

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Volunteers organizing digitization of Pathfinder books appeal for help

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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'U.S. hands off Iraq!'

Protests worldwide condemn Washington's assault

Dozens of picket lines and rallies protesting the U.S. assault in Iraq took place across the United States, United Kingdom, and other imperialist countries. Three street actions were held in New York City, the first hours after the bombing began. The largest of those, on December 19, numbered about 1,000. Below are other reports sent in by *Militant* correspondents around the world.

CHICAGO — On December 17, just 24 hours after the U.S. bombing of Iraq began, more than 250 people attended a protest rally at the Kluczynski Federal Building here. Many of the participants were high school and college students. Among the rally speakers were José López, director of the Center for Puerto Rican Culture. He said, "I am here in solidarity with the Iraqi people.... Puerto Ricans and Iraqis alike are living under the same shadow of U.S. imperialism. We are living under the era of colonialism." Rafik Jabal of the Islamic Association for Palestine said, "Is the gift you [Clinton] are trying to give the Muslim people more war orphans, more maimed people? Is that what you call the gift of peace?" The action was initiated by Illinois Peace Action and the 8th Day Center for Justice, a Catholic activist organization around the demands of "Stop the Bombing, End the Sanctions."

A second rally at the Federal Building December 19 drew 150 people, including a large contingent from the Naperville Islamic
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Above: Militant/Helen Meyers

Working people worldwide have protested Washington and London's bombing assault. Above, Teamsters who work at United Parcel Service participate in a Chicago protest. Right, about 15,000 Palestinians demonstrated in the streets of Nablus in the West Bank December 18. Protesters are chanting, "Death to America!"



Bombing leaves Clinton weaker, more dangerous

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Washington has emerged from its "Operation Desert Fox" bombing campaign against Iraq politically weaker and even further away from accomplishing its goal of overthrowing the regime of Iraqi president Saddam Hussein and establishing a U.S. pro-

tectorate there.

With no clear policy that can achieve the aims of the U.S. rulers short of a massive ground invasion of Iraq, and facing possible removal from office, U.S. president William Clinton becomes more dangerous for toilers

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Montreal: garment workers win strike

BY MICHEL DUGRÉ

MONTREAL — Four thousand members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) who were locked out since December 14 at a score of garment companies in the Montreal area won an important victory after a week on the picket lines. The employers withdrew their main

proposal for paying new workers less. The Men's Clothing Manufacturers Association collapsed during the process, under pressure from the growing competition in this industry and the determined resistance of the UNITE members.

The Manufacturers Association announced December 21 that it was dissolved and that the union had to sign collective agreements separately with the different companies. Jack Victor had been the first major company to break away from the association four days earlier and offer a settlement that workers approved. Most of the companies made the same offer to their employees December 21. The bosses not only withdrew the introduction of a two-tier system but also offered a 75-cent wage increase — about 8 percent on average — over three

years. As we go to press, four companies, including three smaller ones that had split from the association earlier, have not yet made new contract offers.

In most plants, a majority of workers voted to accept the new contracts. Many voted against, however, including 60 percent of the 300 workers at Samuelsohn. That shop is still being picketed.

These negotiations have taken place under the shadow of the employers' proposal to abolish the decree that determines the wages of all workers in the Quebec men's clothing industry. Maintaining the decree, and the wage levels set by it, was the central issue in this confrontation.

The Quebec government appears set to carry out the bosses' proposal and end the decree. For the vast majority of the garment workers who are nonunion, the provincial minimum wage would become their only base rate. For UNITE members, the Manufacturers Association's previous offer meant that workers hired after the abolition of the decree would have been paid less.

While opposing the abolition of the decree, the union was also demanding that the rates included in it be part of the collective agreement. This demand was won.

No lower wages for new workers

"What we want, above all, is to prevent
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Militant/Grant Hargrave

UNITE garment workers on picket line at Golden Brand in Montreal

Illinois miners are stronger from strike

BY BETSEY STONE AND CAPPY KIDD

FARMERSVILLE, Illinois — By a margin of 202 to 154, members of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) at Freeman United Coal voted December 17 to ratify a four-year contract, ending a hard-fought 98-day strike.

Workers at Freeman's three mines in central Illinois went on strike September 11 after the company threatened to gut medical benefits for retirees.

From the outset the company made it clear it would go to extreme lengths to force concessions on the miners. They deployed the notorious strikebreaking agency Vance Security. They filed a million-dollar lawsuit against the UMWA International and the three striking locals, challenging their basic right to strike.

Freeman ran ads for scabs in local newspapers and began mining coal, first with people taken from management and then with scabs.

The strikers fought back, organizing rallies, expanded pickets and car caravans, deepening the involvement of the rank and file in strike activities, and winning support for the strike from other unions and commu-
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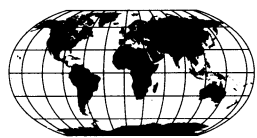
'Militant' is produced directly from computer to printing plate

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

The issue of the *Militant* you are reading, as well as the pamphlet *Panama: The Truth about the U.S. Invasion*, are the first jobs in the Pathfinder printshop to come from plates produced directly from computer files! This state-of-the-art technology is dramatically reducing labor time and necessary skill level, cutting costs, and providing a road to maintain Pathfinder's output of revolutionary literature well into the future.

A \$550,000 capital fund is making possible the use of this technology to produce the books, pamphlets, newspapers, and magazines that will quench — on demand — the growing thirst among fighting workers, farmers, and youth for working-class solutions to the accelerating crises of capitalism. In the wake of the four-day bombing campaign against Iraq waged by Washington and London, *Panama: The Truth about the U.S. Invasion* is quite timely, detailing the U.S. government's murderous action in that military assault a decade ago.

"The truth is that after several years of trying to overthrow Panama's government using everything from sanctions to coup attempts, Washington finally decided that only direct military intervention could ... install a client regime, smash the movement for national sovereignty and social justice, ... ensure the use of U.S. military bases in the country, and strengthen U.S. domina-
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**Indonesian gov't faces
unrelenting protests**

More than 4,000 students in Indonesia assembled at the parliament building in the capital city of Jakarta December 17, demanding former president Suharto be tried on corruption charges and an end to the military's hand in government. Riot cops guarding the government building attacked protesters with tear gas, rubber-coated bullets, and batons. Over 110 demonstrators were injured and 14 cops were wounded. The following day 1,200 students staged antigovernment rallies.

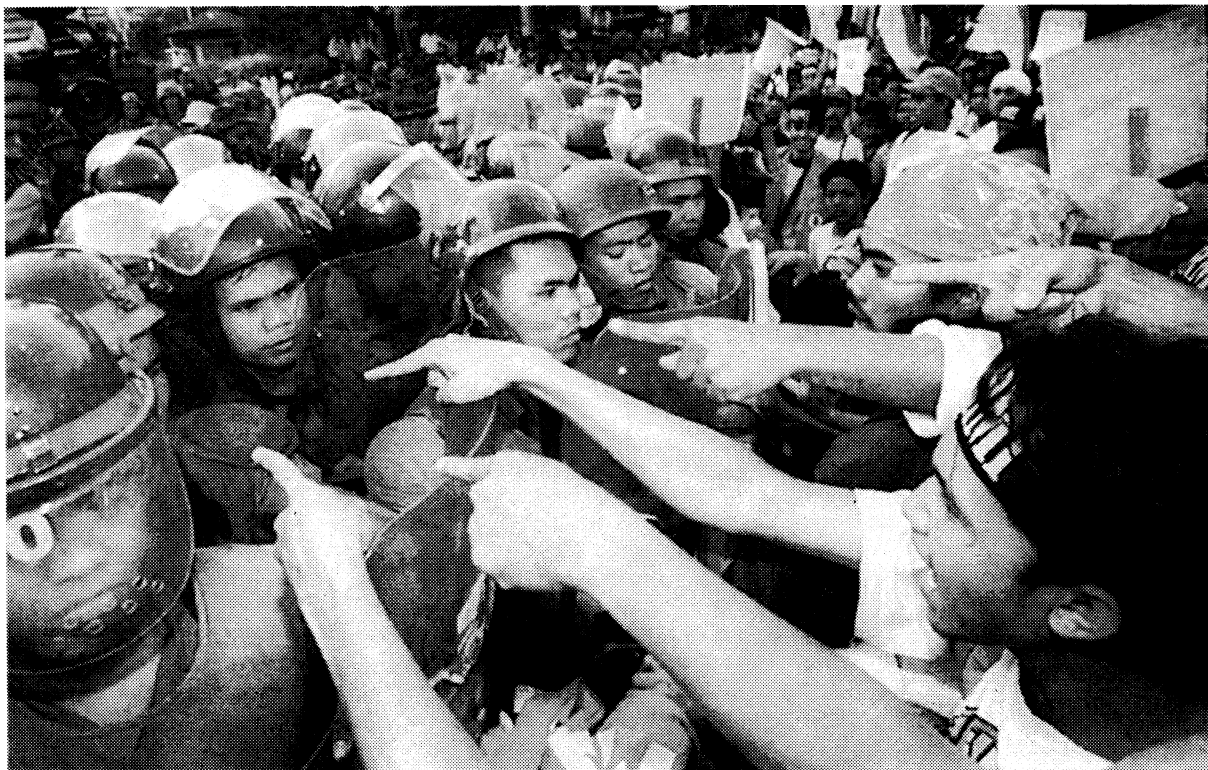
Meanwhile, more than 1,000 people in East Timor took to the streets of Dili demanding independence from Indonesia December 18.

**Israeli parliament forces
early elections**

A landslide 81-30 vote in the Israeli parliament December 21 set in motion early elections for prime minister. Current prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu agreed to the call. Elections are projected for early 1999. Underlying tensions between rightist forces demanding an end to withdrawals from occupied Palestinian territory and those who back the pullouts, as well as the growing depression conditions there, have exhausted the attempts by Netanyahu to pull together a coalition of "national unity" that could carry him through his full term, which ends in 2000.

Netanyahu is likely to have to run against Labor Party candidate Ehud Barak and former chief of staff of the Israeli Defense Forces, Lt. Gen. Amnon Lipkin-Shahak.

Meanwhile, the Israeli Cabinet voted the day before to suspend the U.S. government-mediated Wye accords between Tel Aviv and the Palestinian Authority (PA), headed by Yasser Arafat. Tel Aviv said the agreement is on ice until the PA agrees to a new set of demands laid down by Netanyahu, which according to a December 21 *Washington*



Students in Indonesia protest December 4, demanding an investigation of former President Suharto by the new government. There have been nearly daily demonstrations there for months, mainly led by students.

Post article, include renouncing intentions to declare an independent state, halting "all violence and incitement of violence," dropping the demand that Israel release Palestinian political prisoners, and seizure of all "illegal" weapons in the West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Tel Aviv shells south Lebanon

The Israeli government, in yet another incursion of Lebanese soil, sent helicopter gunships to attack the southern region of that country in the early morning of December 19. The air strike had the usual stated aim of attacking "suspected bases" of Hezbollah. Hezbollah is an organization in Lebanon fighting to drive 1,500 Israeli troops and 2,500 militia members from the strip of Lebanese land they have forcefully occupied since 1985. The targeted "bases" are actually villages, partially abandoned due to constant shelling by Tel Aviv's forces.

"More than 1,000 of my [olive] trees got burned last month when the Israelis shelled the area," said Hassan Rachid Towrani from Yatar village. "It was a real tragedy because any trees we plant now won't bear olives for another 10 years." For many, olive growing is their livelihood.

"These fires caused by Israeli shelling are a day-in, day-out problem," said Lebanese Gen. Yehya Raad. Their have been 107 Israeli air raids against Lebanon in 1998 and countless surface-to-surface attacks from the southern occupational troops. "In some places as much as 40 percent of trees and crops have been destroyed by fires or shelling," said regional agriculture minister in southern Lebanon, Abbas Jamaa.

Japan companies project firings

The Japanese company NKK, one of the world's largest steelmakers, will eliminate 1,300 jobs over the next year in addition to 2,000 terminations planned earlier. Steel prices, in the face of a worldwide crisis of steel overproduction, are dropping, causing many companies to downsize and "re-structure" their operations.

Nissan, Japan's second-largest automaker, faces a similar situation. Thousands of jobs could be axed and some plants are likely to be shut down. The auto industry in Japan "is racked by overcapacity following a 12.3 percent drop in domestic vehicle sales this year to the lowest level since 1986," read an article in the December 19 *Financial Times* of London.

**More cops arrested in case of
tortured Haitian in New York**

Two New York cops, Francisco Rosario

and Rolando Alemán, were arrested December 16 on federal charges of conspiring to make and making false statements concerning the brutal police torture of Abner Louima in 1997.

Both officers, who were released on bail the same day, have been suspended without pay. If convicted they could face up to five years behind bars.

Abner Louima is an immigrant from Haiti who was arrested when police arrived at the scene of an altercation outside a nightclub in Brooklyn. He was reportedly hauled into the 70th Precinct cop station, forced into a bathroom there, and sodomized with a plunger. Louima suffered substantial damage to internal organs. It was only after tens of thousands of people demonstrated in the streets of New York, protesting the act of police brutality, that the federal government was forced to act.

U.S. bosses plan job cuts

The number of job cuts planned by U.S. industrial bosses internationally has reached 575,000 — the highest figure since the worldwide recession of the early 1990s — according to Challenger Gray & Christmas, an "outplacement" firm in Chicago.

The reason behind the mountain of planned layoffs is capitalism's crisis of overproduction — the bosses' inability to sell for a profit that which they have mass produced. The result is a scramble to cut costs to make up for falling profit rates.

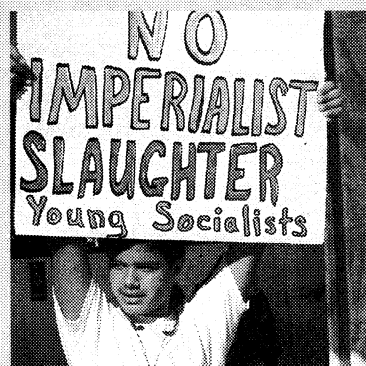
Johnson & Johnson said it will shut down 36 of its 158 plants worldwide after a year of reduced profits. When oil giant Exxon stated it would buy Mobil, immediate layoffs of 9,000 were projected, with thousands more likely to take place through plant shut downs and consolidations. Lear, one of the largest U.S. suppliers of vehicle interiors, is axing 2,800 jobs and closing 18 plants. At Boeing, deflationary pressures are moving that company in the direction of firing union workers and outsourcing to low-cost, generally non-union suppliers.

— BRIAN TAYLOR

THE MILITANT

UN 'inspectors' out of Iraq!

Washington and London's bombing of Iraq solved none of the problems imperialism faces in the region. That's why the imperialists will try once again to use their 'inspectors' to probe and violate Iraqi sovereignty, creating provocations for more assaults. The 'Militant' tells the truth about these provocations. Don't miss a single issue!



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Farmers in Greece protest debt, low prices

BY MARIA PLESSA
AND CAN COBAN

LARISSA, Greece — Close to 400 farmers rallied in this town of north central Greece, located in the agriculturally rich Thessaly plain. Despite the heavy rain and sleet, a convoy of about 50 tractors, waving the black flag of struggle, made it into the central square December 8.

The farmers were joined by a contingent of about 30 students from the town's occupied high schools. Representatives of high school students, striking medical school students, and the Larissa Labor Center gave greetings to the rally.

A day earlier hundreds of farmers held a tractorcade in the nearby town of Trikala and on December 2 hundreds of tractors descended on the central square in the town of Karditsa.

In a statement published in the Larissa daily *Kirikas*, the Pan Thessaly Coordinating Committee (PASE) of the farmers explained the demands of the protests. These include:

- Lowering farmers' production costs by reducing the value added tax to 8 percent and the fixing of the cost of petrol at transit prices — that is without all the usual taxes.
- Renegotiating farm loans with the Agricultural Bank and suspending foreclosures.
- Reducing payments by farmers to the farmers social insurance fund and increasing the minimum pension from 29,000 Drc. to 45,000 Drc. (290 Drc. = US\$1) per month.
- Halting the court trials of farmers, which are continuing against farmers who engaged in road blocks.
- Intervention by the state to guarantee a price of 55 Drc. a kilo for wheat and 365 Drc.

Greece: workers and students join rallies against government austerity

BY GEORGES MEHRABIAN

ATHENS, Greece — Occupations of high schools and universities by students protesting an education "reform" law that seeks to limit entrance to universities and to weaken public education have expanded.

"Close to 1,500 schools are now under student occupation, an increase of 500 since last week," Andreas Kilchiksis, a high school student in the area of Zografo, told the *Militant*. Over the previous week, demonstrations totaling nearly 50,000 students took place in Athens and dozens of other towns.

"Three days ago we got word from friendly teachers that some teachers were going to try to break into our school to end the occupation. We mobilized 80 students and the 'strikebreakers' never dared to show up. That is not bad after five weeks of occupation," continued Kilchiksis.

"Yesterday the high school students from our neighborhood joined with the university students, and about 200 of us blocked the main road in the area," said Georgia Kafedzi, another high school student in Zografo. "Some parents came by and supported us." These kind of demonstrations are taking place in many neighborhoods. Kilchiksis and Kafedzi were attending a concert at the occupied Department of Mathematics of the University of Athens along with another 40 or so students. Meetings and concerts are a regular feature in several university buildings.

At another school this reporter witnessed some 75 irate parents in front of a junior high

Students in Germany protest cuts in education



Students at Humboldt University in Berlin in December protest government cuts in education spending. Above, they carry a coffin symbolizing the death of education. Signs read: "Empty school=Dead school," and "Education! False friends will be your death."

a kilo for cotton.

In a discussion with *Militant* reporters one cotton farmer, who did not wish to be identified, said, "There is real fear now of losing the land. You see one or two foreclo-

tures taking place in every village now. This must stop. Of course the problem is that our costs are too high and our prices too low."

Christos Papasteriadis, a member of the PASE coordinating committee, told the *Mili-*

tant, "Small and medium farmers are facing extinction. The aim of the European Union and the government here is to reduce the farm population from 21 percent to 8 percent! The EU is not allowing subsidies for small farmers, and with small plots they are not competitive in the globalization of the market and the capitalist type of production."

Pointing to how debt has become a major problem, Papasteriadis continued, "Five years ago the price of cotton was 332 Drc. a kilo. People produced cotton with that price in mind, and invested in production. The following year the price dropped to 220 drc. To make up the difference you were forced to borrow. Debt has mushroomed tenfold in the last 10 years. Now debt is accumulating on the interest."

Referring to the high school mobilizations currently taking place (see article elsewhere on this page), Papasteriadis added, "The students are doing the right thing. They should not lower their heads and accept this situation." A high school student attending the farmers' rally explained that 11 out of 15 schools in Larissa were occupied.

Georges Mehrabian contributed to this article.

school that had just voted to start an occupation. "Take these chains down, my child has a right to go to school if he wants to," screamed one parent at the student guard outside the locked gate. "We voted by majority vote to occupy the school; no one is getting through," explained the young woman guarding the gate, which remained sealed.

Several prominent figures have come out against the occupations, including the populist right-wing head of the Orthodox Church, Archbishop Christodoulos.

Meanwhile, several thousand people demonstrated December 15 against govern-

ment austerity policies. The demonstration was called by the General Confederation of Greek Workers (GSEE) and the Civil Servants' Supreme Administrative Council (ADEDY) as part of a nationwide 24-hour strike. Among the demands were wage increases and government funding for unemployment and education. The demonstration included the participation of thousands of high school and university students who are part of the school occupations.

According to Kilchiksis, the student coordinating committee met on December 20 and called another nationwide day of actions for January 15.

500 protest anti-Puerto Rican column in Boston paper

BY TED LEONARD

BOSTON — Five hundred people, most of them Puerto Rican, picketed the *Boston Herald* December 7. They were protesting an article by columnist Don Feder that had appeared in the major daily November 30.

Commenting on the plebiscite vote in Puerto Rico, the column was entitled "No statehood for Caribbean Dogpatch." Feder wrote, "We need more non-English speakers in this country like we need more welfare recipients, higher crime rates and an alien culture — all of which we'll get with Puerto Rico statehood."

The action was the largest in support of Puerto Rican or Latino rights in Boston in nearly 30 years. Participants in the day-long vigil included supporters of independence for Puerto Rico, statehood, and maintaining the current "commonwealth" colonial status. Chants were in Spanish and English.

Northeastern University student Mayari Sánchez, a participant in the picket line, told the media, "I think all of us, young and old, are more aware now that if we don't do something about this kind of racism, we are never going to advance."

Responding to the protest, the publisher of the paper, Patrick J. Purcell, ran a signed editorial the following day. In "An apology to readers" he wrote, "To those who took offense at his words, I offer my personal apology."

Participants in the event are discussing whether the apology is enough or a boycott of the paper should be organized.

Jaime Rodríguez, president of the Na-

tional Congress for Puerto Rican Rights and an organizer of the protest, said, "Puerto Ricans have a long history of protest and activism, but for the past 10 or 20 years we've been dormant. Not anymore."

Other organizations that sponsored the action were the League of United Latin American Citizens, the Massachusetts Hispanic Political Action Committee, the Puer-

to Rican Veterans Association of Massachusetts, the Massachusetts Association of Hispanic Attorneys, the Massachusetts Hispanic Voter Registration and Education Coalition, and others.

Ted Leonard is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees.

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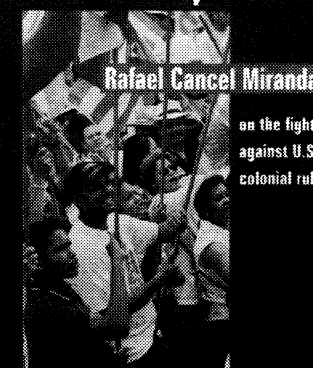
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**Puerto Rico
independence is
a necessity**



'We will reenlist volunteers, and sign up new ones'

Organizers of project to digitize Pathfinder books assess progress, appeal for help

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

"We need to reenlist volunteers who signed up months ago to digitize Pathfinder books but who we have not given assignments to on a regular basis," said Peggy Brundy in a telephone interview from her home near Oakland, in the San Francisco Bay Area, December 23. "We also need to sign up new volunteers. We are now in a position to train them and utilize all their energies. And we are organizing to shift some of the most experienced volunteers scanning and proofreading books to the finishing part of the process, where we've had the most bottlenecks the past few months."

Brundy is the production coordinator of the international project to put the entire arsenal of Pathfinder books and pamphlets into electronic format. She is also a member of the steering committee organizing dozens of supporters of the communist movement around the world to carry out this historic task, which will make it possible for Pathfinder's print shop to use newly acquired computer-to-plate (CTP) technology (see article on facing page).

This is necessary to reduce the size of the print shop, cutting labor time necessary to produce Pathfinder books, increasing the productivity of that labor, lowering the skill levels needed to work in the shop, and driving down production costs while sacrificing nothing on Pathfinder's standards of quality. Only this course will allow sustaining production of Pathfinder — a publishing house helping to build the communist movement in the United States and internationally — and keeping its entire back list of 350 titles in print. This revolutionary literature is more in demand today among workers, farmers, and young people resisting deteriorating living and working conditions that the capitalist owners in crisis are trying to impose on the working class.

In addition to Brundy, Ruth Cheney, Jerry Gardner, and Tom Tomasko — all supporters of the Socialist Workers Party — are on the Pathfinder reprint project steering committee. Norton Sandler, who is assigned by the SWP Political Committee to be the liaison with the volunteer organizers in the Bay Area, is the organizer of the committee.

The steering committee held an expanded

meeting in the Bay Area December 16-17. Besides its members, Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press and editor of *New Internationalist*, and Argiris Malapanis, who is assigned by the party's Political Committee to centralize the work of all departments in the publishing apparatus related to this effort, took part in the gathering.

Washington's brutal bombing of Iraq, which began hours before the steering committee started its meeting, underlined the need for keeping in print the titles volunteers are digitizing, said Sandler.

That night, and in subsequent days, members and supporters of the SWP and Young Socialists in the Bay Area and beyond sold many pamphlets and books to young people and others protesting the Clinton administration's imperial assault as well as to workers at factory gates, on picket lines, and on the job.

Where the project stands

During the December 16-17 gathering, and at a meeting of the steering committee a week later, said Brundy, "we stepped back from the daily pressures of trying to complete this or that book and looked at whether we could meet the goal we set for ourselves of digitizing 10 books per month."

That's what's needed to keep up with the publisher's current level of sales and reverse the process of more Pathfinder books going out of stock. About 20 Pathfinder titles were out of stock at the beginning of December. The transformation of book production in Pathfinder's print shop carried out this year allows the publisher to reprint only books that are prepared in digital form.

Between May — when supporters of the communist movement put into electronic format the first book, *Revolution Betrayed* by Leon Trotsky — and August, volunteers digitized one book per month. During that initial period, they only put into electronic format the text of the books. At an expanded meeting of the steering committee in Detroit at the end of September, volunteer organizers took steps to digitize all covers and internal graphics and deliver the books to Pathfinder completed on a CD-ROM, ready to produce printing plates through the print shop's CTP equipment. The Detroit meeting

also took on the goal of producing 20 books in the last quarter of 1998.

The target proved more difficult to meet. Between October 1 and December 1, the production rate remained at an average of one book per month.

Two books and one pamphlet were delivered to Pathfinder for reprinting in these three months — *Cuba for Beginners*, *Panama: The Truth About the U.S. Invasion*, and *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions*.

Need more volunteers to work weekly

This has begun to change in December. Two titles have already been completely digitized and delivered to Pathfinder this month for reprinting — *Women and the Cuban Revolution* and the Spanish-language edition of the pamphlet *Che Guevara and the Fight for Socialism Today*. The steering committee projects that at least another two titles will be delivered on CD-ROM before New Year's Day.

"After considerable discussion, the steering committee decided that we can now organize ourselves effectively to complete 10 books per month," said Brundy.

The first step in this direction is ensuring everyone who wants to be part of the project has work every week, she continued. More than 150 supporters of the communist movement have signed up since the project was launched at a regional socialist conference in Seattle last year. "But of those, only 85 are working every week," said Brundy. "When we first started we were less experienced and not organized well enough to give assignments to all these volunteers. A number were discouraged by being idle. But now we face the opposite problem. We don't have enough volunteers to give assignments to. We have all parts of the project on line — scanning, proofreading, formatting, and graphics work — and can organize more people to do work every week."

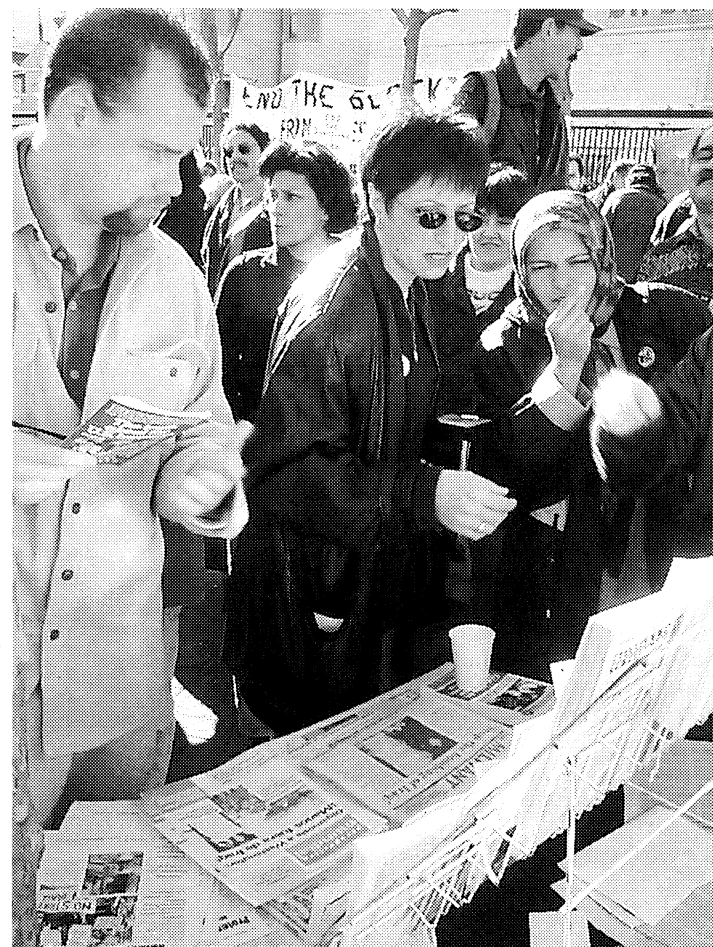
Stop leaving roads unfinished

Volunteers have made a lot of progress towards increasing productivity in scanning and proofreading books. "And we've made real progress in formatting them also," said Brundy. "We've been bogged down mostly on the finishing stage. Formatting and graphics don't have enough people to complete all the tasks they are responsible for."

The formatting production team is responsible for laying out the pages electronically, correcting the index to make sure its references correspond to the new pagination, and checking the entire digitized text of the book. After that process is completed, the book is sent electronically to Pathfinder for a final check. When formatting volunteers focus on the first stages of the process, the last stages don't get done, and vice-versa, said Brundy. As a result, she added, during the month of November only one book was turned into Pathfinder's print shop for reprinting but eight were almost finished in formatting and graphics. It has occasionally taken weeks to finish correcting the few errors the Pathfinder staff asks to be corrected.

Addressing this problem at the beginning of December, the steering committee decided to focus the attention and resources of both the formatting and graphics teams on finishing books. As a result, formatting and graphics have already finished five books this month.

The steering committee has now established that a book is completed only when the CD-ROM, with all the elements on it, is



Militant/Jacob Perasso

The first pamphlet delivered by volunteers on CD-ROM that is being produced with computer-to-plate technology, *Panama: The Truth About the U.S. Invasion*, drew interest at a December 19 protest against the U.S. bombing of Iraq in San Francisco, above.

burned and delivered to the print shop for production.

In a recent steering committee meeting Mary-Alice Waters drew an analogy between this and the many roads in Cuba that were started but never finished in the 1970s and early '80s, so administrators could chalk up having met their quotas, said Brundy. She was referring to discussions initiated by the leadership of the Communist Party of Cuba in the mid 1980s, in what is known as the rectification process. Its aim was to carry out a historic correction to the course of the revolution and confront problems that had developed for more than a decade by using the economic priorities and methods borrowed from the former Soviet Union as a guide. As part of confronting the corrupting and demoralizing political consequences of that course, the Cuban communist leadership pointed to many construction projects, including roads, that were left unfinished while administrators claimed they had been completed so they could get bonuses from fulfilling their quotas.

"The steering committee is determined not to make that mistake!" Brundy said.

The steering committee decided to assign more volunteers who have a proven record of timeliness in meeting deadlines and of quality work to the finishing stage of a book, regardless of where they had been working previously.

"We want to avoid what happened with one 36-page pamphlet, for example," Brundy noted. Because the steering committee didn't act decisively to solve technical problems that cropped up in the finishing stage, "it took us five weeks to do the final check of the pamphlet, instead of one week or less."

In order to produce 10 books a month, the formatting team needs to assign the most experienced volunteers to specifically make these finishing stages run smoothly. To make this possible the steering committee decided to shift some of the most experienced volunteers who had concentrated on scanning and proofreading to the formatting/indexing production team. Initial assignments will bring those involved in formatting and indexing books to 20, up from 15. "And more are needed to meet the production goal of 10 books per month," said Brundy. "We need people who can commit at least five hours per week. Formatting and graphics work are very deadline-oriented and where we face the main logjams."

"In addition, a number of experienced formatters outside the Bay Area are taking on more responsibility in the final checking of books." Fred Stanton in New York and Robbie Scherr in Seattle are among them. "The leadership of the project is broadening," Brundy said.

Up until now, much of the checking work was done by Gardner, organizer of the formatting team, and Brundy. Because volunteers have stepped forward to take on the checking responsibilities, Gardner and Brundy can now concentrate their energies

Continued on Page 14

Help needed to finance reprint project

December 23, 1998

Dear Volunteer,

I would like to ask your help in financing the project to convert Pathfinder's 350 titles to digital form. As you know, a call was put out several months ago for volunteers to help on this ambitious project. Today, more than 150 supporters and friends of Pathfinder Press, from around the world, have responded, and most of those who volunteered are today busy scanning, proofreading, formatting, indexing, and reproducing the graphics and covers for the Pathfinder titles.

This will make it possible for the Pathfinder printshop to output these titles on new state of the art computer-to-plate technology. This printing equipment was installed in the printshop in November and it is enabling the size of the printshop staff to be reduced substantially.

But these sweeping changes in the printshop are dependent on a steady stream of books being sent in each month by our international volunteer team. The steering committee is taking steps to improve our organization so that we can soon reach the target of having 10 titles a month delivered to the printshop.

The work of the volunteers converting the titles to digital form is organized by e-mail, and increasingly through our website <http://www.pfvolcenter.com>

From the beginning this project has been self-financed with the costs absorbed by the volunteers. But as we took

on reproducing the covers and photographs we found out how expensive this aspect of publishing books is. In fact, the expenses for the graphics are more than what any individual or small group of volunteers can afford. That's why we need your help.

To keep the books in print as we project, we must raise \$25,000 for next year's graphics budget. We are constantly working to streamline and professionalize this unique project but we must have contributions that cover our expenses. If you consider our efforts to keep the full range of Pathfinder titles in print a value, please help by making a financial contribution. A monthly contribution of \$20 or more from 100 volunteers would go a long way toward keeping the project rolling on target. We also need your ideas or suggestions on other friends of the project who can be contacted for substantially larger contributions. If you give us suggestions, we will organize to get in touch with them.

Thank you for your time and consideration. A check can be made out to "Reprint Project" and mailed to the address below:

Checks can be mailed to Reprint Project, 3542 Fruitvale Ave. #245, Oakland, California 94602-2327.

Sincerely,
Ruth Cheney
For the Reprint Project
Steering Committee

Workers discuss the U.S. bombing of Iraq

Below we print several notes sent in by supporters of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and *Pathfinder* books about discussions with their co-workers about the U.S. bombing of Iraq.

DES MOINES — Richard McBride, a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 1149 at the IBP packinghouse in Perry, Iowa, said, "On the second day of the bombing, I asked a co-worker how to say in Spanish, 'I'm against the bombing of Iraq!' I got the translation, shouted it out on the line, and everyone got quiet. At first, most of my co-workers thought the U.S. was right to go after the 'weapons of mass destruction.'"

McBride said he then pointed to the long history of U.S. domination of Mexico.

"Eight of the 10 workers who got into the discussion are from Mexico," he said. "After a while, I won agreement from all of them that the United States is not trying to bring democracy to Iraq, but trying to advance its own interests."

Joe Swanson, a member of United Auto Workers Local 1672 at Emco Specialties in Des Moines reported, "An older co-worker of mine who served in the military at one time said he thought the U.S. government cannot remove Saddam Hussein without

going into Iraq with ground troops. He said he's against that, and thought opinion polls that now show majority support for the bombing would turn against a ground war in Iraq."

At Bridgestone/Firestone in Des Moines, where I work, there was a lot of debate and discussion on the U.S. assault on Iraq. The first day of the bombing there was a protest picket line at the Federal Building, on half an hour's notice. This really paid off the next day at work. All three local TV stations covered the protests, and half a dozen workers came up to me to say they saw the news report.

It gave me an opening to explain why workers should oppose U.S. war moves in the Middle East. There was a real openness for the discussion, and one co-worker said he was against the bombing, saying, "The U.S. is just out to control the oil."

Ray Parsons

DETROIT — The morning of the day the bombing started I commented to a co-worker, Ron, that we should keep our eyes on developments in Iraq, not just the impeachment hearings in Washington. "Clinton just pulled the inspectors out: I wouldn't be surprised if they start bombing tonight or tomorrow morning," I said.

This laid the basis for continuing the discussion in depth the next day. Ron said that he thought the bombing was controversial, at best. He offered that he simply could not know what the actual situation was in Iraq, in terms of weapons and "threats against their neighbors." I showed him a copy of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist* no. 7, with the article "The Opening Guns of World War III: Washington's Assault on Iraq."

Another young worker supported the bombing, declaring that the U.S. government needed to get rid of an excess of weapons, and a good place to unload them was over Iraq.

But most workers were opposed, or skeptical about Clinton's motives. One said, "This is a question of sovereignty, just like it was wrong to bomb that pharmaceutical plant in Africa," referring to the U.S. missile attack on Sudan in August. He bought a copy of the *Militant*.

Another worker decided to buy a subscription to the *Militant*. We had been talking about the Freeman miners strike the week before. When we discussed the 1991 Gulf war and its aftermath, she bought her subscription, saying, "What you say makes sense." The next day she checked back with me: "Did you send in that subscription?"

When I said I had, she said, "Good."
Marty Ressler

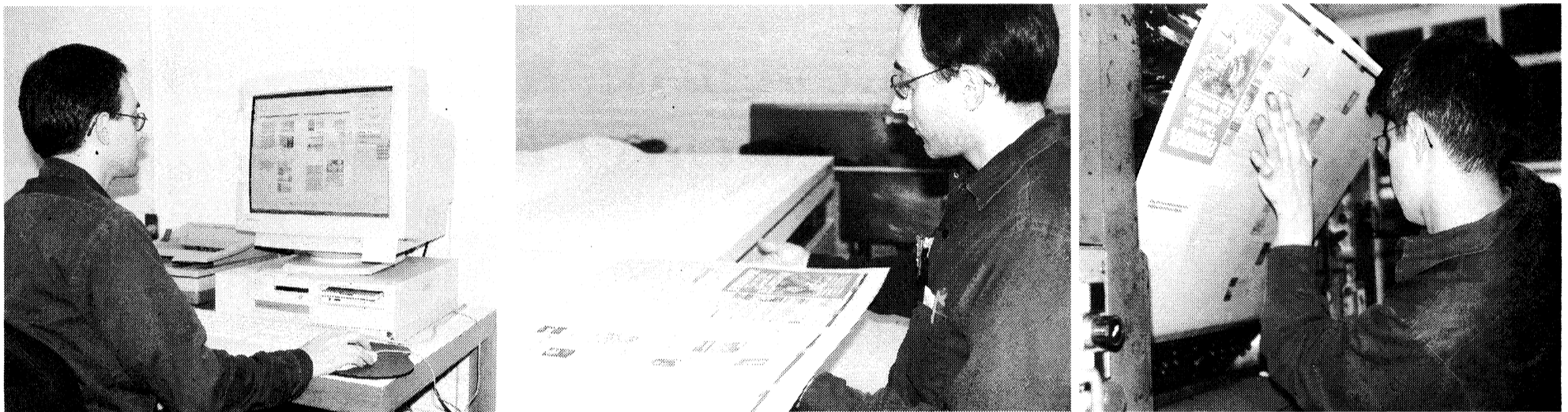
PHILADELPHIA — I was talking with a co-worker recently, in the garment factory where I work, who is originally from Iraq. She immigrated to Philadelphia following the Gulf war of 1990-91. She told me that she talked to her boyfriend in Baghdad the night before, after the four days of U.S. and British air strikes. He told her not to worry, "We are not afraid," he said. "The mood here is defiant."

Betsy Farley

CHICAGO — *Militant* supporters here made a special effort to get out to factory gates where we regularly sell the paper to campaign against U.S. imperialism and its assault on Iraq.

Three copies of the *Militant* were sold at the airport plant gate that week, seven at the LTV steel mill, and two were purchased at UPS. At a mine portal sale at Farmersville, Illinois, two of the three people who stopped to discuss the paper decided not to buy it because they agreed with the bombing. The third did get a copy.

Pattie Thompson



Left, press operator David Rosenfeld performs digital preparation work on the computer file of *Panama: The Truth about the U.S. Invasion*, sent by volunteers. That file is then sent directly to the Galileo platesetter to output a plate, center. That plate is then handed over to press operator Bill Estrada, right, who loads it into the Heidelberg press for printing.

'Militant' printed with new CTP equipment

Continued from front page

tion throughout the region," reads a section of the introduction.

The immediate goal of the capital fund is to raise \$350,000 by year's end to cover the cost of the newly installed Agfa Galileo computer-to-plate (CTP) system. The printshop will need an additional \$200,000 to once and for all wipe out the debt owed to bankers for the web and sheetfed presses housed in the Pathfinder Building. Supporters have sent in \$11,000 over the last week, bringing the total amount collected to \$292,000. This leaves \$58,000 more to raise.

Contributions come from accident settlements, bequests, and other situations where supporters of Pathfinder find themselves the recipients of big sums of capital. Many workers have contributed the entirety of so-called bonuses — "blood money" paid out by the bosses to try to convince workers to accept wage concessions and assaults on health benefits and job conditions.

Going completely digital with Galileo

"The installation of the computer-to-plate machinery and software is complete. Now our goal is to move into full production as quickly as possible," explained David Rosenfeld, the press operator in Pathfinder's printshop responsible for bringing the new computer-to-plate equipment on line. The editorial work and graphics design; the scanning, proofreading, and formatting of Pathfinder's 350 titles organized by volunteers (see facing page); and the imposition work needed to produce plates to be run on the presses are all done digitally with the new system.

Currently, volunteers send a CD-ROM with an entire Pathfinder book on it, ready to go into production. The information on that disk is sent directly to film, already shaving hours of time spent just months ago on camera work and the highly skilled task of stripping up large flats by hand to make

plates.

The Galileo eliminates film altogether, and makes it possible to take a disk from volunteers, make minor on-screen adjustments, and send those files directly to the plate burner.

First title rolls out of CTP

"Just a click of a mouse button sent the volunteer's electronic files for Pathfinder's first CTP-produced pamphlet to the Galileo platesetter," said Rosenfeld. Before computer-to-film, several staff members could have stripped an average Pathfinder book for days, he explained. Currently, with computer-to-film, it takes 30-40 minutes to produce a plate. But with the Galileo machine one person can make 10 plates in 40 minutes!

"It took a minimum of six months just to feel comfortable with the strip up," said Lisa Rottach, one of the last shop cadre to be trained in that skilled technique. A separate strip-up department was needed just to perform that task.

Now, in just three to four weeks of training on the CTP equipment, a person can be a qualified digital operator able to do all digital file preparations using the new computer software — formerly the manual work of the now dissolved strip-up department — make the plates, and trouble-shoot most basic problems. In just a few hours a person can be trained to competently make plates.

"The goal is to qualify every press operator as a digital operator," stated Rosenfeld. Then the press operator can walk up to the computer, find the job they want, hit a few buttons, and the machine makes the plate. Rosenfeld was making plates while showing this reporter the machine and conducting this interview.

In order to harness the productive capacities of the new machines, the entire print shop is undergoing a transformation. This includes cross-training on presses and bind-

ery equipment, stepping up production rates, cutting scrap rates and costly plate remakes, paying greater attention to quality control, and increasing the involvement of the entire cadre of the shop in commercial sales to help finance its operations. As part of this, the shop is moving to decrease its size by two volunteers in the next four months, while continuing the program of regularly releasing cadre after a few years and bringing in new volunteers.

Door open to four-color web printing

The ease of this process helped open the door for four-color printing on the web press — for years relegated to the impossible. When press operator Ryan Lewis had some downtime on the press, he and José Aravena started running tests and experimenting using the setup from a job run beforehand.

"We noticed how tight the registration was holding on that job," Lewis said. "Other shops have the same web press as we do and they run four-color jobs." Aravena and Phyllis O'Conner, another press operator, took the initiative to create a color job and digitally prepare it using some of the new machinery.

After a quick cleaning of the machine, they used spare ink and ran the test. When they ran the job at a slower setup speed the colors "held." "So we ran it faster and when we got to top speed it was still holding tight," recounted Lewis.

The printshop has now bought new ink for the web and is getting new instruction manuals to probe four-color web printing for color photographs in the *Militant* and other printed materials used by the communist movement, as well as commercial jobs.

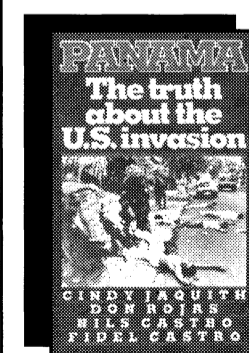
Capital fund goal in striking distance

The computer-to-plate machinery must be paid off in January. The capital fund committee is asking that everyone who made pledges send them in. And they are organizing to bring in the remaining \$58,000 in contributions that are needed right away.

A meeting of the Socialist Workers Party's National Committee is set to take place in New York City January 1-3. Leadership delegations from the Young Socialists and from communist organizations in other countries will be attending. While taking part in the meeting, they will have an opportunity to tour the Pathfinder Building and see the physical and organizational transformations under way in the shop.

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

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about the U.S.
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\$3.50

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Miami: Cuban group celebrates 20 years opposing embargo

BY ERNIE MAILHOT

MIAMI — More than 125 people packed the newly decorated headquarters of the Alliance of Workers of the Cuban Community (ATC) December 13. The occasion was the 20th anniversary of the founding of the organization and its two decades of work in opposition to the U.S. economic blockade of Cuba. This work has included helping Cuban-Americans travel to Cuba to visit their families, collecting material aid, and organizing and participating in protests of the U.S. embargo against Cuba.

The most notable new decoration at the office was actually a new sign above the front entrance, with ATC in big bold letters and the name spelled out in Spanish. At the back of the meeting hall a large banner in Spanish read, "Long live the 40th anniversary of the revolution and 20 years of the ATC."

Andrés Gómez, the head of the Antonio Maceo Brigade, a group of Cuban-Americans in Miami who support the Cuban revolution, gave the main presentation. He

explained that the first two conferences of Cubans on the island and living abroad, mainly in the United States, were held in Cuba 20 years ago, in 1978. It was out of this dialogue that the idea to found the ATC developed. Gómez went on to give a brief history of the demonstrations and other activities that the ATC and other anti-embargo groups have carried out in Miami over the years, including those that were attacked by rightists.

Many in the audience showed their pride in having been part of these demonstrations, and some interrupted the speaker with anecdotes about the actions. In referring to those picket lines and other protests of Washington's policies towards Cuba Gómez stated to applause, "The fact that we are together here today comes out of the fact that we can take to the streets.... The politics of war against Cuba continues and the possibility of changing it continues too."

Walfrido Moreno, the president of the ATC, also addressed the meeting, pledging an ongoing fight to defend the Cuban revo-



Militant/Eric Simpson

Cachita Moré from Afro-Cuban cultural group RECUACU gives greetings at celebration of 40th anniversary of Cuban revolution and 20 years of ATC. To left of her is Antonio Maceo Brigade head Andrés Gómez, and at right is ATC leader Wilfredo Moreno.

lution. Greetings were given to the meeting from Cachita Moré of the Afro-Cuban cultural group RECUACU; Ernie Mailhot, from the Socialist Workers Party; and Xiamora Almaguer from Jewish Solidarity and the Cuban-American Defense League. Members of the Miami Coalition to End the U.S. Embargo of Cuba were also in attendance, as

were a number of other individuals. A message of congratulations to the ATC from the Cuban Institute of Friendship among Peoples (ICAP) was read to the meeting.

Ernie Mailhot is a member of the International Association of Machinists Local 1126 in Miami.

Miami-Dade County Commission extends law banning discrimination to cover homosexuals

BY ELLEN BRICKLEY AND MAGGIE MCCRAW

MIAMI—"I'm here in support of the human rights ordinance," said Christopher Martin, a 20-year-old who was among the crowd urging the Miami-Dade County Commission to pass a new human rights ordinance that would ban discrimination against gays. "This is not about special rights, it's about equal rights. True justice should be blind to sexual orientation, race, age, or nationalities," Martin said.

In a 7-6 vote, the commission narrowly passed an amendment December 1 adding the words "sexual orientation" to an existing ordinance that prohibits discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodation based on a person's age, race, religion, color, national origin, gender, pregnancy, family status, ancestry, marital status, or disability.

Today more than 100 cities and counties, as well as 18 states, have laws extending protection based on sexual orientation.

Dade County was in fact one of the first to pass such a law in 1977. But it was later reversed by a voter referendum following the virulent, antigay "Save Our Children" campaign led by singer Anita Bryant and TV preacher Jerry Falwell.

Referring to the December 1 victory, Rosemary Wilder said, "All we did today was to go back to where we used to be nearly 25 years ago." Wilder is a leader of SAVE-DADE (Safeguarding American Values for Everyone), a gay rights organization that mobilized support and lobbied commissioners for the past 18 months.

On the day of the vote about 500 antigay protesters, organized by the Miami-Dade County Christian Coalition, gathered at the downtown government center. About 200 advocates of the ordinance also held a spirited rally. There was a heavy police presence and the two sides were separated by police barricades.

Christian Coalition protesters distributed a flyer arguing that gays are not discriminated against. It stated, "Homosexuals have more education, have a higher per capita income, and are more likely to be employed in professional positions than others in society."

One of their signs said, "Equal rights for all—Special rights for none." Another blamed recent devastating hurricanes on gays, reading, "Mitch, Georges, Andrew are Samples We Want to Avoid.... No More Sodom-Gomorrah for Our Families."

In answer, gay rights activists chanted, "Shame, shame, shame," "Ignorancia!" (Ignorance!), and "Separate church and state."

Advocates of the ordinance carried signs

reading, "A House, a Job — What is So Special About Wanting That!" and "No Justice No Peace!" Another said, "Stop Using God to Hide Your Hatred."

"We are not asking for special rights, we're asking not to be fired, and that landlords don't ask us to leave our houses because we're gay," said Antonio González, who is originally from Venezuela.

Some gay rights activists shouted anti-immigrant remarks, such as, "We vote — you don't," at the Christian Coalition protesters, the majority of whom were Latino. This was also echoed by *Miami Herald* columnist Liz Balmaseda, an advocate of the ordinance. Her December 2 column stated, "I found a lot of people willing to cast opinions — but who could not cast votes to back them up. Foreign residents, they are not yet part of

the county's votership." However, other participants in the rally told *Militant* reporters they did not agree with this.

Inside the public commission hearings some who spoke against the ordinance argued that businesses were being told who to hire and who not to hire.

"No one here is responsible for M. Shepard's death and please vote no," said another speaker. They were responding to testimony explaining that the brutal murder of Matthew Shepard proved that discrimination and prejudice still exist. Shepard, a Wyoming college student, was beaten by antigay thugs and died on October 12.

A broad range of endorsers of the ordinance were listed in a full page *Miami Herald* ad on November 30. The ad stated that unlike in 1977, the Catholic Archdiocese of

Miami said it has no opposition to the amendment on moral grounds. Endorsers included the NAACP, the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, the South Florida AFL-CIO, the United Teachers of Dade, the American Jewish Congress, numerous religious leaders, neighborhood associations, and some south Florida city councils.

Representatives of the Service Employees International Union and the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees also spoke in favor of the amendment at the hearing.

Opponents of the ordinance pledged to work for its reversal. SAVE-DADE's Rosemary Wilder said gay rights activists are ready this time. "They are coming after us with a referendum and we are going to beat them again," she said.

Police attack demonstration in Vancouver

BY NED DMYTRYSHYN

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — About 60 riot cops dressed in full protective gear, accompanied by a police squad armed with tear-gas launchers and dogs, attacked participants in a demonstration protesting Prime Minister Jean Chretien's presence in Vancouver December 8.

The crowd, estimated between 700 and 1,000, was there to protest the prime minister's role in ordering attacks by the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) against student demonstrators protesting the Asia Pacific Economic Conference here in November 1997. In the cop attacks at that time, pepper spray was used. Out of those events an RCMP Public Complaints Commission was set up, which has heard testimony accusing the RCMP of violating students' constitutional rights and claiming political interference by the Prime Minister's office.

Now that commission has been temporarily suspended. The chairperson of the inquiry has resigned and the Solicitor General of Canada, Andrew Scott, was forced to resign after revealing that he was setting up Hugh Stewart to take the fall for the pepper spraying incident. Students are calling for a full public inquiry. Hugh Stewart was the RCMP officer in charge of the cop action on December 8.

Other slogans of the December 8 protectionist action included "End economic tyranny through globalization" and "No to Canada's involvement in APEC, one of many undemocratic trade deals —" demands that promote Canadian nationalism in the guise of concern for democracy and human rights. Sponsors of the action

included the Vancouver and District Labour Council, The Canadian Autoworkers Union, The Canadian Federation of Students, the Council of Canadians, the Communist Party of Canada, the International Socialists, and others.

A handful of protesters tried to go around the police lines and into the hotel where Prime Minister Chretien was. They were quickly arrested. The cops used this as a pretext to bring out the riot squad and viciously attack the entire demonstration, which was peaceful. According to rally organizers 20 were treated for injuries and at least two were taken to the hospital for serious injuries.

As the riot squad was wading into the crowd Chretien told Liberal party supporters seated for a \$400-a-plate dinner in the hotel that "Canada is praised worldwide as a model of tolerance and generosity where everyone enjoys equality under the law."

The Canadian Autoworkers Union National Council meeting held December 12-13 in Toronto called on organizations to protest the use of police clubs to attack people asserting their democratic right to oppose government policy in Canada.

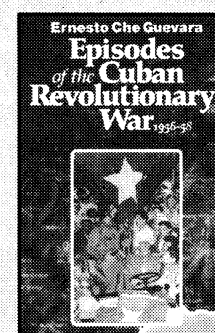
The December 8 cop attack comes in the context of deepening attacks on democratic rights. The British Columbia attorney general's office has revealed that phone taps are

routinely used against the Sikh community, supposedly to combat "terrorism." The British Columbia Civil Liberties Association has filed a complaint to the office of the police commissioner about actions taken by police to deal with drug trafficking which involve illegal searches and seizure of property, invasion of privacy, and attributing drug trafficking to Hondurans, thus unjustly tainting people from Honduras and others of Latin American descent as being involved in criminal activity.

Ned Dmytryshyn is member of the International Association of Machinists.

Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War, 1956-58

ERNESTO CHE GUEVARA



Ernesto Che Guevara, Argentine by birth, became a central leader of the Cuban revolution and one of the outstanding communists of the 20th century. This book is his firsthand account of the military campaigns and political events that culminated in the January 1959 popular insurrection that overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship in Cuba. He explains how the struggle transformed the men and women of the Rebel Army and

July 26 Movement led by Fidel Castro and how these combatants forged a political leadership capable of guiding millions of workers and peasants to open the socialist revolution in the Americas. \$23.95

Available from bookstores listed on page 12.

Mushroom workers in Pennsylvania win right to a union

BY PETE SEIDMAN

KENNETT SQUARE, Pennsylvania — Workers at one of the biggest mushroom companies in the country scored an important victory December 14 when the Pennsylvania Supreme Court rejected the Kaolin Mushroom Farms' third and final challenge to a successful union representation election. That 130-102 vote was won by the Kaolin Workers Union following a hard-fought 30-day strike in April 1993. Kaolin is now the only mushroom company in Pennsylvania — the largest mushroom producing state in the country — where workers have won union representation.

Kaolin owner Michael Pia had challenged the election, claiming that poor translation provided by the State Labor Board meant the workers, the overwhelmingly majority of whom are Mexican, did not understand what they were voting for. But Kaolin Workers Union leader Luis Tlaseca told the *Militant*, "All of us understood the people who were translating because they were saying exactly what the ballot said — yes or no to the union of Kaolin workers."

Tlaseca blasted Pia's hypocritical claims about good translation, noting that prior to the election management organized a campaign in the plant urging workers to vote against the union. "Supervisors ordered us to take off T-shirts with 'union yes' signs. They threatened supporters of the union that we would not be rehired when we came back from visits to Mexico during the Christmas holidays," Tlaseca recounted.

This was a serious threat, he explained, because there is almost no work available in the Mexican state of Guanajuato where most of the Kaolin workers come from, only some garment factories and temporary work in the fields.

During the strike, Tlaseca explained, Pia fired 33 pro-union activists "and put their names on a list so they couldn't get work" in any of the approximately 60 other mushroom companies here in this self-pro-

claimed "mushroom capital of the world." A subsequent Labor Board ruling ordered Kaolin to rehire Tlaseca and ten other fired activists with back pay. Since the court ruling, Pia has written the union offering to begin negotiations immediately.

Tlaseca explained that before the union begins such talks, it has a lot of work to do. "We're going to have an assembly of the workers at Kaolin to elect representatives. There has been a lot of time since the strike and union election. There are a lot of new workers in the plant." Among the demands the union will put forward in negotiations are "more money per basket, paid holidays, health insurance, vacations, and fair treatment," he continued. "And other things, like the return of all those fired in this struggle."

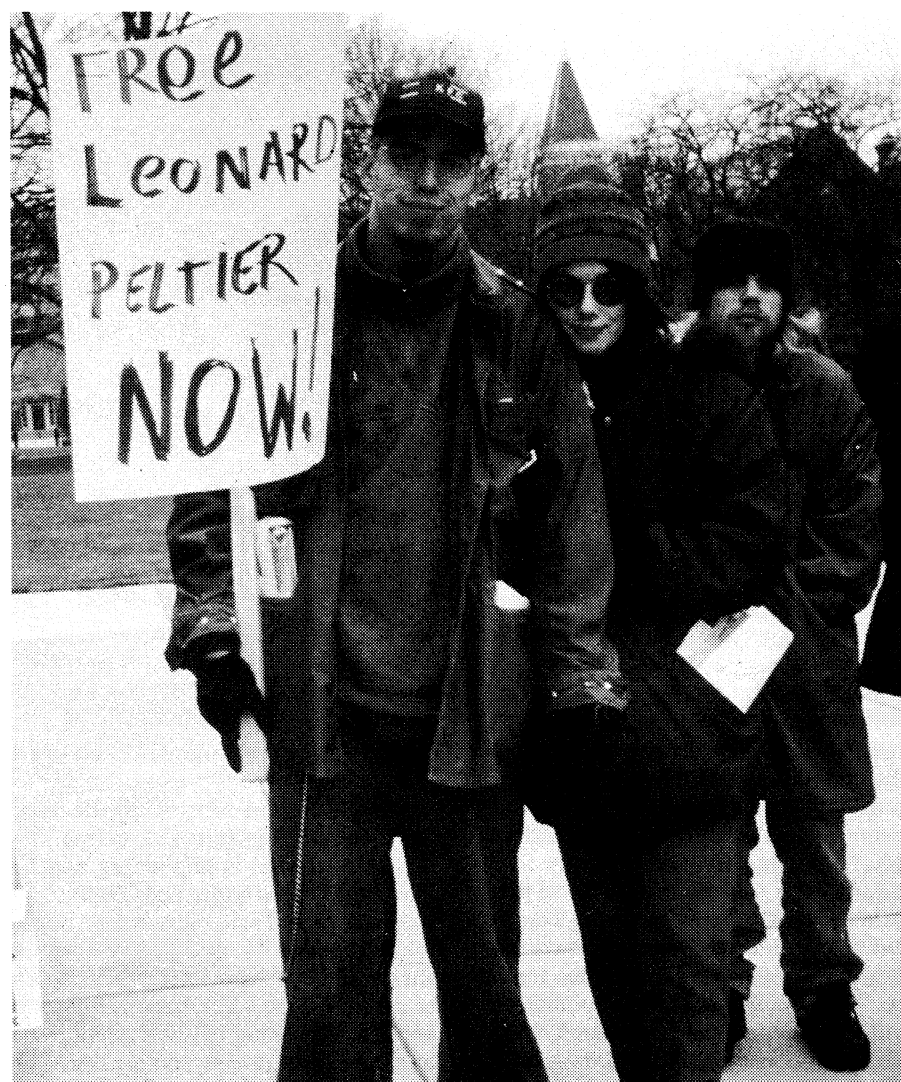
"The first step," Tlaseca said, "is to get a union contract at Kaolin. Next, to extend the union to all the other packers. This is not easy and will take some time."

There have been a series of raids by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) both in the Kennett Square and Reading mushroom producing areas. Last June, a raid at the Blue Mountain Mushroom Company in Reading took place shortly after workers there won a union representation election by a vote of 80-40. "What happened," Tlaseca said, "is the INS came in and arrested the majority of workers and disorganized the struggle. They intervened to disorganize the workers, to support the owner."

Immigration cops have also raided plants in Chester County, where Kennett Square is located, since September. "In the last year, as Congress has boosted funding, the INS has increased [such] raids," the *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported November 20.

Another big issue for the Kaolin Workers Union is housing. Pia recently purchased the Center Square Apartments, a run-down complex where many of the single men who make up the majority of the workforce at Kaolin live. "Now he's abusing these work-

Action demands: Free prisoners Leonard Peltier and Mumia Abu-Jamal now!



Militant/Marty Ressler

About 100 people, many of them young, rallied December 19 on the steps of the state capitol building in Lansing, Michigan. The protest was originally called by Native American groups to demand the release on parole of Native American rights fighter Leonard Peltier. Groups active in the fight to free Black journalist and death row inmate Mumia Abu-Jamal later joined in calling the action. High school student Russ Bomhof from Grand Rapids, who traveled with two other high school seniors, said, "We are just entering the scene and are really getting excited about making a difference."

ers in their homes with the aim of getting more control over the people who work for him," Tlaseca said. "We're organizing to fight for their rights. It's linked to winning support for the union as it fights for a con-

tract."

Pete Seidman is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees in Philadelphia.

Ohio: 500 RMI Steelworkers remain strong on strike

BY MIKE FITZSIMMONS

NILES, Ohio — Spirits remain high on the picket lines as more than 500 members of United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Locals 2155 and 2155-7 approach the fourth month on strike here against RMI Titanium. "Our motto is 'One day longer,'" said Rick Maine, a maintenance grievance man and member of the negotiating team with 18 years at RMI.

"I'm proud to be out here with these guys. Of course I'd rather be working, but I'll stay out until it's done," added Tom Taylor, a shearman for two years.

Pickets are quick to point to the importance of rejecting the company's demand to introduce a permanent \$1.60 pay cut for new hires and the replacement of the company-funded pension plan with employee-funded 401K plans.

The union also demands a pay raise and pension increase to a comparable level with major steel producers like USX, the former owner of RMI.

Maine also pointed to the participation of 450 of the 500 members of the local in picket duty. Each picket is scheduled for two four-hour shifts per week, with some spending

substantially more time than that.

The outreach and support work of the union committees also contribute to raising the morale of the ranks.

The Steelworkers' fight was recently bolstered by the victory of nurses at Trumbull Memorial Hospital in nearby Warren.

After a nine-day strike in November, according to striking Steelworkers, the nurses were able to return to work with the

hospital's promise to reduce forced overtime.

A contingent of those nurses participated in a November solidarity rally organized by the Women's Action Committee of the striking USWA locals. The committee also organized a spaghetti dinner for strikers' families on December 12 at the union hall of USWA Local 1375 in Warren.

Members of this local, workers at WCI

Steel, regularly visit the picket line and participate in other solidarity activities. Activists in the Women's Action Committee and the Strike Assistance Committee proudly point to their success in working with local pharmacists to ensure that strikers' medical needs are addressed during the strike.

For information on how to help, call USWA Locals 2155 and 2155-7 at 330-652-0288.

Washington escalates 'banana war' with EU

BY MEGAN ARNEY

The Clinton administration escalated the conflict with Washington's European rivals over the banana trade December 21, announcing a "final list" of exports from the European Union it is threatening to subject to a 100-percent tariff. Unless the EU capitulates to Washington's dictates, the taxes on more than \$500 million in goods could be imposed as early as February.

Leon Brittan, the EU trade commissioner from Britain, called the U.S. action "unilateralism at its worst." Washington may add

pork and other agricultural products to the 16 types of goods already on the sanctions list. Paris also objected. "The behavior of the U.S. calls for a response," read a December 23 statement issued by the French foreign ministry.

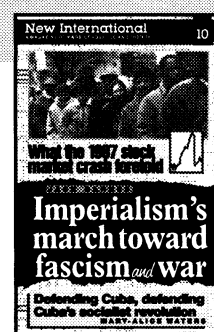
The U.S. government has taken its jingoistic case to the World Trade Organization, claiming existing EU trade laws "discriminate" against U.S. distributors of bananas grown on Central American and South American plantations such as Dole and Chiquita, favoring those from former colo-

nies of European powers in the Caribbean, the Pacific, and Africa.

Reflecting U.S. ruling class nervousness over the trade conflict, the editors of the *New York Times* warned European rulers December 22 that "it is essential for Europe to accede.... To do otherwise would invite international anarchy on trade rules when protectionism is a greater threat than at any time in the past decade."

The banana war, as it is becoming known, is one of a growing number of trade conflicts between the imperialist powers over everything from steel to wheat. These disputes have grown nastier in recently as the prices of commodities have fallen and more industrial capitalists announced lower profits.

Most recently, Washington has threatened to challenge Tokyo over rice imports. Under pressure from competitors in the United States, Australia, and elsewhere, the Japanese government agreed to import 4 percent of the country's rice per year, gradually increasing the quota to 8 percent in about 9 years. Tokyo has now announced that imports above this quota will be allowed, but will be subject to a tariff of about \$3 per kilogram. The United States is currently the largest exporter of rice to Japan, shipping 190,000 tons between April 1 and early December of 1998.



Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War

JACK BARNES

"There will be new Hitlers, new Mussolinis. That is inevitable. What is not inevitable is that they will triumph. The working-class vanguard will organize our class to fight back against the devastating toll we are made to pay for the capitalist crisis. The future of humanity will be decided in the contest between these contending class forces." Jack Barnes, "Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War." \$14.00 in *New International no. 10*

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Bombing leaves Clinton weaker, dangerous

Continued from front page around the world.

In 1991 nearly 20 governments participated in the U.S.-organized carnage against Iraq. This time only London joined the military operation.

According to the December 22 *Washington Post*, Clinton administration "strategists" hope that the four-day blitz of bombs and missiles and future attacks will foment rebellion and provoke a coup against Iraqi president Saddam Hussein. There's no sign of this on the horizon, though.

U.S. officials said 450 cruise missiles were launched and more than 650 sorties were flown by warplanes December 16-19, pounding Iraq with the most massive firepower since the 1991 Gulf War. During the first wave of assaults more than one cruise missile was fired every two minutes until sunrise.

Iraqi government officials reported 68 people were killed during the first three nights of air strikes. Iraqi deputy prime minister Tariq Aziz said 62 Iraqi soldiers died in the attack and 180 were wounded. He said he did not have a total for civilian casualties, although they were "much, much higher." At a December 21 news conference, he called the Clinton administration criminal declaring, "They acted according to the law of the jungle."

While Washington and London called off the bombing supposedly out of "sensitivity" to the Muslim celebration of Ramadan, the holy month was no obstacle to the fourth day of pounding the Iraqi people with cruise missiles. As night fell in Iraq on December 19, U.S. and British fighters and bombers resumed their bombardment for a fourth and final night.

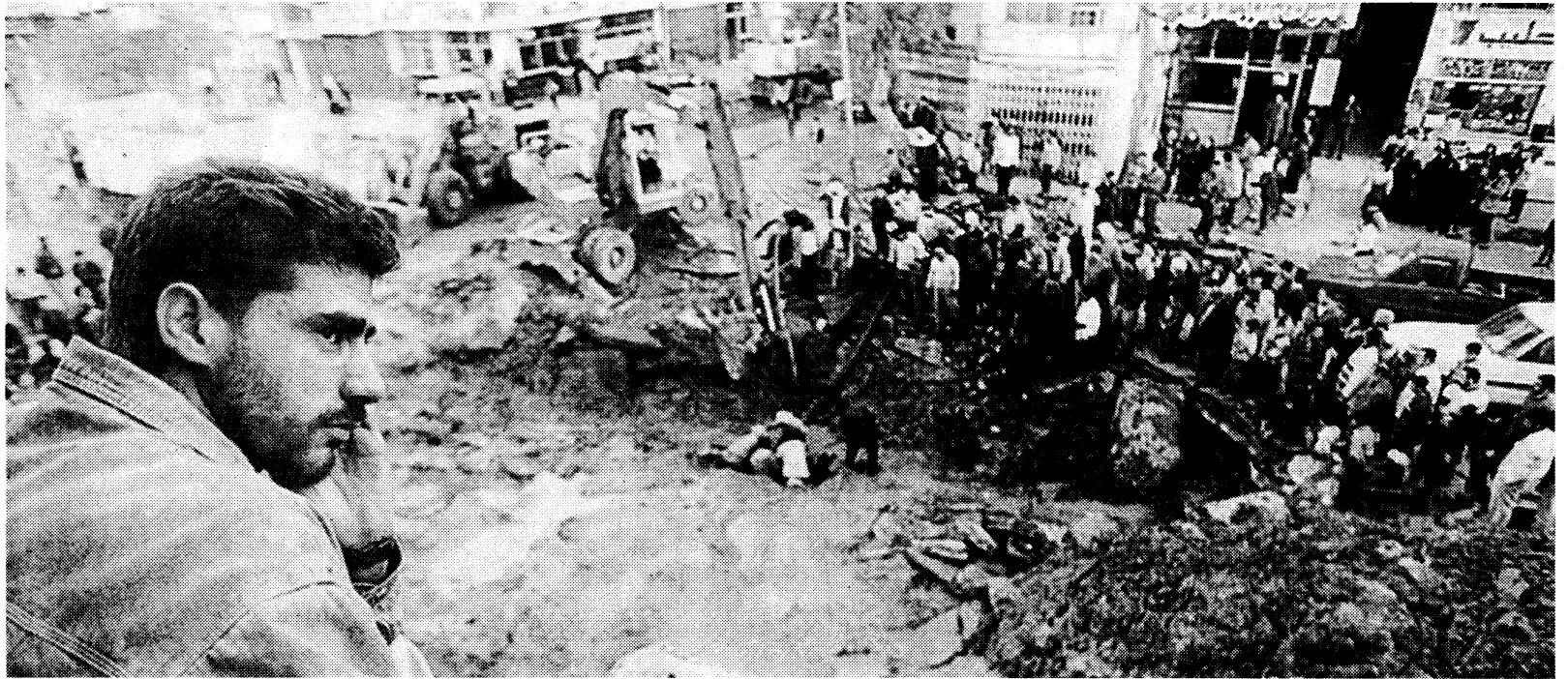
"There has been enormous damage mainly to the civilian infrastructure and to human lives," Iraqi ambassador to the UN Nizar Hamdoun told CNN reporters December 20. The bombs fell on hospitals, private homes, schools, and other civilian sites.

The bombing destroyed a warehouse managed by the UN World Food Program that contained 260,000 tons of rice. The UN Children's Fund said it was drafting plans to repair two hospitals and several primary schools damaged by the military operation. An oil refinery in Basra was also attacked.

At least three post offices in the southern city of Basra were hit. The home of Moueid Salah, next to one post office, was shattered when a cruise missile crashed in his neighborhood December 17. Two of Salah's children were injured in the assault.

Growing hatred of U.S. imperialism

There is a growing hatred among Arab masses in Iraq and elsewhere in the Mideast of Washington's imperial use of its mili-



People in Baghdad assess the damage December 17, the day that Washington launched the largest military assault on Iraq since the Gulf War.

tary might and the devastating effects of the U.S.-led sanctions imposed on Iraq.

"I know what is happening and I still blame the United States and Clinton," Yania Attala, a retired schoolteacher in Baghdad, told a reporter. "I used to live very well," she continued. "Now I am reduced to a kind of poverty. Last week I spent four days at home not knowing if I was going to be hit by a bomb. We gave my mother some valium to calm her down, but they didn't help. So how do you think I feel? How would you feel?"

Palestinians on the West Bank burned U.S. flags that had been waved for Clinton just days earlier, and other working people throughout the Mideast demonstrated in the thousands in outrage at the bombing of Iraq (see article on facing page).

Iraq is not the only target of the U.S. aggression in the region. The bombing highlighted the collision course between Washington and Moscow, as the U.S. rulers have moved to expand NATO into eastern Europe, intervened with ground troops in Yugoslavia, and built a ring of pressure along the southern flank of the former Soviet Union. The aim of this military encirclement is to put the imperialists in position to try to overturn the workers states and reestablish capitalist domination in Russia and the region.

To protest the bombing the Russian government recalled its ambassadors from the United States and Britain for the first time in decades. Russian prime minister Yevgeny Primakov has called for building a "strategic triangle" between Moscow, New Delhi, and Beijing to counter "U.S. hegemony."

The Chinese government also condemned the attack, saying it set a "dangerous precedent" of launching military strikes without the approval of the Security Council. Beijing expressed concern that one day such aggression could be used against China.

Other governments issued statements condemning the U.S. aggression, including the Cuban Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. South Africa's Department of Foreign Affairs released a statement in behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement on December 18 deploring the "ongoing military actions against Iraq by individual countries without any authorization from the Security Council in flagrant disregard of the United Nations Charter."

Calls to restart 'weapons inspections'

The U.S. and British bombing also put a spotlight on conflicts between the major imperialist powers in the NATO alliance over dominance in the Mideast. The French government opposed the military action, as it has every time Washington has prepared to bomb over the last year. Paris favors lifting

the economic sanctions against Baghdad, which Washington has spearheaded since 1990. Paris had lucrative trade investments with Baghdad before the Gulf War.

Immediately after the bombing halted December 20, French president Jacques Chirac said he was "delighted." He offered to "make an important, positive contribution to the necessary way out of the crisis." What he meant was spelled out by Foreign Minister Hubert Vedrine the next day. Vedrine called for revamping the United Nations "inspection teams" that were used to provoke the latest crisis and moving "toward a lifting of the embargo."

The Iraqi government refuses to consider allowing the "inspectors" back in to spy on military and other government facilities under the guise of searching for "weapons of mass destruction."

"In all this bombing, not a trace of chemical or biological weapons was detected," said Deputy Prime Minister Aziz. "All this rhetoric about weapons of mass destruction is a big lie."

A former UN "weapons inspector" told the *Financial Times* December 22 there was no proof that Baghdad was hiding "weapons of mass destruction."

Moscow and Beijing's representatives to the UN Security Council said chief UN spy Richard Butler lied in his report to UN secretary general Kofi Annan, which served as the pretext for launching the air war. China's UN ambassador Qim Huasun called Butler "dishonorable."

"Butler was coordinating, conspiring together with the people in the Clinton administration to try to bomb Iraq and to provide the pretext for them," Iraq's ambassador to the United Nations Nizar Hamdoun asserted on CNN December 20.

Aziz dismissed the French government's proposal to reconstitute a new team of inspectors, as well as calls for firing Butler. "The weapons inspections were killed by the American and British missiles," he said. "How can I receive a suggestion from a party that does not condemn the aggression? How can I discuss a solution if that solution does not include an end to the sanctions?"

Aziz continued, "Richard Butler is a cheap pawn in the hands of the Americans. He is not the issue. The issue is the American and British position during the whole period which prevented the Security Council from making any serious effort to lift the sanctions."

Arab regimes in the Mideast region are feeling stronger pressures from workers and peasants to demand an end to the draconian sanctions. They along with Moscow and Paris call for replacing the oil embargo with "economic and financial controls," the December 23 *Wall Street Journal* reported.

Washington's Iraq policy decomposing

Meanwhile, Clinton's Iraq policy is disintegrating. The threats of renewed bombing missions and tightening the squeeze on the Iraqi masses began immediately. "We have said very clearly that we reserve the right to use force again," declared U.S. secretary of state Madeleine Albright on the December 20 NBC television program "Meet the Press." But what the U.S. rulers

could gain from this is being hotly debated.

Marking a big departure from their usual bipartisan stance on foreign policy, several senior congressmen publicly declined to support the bombing campaign, though they signed a statement "supporting the troops." Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott declared, "I cannot support this military action in the Persian Gulf at this time. Both the timing and policy are subject to question." Earlier in the year Lott said, "Despite any current controversy, this Congress will support the president in full defense of America's interests throughout the world," referring to the then unfolding sex scandal involving Clinton and former White House employee Monica Lewinsky.

"The basic problem is that we don't have a larger strategic policy for Iraq," complained Zbigniew Brzezinski, a national security adviser to former U.S. president James Carter, to the *New York Times*. "Our policy is either strike them or starve them."

The editors of the *Nation* magazine likewise described "Operation Desert Fox" as "a smokescreen to cover for the lack of a comprehensible or workable policy toward Iraq." With not a word about the 22 million Iraqi citizens who were showered with cruise missiles and bombs, the liberal editors complained that the UN humanitarian staff were not evacuated before Clinton ordered the murderous bombardment. They criticized the assault for eroding the "rapidly crumbling international support for sanctions," supporting the U.S. imperialists' prerogative to strangle Iraq and violate its sovereignty.

A stalemate has developed between the Clinton administration and Congress over what role the CIA should play in Iraq policy. U.S. government officials say the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence has blocked a plan to undermine the Iraqi government because the president does not have a serious plan to overthrow Saddam Hussein.

"Nobody that I know has a strategy that they think will get rid of Saddam in the next six months or year, unless you are willing to put in a large U.S. ground force there," said an unnamed White House official.

In the aftermath of the 1991 Gulf War organized by the Bush administration, ruling-class spokespersons charged that he dropped the ball by deciding to halt offensive operations at the end of February. By conservative estimates more than 150,000 Iraqis were killed. At the time the U.S. rulers thought they had accomplished their aim and would be able to replace the Iraqi government with one more subservient to Washington's commands. An invasion would have led to substantially higher U.S. casualties. Bush later acknowledged that one reason for not continuing the slaughter was fear that the U.S.-dominated "coalition" would shatter.

The U.S. rulers are just as worried today over the political implications of U.S. casualties in a military conflict. The *New York Times* reported December 23 that Gen. Anthony Zinni of the U.S. Marine Corp. "said for the first time that Iraq's seemingly feeble antiaircraft fire had forced pilots to abort strikes on some sites" during the latest bombardment.

New International

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In no. 7

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BY JACK BARNES

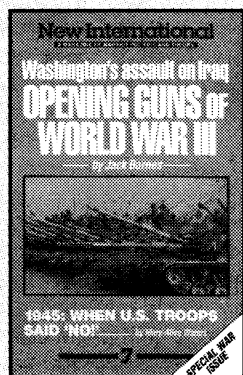
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Mideast: tens of thousands protest assault

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

U.S. president William Clinton's four-day shower of cruise missiles and bombs on 22 million Iraqis has escalated political tensions and social turmoil in the Mideast in a way not seen since Washington's 1991 Gulf War slaughter. Tens of thousands of people rallied in the streets throughout the region to protest what they considered an outrageous assault on Arab people.

The Associated Press noted December 18 that "not one Arab government has expressed support for the airstrikes." The news agency reported that the attack was condemned by the world's largest Muslim group, the 52-nation Organization of the Islamic Conference based in Saudi Arabia.

"Clinton is nothing more than a criminal," said a student in a demonstration December 19 of more than 1,000 people at the University of Jordan in Amman. "He says he respects the month of Ramadan by not starting his attack on Iraq during the holy month, as if it is okay to strike our Arabs and Muslim people and to kill them during any other month."

Hundreds of students also demonstrated at Yarmouk University, and students at private and public high schools said they organized protests on their campuses. More than a dozen unions and 14 opposition parties in Jordan issued a December 19 statement urging Arab governments to condemn the bombardment. The next day more than 3,000 women marched in Amman.

That same day, December 20, more than 100,000 protesters marched in Rabat, the capital of Morocco. Though the demonstration was led by a banned Islamic group, the government did not try to stop it. Similar actions were organized there during the 1991 onslaught against the Iraqi people.

In Yemen 15,000 protesters rallied on the streets of San'a December 18 chanting, "America is the enemy of the Muslims." About 2,500 people in Beirut, Lebanon, organized a sit-in outside UN headquarters, and in Egypt 4,000 students burned U.S. and Israeli flags December 19 at Banha University, north of Cairo.

Also that day, tens of thousands of demonstrators marched in the streets of Damascus, Syria. "The Syrian people are with you, our Iraqi brothers," read one banner carried by the marchers. Syria's parliament speaker Abdul-Kader Qaddoura told that legislative body, "[We] condemn and denounce this attack and call on the international community to condemn and halt it immediately."

About 1,000 students attacked the U.S. embassy and some hurled rocks at the British embassy in Damascus. They overturned a British diplomatic vehicle and the U.S. embassy's Marine guards reportedly fired tear gas to disperse the crowd.

Other protest actions included 2,000 people in Khartoum, Sudan, where Washington bombed a pharmaceutical plant in August claiming the facility was used to make components for chemical weapons. Some 4,000 people rallied outside the U.S. Consulate in the Netherlands to protest bombing raids.

Palestinians take to the streets

More than 4,000 Palestinians marched in the West Bank city of Hebron December 19, despite attempts by the Palestinian Authority to ban protest actions without prior permission. Israeli soldiers attacked the demonstration with rubber bullets and tear gas, injuring at least 100 people. Elsewhere, about 2,500 Palestinians marched in Jenin, West Bank, and 400 rallied in the Gaza Strip town of Rafah. In southern Lebanon, 1,000 Palestinian refugees rallied against the bombing as they burned U.S. and Israeli flags.

On December 18 about 15,000 Palestinians demonstrated in the streets of Nablus, West Bank, chanting "Death to America." U.S. flags distributed by the Palestinian Authority during Clinton's visit the previous week were trampled and burned. At Manger Square in Bethlehem, protesters found some leftover U.S. flags and wrapped them around their shoes to show contempt for Clinton's hypocrisy. Other actions that day included a funeral procession joined by 1,000 Palestinians in the West Bank village of Beit Douku for a youth killed by Zionist troops during an earlier protest against the U.S. bombing.

Palestinian cops beat 500 protesters in Gaza City December 18 and arrested nine journalists who were covering the demonstrations in the West Bank and Gaza. The Palestinian Authority shut down media that broadcast programs on the U.S. military assault and protests in the West Bank against it. An Associated Press photographer was briefly detained by Palestinian security, who warned him not to take pictures of other protest actions.

The rising tensions and the dilemma posed for the Palestinian Authority to curtail protests against Washington's war moves was also faced by other Arab regimes that are more pliant servants for the U.S. imperialists. In Jordan 500 police were mobilized to surround a rally of 500 people in Amman December 18. And in



Militant photos/above: Jacob Perasso; left: John Sarge
Dozens of demonstrations, rallies, and speak-outs occurred throughout the United States and the world. Above, Manal Elkart, a member of the Muslim Student Association at the University of California at Santa Cruz, speaks at a demonstration in San Francisco December 19. That same day, a rally took place at Fox TV station in Southfield, Michigan, left, to protest a media blackout of opposition to U.S. bombing of Iraq.

Cairo, Egypt, about 300 cops circled a rally of some 40 people at a mosque near the U.S. embassy in Cairo.

The governments of Saudi Arabia, Qatar, Bahrain, and the United Arab Emirates were reticent about allowing support opera-

tions for Washington's war machine on their territory, including takeoff of refueling planes that service fighter jets and airspace clearance.

The government of Saudi Arabia, which had long refused to permit the 60 U.S. warplanes based there to attack Iraq from Saudi soil, hardly acknowledged its operational support for the missile barrage. Reporters on bases in the region were told not to disclose their location.

Hundreds in U.S., U.K. condemn bombing by Washington, London

Continued from front page

Center. Naperville is a Chicago suburb. Standing at the front of the rally were three members of Teamsters Local 705 at UPS in Chicago. Manny Lara, the chief steward on the twilight shift, told the *Militant*, "I am a Vietnam vet. I know how the U.S. government treated us when we returned, and I oppose the bombing of Iraq. We are in a fight ourselves."

Migdalia Jimenez
and Helen Meyers

NEWARK, New Jersey — Supporters of the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists here initiated three street protests against the bombing of Iraq outside the Federal Building in downtown Newark. The third protest was joined by members of the New Jersey Independents and supporters of the American Friends Service Committee. All the protests received honks and waves of support from passing drivers, and two passersby joined the picket. The first protest, on the night the bombing began, was reported in the New Jersey *Star Ledger*. On December 19 we joined a march of 40 people here called by New Jersey Peace Action, Pax Christi, and others.

During the second protest outside the federal building, cops from the Federal Protective Services Agency carried out a counterprotest. These cops are assigned to security at federal buildings, and a group of eight had gathered to watch the protest. A sergeant arrived and began to make clear his opposition to the demonstration. When protesters chanted "What do we want? Stop the Bombing!" he echoed, "No we don't." Egged on by this example, other cops joined this counter-chant and began to make comments about the demonstrators. When a picket refused to give the sergeant a leaflet,

he called the city police, who arrived in two cruisers with flashing lights. After a short discussion, the cops agreed that the protesters had a right to demonstrate, but the two police agencies maintained a large presence for the remainder of the protest.

Andy Buchanan

TAMPA BAY, Florida — About 65 people turned out December 18 for a demonstration here near MacDill Airforce Base. For the first time, the local Muslim community turned out and joined in with other organizations protesting Washington's war moves on Iraq.

Professor Al-Arian of the University of South Florida, who recently resumed teaching duties after a period of suspension while he was being investigated for ties to an alleged Palestinian "terrorist" thinktank, attended the protest. There were many Palestinians in addition to workers from other Middle East countries. MacDill is the CENCOM headquarters for much of Arab-Persian Gulf Air Force operations.

Dale Younce

DETROIT — "Muslim people do not support Saddam Hussein. He is a criminal. But the U.S. has no right to intervene in the internal affairs of Iraq," Sheik Abdal-Bari, told almost 400 people, many of whom were Arab, in a protest December 18 at the Islamic Center of America in Dearborn, Michigan. He pointed out that the bombing "is a very cowardly deed," describing the U.S. actions as "new age imperialism." The meeting followed an outdoor press conference and candlelight vigil.

Abraham Turaani, a member of the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, who chaired the event, declared that the meeting was called "in one voice to con-

demn this naked aggression aimed at the Iraqi people." The meeting, conducted in both English and Arabic, heard from Islamic and Christian clergy and organizers of protests against both the bombing and the continued sanctions aimed at crippling Iraq.

It was the largest of a series of protests in southeast Michigan and northern Ohio of the latest U.S. assault on Iraq. Within hours of the announcement that bombing had begun, the Detroit Socialist Workers Party released a statement condemning the U.S. aggression. John Sarge, the Socialist Workers candidate in Michigan's 14th Congressional District in the recent elections, blasted the "imperialist arrogance of the Clinton administration for the bombing," as a guest on a radio talk show broadcast from both Toledo and Cincinnati, Ohio.

The next afternoon more than 100 people gathered at the Brodhead Naval Armory on Detroit's near east side to protest the latest aggression. Fifty people gathered in Toledo, Ohio, December 20 to protest the bombing. This picket line was planned at a meeting the night before of the local group organizing to win freedom for frame-up victim Mumia Abu-Jamal, which included students from the University of Toledo.

Marty Ressler

MANCHESTER, England — A demonstration of 200 marched here December 19 to demand "Stop the Bombing." It was announced an hour before on local radio, and was reported on local television. The demonstration was called by the British Socialist Workers Party, the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, and the Greater Manchester Socialist Alliance.

Similar actions took place in London, Paris, Canada, Sweden, New Zealand, and dozens of other U.S. cities.

'We're going to win,' say Skychef pickets in Britain

BY CAROLINE BELLAMY

LONDON — Thirty days after being sacked for a one-day strike, workers at the Skychef catering company at Heathrow airport are still standing firm. "We're going to win it and that's the end of the story," said G.S. Mann, a driver, speaking at the 24-hour picket outside the factory.

"They are trying to break the union," said R. Taylor, who worked in the stores. "They want it so they can manipulate us and only employ the people they want, the crawlers. If you speak up you'll be out. Without the union, what's the point? When they sacked us it was a shock. We only came out for 24 hours and some of us have worked here for a long time." Some pickets have more than 20 years employment at the company.

On the day of the strike, workers were delivered letters telling them they were fired. Those on sick leave were phoned up and asked if they would have gone on strike had they been at work. If they said yes, they too were sacked. Workers are angered by this harassment, and many say that it contributed to the death of one man who was off sick with a bad back. Jaspal Singh Virdee, 48, died of a brain hemorrhage after receiving the news of his dismissal. Skychef has now sent letters to those who were on sick leave telling them that they can come back to work.

"This is all part of their dirty tricks," said Surinder Kaur, who works in the American Airlines section. "They are trying to divide us up." She reported that the picket line has been effective. "Some people went back to work, but they came out again after one night saying that they didn't want to be in there when their friends were outside on the picket."

The original one-day strike, the first of a projected series of four, was over broken promises by Skychef to compensate workers for big changes in working practices. Drivers who deliver and load the food trolleys to the planes were doing so alone. Previously a minimum of two workers delivered a load. Kaur said that in her section, the company had been imposing shift changes for two years, making workers do three rotating shifts as opposed to the fixed shifts they had worked before. "We never see our families," she commented.

Workers at other parts of the airport are supporting the strikers. There are 30,000 members of the Transport and General Workers union at Heathrow, including the Skychef strikers. Union representatives from all over the airport will be meeting December 22 to discuss the strike. This follows a December 4 meeting at which they pledged their support.

A ramp worker at one of the airlines at Heathrow, who asked that his name not be reported for fear of company discipline, said, "This is an issue for all the workers in the airport. People are increasingly thinking that if they defeat the union at Skychef, they'll try and do the same in other parts of the airport."

British Airways workers have contributed £2,000 (£1=US\$1.67) to the strike fund, and many airport workers have visited the picket line.

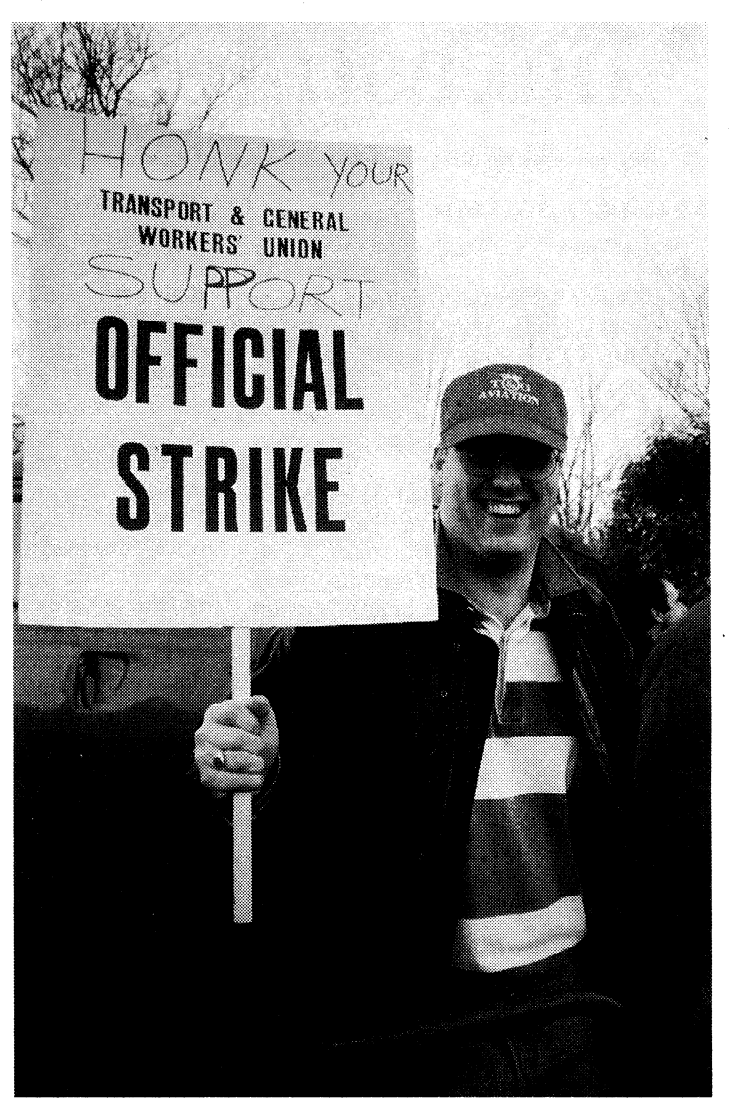
Financial support has been coming in from other workers. Electricians on the Jubilee Line Extension project, who recently won a two-week strike over health and safety and victimization, sent in £1,500. The hardship fund now stands at over £25,000.

The strike and picket are having an effect

on Skychef. Workers report that the company has lost two contracts already and may well lose a third. Timothy Otteridge, the general manager, has been on local radio saying that the strike has cost the company £1.5 million. No meals are being produced in the factory, the scabs are just packing food prepared elsewhere onto trays. Air France and Iberia are back-catering some flights, loading flights with food for the return journey at the airport of departure. Strikers have heard that workers at Iberia in Madrid refused to do this for one day, and the food had to be sourced from another company.

While Militant reporters were at the picket line, the police came over and told pickets not to shout at mothers and children who were leaving a company Christmas party put on for the scabs. "They say don't shout at children, but what about our children?" said Hardip Duhra.

Kaur reported that the company is allowing scabs to take their children into work,



Militant
A member of Transport and General Workers Union on picket line at LSG Lufthansa Skychefs in London.

but that the police will not allow strikers' children on the picket line. "But my children, aged 11 and 13, are proud of me," she said. "They say, 'You're great, Ma, you can walk with your head up because you stand up for your rights.'"

London: Johnson workers vote up contract, win raise

BY IAN GRANT AND CAROLINE BELLAMY

LONDON — Johnson Controls, the manufacturers who produce seats for the Ford Dagenham assembly plant in London have settled a pay claim made by the Transport and General Workers Union (TGWU) here.

In a November 19 ballot, workers voted 88.3 percent to accept the deal, which in-

cludes larger raises than the company's earlier offer. Previously, a vote to take strike action was supported by 87.5 percent of workers. A 25-day strike by Johnson Controls workers in the United States last year made some gains and left Ford with thousands of vehicles needing to be "retro-fitted" with seats.

The London workers will get a 8.63 percent raise on their basic pay in year one of

the two-year deal, and a further raise in year two, for a total 13.73 percent basic pay raise by September 1999. Including non-guaranteed attendance bonuses, workers' earnings could rise by a total of 19.5 percent over two years. Johnsons had proposed a four-year deal offering 4.5 percent raise each year, or a total of 19.25 percent over four years.

Workers at Johnsons want parity with Ford production workers. Pay has been only

70 percent of a Ford production worker's since the seat assembly was out-sourced three years ago. The Johnson production line is directly linked to the final assembly line in the Ford Dagenham plant a few hundred yards away. Other issues workers wanted addressed were the increasing use of temporary agency workers on production, holidays at premium pay, and a formal collective bargaining agreement with the union, rather than the "bargaining council" favored by the company.

In addition to the pay rise, workers won an extra one-day holiday in each year of the deal, but no premium holiday pay rate, and layoff pay for a maximum six weeks at full pay. The company will enter into discussions with the union on collective bargaining structures.

Addressing one of the key points for workers in the factory, Johnson promised to eliminate the use of temporary agency labor within three months.

"I think it's a good deal, everything considered," said Paul Flint, a seat fitter inside the Ford plant. Flint has worked at Johnson since they started production at Dagenham. "The raise in the basic was the most important thing for me, but the attendance allowance and extra holiday, in that order were factors too," said Flint, who voted for strike action, and then to accept the new contract offer. "The temps agreement is good too. Many are here day after day — why have them as temporary when they could be employed full-time? We also need more skilled workers to run the line," he added.

"I think we could have done better," said Decoursey Stewart, a shop steward and material handler at Johnson. He said that along with other stewards he wanted to recommend rejection of the deal. TGWU officials recommended the workforce vote to accept.

"If we'd taken some form of industrial action we could have got a better second-year basic rise and improved the conditions attached to the unguaranteed attendance bonus," Stewart said.

"The union is stronger, but we're still a fair way from getting equity with Ford, which was our aim," he added. "When we get back to the table in two years' time we'll want to close that gap."

Titan strikers win support at Grinnell College

BY RAY PARSONS

DES MOINES, Iowa — Thirty-five Grinnell College students turned out December 11 to hear a first-hand report on the strike by United Steelworkers of America (USWA) Local 164 at Titan Tire. The presentation was given by Local 164 member Mike Bolten and a lively discussion followed his remarks.

"The issue is pride — not being treated like a door mat," Bolten said of the strike. Some 670 USWA members walked out May 1 against mandatory overtime, two-tier wages, and for the restoration of pension and health-care benefits for retired workers. In September 500 members of USWA Local 303L walked out at another Titan Tire plant in Natchez, Mississippi. They are standing

firm against concessions Titan has demanded as part of its recent purchase of that facility.

The meeting at Grinnell, about 50 miles east of Des Moines, was organized by two student groups, the Campus Democrats and the Grinnell Socialists, with help from the political science and sociology departments. In November a dozen students visited the Steelworkers picket line in Des Moines following a demonstration organized by the Grinnell Coalition to Free Mumia Abu-Jamal. Abu-Jamal is a former Black Panther and prominent Black journalist currently on death row in Pennsylvania following a 1982 frame-up and conviction in the shooting death of a Philadelphia cop.

Joseph Feinberg, a leader of the Grinnell Socialists, helped organize the event because, "It's important for students to know what's going on in the labor movement. We can learn a lot from people involved in strikes."

Bolten was asked what the unionists will do as the strike, already in its eighth month, continues. He described the strike fund and unemployment benefits strikers receive and added, "We get lots of support [from other unions and community groups] because people think if Titan gets its way, it will snowball elsewhere." A December 8-9 gate collection at the Bridgestone/Firestone tire plant in Des Moines, where workers are members of USWA Local 310, netted more than \$2,800 for Local 164.

In other outreach efforts, Local 164 members spoke before the Des Moines Interfaith Network, an area religious group. On December 2, the *Des Moines Register* published a letter signed by more than 400 strikers answering point-by-point assertions made by Titan owner Maurice Taylor in a lengthy letter to the editor printed November 24. Following the union response, letters from four readers were published, all supporting the union.

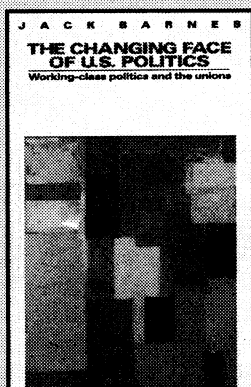
"I've heard the Titan workers' side and I've heard Morry Taylor's. I believe the workers," said one reader.

Meanwhile, Titan has failed to pay a monthly medical reimbursement to retirees that was due December 1. The payment, owed to some 300 retirees and their spouses, covers deductions made in retirees' Social Security benefits.

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

Ian Grant and Caroline Bellamy are members of the TGWU at Ford Dagenham.

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Locked-out ABC workers win support from fellow fighters

BY MITCHEL ROSENBERG

NEW YORK — Into their eighth week locked-out by ABC, Inc., a subsidiary of the Walt Disney Company, members of the National Association of Broadcast Engineers and Technicians (NABET) are staying solid, winning solidarity, and facing a new, union-busting contract proposal.

The members of NABET, which is part of the Communications Workers of America (CWA), struck for one day November 2 over ABC's refusal to divulge the details of the new medical plan the media giant sought to force the union members to accept. The next day, its 2,700 members nationwide were locked out.

Commemorating its 45th day lockedout, NABET Local 16 called an expanded picket line at 6:30 a.m. at the ABC Television building in New York December 17, drawing contingents and individual unionists from CWA Local 1101, Laborers International Union Local 79, the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE), the United Auto Workers, the Teamsters, the United Transportation Union, and others.

The largest contingent was from CWA Local 1101, one of the locals that recently won a strike victory against the Bell Atlantic telephone company. CWA members expressed the idea that their fight and the NABET struggle are linked with other battles and that the unions are "starting to come together," as Local 1101 member Pat Gibbons put it.

He said the NABET action was announced on the local's taped hotline, encouraging members to show up, and that the unions are "finally learning from the PATCO strike," referring to the firing of union air traffic controllers by then-president Ronald Reagan in 1981, and the lack of union resistance to that attack.

Another CWA member, Keith Denton, said the large turnout of Local 1101 members was "definitely due to the impact of the Bell Atlantic strike."

NABET members welcomed the supporters and were clearly boosted by the 300-strong or more turnout, though some noted it could have been much larger.

Cops arrested four unionists that morning, one NABET member and three from the Laborers, accusing them of crossing the street and "obstructing traffic" on the sidewalk.

At 4:30 p.m. the same day, dozens of New York Federation of Teachers unionists joined NABET members, swelling the picket lines again. Some reported they'd recently been part of solidarity pickets with the National Education Association members who won a strike victory in Jersey City, New Jersey, in November.

NABET members welcomed a group of activists from the Mumia Abu-Jamal Defense Coalition of New York on their picket line the evening of December 21.

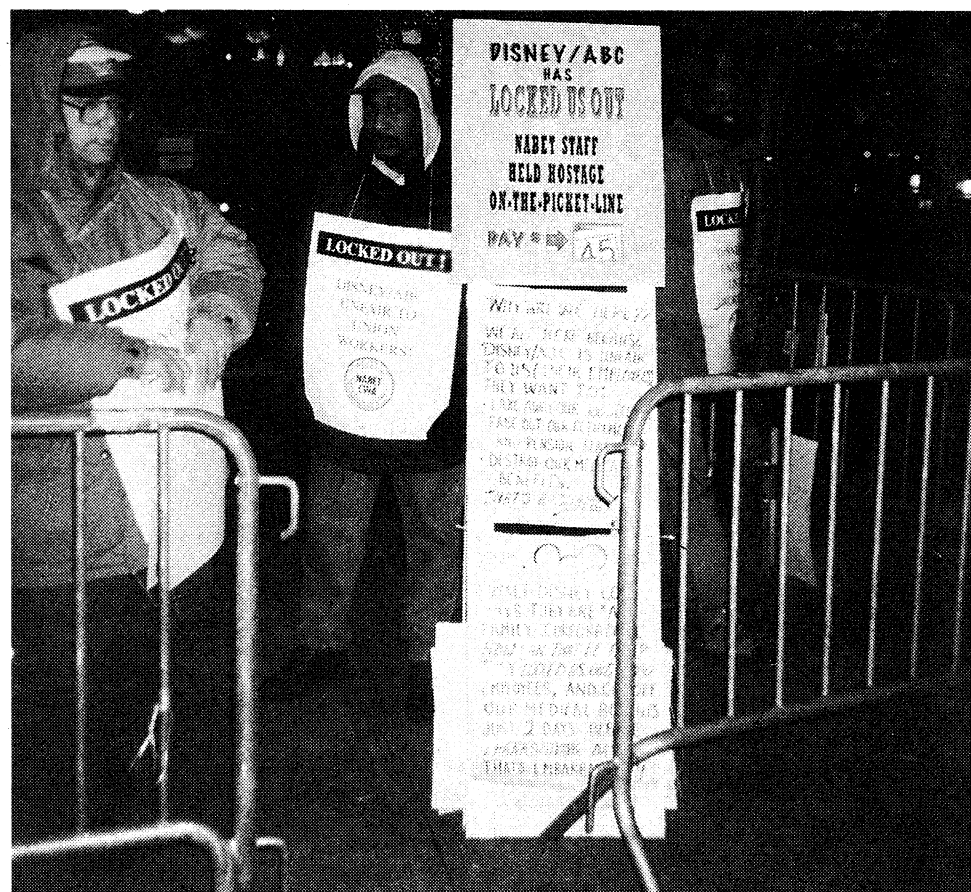
Defense activists expressed solidarity with NABET and explained the fight to stop the state of Pennsylvania from executing Abu-Jamal.

NABET members on the line were impressed with Abu-Jamal's refusal to be interviewed for the ABC television news show "20/20" out of solidarity for the locked out workers (see article below). Ross Helman, a video editor for the "20/20" show before the lockout with seven years at ABC said, "It takes a lot of guts to do what he did. We face losing our homes, our jobs. But he faces a lot bigger fight."

Picket captain Brendan Black, a video technician, thanked the defense activists for their presence, noting the power of Abu-Jamal's example. "If a guy on death row won't cross a picketline, it can convince others not to," he said.

NABET now faces a new contract proposal from ABC, which is "worse than the contract on the table six months ago," according to Black. He said it has "no amnesty clause" to protect activists during the lockout, includes "massive cuts in union jurisdiction," which would result in loss of many union jobs, and demands some NABET members take a lump sum wage supplement instead of a wage hike.

NABET members in New York are meet-



Militant/Deborah Liatos

Some 300 people turned out to an expanded picket line December 17 organized by NABET-CWA workers locked out by ABC, Inc.

ing to discuss the contract proposal December 21 and 22.

Graphic artist Lori Nosrallah did not like what she'd heard about the company proposal and was awaiting her meeting December 22 to get details. But she discussed other attacks the unionists had faced since the lockout began, including the take-away of health coverage the day before Thanksgiving. Nosrallah has tendinitis from the repetitive keyboard work she does at ABC.

Picket captain Ray Alicea summed up the determination among picketing NABET

members: "We'll stay out as long as it takes — we've been out 48 days and we'll stay out another 48 if we have to." He noted the unionists have been getting \$200 weekly from the union while locked out and now will be eligible for unemployment compensation.

"We're not surrendering," Alicea affirmed. "They expected us to roll over, but they've got a big surprise coming."

Mitchel Rosenberg is a member of UNITE. Al Duncan contributed to this article.

Activists in Philadelphia call for march to free Mumia Abu-Jamal

BY JOHN STAGGS AND CANDACE WAGNER

PHILADELPHIA — A march of "Millions for Mumia" is scheduled for Philadelphia April 24, 1999. The mobilization was announced at a December 11 conference of 200 supporters of journalist and Black rights activist Mumia Abu-Jamal, who was sentenced to death, accused of killing Philadelphia policeman Daniel Faulkner. His fight for a new trial has gained international support. Participants in the Philadelphia meeting came from a range of organizations.

New backing has been won recently for Abu-Jamal's defense. Steve Wisner from Bruderhof, a religious grouping, reported to the conference that Bishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa sent a letter to Pennsylvania governor Thomas Ridge supporting a

new trial for Abu-Jamal. Among those who have signed the letter are members of Congress John Conyers and Barbara Lee; Coretta Scott King; actors Martin Sheen, Susan Sarandon, and Danny Glover; writer Toni Morrison; and Democratic politician Jesse Jackson.

Ramona Africa of the Concerned Family and Friends of Mumia Abu-Jamal reported that a delegation is making a presentation to the European Parliament on Abu-Jamal's case. On December 17 after the presentations of the delegation, the parliament passed resolutions calling on the Pennsylvania governor not to sign a new death warrant for Abu-Jamal and asking for a new trial.

A day-long conference organized by Academics for Mumia preceded the activists' conference.

On the evening of December 9, a TV audience of millions saw ABC newsman Sam Donaldson try to "prove" why the campaign to win a new trial for Abu-Jamal has no merit. In an interview with the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, printed the day of the broadcast, he explained his viewpoint. "Everything that we looked at compellingly points to the fact that Mumia shot Faulkner in cold blood...and was convicted properly, and was sentenced according to the laws of Pennsylvania."

On the 20/20 program Donaldson used the format of an "investigative report" to present a facade of impartiality. He interviewed Abu-Jamal's lawyer and prominent supporters such as actors Ed Asner and Mike Farrell, as well as Maureen Faulkner, the widow of the cop who died.

Donaldson explained that the prison authorities had not given permission for Abu-Jamal to be interviewed. At the conclusion of the segment the reporter also explained that Abu-Jamal had declined to be interviewed until the lockout of union cameramen by ABC had ended.

At the activists' conference, Leonard Weinglass, Abu-Jamal's lead attorney, hit on the pro-prosecution character of the 20/20 show. The program featured short fragments of a two-hour interview ABC had taped with Weinglass. Weinglass outlined some of what ABC omitted from the "investigative report," including the completely deficient le-

gal defense Abu-Jamal received from his public defender in the original trial, the witnesses who testified in later court hearings that they had been coerced by the police to change their original testimony of seeing someone else fleeing the scene, and the fact that no ballistic tests were done either on Abu-Jamal's gun or his hand to prove that he had fired a gun that night.

Donaldson focused in on the alleged hospital bed confession by Abu-Jamal the night of his arrest. But the reporter didn't question why no witness to this confession came forward until two months later and why one of these "witnesses" wrote in their report that day, "negro male [Abu-Jamal] made no comment."

The day following the airing of the 20/20 segment, supporters of the *Militant* newspaper in Philadelphia reported the program disturbed a number of their co-workers who hadn't considered themselves supporters of the framed-up activist. A member of the Oil Chemical and Atomic Workers at Merck Pharmaceutical, who asked that his name not be used, put it this way: "That was really the police version of what happened, wasn't it?"

At the December 11 conference, Weinglass also took up the fact that on November 28 the Pennsylvania Supreme Court declined to reconsider its rejection of Mumia's post-conviction appeal.

The attorney noted that under the new Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act Clinton signed into law in 1996, this action by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court starts the clock running on the one-year time limit to file an appeal in federal courts. Once the appeal is filed, the new law restricts the right of the federal court to conduct an independent review of the facts of the case. Governor Thomas Ridge could set a date for Abu-Jamal's execution at any time.

Protests are planned in cities around the country following action by Ridge or the Supreme Court to set an execution date or place other obstacles to block the fight for a new trial.

John Staggs is a member of the Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Union. Candace Wagner is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees.

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Miners forge 'stronger bond' in strike

Continued from front page
nity groups.

Nevertheless, the new contract just voted contains significant steps backward, not only from earlier UMWA contracts at Freeman but from the 1998 national contract negotiated by the Bituminous Coal Operators Association (BCOA), which covers the majority of organized miners.

Key concessions include:

1) In place of a company-funded system of health-care insurance covering retirees and their families, the agreement establishes monthly cash payments for the retirees to purchase their own medical insurance.

The amount of money paid out from the company to the miners is greater than proposed before the strike, but many miners do not consider it adequate.

For miners with pre-existing conditions who will find it difficult or impossible to get insurance, a \$1 million fund has been created. But to receive these funds, a miner must get the recommendation of a four-person board comprised of two representatives from the company and two from the union.

2) New rules in the contract undercut the system of bidding for jobs according to seniority, so the company now has more say over who does what job. Rule changes also give the company more control over who gets recalled from layoffs.

3) A two-year "attendance control" program has been instituted for workers recalled from layoff. Workers are subject to dismissal if they have two consecutive unexcused absences from work, two nonconsecutive unexcused absences in any month, or three in any 90-day period. The Freeman mines operate on a six-day workweek.

Under the new contract Freeman will let go of the replacement workers.

Wages will go from \$17.51 an hour to \$18.51 an hour over the four years of the contract.

Representatives of the UMWA International Union negotiated the contract with the company and recommended the miners approve it. An article in the *State Journal Register* quotes International representative Bill Hoback as calling the contract "a good deal — for both sides."

The day before the contract vote, UMWA president Cecil Roberts was quoted in the *Journal Register* saying, "This agreement is equal to or better than the '98 [BCOA] contract. But each miner has to decide that for themselves." He went on to say, "I don't want to make any predictions, but I hope this is coming to an end."

Company threatens to close mines

On the eve of the vote the company announced that if the miners rejected the contract, the current and future scabs would become permanent replacement employees. The company also threatened workers with closing the mines. Illinois coal is high in sulfur and is therefore affected by federal clean air legislation. Company spokespeople claimed that without cutting costs they would not be able to compete with low-sulfur western coal.

This threat was harped on by the press. The headline in the December 20 Taylorville



Maggie Filson, organizer of the miners food pantry, spoke with pride of the solidarity strikers received. Above, Filson at the strike headquarters in Farmersville December 17.

Breeze-Courier announcing the ratification vote proclaimed, "Union approval of contract ensures longer life for coal company."

Greg Mahan, president of UMWA Local 1969 at the Crown no. 2 mine, commented that the threat to close the mines was an important factor influencing those who voted to ratify the contract. Mahan said one miner who voted yes expressed it this way: "I didn't vote for the contract. I voted to go back to work."

The attack on seniority in job bidding is a special danger since it opens the way for the company to divide workers by playing favorites and to discriminate against union fighters in assigning jobs. As Frank Hasquin, a miner at Crown no. 2, explained, "This will allow the company to pick and choose, and weed out the people they don't like."

There is also great concern about the limited funds for workers with catastrophic illness. Bill Dillon, who has 22 years in the mines and has been diagnosed with muscular dystrophy, explained that if the four-person panel vetoes a request for funds the only recourse is legal action. The company could tie this up in the court forever, he commented.

Gains of the strike

Despite these and other concessions, many miners point to important gains from the strike. David Yard, a trustee on the Miner's Relief Fund, put it this way: "The strike showed the strength we have. We are not the same people we were 98 days ago. Many guys have gained more confidence and understanding — there's a stronger bond among us."

Yard said he felt this bond when miners left the bathhouse wishing each other a good Christmas. The feeling was not one of defeat. He mentioned that a co-worker said to him that despite the vote for a bad contract, the workers "put on one hell of a strike."

There is a lot of pride in how the strike was organized. Maggie Filson is part of the families' auxiliary and heads up the organization of the food pantry at strike headquarters. Her husband Rick has worked at the Crown no. 2 mine for more than 21 years. "When we started out, we had 54 boxes of groceries a week," she says. "Now we are up to 218 boxes.... We've received donations from as far away as Kentucky, Pennsylvania, Indiana, West Virginia, and other places."

"Being able to supply the grocery needs helps strikers a lot," Filson said. "That way they can spend their limited money on other bills."

Frank Doric, who has 18 years at Crown

no. 3, pointed to the heavy attack the miners were up against. "They [the company] hide behind security, scabs, police, FBI agents, lawyers, politicians, and the court to bully people into doing their will," he explained.

In countering an attack from the FBI, the miners set a real example. On November 6, FBI agents showed up at the home of Georgia Yard, David Yard's grandmother, demanding to search a tool shed on her property. When she demanded to see a search warrant, they left. Three days later the cops returned with the warrant, found nothing, and were told to leave.

The miners publicly opposed this attack, passing out leaflets describing the FBI harassment and sending letters to the editors of newspapers. Georgia Yard was received at rallies as a hero of the strike for standing up to the FBI.

Fight against mine bosses continues

Miners are discussing what comes next. Paul Perrine, the mine committee chairman of Local 1969, explained a concern, expressed by many, that the coal bosses would attempt to impose the concessions won in central Illinois on other locals. The Freeman miners have to educate on this, he said.

Perrine and others are already discussing and preparing for the continuing fight against the day-to-day attacks on workers on the job.

The miners have begun to discuss how to spread what they have learned to others on strike. "We got a lot of solidarity and support from other unions," Perrine commented. "We want to thank them. And now we can get out and support others on strike, like the Steelworkers, like the thousands of locked-out workers, and others on strike. We can't let the fire go out."

Betsy Stone is a member of the International Association of Machinists. Cappy Kidd is a member of the United Auto Workers.

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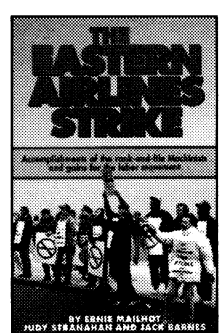
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Harry Ring

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of oil down to a 26-year low, the number of folks attending the annual Xmas lunch (prime ribs, oysters, etc.) at the posh Petroleum Club in Houston, dropped from 1,600 to 1,300.

Wait, there's more — A tradition had developed at the Petroleum Club that no one would pay more for a bottle of wine than for a barrel of oil. Now with oil down to \$10.75 a barrel, choice vintages are gathering dust in the wine cellar, and bottled mineral water is in.

Sweeping money from the streets? — Edward DiPrete, ex-

governor of Rhode Island pleaded guilty to accepting \$250,000 in bribes in exchange for state contracts. He was sentenced to one year in a work release program.

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And the cops got what? — The West Virginia State Police is paying \$40,000 to two Kentucky Fried Chicken workers who were strip searched because \$160 was missing. The money later turned up among some papers.

Lawyers? Never! — According to British cops, lawyers from at least 60 firms, including up to a half dozen of the top ones, are suspected of laundering millions of dollars generated each year by drug trafficking.

Free-market ingenuity —

Florida's Public Service Commission is divided on the howl by Bell South to reject the application of a guy who wants to operate pay phones under the name, Florida Billsouth. And there's the Texas company soliciting customers under the name KTNT. Pronounced rapidly by a phone salesperson, some folks think, it sounds like AT&T.

Capitalism's bright future — "Corporate confidence continues to fall as Japan's economy fails to produce evidence that it has hit bottom and is ready to rebound from the worst recession in more than 50 years." — Associated Press, Tokyo.

Celebrate 70-year anniversary of the 'Militant'

The first issue of the *Militant* began publication 70 years ago, on Nov. 15, 1928. Under the lead headline "For the Russian Opposition! Against Opportunism and Bureaucracy in the Workers (Communist) Party of America," it published a statement presented by James P. Cannon, Martin Abern, and Max Shachtman, leaders of the Communist Party to the meeting of the party's Political Committee (Polcom) that bureaucratically expelled them for "Trotskyism." Below are excerpts from that statement explaining the authors' reasons for supporting the Left Opposition led by Leon Trotsky in the Russian Communist Party to defend Marxist program and proletarian internationalism against the political course led by Joseph Stalin. The entire statement is published in *The Left Opposition in the U.S. 1928-31*, containing writings and speeches of James P. Cannon. The book includes other articles from the first issue of the *Militant* including an article celebrating the 11th anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution in Russia. The book is copyright © 1981 by the Anchor Foundation, Inc. Reprinted by permission. Footnotes are by the *Militant*.

BOOK OF THE WEEK

10. The Opposition in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union led by L. D. Trotsky has been fighting for the unity of the Comintern [Communist International] and all its sections on the basis of the victory of Leninism. The correctness of the

¹ Gregory Zinoviev, Leon Kamenev, and their followers in Leningrad formed a bloc with the Bolshevik-Leninists called the United Opposition in 1926. Its platform called for industrialization and for limitations on the better-off peasants (kulaks), who were gaining strength under the regime of Stalin and Nikolai Bukharin in Moscow. In 1928 a nationwide grain strike by the kulaks threatened the cities with starvation. In panic, Stalin instituted forced collectivization of the land and rapid, bureaucratic industrialization.

² *Nepmen* was a popular term for traders, merchants, and others who took advantage of opportunities for profitmaking under the New Economic Policy adopted by the Soviet government in 1921.

³ The May 1926 British general strike, called in solidarity with a bitter miners' strike, brought the country to a standstill. Its power frightened not only the capitalists but also the union bureaucrats, who called it off after nine days. Soviet trade unions continued their collaboration with the British union officials in the Anglo-Russian Trade Union Unity Committee until the British withdrew from that body in September 1927.

⁴ The Chinese revolution of 1925-27 began with a general strike in Shanghai. It spread with the Northern Expedition of Chiang Kai-shek's army, which conquered the pro-imperialist warlords of the North, unified the country, and sparked workers' uprising and peasant land seizures on a massive scale. The revolution was crushed when the Communist Party, after leading a successful insurrection in Shanghai in March 1927, welcomed Chiang's troops into the city, leading to a massacre of the workers. The CP, under the orders of the Comintern, had joined the Kuomintang, or Nationalist Party, in 1925, and Chiang was the principal military leader of that party.

position taken by the Russian Opposition over a period of five years of struggle has been fully confirmed by events.

a. The struggle led by Trotsky since 1923 for party democracy and against bureaucracy as the pressure of another class upon the party of the proletariat, was absolutely correct then and is even more so now. The adoption of this position by Zinoviev, Kamenev, and others in 1926, and the attempt by Stalin to adopt it now, demonstrates the tremendous pressure of class forces which impel the Communist Party of the Soviet Union to this platform.¹ The struggle for party democracy, against bureaucracy, and for a regime of genuine Leninist self-criticism are burning questions now for every party and for the Comintern as a whole.

b. The necessity for a more relentless struggle against the kulak and the nepman² — for an orientation exclusively toward the workers and hired hands, united with the village poor and lower peasantry and in alliance with the middle peasantry-proclaimed by the Opposition, becomes clearer every day. The trend of events and the irresistible pressure of class forces is already driving a deep cleavage in the leadership of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, and is forcing the Stalin group to struggle against the right wing (Rykov, etc.), with other elements (Bukharin) vacillating between the two.

The platform of the Russian Opposition, prepared for the Fifteenth Congress of the CPSU, indicates the revolutionary policy for the present situation in the Soviet Union. The prediction and warning contained in this platform against the inevitable growth and aggressiveness of a genuine right wing in the party (Rykov, Tomsy, etc.) has been precisely confirmed in the intervening period, particularly in recent months. The activities of this right wing have already necessitated organizational measures in the Moscow and other organizations of the party — a proof of the awakening of the proletarian masses of the party to this danger. The "left" course of the Stalin group in the direction of a struggle against the right dangers, for party democracy and self-criticism, against the bureaucrats, the nepmen, and the kulaks, can become a real left course only insofar as it abandons zigzag movements, adopts the whole platform of the Opposition, and reinstates the tested Bolshevik fighters who have been expelled to their rightful places in the party.

c. The attempts to revise the basic Marxist-Leninist doctrine with the spurious theory of socialism in one country have been rightly resisted by the Opposition led by Trotsky. A number of revisionist and opportunist errors in various fields of Comintern activity and its ideological life in general have proceeded from this false theory. To this, in part at least, can be traced the false line in the Chinese revolution, the debacle of the Anglo-Russian Committee, the alarming and unprecedented growth of bureaucracy in the Comintern, an incorrect attitude and policy in the Soviet Union, etc., etc. This new "theory" is bound up with an overemphasis on the power and duration of the temporary stabilization of capitalism. Herein lies the true source of pessimism regarding the development of the proletarian world revolution. One of the principal duties of every Communist in every party of the Comintern is to fight along with the Opposition for the teachings of Marks, Engels, and Lenin on this basic question.

d. The Opposition was absolutely correct when it demanded the immediate rupture of the Anglo-Russian Committee and the con-

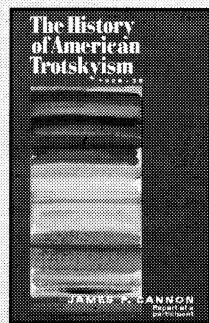
centration of all the fire of the Comintern and the British party upon the leaders of the British Trades Union General Council (Purcell, Hicks, and Company) immediately after the betrayal of the general strike.³ The maintenance of the Anglo-Russian Committee after this event did not serve as a bridge to the British masses but as a partial shield of the traitorous leaders from the fire of the Communists.

e. Rarely before in history has a Marxist-Leninist appraisal and forecast been so completely and swiftly confirmed as in the case of the Opposition theses and proposals (Trotsky, Zinoviev) on the problems and tasks of the Chinese revolution.⁴ The line of the ECCI, formulated by Stalin, Bukharin, Martynov, etc., and the rejection of the proposals of the Opposition, which were suppressed and concealed from the parties of the Comintern, have brought catastrophic results and hampered the genuine development of the Communist Party of China and the revolutionary-democratic dictatorship of the workers and peasants. In view of its world-historical importance, a real discussion of the problems of the Chinese revolu-

tion, with all the documents being made available, is imperative for all parties of the Comintern. The prohibition of this discussion must be broken down, the truth must be told and the enormous errors exposed down to their roots. Only in this way can the great lessons of the Chinese revolution be learned by the parties of the Comintern....

13. The consolidation of the Opposition in the American party, which logically and inevitably merges with the path of the Opposition in the Communist Party of the Soviet Union led by Trotsky, has developed in the struggle against the right danger.... The attempts to exclude us from responsible party work, and even from the party itself, along with the proletarian communists who support us, while at the same time the control of the party apparatus and the party leadership in such unions as the needle trades consolidates more firmly in the hands of the opportunists, who fight their communist worker critics with expulsion and physical violence—all this can only accelerate the rapprochement between the right wing and petty-bourgeois elements now outside the party.

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JAMES P. CANNON

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Writings and Speeches, 1928-31

JAMES P. CANNON

Supporters of the fight to continue Lenin's revolutionary course begin to rebuild the Marxist movement in the United States. \$22.95

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—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



January 11, 1974

For the fourth time in three years, the New York city council has rejected a bill to outlaw discrimination against homosexuals. The bill was killed Dec. 20 before it even got out of committee. The 13 council members voting, all Democrats, defeated the measure 9 to 4.

The bill would outlaw discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations. It has been the focus of much activity by gay liberation groups in the past. This time, however, there were no demonstrations outside City Hall, because of assurances from legislators that the measure would pass, and cautions that protest actions might "turn off" city council members.

A meeting of gay organizations following the defeat denounced the vote as "yet another example of the cynical indifference to human beings demonstrated by the city council."

The groups declared that they are "at the end of their patience" and will launch a renewed campaign to win passage of the bill this year.

January 3, 1949

The left wing of the Democratic Party finds itself on the spot on the Negro question. Discrimination against Negroes is part of the life-blood of American capitalism.

A case in point is the decision by the Appellate Division of the Court of New York supporting discrimination against Negroes in the Stuyvesant Housing project.

Bartley Crum is another of these liberals and his paper, the *New York Star*, very often expresses the views of this particular wing of the Democratic party. It printed an editorial on the decision, bursting with righteousness, good will and desire for Negro emancipation. Until these fast-talking politicians point out that not only [Fiorello] La Guardia in New York, but their own Democratic Party, ruler of the country for sixteen years, has been the most active practitioner and exemplar of Jim Crow in the country, we shall continue to insist that on this, as on all other serious politics affecting the people, these liberals and their circle are a powerful obstacle in the road of Negro and all other types of emancipation.

Clinton impeached by Congress

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

The U.S. House of Representatives voted to impeach President William Clinton December 19.

Congress approved two of the four articles of impeachment proposed by the House judiciary committee. The first, accusing Clinton of perjury for allegedly making false statements to a federal grand jury about his sexual encounters with former White House employee Monica Lewinsky, was approved by a vote of 229-205. All but five of the majority were Republicans. The second article, accusing Clinton of obstruction of justice, passed by a 221 to 212 majority. The vote took place while the Clinton administration was carrying out the bombing of Iraq.

The White House decision to launch the bombing the day before the impeachment vote was to take place led many bourgeois politicians to argue Clinton was simply trying to put off the vote. Republicans initially postponed the debate by 24 hours, but then placed the matter before the House a day later.

During the debate on impeachment, Rep. Robert Livingston announced he was resigning from his post and from Congress. The Republican caucus had nominated him to be the next Speaker of the House after Newton Gingrich announced his resignation from that post following the November 3 elections. The Republican politician from Louisiana made his decision after word leaked in the media that *Hustler*, a pornographic magazine, was about to publish information about Livingston's several "extramarital affairs." Livingston stated he was resigning "to set an example" and called on Clinton to follow suit.

To no avail. The Democratic party leadership held a press conference on the lawn of the White House after the impeachment vote where the president and his backers announced he will not resign.

The U.S. Senate is now supposed to conduct a trial to determine whether Clinton is guilty or not of the accusations approved by the House. A two-thirds majority is needed to remove the president from office. The big-business media is predicting Republicans will not be able to muster that kind of a vote to oust Clinton and that a compromise may be worked out between the two parties to censure the president and avoid the Senate trial.

The process has heightened political instability and has weakened the U.S. presidency, no matter what the outcome. "A president impeached and a Congress torn — the show must go on," was the headline of a front-page article in the December 21 *Wall Street Journal*. "While Mr. Clin-

ton digs in against resigning," the article read, "Republicans are staggered that another of their House speakers has fallen victim to Mr. Clinton's crisis, and there is no sign of any major healing figure on the horizon.... Many close observers of Washington think Mr. Clinton will survive. Yet the collision of events has left the capital emotionally drained, even frightened by its own instability."

The reason that political figures seem more vulnerable to scandals today is not that such conduct is something new in ruling-class circles in the history of capitalism or class society. The greater vulnerability to scandals now is a reflection of the instability of the world imperialist order and the growing lack of confidence in this system and its leading personnel both by those who profit from it and by millions of working people and others.

The scandal mongering that has engulfed Washington has been pushed largely by ultrarightists in what is an effort to advance the "culture war" that has been the stock-in-trade of politicians like Patrick Buchanan who attempt to build an incipient fascist cadre. It can best be described as the pornographication of politics.

It is a positive development for the working class that a majority among those who toil for a living seem to have steered clear of the trap of simply "exposing" the corruption of bourgeois politicians pushed by the right wing. This kind of politics of resentment was also the stock-in-trade of the Nazis in the 1920s and early 1930s, as they decried the "degeneracy" of the Weimar Republic.

This is not unrelated to the high percentages in bourgeois opinion polls of those who oppose impeachment of Clinton. Millions — including Blacks and women — sense that a victory for those driving to oust Clinton from office, the president's offensive behavior notwithstanding, would register an advance for the "cultural war" of the rightists and a setback for working people.

Many workers sense that when the Buchanan types target Hillary Clinton, the president's wife who has vigorously campaigned in his defense, for example, it is not because she is a well-off lawyer and bureaucrat for the employing class who often exudes the "social engineering" mentality workers hate. When Buchanan, or right-wing shock jocks, utter the name "Hillary," millions know the target is every woman who begins acting like a political person.

The *Militant* will carry more extensive coverage of this major development in bourgeois politics in the United States in an upcoming issue.

Montreal: garment workers win

Continued from front page

the bosses from abolishing the decree and dividing us through paying new workers less," said Julia Noemi, who works at Golden Brand, the biggest plant involved with 900 workers.

"They start with new workers, but who can guarantee that I will not myself become a new worker before the end of the contract?" said Pedro Miguel Rego, a presser at Golden Brand. "They already threaten to fire us if we don't adapt to new technologies. Imagine how much more incentive they will have to get rid of us when they have a layer of new workers doing the same work, but paid much less."

The Manufacturers Association at first opposed any reference to wages in the collective agreement. After this was overwhelmingly rejected by a meeting of more than 3,000 workers, the association proposed that the collective agreement include lower base rates for new workers. This scheme, which union officials initially agreed to, was rejected by 70 percent of the UNITE members attending a meeting of more than 2,000 workers December 10. Union officials had agreed to the bosses' demand that the vote be taken plant-by-plant during working hours, but workers insisted on holding the mass meeting instead to discuss the proposal.

Faced with this decision by workers and the growing sentiment among UNITE members to begin a strike, the bosses announced December 11 they were shutting all the plants, locking out the unionists as of December 14.

A majority of UNITE members involved in this battle see the companies' decision to give new workers the same rates as those currently written in the decree as a victory. This was already obvious in workers' reaction to the settlement at Jack Victor, which ended up setting the pattern for other shops. "I'm glad for workers at Jack Victor," said Juan Antonio Reyes, a 24-year-old worker at Golden Brand.

"Jack Victor's offers reflect the growing divisions among the bosses. It's good," added Rego, also from Golden Brand.

Nevertheless, 40 percent of the Jack Victor workers voted against the offer. Most of those who opposed it were concerned with the breach in the workers' common front, saying they would have agreed if the same offer were made to all 4,000 workers involved in the common negotiations. "When we negotiate three years from now, we'll all be divided. It will be harder to defend ourselves against the bosses," said one worker who did not want to be named, prior to the December 21 offers by the other companies.

"Jack Victor has a lot of orders now, that's why they want us to go back to work as soon as possible. They can afford to give new workers the same wages as we get, for the time being. But they want us to pay the price, and the price is that we are more divided. We got this offer because we stuck together. We could have won more by staying out with other workers," maintained Tony Sanchez, a presser at Jack Victor.

Need to maintain solidarity

Many workers at Samuelsohn rejected the offer for the same reason. "We went out together, we need to go back together," said Mary Rodriguez, a sewing machine operator. "The bosses are trying to break the solidarity between us. That's what a union is. What kind of a union do we have if workers negotiate separately?"

This determination to maintain unity among all workers of the industry has a long history rooted in battles against the Montreal bosses association.

In December 1986, when union officials reached an agreement with the bosses and wanted workers to vote plant by plant, thousands of unionists, including those at Golden Brand, stopped working. They went to other plants and gathered at the union offices downtown in Montreal, requesting a mass meeting. Five thousand workers met a few days later and overwhelmingly rejected the offer. They went on strike few days later and won a big victory after a month-long work stoppage. That was the last important strike here before the current battle.

For decades, member of the Manufacturers Association favored maintaining a decree imposing the same conditions for all workers, because they then feared competition from smaller, nonunion shops. Today the bosses themselves want to abolish the decree, due to changes in the industry over the last decade. The men's clothing industry requires more and more highly sophisticated machinery that greatly reduces the possibility of home work. Louise Béchamp, spokesperson of the Men's Clothing Manufacturers Association, stated that the competition in this industry today comes not from small shops in Quebec but from the big shops in the United States.

In Montreal the biggest manufacturers don't need the decree anymore. Their real perspective now is to drive wages below the decree. But this remains in front of them. Their current attempt to lower workers' wages throughout the industry has failed. Building solidarity with the Samuelsohn workers, who are still on the picket line, remains a task for all union members.

Michel Dugré is a member of UNITE who was locked out at SFI Apparel. Carlos Cornejo and Sébastien Desautels, also members of UNITE at SFI, contributed to this article.

Organizers of project to digitize Pathfinder books, assess progress, appeal for help

Continued from Page 4

more on the overall coordination of the project.

These changes are possible because of the progress registered in the organization and leadership of the project as a whole, said Brundy.

Progress in scanning, proofreading

"It's now possible to shift some people over and still achieve our goal of scanning and massaging all the books by the beginning of the year 2000, which will be a big morale booster for everyone," said Tom Tomasko, organizer of the scanning team that now numbers 18 volunteers. "We can easily train new volunteers in scanning, the first stage of converting a book into electronic format."

Tomasko's crew completed 12 books in October, 8 in November, and are well on their way of finishing 16 in December. Their goal is an average of scanning 18 books per month in 1999. Each volunteer is asked to commit a certain number hours of work per week. Follow through on training and detailed attention to production rates and quality by the organizers has paid off.

Proofreading the electronic files provided by the scanners against the original manuscript, and correcting errors — the second stage in the production process — is also advancing rapidly towards completing 10 books per month. This is one of the most time-consuming tasks. About 35 volunteers are actively involved in proofreading at the moment.

Ruth Cheney, organizer of the proofreading team, said that the production rate has increased from five books in October to seven in November and eight in December. Steve Marshall in Detroit organizes a proofreading bulletin for first reads of titles. Cheney organizes a similar bulletin for those doing the second, and final, reads. The bulletin lists books in order of priorities. "Those who have more time in the short run can volunteer for more hours," Cheney said.

The steering committee is now organizing to post this bulletin on the volunteer web site, administered by Janice Prescott in New York. "We are also planning to make available to volunteers scanned pages of books in portable document format (pdf) that volunteers can use in proofreading," Cheney said. This format allows photographic images of book pages to be transmitted electronically. The scanning production team will produce these images.

"Making as many of them as possible available electronically to volunteers will cut down the time and money that all the departments currently expend in mailing book

pages to volunteers using the post office," Brundy noted.

"Over the coming weeks we will be taking other steps to make our web site more of a working site, not an ornamental spot," said Brundy. For example, the steering committee is planning to alter the production chart now posted on this web site, and update it daily, so everyone involved can find out easily at any time where each element of the book is at in the production chain. "We are also discussing the possibility of making proofreading files available from our web site," Brundy added.

This Web site can be accessed at <http://www.pfvolcenter.com>

Tackling challenge of graphics

Digitizing covers and internal graphics of books is one of the main challenges of volunteer organizers. This work is centralized through Bobbi and Greg Sack, who live in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Brundy and Gardner have regular consultations with the Sacks at least once a week now.

The graphics team of 14 is taking steps to organize better its division of labor, said Bobbi Sack in a telephone interview December 23. Arthur Hughes in New York, for example, is assigned to produce in digital form the bar code that goes on the back cover of every book. And Pete Evans in London, England, is centralizing the selection of type fonts for covers to match the original design and in training others in this task.

"Pathfinder's recent decision to send us scanned photographs, rather than the original prints or film of pictures, is very welcome," said Sack. It has significantly cut down on labor time needed to organize scanning of photos, and has reduced the cost of using commercial service bureaus for this task. Sack said the scans sent by the Pathfinder staff compare very favorably to those her team used to produce through commercial companies.

The graphics team began to coalesce in October and has the least collective experience in one of the most complicated parts of the production process. In addition to improving the training and organization of its current members, however, more volunteers are needed.

"My rough estimate is that we need to nearly double our numbers to about 25 volunteers," Sack stated, "to be able to digitize book graphics at the rate of 10 books per month."

Those who would like to join any aspect of the project, or reenlist after a period of inactivity, can do so by contacting the Pathfinder volunteer reprint project steering committee at rcheney3@compuserve.com

Ontario: meatpackers strike against pay cuts

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

and they want to increase it to 1,250 in the next months. We get 20 minutes a week to go to the washroom." After that the foremen are supposed to dock their pay.

tion to end a wage freeze for some Canadian Airlines workers.

In a contract signed in 1996, the IAM agreed to several concessions to help Canadian Airlines (CAIL) return to profitability. One of these concessions was that all workers hired in Reduced Time Employees (RTE) classifications after April 30, 1996, would not receive any "step" increases for the three-year duration of the contract. In some classifications it takes up to seven step increases to reach top pay. The contract was later extended to Dec. 31, 2000, as part of a bailout of CAIL involving all the unions at CAIL and federal and provincial governments. The extension included a wage reopener for those workers who had their step increases frozen.

The affected workers are in the cleaner, station attendant, laundry worker, janitor, and security officer classifications. Their wages were frozen at Can\$9.06 per hour and increased to Can\$9.16 per hour with a 1 percent across the board increase in early 1998. Top pay in these jobs ranges from Can\$13.84 to Can\$18.44 per hour.

Another group of affected workers are "contract groomers." They do the same job as aircraft cleaners but are only allowed to work on aircraft from other airlines that CAIL has cleaning contracts for. They are temporary part-time workers with minimal benefits and wages as low as Can\$8.08 per hour.

The resolution proposed this classification be eliminated and the contract groomers become RTE cleaners.

In a leaflet circulated throughout the maintenance hanger and the cabin services, the workers appealed for support from workers



Militant/Katy LeRougetel

Meatpackers in UFCW Local 743 and supporters on picket line in Toronto.

ON THE PICKET LINE

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

TORONTO — "Farmers are suffering now, too. They want to cut our wages, but they're not passing it on to the farmers. They're pocketing it," said Francisco Ormonde as he greeted supporters joining the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 743 picket line at Quality Meat here. Some 950 meatpackers struck two Ontario plants, one in Toronto and the other in nearby Bramalea, December 7. Striker Gilberto Oliveira explained, "They want to cut our benefits and cut wages up to \$6 an hour! "Top production wages are Can\$17.48 (Can\$1=US\$0.65). Pickets explain that with the company's proposed six-year contract, average wages would drop to as low as Can\$11, overtime would only be paid after 44 hours in a week, and long-term disability insurance eliminated.

A meatpacker who had gone through the four-month strike against Maple Leaf Food in Burlington near Toronto earlier this year was visiting the line. That strike was defeated, and pay rates were drastically cut. He reported that conditions in the Maple Leaf Burlington plant "are pretty bad. For example, if 20 are hired, 5 leave or get fired within a week or so. We process about 1,030 hogs an hour

Many strikers echoed Ormonde, who said, "We made a mistake not to go out when Maple Leaf went out. We took a contract extension instead. Now the company tells us they have to compete with Maple Leaf. Maple Leaf said they would create a second shift, create jobs. They said they'd pay the farmers more and keep the hogs from going to the United States. But they're not keeping their promises."

Harry Ponte, 22, has worked for Quality for just under two years. He said, "I have carpal tunnel syndrome in both wrists. Fifteen- to 40-pound hams drop off the line overhead when it's overfilled — that's dangerous." Pickets standing around the fire barrel began showing their work-related injuries and telling of relatives who had died or been injured in the plant over the years.

"We need all the unions to stick together," said Frank Menezes, pointing out the lesson learned from the fact that Quality ran overtime during the Maple Leaf strike.

"This is going to be a long strike," said a striker originally from Poland. "In my country, it takes weeks to be able to pay for a jacket — now it's getting to be the same here!"

Canada: airport workers fight to end wage freeze

RICHMOND, British Columbia—Nearly 200 members jammed the meeting of International Association of Machinists (IAM) Local Lodge 764 here November 18. The local represents workers at Canadian Airlines and United Airlines in British Columbia and the Yukon. Most came in support of a resolu-

already at the full rate of pay and those in classifications not affected by the freeze. More than 125 workers endorsed the leaflet, including several in the skilled trades.

The issue has now been referred to District Lodge 140 to work out the method of negotiations with the company. Many workers have vowed to continue attending union meetings and pursuing this issue until it is resolved.

Boston nursing home strikers celebrate victory

BRIGHTON, Massachusetts — "I'm glad it's over. It was a long, hard fight, but it was worth it. The union is stronger now, morale is higher. I think the company will try some tricks with us back inside, but we're ready for them." This is how Gloria Filsamie, a veteran worker and union member at the SunRise-owned Oakwood nursing home here, summed up the 11-week strike of Service Employees International Union Local 285.

Approximately 150 workers at two homes, in Brighton and Lowell, Massachusetts, struck September 13 against the SunRise Corporation over poor pay, understaffing, and lack of respect by management. Workers also claimed the company's practices made it diffi-

cult to provide the patients quality care. The November 25 *Boston Herald* reported that starting wages will increase from \$7.10 an hour to \$8.50 in three years, along with a general 12 percent pay raise. SEIU representatives at a November 29 "Welcome back to work" picket reported a new 25-cent night differential in pay, and 50 cents premium pay for weekend work. No union workers were fired during the strike. A third SunRise-owned home in Quincy, which had a separate contract, was also brought into the same expiration date as the other two.

Mitaud Louis, a Haitian worker with 10 years at the Brighton home, said the company was out to bust the union and forced the strike. "The company paid lots of money to have police and security patrol during the strike. The company doesn't want the union." Louis was among the group giving applause and roses to unionists leaving first shift or coming in for the afternoon November 29, their first day back on the job.

Katy LeRougetel, a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 5338, and Gabriel Charbin in Toronto; Larry Johnston, a member of IAM Local Lodge 764 in Vancouver; and M.J. Rahn and Elena Tate in Boston contributed to this column.

LETTERS

On the IAM and AMFA

I was glad to see the article in the December 7 *Militant* by two United Airlines workers urging airline workers at United and US Airways to vote against the proposed splitting of IAM [International Association of Machinists] District 141 into two distinct entities. As a former member of the IAM who recently left US Airways, I have some observations on how the AMFA (Airline Mechanics Fraternal Association) phenomenon is reflected there.

While there has been no visible AMFA presence at US Airways, there is significant sentiment within the ranks of the mechanics to separate themselves out from the Fleet Service (baggage handlers and caterers) and the cleaners. This attitude was fostered by the IAM international, which in the 1970s and '80s made little or only token effort to organize the Fleet Service. Subsequently, the Teamsters organized and represented the Fleet Service until just after 1990, when they were decertified in a union representation election.

When the Teamsters and the United Steelworkers of America began to court these workers, the IAM decided to get serious about organizing. The IAM had to convince two groups of workers that it was the best choice. One was its own members, who had developed the craft mentality that skilled workers were better off bargaining by themselves. The other was the Fleet Service, which had been ignored by the IAM previously. Written mate-

rials, buttons, and videos were distributed all over the system with the major theme being, "One Airline, One Union." A minority of mechanics and cleaners worked in the organizing campaign, convinced that one union made the work force potentially stronger in dealing with the company. To the credit of the Fleet Service workers, in a runoff with the USWA [United Steelworkers of America], the IAM was voted in as the bargaining agent. Once a contract was ratified, these workers would be in the same locals as the mechanics and cleaners.

The Fleet Service workers had high expectations that they would begin to achieve parity with the mechanics. Many of their benefits and rights as workers were taken away by the company during the period they were nonunion. These expectations have not been met and the frustration level of this group of workers with the IAM is great. The IAM won its representation election in 1993 and to this date has not yet secured a first contract. A totally inadequate contract proposal touted by the international was overwhelmingly rejected by the Fleet Service workers earlier this fall.

The IAM international, adapting to AMFA, is now proposing that the two groups of workers be completely separate, a 180-degree turn from their position during the bargaining election. This view reinforces the craft mentality of a layer of mechanics. It cuts across the idea that one strong industrial union, representing all workers at a particular

company, is the most effective way to defend workers' interests.

AMFA's divisive strategy can only aid the airlines in their drive to lower wages and benefits and worsen working conditions.

Frustration with the IAM has also led workers to say they'd be better off in the Steelworkers or the Teamsters. However, the bureaucracies of these unions are no different than the IAM. It is only the rank and file in a single organization, bringing together workers in all job classifications, that can wage effectively the future battles with the bosses that are surely on the horizon.

One other point. I am a bit confused about how to characterize AMFA. At least one person I know has said that it should now be called it a "union." The *Militant* had described it as a company-minded union busting outfit. Has the vote at Northwest changed anything?
Edwin Fruit
Des Moines, Iowa

More questions on AMFA

I have been reading with interest the *Militant's* coverage of the struggle against AMFA. Although AMFA does not actually exist in Canada yet, its ideology is having a big impact at Canadian Airlines. I work there as a cleaner in the Vancouver Maintenance Hanger. We have faced seven years of concessions, threats of bankruptcy, and lack of leadership from the IAM.

In this context there have been attempts by aircraft mechanics in par-

ticular to win a wage increase. This spring the head of Maintenance and Engineering said the company would offer the skilled trades a raise to address this problem. However, because our last concessions agreement was jointly signed by all of the unions (pilots-CALPA, flight attendants-CUPE, passenger agents-CAW) and included a clause that if one group got a raise all would get one, the other unions refused to go along with this proposal without comparable increases. The company of course was not interested in doing that.

This resulted in a series of petitions, some directed at the company and others at the IAM, urging various forms of increases or skill pay. The division of the IAM district at NWA [Northwest Airlines] gave impetus to those who advocated a separate union as the solution to the problems of the skilled workers. This has culminated in a petition calling on the IAM to give them a separate lodge or district lodge and a separate collective agreement.

There has been room for a lot of discussion in light of these events. Unfortunately I have found that the *Militant* articles have not been very helpful to me in carrying out this discussion. I have several questions:

Why has so much of your coverage of AMFA focused on the argument that AMFA is not a union but a union-busting organization? Whatever it may be, in my observation AMFA's conduct is not notably different from real unions when they conduct raids against

other unions. They put their narrow interests ahead of those of the class as a whole.

Why have you not taken up the issue of the true interests of the skilled workers? There are many references to AMFA's claim that the interests of the skilled and unskilled are different and to workers who say they aren't, but little analysis of why their interests are the same. Is that not the way in which skilled workers will be won away from AMFA and its craft mentality?

How can you address the issue of the unity of the skilled and unskilled without taking up the issue of the wages system itself? The value of labor power, how it is determined, what happens if the value of average labor power is diminished (as AMFA would like)? What is a reasonable difference between skilled and unskilled wages?

How can AMFA be defeated without posing an alternative that is better than the IAM as it exists today? Isn't the alternative to AMFA an IAM that is more under the control of the members, an IAM that addresses the needs of all members, a fighting IAM?

Larry Johnston
Vancouver, British Columbia

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

Washington threatens north Korea

BY NAOMI CRAINE

Washington has escalated its threats and provocations against the Democratic Peoples Republic of Korea (DPRK), accusing the north Korean government of building nuclear weapons and demanding to send "inspectors" to an alleged construction site.

At the heart of the situation is Washington's refusal to fulfill its commitments under a 1994 agreement it signed with the DPRK government, said Li Hyong Chol, the country's ambassador to the United Nations, in a December 21 interview. "The U.S. government has tried to transfer responsibility for this to the Korean side. They have threatened the Korean people by force of arms," he said.

Under the 1994 accord, Washington agreed to organize the construction of two light-water nuclear power reactors in the DPRK by the year 2003, provide about 500,000 tons of fuel oil annually until those reactors are running, ease the severe economic embargo the U.S. rulers have imposed for decades, and take some steps toward normalizing diplomatic relations. The DPRK government agreed to freeze the use of graphite nuclear power reactors it had been operating.

"We've implemented our part of the deal in good faith," Li said. "On the U.S. side, there's been a big delay in the construction. Four years have passed already, and they're still digging the ground" for the light-water reactors. The promised fuel oil has been delayed as well, and only a portion of it provided. There has been no lifting of the sanctions, the ambassador said. The only exception has been allowing some direct telephone lines. Washington "still holds DPRK assets frozen in U.S. bank accounts," he noted.

Now the Clinton administration has begun demanding to inspect an underground site where U.S. officials claim they suspect nuclear facilities may be constructed. The DPRK government responded that this would only be allowed if the U.S. government paid \$300 million in compensation. Washington refused, and now asserts that if the matter is not resolved "satisfactorily" the 1994 framework agreement will be invalid.

"One thing we can learn from Iraq," Li said, "is that if you let them inspect one site



Washington has stepped up military maneuvers, like 1993 war games shown above, with the Seoul regime, while demanding to "inspect" a site in the Democratic People's Republic of Korea. U.S. rulers are trying to make it appear that the DPRK government is at fault for breakdown of 1994 agreement that Washington has flouted.

they will come back and demand to see three more. They just keep changing the conditions. This is not acceptable."

Meanwhile, U.S. military forces have stepped up their maneuvers in the area, together with troops from Japan and the south Korean government in Seoul, including three different operations between October 24 and November 7. "Publications in a third country have openly carried reports that the U.S. military has completed a new war plan for the invasion of north Korea," said a statement issued by the spokesman for the Gen-

eral Staff of the Korean People's Army December 2. "The gist of the 'Operation Plan 5027' is a plan for a second Korean War of aggression allegedly to retaliate against the DPRK for the U.S. defeat in the past Korean War."

The U.S. Defense Department issued a report November 23 that called for maintaining about 100,000 U.S. troops in east Asia to cope with a "crisis" on the Korea peninsula. Of these, some 40,000 are permanently stationed in south Korea, enforcing the division of the peninsula that Wash-

ington has maintained since the 1950-53 Korean War.

In addition to participating in U.S. war games in the area, the Japanese government approved plans December 22 to launch four reconnaissance satellites by 2002, supposedly in response to the DPRK launching of a satellite last August. Tokyo claimed the rocket was a ballistic missile.

In another attack on the DPRK, the Seoul government claimed its forces sank a north Korean military vessel, which it first described as a submarine and then as a speed boat, off the south Korea coast in mid-December. The south Korean government says it retrieved one body, and is demanding the DPRK government apologize for the alleged incursion. Pyongyang says it knows nothing about the vessel. The boat itself may not be dredged up from the ocean floor for a month, according to BBC television.

The Korean people will fight back in the face of U.S. aggression, Li said. "We don't want war, but we aren't cowards. Military force is not the monopoly of the United States."

Pointing to how the big-business media gives only Washington's version of events, he said, "We hope our side of the story can be heard by the public. And we welcome any actions of solidarity with the Korean people — for peace, stability, and unification."

NATO 'observers' now patrolling in Kosova

BY NATASHA TERLEXIS AND BOBBIS MISAILIDES

PRISTINA, Kosova — "Observers" from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) can now be seen here in the capital of Kosova, patrolling the central streets in their jeeps. Their forces are expected to rise to 2,000 according to the accords signed — under the threat of NATO air strikes against Yugoslavia — between U.S. special envoy to the Balkans Richard Holbrooke and Yugoslav president Slobodan Milosevic. An imperialist intervention force of 2,000, touted as back-up for these observ-

ers, has begun deployment in the neighboring Republic of Macedonia. Some 1,150 troops are already in place, 650 of whom are from France.

While most Albanians here do not object to the OSCE presence and see it as a sign of international concern for those fighting in Kosova for their national self determination, no one these reporters spoke to viewed them as a form of protection from attack. "The UCK is the only force defending Albanians from Serbian police attack," said Bujar Dugolli, president of the Students Independent Union of the University of Pristina, in an interview here.

The Kosova Liberation Army, known by its Albanian initials UCK, is fighting for independence from Serbia. Kosovar Albanians, who comprise 90 percent of the population in this region, face severe discrimination and repression from the regime in Belgrade. Washington and other imperialist powers have used professed concern for the rights of the Albanian majority to justify deepening their military intervention in the Yugoslav workers state.

The inauguration of the regional headquarters of the OSCE observers in Mitrovica, as reported in the Albanian-language press here, did not include a single Albanian nor did it have simultaneous translation.

At the same time as this deployment, and just two months after the signing of the imperialist-inspired accords, hopes for a diplomatic settlement to the conflict are fading under deepening attacks by the Milosevic regime in Kosova. Forty-six people were reported killed in the week before these reporters arrived here. The killing of 33 Albanian youths near the Albanian border December 12 was the turning point in this escalation. The UCK conducted a large-scale military funeral for them December 20.

In Pec, Serbian officials have been harassing and arresting Albanians since six Serbian youths were killed in a bar in mid-December.

Eleonora Halimi, an aid worker who trav-

els extensively in the region, confirmed that Serbian troop movements are on the rise. "They come in, but they don't come out," she observed. The accords as they stand allow for a 25,000-strong Serbian military presence in Kosova.

Refugees, ostensibly allowed to return to their bombed villages, reportedly face frequent harassment. Many fear to return unless protected by UCK fighters.

The local press carries daily reports of small scale attacks on villages and skirmishes with the UCK. In the wake of the killings in Polje, as well as that of a Serbian deputy mayor of Kosova police December 18, harassment by the police has intensified under the guise of "fighting terrorism." The UCK forcefully denies charges that it is responsible in these killings. After dark, Pristina becomes a booby trap of police check points for young Albanians, as observed by these reporters.

Under these blows workers and farmers are becoming disillusioned with the results of the cease-fire, and there are heightened expectations of a new wave of fighting. "The UCK is necessary in today's situation," said Agim Hajrizi, president of the Assembly of the Union of Independent Trade Unions of Kosova. "After you have lost your job, your home is destroyed. You are forced to go to the UCK to protect what is left of your former home."

Milosevic has also intensified his crackdown on democratic rights in an effort to stop opposition among working people and youth to his regime. A new media law has targeted newspapers and radio stations that have been critical of the regime's brutal oppression of the Albanian in Kosova. Under the new law so far two independent newspapers were forced to shut down while local radio station were denied licenses for "promoting defeatism" and "undermining the state's security."

Teachers have been dismissed from the universities because they refused to sign loyalty oaths to the Milosevic regime that is required under a new law.

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