country, as happened during the U.S. war against Vietnam.

## Communist analysis and the test of events

This is the world—its accelerating disorder, its lines of disintegration, its class struggles—whose dialectics the Socialist Workers Party and our co-thinkers in other countries have brought into focus since the 1987 stock market crash. Each time we have confronted a new turning point, we have gotten together at international leadership gatherings, evaluated how our analysis has stood up, made any indicated adjustments, and used that assessment as our guide for what to do next, as our guide to action.

I have taken the time to review this record to try to make the case for one conclusion: new turning points like these are not what is in store for us now. What is on the agenda is the further unfolding of this world pattern: growing class tensions, political polarization and radicalization, and class differentiations and conflicts within all nations and nationalities. Communists have to clearly and confidently present this world and explain it. That is what thinking workers and revolutionary-minded fighters want to hear about and discuss. Because if this description is true, then it has historic consequences for every fighter, everywhere in the world.

## Forum discusses farm crisis, Cuba

Continued from Page 14

land. There is a little limitation there. You have to work it. You can’t sell it or rent it. You can pass it on to your children. It can stay in the family. So basically, as long as you want to farm, it’s your land.”

“It’s entirely different here,” Jasper said. “They’re driving us out in droves. Six dairy farms a day in the state of Wisconsin are going out of business right now, the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture tells us.”

“I’ve been to Washington, D.C., three times this year at Black farm rallies,” he added, to back their fight against discrimination at the hands of the United States Department of Agriculture.

“There’s always a bottom rung on a ladder,” he explained. “If the Black farmer is on the bottom rung and you tear that bottom rung off, I’m the next rung on the ladder. There’s always a bottom rung. So it’s not a Black farm fight. It’s not a white farm fight. It’s not an England fight. It’s a worldwide problem.”

“The big thing,” he said, “is that farmers and workers both sell our labor. That’s the connection. And also food is the connection. Everybody eats every day and we need to somehow harness that. If you want to bring this country to its knees and straighten it out, control food.”

“I was in Cuba for six days, by the way,” Jasper noted. “I didn’t see everything. That’s why I need to go back. Because there’s too many things I missed,” he said. “I’m not saying things are perfect over there. But we could learn an awful lot.”

In response to a question following the presentations, Jasper stressed the need for “more conversations like tonight” to educate people. “Five years ago, if you told me I’d be here speaking I’d have said, ‘No way!’ Now it’s fun! We need to go out to a ton of churches, schools, and organizations and

speak to them.”

“Next year is the 40th anniversary of ANAP, Jasper pointed out. “That would be an ideal time for farmers and workers to go back and visit. We probably could make arrangements to be part of it. It would be an excellent opportunity. It would be great if a lot more people could go there.”

## New York grocery workers win back pay

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Workers who deliver groceries in New York City for the Food Emporium supermarket chain will receive \$3 million in back pay under a settlement announced December 7.

Food Emporium, which uses about 110 deliverymen at more than a dozen stores in Manhattan, agreed to the settlement after being sued on charges of violating minimum-wage and overtime laws. Many of these deliverymen earned just \$2 an hour, working from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. six or sometimes seven days a week. They earned just \$150 to \$180 a week, even with tips. Under this out-of-court agreement these workers, many of whom hail from countries in West Africa, will receive more than \$30,000.

“This settlement is important because it will teach Food Emporium a lesson that this shouldn’t happen anymore,” stated Mamadou Camara, who made deliveries for five years for the Food Emporium at 68th Street and Broadway. “We were all working like slaves. No one was making much money, there was no medical, no benefits, nothing at all.”

The supermarket chain claimed that they did not employ these workers, but that they were independent contractors who had been hired by a delivery company.

In reaching the settlement, the Great At-

lantic and Pacific Tea Company, which owns the Food Emporium, Waldbaum’s, and A&P chains, got agreement from the deliverymen, who are represented by the National Employment Law Project, to drop their lawsuits against the company.

## — LETTERS —

### Political space in Indonesia

Just a note to spur on those working to get the entire Pathfinder arsenal digitized. An article in the November 21 *San Francisco Chronicle* was headlined, “Literary Flowering in Indonesia: After years of censorship, new publishers—and new titles—abound.”

The article reports “on a cultural renaissance that has occurred since the fall of former President Suharto, who during his 32-year rule squelched opposition newspapers and magazines, restricted stage presentations and censored a staggering 2,000 books. Readers who somehow acquired banned books typically draped them with blank or false covers.”

The article continues, “In the past two years, 13 new independent publishing companies have sprouted in Yogyakarta, a city of some 500,000 inhabitants and 70 institu-

However, they are maintaining their suit against two other major chain stores—Gristede’s supermarkets and Duane Reade drugstores—as well as against two delivery company companies, Hudson Delivery and Chelsea Trucking.

tions of higher learning.... These fledgling publishers are led by bibliophiles under 30 years old who don’t intend to publish best-sellers such as the Harry Potter series or John Grisham courtroom dramas.... Instead, they are printing works by Nietzsche, Marx, and novelist Milan Kundera, with subjects as varied as neoliberal economic theory and communism and works by leftist authors long banned by the government.”

Ellen Haywood  
Pittsburg, California

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.

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.

## Australia gov't expands military force

BY RON POULSEN

SYDNEY, Australia—The conservative Liberal/National coalition government of Prime Minister John Howard has launched plans for the largest expansion of the Australian military since World War II. Canberra has allocated an extra \$A23.5 billion (A\$1=US 54 cents) over the next decade to boost both the size and armaments of the Australian armed forces. This is explicitly in readiness for further imperialist interventions and wars, particularly in the Asia-Pacific region. Defense minister John Moore, among other politicians and pundits, has referred to the region as “a sea of instability.”

It “was the pace of recent changes in Australia’s immediate region—the Asian economic crisis, the fall of Soeharto, the Timor crisis and other upheavals stretching from Aceh to Fiji,” editorialized the December 7 *Sydney Morning Herald*, which has led to this acceleration in military preparations by Canberra.

The rearmament program was released December 6 as a government white paper entitled “Defending Australia 2000.” It supercedes the former stance of “Fortress Australia,” which backed reductions in forces and costs, with a more openly aggressive posture of “forward defence.” It explicitly lays out Canberra’s “strategic objectives” for increased intervention in Asia and the Pacific, using terms like “regional stability” and “global security,” code words for the capitalist powers’ policing of the world to defend imperialist exploitation and domination.

The government paper explains bluntly that “success in pacifying an unstable situation often depends on a demonstrated ability and willingness to use preponderant force swiftly...[with] ample firepower.”

### Increased military interventions

In addition to Canberra’s commitment to the imperialist slaughter against Iraq in the Gulf War of 1990-91, there have been more military interventions in the guise of “peace-keeping” over the past decade, reflecting what the white paper acknowledges is “a worldwide trend.” The document said that over the last two years, more reservists had been deployed on full-time service than at any time since 1945.

Canberra has flagged orders for new airborne early warning and control aircraft, in-flight refueling tankers, and upgrading its

F-111 bombers and F/A-18 fighters. This would considerably extend the striking range of the Australian air force. Washington has been pressuring Canberra to upgrade its arsenal to enable it to join in any imperialist conflict in the region led by the United States against the workers states of China and north Korea, as well as to be able to intervene in other regional conflicts.

This militarization drive has support from the opposition Labor Party. Its leader, Kim Beazley, welcomed the thrust of the white

to the nationalist mythology commemorating the failed—and bloody—storming of the Gallipoli peninsula in Turkey during World War I by troops mainly from the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps.

This has been accompanied by an orchestrated rise in jingoistic propaganda reflected even in ads for beer, using the nationalist hype around the East Timor intervention, the Sydney Olympics, and the upcoming centenary of federation, when the separate Australian colonies joined together in 1901.



Australian troops join UN personnel at border of East and West Timor as part of imperialist intervention force. Canberra plans to extend its military in the region.

paper while adopting a seemingly less aggressive posture by criticizing the government’s failure to ensure stable regional ties.

The militarization campaign comes after the deployment of nearly 5,000 Australian troops as the spearhead of the multinational intervention in East Timor. It also coincides with an ongoing Australian-led imperialist military presence in Bougainville and another naval and police intervention begun in recent weeks in the Solomon Islands.

The *Herald* cited Howard’s belief that “interest in defence has surged with a new generation free of the traumas of the Vietnam war and intensely interested in the ANZAC tradition.” The latter is a reference

“Our armed forces...are part of our national identity,” reflecting “the kind of country we are, the role we seek to play in the world, and the way we see ourselves,” the document boasts.

Some \$A5 billion is to be spent on the Australian Army, expanding land forces from four to six battalions, and setting up two separate well-armed forces, a 3,000 strong brigade and a battalion of 1,000 troops, ready to be rapidly deployed with increased firepower, including combat helicopters and missiles. The government also proposes to boost the strength of the army reserves and the training of cadets in high school as part of its militarization program.

The Australian rulers have recently

stepped up pressure for New Zealand to increase its military capabilities to participate alongside its imperial allies, Canberra and Washington, in policing the region. Wellington is re-equipping its land forces, which assisted Canberra in intervening in East Timor, Bougainville, and the Solomons, but there is speculation in the New Zealand media about phasing out its attack aircraft and reducing the number of its warships. A seminar of Australian defense analysts on December 4, with typical chauvinism, decried New Zealand’s military as “useless” and little help in the event of any joint imperialist intervention.

Australian imperialism, as a middle-ranked power of European colonial-settler origins on the edge of Asia, has always relied on more sophisticated technology and its advanced economy to maintain its edge over the Third World countries of the region that it helps dominate. Australia’s “capability edge” is being blunted, the *Herald* warned, as it chimed in to support the expanded military in its December 7 editorial. The white paper proposes an extra \$A1.9 billion to keep this edge in advanced intelligence, battlefield communications, and other high-tech warfare, all in cooperation with the Pentagon.

Australia’s capitalist rulers are openly alarmed about disorder in what they consider their “backyard”—from Papua New Guinea, to elsewhere in the South Pacific; and from Fiji to the Solomons, where Australian military intervention has reinforced Australian neocolonial domination. They also see the trend toward the potential disintegration of Indonesia with the rise of national struggles from Aceh to West Papua.

Australia has always been a militarily aggressive junior imperialist power. During the twentieth century, Canberra was involved in 11 wars against workers and peasants, chiefly in Asia and the Pacific, as well as 36 “peacekeeping” interventions overseas. Previously, these have always been in close alliance with London and later Washington. But in the last few years, Canberra has also been leading regional interventions.

The Australian government has no illusions, Hamish McDonald noted in the December 7 *Herald*, “that war between states is obsolete and the only likely conflicts are low-level and internal.” He points to the aggressive position of the white paper, which talks of “retaliation and deterrence: the F-111s were acquired in the 1960s to be able to strike at Indonesia; the Collins-class submarines designed with the range to blockade ports far afield. This document makes it all very explicit, albeit in the current managerial jargon of a ‘proactive’ defence policy.... This is high-intensity warfare far from Australia.”

Ron Poulsen is a member of the Maritime Union of Australia.

## Workers demand removal of toxic waste site

BY CANDACE WAGNER

THROOP, Pennsylvania—Many residents of this community are outraged by the Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) decision to allow Gould Electronics Inc. to bury 500,000 tons of lead-filled car batteries casings, and other toxic debris under what the EPA claims would be an impermeable 10-acre cap.

“I think they should spend the extra dollars and think about the future,” declared Dave Lesnefsky. “They should get it all out of here.” Lesnefsky is a high school student and fast food worker who lives three blocks from the site.

“Citizens have fought for the removal of all the waste. This is still our fight,” reported Susan Shortz in a phone interview. Shortz is a member of the Marjol Citizens Review Committee. According to Shortz, the EPA set up the committee claiming that its members would participate in the final decision on the disposal of the waste at the Marjol Battery site.

The used batteries were stored on the site by Gould and a previous owner of the lead recovery business. Lead is a serious health risk, especially for young children. The waste is close to homes and a playground.

An October 1999 proposal by the EPA called for the removal of 86,000 tons of the most toxic soil and debris and the stabilization of the remainder under a cap. Implementation of the December 4 decision will remove only the materials which won’t fit

under the cap and stabilize just the top five feet of waste.

Bordering the junk pile is the Lackawanna River. The company has built a retaining pond to collect runoff from the site. The pond is supposed to withstand river level fluctuations.

Shortz, however, believes that with the periodic significant floods common to the area, the retaining pond will dump toxic waste into the river. Prior to the late 1980s when the EPA ordered some cleanup of the site, “you could see batteries floating in the river,” Shortz related.

Throop, north of the city of Scranton, is located on the northern field of anthracite coal. Most active mining today is in the middle and southern coal seams. The entire region has been ravaged by underground and strip mining and industrial waste dumps.

Opponents of the capping point to the existence of the mines and a history of mines fires as an additional reason to remove all the toxic materials.

Gould Electronics is opposed to removal of the waste pile. The EPA estimates that the price tag for removing all of the waste would be \$85 million. Gould is responsible for the costs.

The widespread opposition to the course announced by the EPA was registered at a special borough council meeting December 7. After testimony from local residents and politicians, the council voted to seek a court injunction preventing the EPA and Gould

from reaching an agreement on implementation of the plan.

The fight in Throop mirrors the current struggle against an EPA proposal to cap a toxic waste site in Hometown, Pennsylvania. Hometown is located in the southern anthracite coalfield.

## Canberra intervenes in Solomon Islands

BY DOUG COOPER

SYDNEY, Australia—By early December, 49 “peace monitors”—35 from Australia and 14 from New Zealand—had intervened on Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. The move brings to three the number of countries in the region where Australian and New Zealand imperialism have ongoing military interventions. The other two are East Timor and Bougainville.

The deployment had been agreed to in mid-October by leaders of two armed groups, the Malaita Eagle Force (MEF) and the Isatabu Freedom Movement (IFM), after Canberra sponsored talks in Townsville, Australia.

The monitors, including police, civil servants, and military personnel, are said to be unarmed but will receive full logistical support from the Australian armed forces as they move to implement provisions of the October 15 agreement on supervising the surrender of weapons by the rival forces.

Reports in the big-business media have

painted a picture of “lawlessness,” “destruction,” and economic collapse on Guadalcanal to justify the deepening intervention.

Canberra has significant big-business interests to protect. The Australian-owned Gold Ridge gold mine suspended operations soon after a June 5 coup and its facilities have been reported to be completely ransacked. The mine is the country’s biggest earner of hard currency.

The MEF carried out the coup in reaction to a wave of attacks by the IFM, which were sparked by resentment toward people originally from Malaita living on Guadalcanal. Australian warships quickly intervened, using the evacuation of foreign nationals as a pretext, but deep instability remains. Nearly 100 people have been killed in fighting on Guadalcanal in the last two years.

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