

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Havana meeting: agrarian reform defined Cuban revolution

— PAGE 9

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 63/NO. 41 NOVEMBER 22, 1999

Overnite strikers get solidarity, need more

BY MIKE ITALIE

ATLANTA — Two thousand Teamsters nationwide continue to win solidarity as they end their third week on strike against Overnite Transportation. This is one of the largest union organizing drives in the United States today, and strikers are demanding their first union contract with the company.

The strikers are in for a hard fight. The Overnite bosses have turned to the courts in their effort to derail the strike. During the first week of November, a judge in Fulton County, Georgia, issued a 30-day temporary restraining order against the union, listing a series of restrictions against the strikers. This includes getting within 50 feet of company trucks and shouting "obscenities."

Striker Richard Merritt pointed out that the purpose of the restraining order is to "tie our hands," with the company hoping for a future injunction limiting the number of pickets, "in order to break our morale and cut down our visibility on the picket line."

Here and at struck terminals across the country, the solidarity of truck drivers and other unionists who are making this strike their own is key to keeping up the picket line and boosting strikers' spirits.

Bill Batson, a city driver at Yellow Freight in St. Louis, told the *Militant* he had walked the picket line at Overnite three times in the first two weeks of the strike. Batson, who was on strike at Yellow Freight in 1994, pointed out, "We won in 1994 because of solidarity. Yellow and other companies wanted to force us to accept conditions like those that Overnite has—including part-time workers on the docks, working on call for years."



Militant/Doug Jenness

Pickets confront scab truck leaving Overnite terminal in Blaine, Minnesota, November 8. Strikers have picketed the trucks at their delivery sites (see page 4). Other Teamsters members and supporters from other unions are bolstering truckers' fight to win union.

The Teamsters walkout at Overnite began October 24 in Memphis, Tennessee, and the union reports that more than 2,000 workers are now on strike at 140 worksites. Although the company claims its business is only off 7 percent, a Teamsters press release cites com-

pany figures that indicate a 30 percent drop in Overnite's deliveries since the start of the strike. The trucking company has closed five of its barns: in Little Rock, Arkansas; Milwaukee; New Orleans; Laredo, Texas; and

Continued on Page 4

British Columbia port workers fight lockout

BY BERNICE BRANDON

VANCOUVER, British Columbia—At 4:30 p.m. November 7, members of the International Longshore and Warehouse Union (ILWU) set up picket lines at nine British Columbia ports in response to a lockout imposed on the 2,000 dock workers by the B.C. Maritime Employers Association (BCMEA), the representative of 71 port

companies. The bosses gave a 72-hour notice of a lockout on November 4 after the union refused to vote on their final offer. Longshoremen have been without a contract since June 1998.

The shutdown of Vancouver's port—normally one of North America's busiest—will reportedly cost the Canadian economy \$89 million a day. Even before the lockout began

Gordon Campbell, the Liberal opposition leader in the provincial legislature, had called on the federal government to urge the employers to lift their lockout and also to consider back-to-work legislation.

Longshoremen on the picket line at Roberts Bank, 25 miles south of Vancouver, said contracting out is the biggest issue in their dispute with the port companies. Sultran, a

Calgary-based company that owns the Pacific Coast Terminal Dock in Port Moody, awarded a three-year contract to a nonunion firm to test the quality of sulphur shipments. The employers have said that they cannot address this issue in the contract because Sultran is not a member of the BCMEA.

Pointing to employer attacks on longshore workers in England and Australia, Rob Visser, who has worked on the docks for 13 years, told the *Militant*, "You can't give them an inch; you can't even let a fingernail in the crack or they'll take a mile."

Since the BCMEA was formed in 1966, there have been 14 labor disruptions at the port. During five job actions the federal government passed back-to-work legislation.

Washington ratchets up military, trade aggression against China

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

Sharpening conflicts between Washington and the government of the workers state of China mark the preparations for the World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting, scheduled to open November 30 in Seattle. The Clinton administration is stalling on Beijing's application for membership in the WTO, while at the same time taking military steps directed against the world's most populous country.

Behind this belligerent stance is the growing recognition by the imperialist rulers of the United States that capitalism will not be restored to China, Russia, or the workers states of Eastern Europe by trade and investment alone. Washington's triumphant tone of the months following the destruction of the Berlin Wall a decade ago has faded, replaced by a more openly aggressive and militaristic stance towards Beijing, and ultimately Moscow.

The White House's chief trade negotiator, Charlene Barshefsky, traveled to Beijing November 9 to begin two days' talks over China's application for entry into the WTO. The Chinese government must reach bilateral agreements with the largest imperialist powers, which dominate the proceedings of the WTO and use it to reinforce their exploitation of the Third World, to gain admittance. Of those powers, Tokyo has given its approval to Beijing's application, but talks between the European Union (EU) and Chinese representatives ended without agreement October 27 and Washington has also withheld its assent.

In the various negotiations the imperialist powers have attempted to blackmail Beijing

Continued on Page 8

Delta airline workers step up effort to win union

BY JANET BARNETT AND LISA NICHOLS

ATLANTA — Workers at Delta Air Lines are stepping up their efforts to win union representation at the third-largest carrier in the United States.

In October, the Transport Workers Union (TWU) won an election to represent 107 pilot ground-training instructors at Delta, by a margin of one vote. Delta, which has not faced a union election in decades, issued a statement saying the company is "disappointed that the Delta pilot ground trainers have chosen an outside group to become involved in a relationship that involves them and their company."

This union victory gives a boost to the efforts of ramp workers and mechanics to join the TWU, as well as other workers at Delta, which employs more than 75,000 workers worldwide.

The Association of Flight Attendants (AFA) has also stepped up its efforts at Delta to seek an election among the airline's 20,000 attendants early next year. Nine thousand Delta pilots are already represented by the Airline Pilot Association (ALPA).

Jeff Osborne, staff organizer for the TWU, Continued on Page 11

\$20 SPECIAL OFFER!

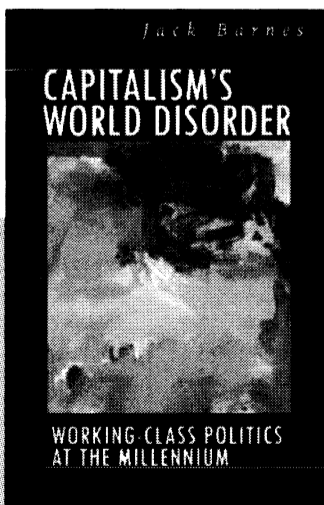
CAPITALISM'S WORLD DISORDER:

WORKING-CLASS POLITICS AT THE MILLENNIUM

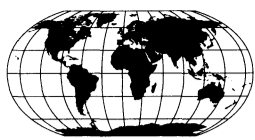
JACK BARNES

"In this century, the world's toilers have already paid a staggering price for capitalism's two previous bloody efforts to resolve its crises. The price for fascism and a third world war is almost unimaginable. The bourgeoisie will come to rely on mass rightist movements to impose that repressive solution, radical petty-bourgeois movements that initially present themselves as a form of socialism—the national socialism proclaimed by the Nazis in Germany, and earlier by Mussolini's fascist movement in Italy.

"But working-class resistance to the rulers' assaults—which we have so far seen in the forms of guerrilla skirmishes on the job and limited fights around a range of questions—will mount and become generalized as well..."



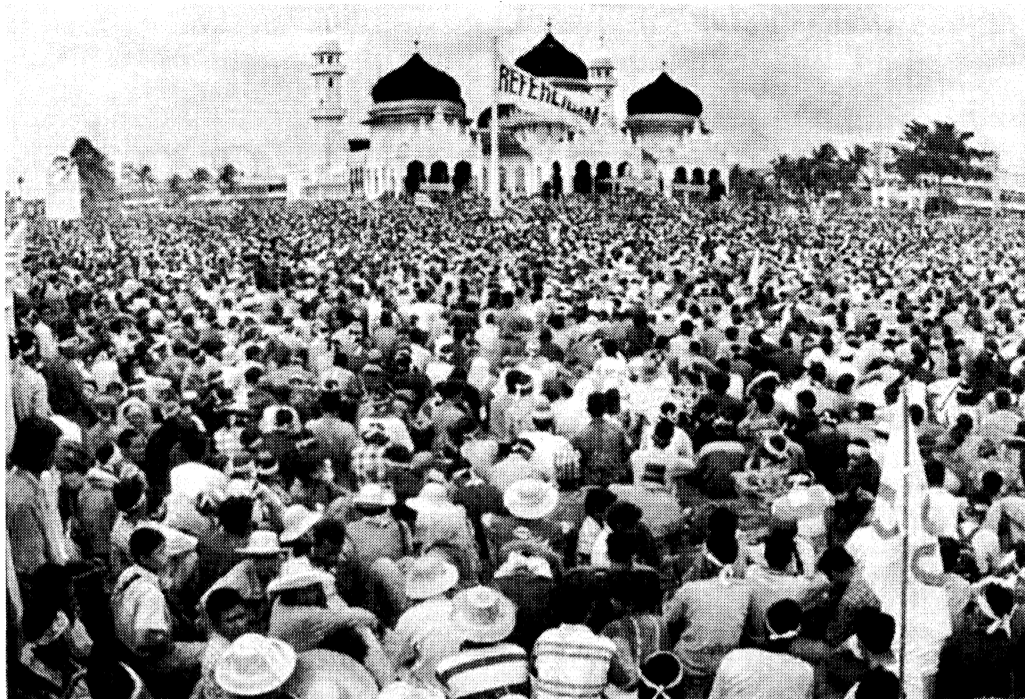
Available in bookstores, including those listed on page 8, or from Pathfinder at 410 West Street, New York, NY 10014



Mass rallies in Aceh call for independence from Indonesia

Hundreds of thousands of people mobilized in Banda Aceh, the capital city of Aceh province in Indonesia, November 8, to demand self-determination and a referendum on independence. It was the second such demonstration within five days. The Indonesian military kept a low profile at the demonstration. On November 2, security forces had opened fire on pro-independence protesters in the province, sparking larger mobilizations. The sentiment for change has grown in the wake of the referendum held on East Timor in August, where the pro-independence vote won a big majority.

On November 5 Indonesia's newly elected president Abdurrahman Wahid said "I support a referendum as their right ... The question is ... when?" On his orders, the Indonesian military said it would start withdrawing some troops from Aceh this month. At least 2,000 people have died during the decade-long struggle for independence and against occupation by thousands of security forces. Aceh, a region with its own distinct history, including in the struggle against Dutch colonialism, is in the north of the island of Sumatra and contains rich oil and gas deposits.



Hundreds of thousands of protesters in Banda Aceh, in northern Sumatra, took to the streets November 8 to demand a vote on independence from Indonesia.

IMF releases loan to Jakarta

The International Monetary Fund announced November 2 that it would resume its dripfeed payment of a \$43 billion loan to the Indonesian government. The loan was negotiated in October 1998, and to date less than one-quarter has been paid out. The IMF's announcement followed the decision by President Wahid that a parliamentary report into the "Bank Bali" scandal would be released. The report deals with allegations that funds held by the bank were paid into the coffers of the former ruling party Golkar, and that Golkar used them in its election campaign this year.

The \$80 million involved came from the Indonesian Bank Restructuring Agency, the government body that was set up under IMF instructions to restructure the banking industry. The agency has taken control of 200 companies and almost 50 banks, giv-

ing it book assets of \$84 billion, 40 percent of which are "nonperforming loans."

Deal looms for pipeline via Turkey

A pact pushed by the Clinton administration to construct a 1,240-mile pipeline to extract oil from the energy-rich Caspian Sea could be signed in late November, the *Washington Post* reported November 6. The pipeline would run from Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan, via Georgia to the Turkish Mediterranean port of Ceyhan, allowing capitalist oil investors to bypass existing pipelines, which all run through the Russian workers state.

The \$2.4 billion oil deal is aimed at undermining Moscow's influence in the area, while sinking U.S. imperialist roots deeper in the region. Thus far, Washington has not offered any financial commitments for the project.

Venezuela: Chavez boosts term

The Venezuelan constitutional assembly enacted constitutional amendments proposed by President Hugo Chávez in early November that increase executive power. The

assembly extended the period of presidential rule from five years to six and allowed the president to stand for immediate reelection. Previously 10 years had to elapse between terms.

Seeking support for his stated desire to rule until 2013, Chávez added demagogically that by then "Venezuela must be totally changed, without corruption and without poverty." He announced the founding of a "People's Bank" that, he claims, will extend credit to the poor. Chávez was elected president in December 1998.

The Constituent Assembly was elected in July of this year, charged with rewriting the country's constitution. Chávez has cultivated a popular following by posing as a "man of the people" who, in response to a deep social crisis, is capable of taking firm action against corruption and bureaucracy through the use of presidential power and the bypassing of traditional political institutions, even at the cost of civil liberties.

Cuban doctors complete mission

One hundred Cuban medical personnel returned from Honduras in October, having spent 10 months in voluntary service there. The doctors, nurses, and health technicians responded to a call by the Cuban government after a request from Honduras for assistance in dealing with the impact of Hurricane Mitch, which devastated the country in November of last year.

The volunteers' return date was brought forward under pressure from the Honduran Medical Association. The Cubans dispensed medicine to Indian tribes living in mountainous, inaccessible regions. Most of their patients had never seen a doctor. Their duties included surgery, and the treatment of malnutrition and parasitic diseases. Greet-

ing the medical personnel on their return, President Fidel Castro said that there are more than 1,600 Cuban doctors offering services in almost 60 nations. Cuba has established a new program of medical assistance for sub-Saharan Africa, he said, involving the establishment of medical schools at which Cuban doctors serving in the various countries will teach.

Students march in Mexico City

Student protesters demonstrated in the capital of Mexico November 5, shutting down an eight-lane highway as they marched along it for four hours. The 6,000 students were among those who have been on strike since April at the National Autonomous University, the country's largest with an enrollment of 270,000 students. The strike began in reaction to the university's proposal to increase tuition fees. In line with their demand of education for all, the strikers are also demanding open admissions for students who have completed studies at university-affiliated high schools, regardless of their test scores or grades.

The students marched to the presidential palace, in spite of the presence of hundreds of cops. The Mexican government "says it respects the university but ... in reality is cruel and corrupt," said one marcher.

U.S. wages rise 1 cent

The official jobless rate in the United States has dropped to its lowest level in 30 years, according to the Labor Department. The rate stands at 4.1 percent of the workforce, or 5.8 million people. October job growth was strongest among temporary workers. But the high demand for labor has had little impact on wages, which for the average worker below the rank of supervisor rose just one cent an hour in October. Overall, average pay has risen a low 3.6 percent in the last year. The Labor Department's figures also indicate that the rate of creation of new jobs, averaged out on a monthly basis, has slowed somewhat in the last quarter.

— PATRICK O'NEILL

THE MILITANT

U.S Navy out of Vieques!

The victory in forcing Washington to release 11 Puerto Rican independence fighters earlier this year has encouraged growing anticolonial resistance in Puerto Rico. The 'Militant' covers the struggle of fishermen, workers, students, and others to demand the U.S. Navy leave Vieques.

Don't miss a single issue!



SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

NEW READERS

\$10 for 12 issues

RENEWAL

\$15 for 12 weeks

\$27 for 6 months

\$45 for 1 year

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

UNION/SCHOOL/ORGANIZATION _____ PHONE _____

CLIP AND MAIL TO THE MILITANT, 410 WEST ST., NEW YORK, NY 10014.

12 weeks of the *Militant* outside the U.S.: Australia and the Pacific, \$A15 • Britain, £7 • Canada, Can\$15 • Caribbean and Latin America, \$15 • Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, £8 • Belgium, 500 BF • France, FF80 • Iceland, Kr1,700 New Zealand, NZ\$15 • Sweden, Kr75 (Send payment to addresses listed in business information box)

Attention Readers:
Visit
THE MILITANT
online!
www.themilitant.com

The Militant

Vol. 63/No. 41

Closing news date: November 11, 1999

Editor: NAOMI CRAINE

Young Socialists column editor: CECILIA ORTEGA

Business Manager: MAURICE WILLIAMS

Editorial Staff: Hilda Cuzco, Martin Koppel, Argiris Malapanis, Brian Taylor, and Maurice Williams.

Published weekly except for one week in December and biweekly from July to August by the Militant (ISSN 0026-3885), 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Telephone: (212) 243-6392; Fax (212) 924-6040.

The Militant can be reached via CompuServe at: TheMilitant

Internet: TheMilitant@compuserve.com

The Militant website can be accessed on the internet at: www.themilitant.com

Correspondence concerning subscriptions or changes of address should be addressed to The Militant Business Office, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

Periodicals postage paid at New York, NY.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to the Militant, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

Subscriptions: **United States:** for one-year subscription send \$45 to above address.

Latin America, Caribbean: for one-year sub-

scription send \$65, drawn on a U.S. bank, to above address. By first-class (airmail), send \$80. **Asia:** send \$80 drawn on a U.S. bank to 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

Canada: Send Canadian \$75 for one-year subscription to Militant, 4581 St. Denis, Montreal, Quebec H2J 2L4.

Britain, Ireland: £36 for one year by check or international money order made out to Militant Distribution, 47 The Cut, London, SE1 8LL, England. **Continental Europe, Africa, Middle East:** £40 for one year by check or international money order made out to Militant Distribution at above address.

France: Send FF420 for one-year subscription to Militant, Centre MBE 175, 23 rue Lecourbe, 75015 Paris; chèque postale: 40 134 34 U. **Belgium:** BF 2,400 for one year on account no. 000-1543112-36 of 1Mei Fonds/Fonds du 1 mai, 2140 Antwerp.

Iceland: Send 5,800 Icelandic kronur for one-year subscription to Militant, P.O. Box 233, 121 Reykjavik. **Sweden, Finland, Norway, Denmark:** 500 Swedish kronor for one year. Pay to Militant Swedish giro no. 451-32-09-9.

New Zealand: Send New Zealand \$75 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand. **Australia:** Send Australian \$75 to P.O. Box K879, Haymarket, NSW 1240, Australia. **Pacific Islands:** Send New Zealand \$75 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand.

Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the Militant's views. These are expressed in editorials.

'They have abused our island for 60 years'

BY HARVEY McARTHUR

CHICAGO — "We're against the presence of the U.S. Navy because it strangles our people," Carlos Zenón told a meeting at the Puerto Rican Cultural Center here November 4. "This is a struggle of principle and dignity. They've already abused our island for 60 years. We want peace and no more shooting."

Zenón is a former president of the Vieques Fishermen's Association and longtime leader of protests against the U.S. Navy occupation of Puerto Rican territories. As a youth he watched as his home was bulldozed by the Navy in the 1940s to make way for the firing range. He was imprisoned by the U.S. government in the early 1980s after fishermen organized flotillas of boats to disrupt warships maneuvering off Vieques.

Today he is helping lead a group that has camped out on the firing range, blocking the Navy's use of the island. The protest and occupation started this spring in response to the death of a civilian security guard after a U.S. plane dropped bombs far off target.

Zenón spoke here as part of a brief speaking tour in the United States winning support for the struggle in Vieques and warning that Washington is preparing to crack down on the protesters and resume bombing runs.

He displayed a copy of the November 3 San Juan daily *El Vocero* featuring a front page story on the arrival at the Roosevelt Roads naval base of 300 U.S. Marshals, ready to arrest the protesters in Vieques. He said the air-



Militant/Martin Koppel
High school students visit restricted zone of Vieques, a Puerto Rican island the U.S. Navy has used for bombing practice since 1940s. They are standing by carcass of U.S. warplane used for target practice. Workers, youth, and others are occupying bombing zone, demanding the U.S. Navy leave.

craft carrier *USS Eisenhower* is already in waters off the island, ready to resume bombing runs in early December.

"If they arrest us they're going to have big problems," Zenón vowed. "For the first time in history, everyone in Puerto Rico wants the Navy out of Vieques. If they arrest one person, the whole country will stop to go over there and join the protest. If the *Eisenhower* starts bombing, I will be in the live-impact zone."

The rising anticolonial sentiment among

working people in Puerto Rico and outpouring of opposition to the U.S. Navy presence has forced the colonial government and parties, including pro-statehood governor Pedro Rosselló, to pose as defenders of Vieques.

Cultural Center director José López urged the 75 participants at the November 4 meeting to volunteer to join the occupation of the firing range if the U.S. government moves to arrest protesters. He reminded them that

Vieques had been used by the U.S. military as a springboard to attack other Latin American countries, from Cuba to Nicaragua to the present intervention in Colombia.

Zenón also related a story of the protesters' response to hurricane warnings earlier this fall. "We knew our wooden camp couldn't withstand the winds and we knew if we left we might never get back on the firing range," he said. "So we cleaned out an abandoned 60-ton tank they had used for target practice and set up camp in it until the storm passed. Nothing will make us leave."

Zenón detailed the impact of the Navy occupation on the people of Vieques, underscoring the reasons it has become such a flash point for opposition to U.S. colonial rule over Puerto Rico.

"Vieques has a total of 33,000 acres of land, and the U.S. Navy has 26,000 of it," he said. One end of the island is a huge munitions dump with 80,000 tons of live ammunition; the other end is the sprawling firing range. The people, some 9,000, are squeezed in the middle. Unemployment is 60 percent, and 70 percent of the people depend on food stamps. There is no hospital; sick people are flown or go by ferry to the main island. Many babies have been born in the plane; heart attack victims have died on the way, he reported.

"The Navy is poisoning our island," Zenón continued. "Our cancer rate is 26 percent higher than the average for Puerto Rico. After we occupied the firing range we found evidence that the Navy had been using uranium shells in target practice. The government first denied this, but later had to admit they had used the shells on 260 different days of bombing practice."

Zenón also saluted the 11 recently released Puerto Rican political prisoners. "We all fight for the same cause. Each time the people of Vieques talk about the Navy we also say 'Free our political prisoners!'"

Following his visit to Chicago, Zenón spoke at several meetings in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area, including an event sponsored by the La Raza Student Cultural Center at the University of Minnesota and a meeting at St. Stephens Catholic Church attended by 30 people. He also visited the picket line of Teamsters on strike at Overnight Transportation.

Many of those attending the Twin Cities events signed up to participate in other activities in defense of Vieques. Organizers of the tour are now planning a picket line outside the local Navy recruiting station for November 19, to coincide with a demonstration in Puerto Rico demanding the U.S. Navy leave Vieques.

Harvey McArthur is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 100A in Chicago. Tom Fiske in St. Paul, Minnesota, contributed to this article.

London escalates trade feud with Paris

BY PAUL DAVIES
AND HUGH ROBERTSON

MANCHESTER, England — In a significant escalation of trade conflicts with Paris, British agriculture minister Nicholas Brown announced a tightening of food labeling laws October 24, along with plans to spend £15 million (\$22.5 million) on a nationalistic campaign, promoting food produced in the United Kingdom.

Recently, Brown announced that he was personally boycotting food produced in France, shortly after the French government's decision to maintain its ban on British beef despite a European Union ruling to lift such bans. The EU originally imposed a ban on the export of British beef in 1996, asserting it was not safe due to "mad cow disease."

Brown claims that the labeling rules and boycott are in response to new allegations that some livestock in France is fed pellets that include treated human waste. British prime minister Anthony Blair weighed into the reactionary campaign, claiming that the "discovery" that animals in France were fed like this was "awful."

These chauvinist campaigns on both sides of the channel pit workers and farmers in the UK against their counterparts in France, as the rival national ruling classes try to protect their own share of the market.

Chauvinist campaigns in Britain

The Labour Party government's moves are part of a widening campaign by big-business food retailers, leaders of farmers organizations, and bourgeois politicians against goods produced in France. Supermarket chains have announced they are taking various French-made products off the shelves. Budgen will stop selling French apples and pears, Asda is banning all French meat and replacing French-made dough for baguettes and croissants with dough made in Britain, and Somerfield will take French apples from the shelves. French apple producers claimed there was a 20 percent fall in orders from Britain following these supermarket bans.

French meat has been banned from all school canteens in the county of Kent by the Conservative Party-controlled county council. Farmers' leaders demanded that other education authorities take similar actions.

On October 20 French police stopped a demonstration of Conservative Members of the European Parliament in Paris. The British MEPs carried banners that read "Let them eat

British beef," a parody of the infamous declaration "Let them eat cake" by Marie Antoinette, wife of French king Louis XVI.

In the British Parliament, Conservative MPs called for the government to impose an immediate ban on all French-produced meat. Opposition agriculture spokesperson Timothy Yeo argued that Brown "has proved that he is too weak to stand up for the British farmer and the British consumer." Yeo said that Brown was "putty in the hands of the prime minister's European agenda."

Blair recently launched the nationalistic "Britain in Europe" campaign, backed by former Conservative government ministers Michael Heseltine and Kenneth Clarke. The campaign, designed to win support for Britain joining the recently launched single European currency, is opposed by the current Conservative Party leadership, who differ over how to defend the interests of the British bosses against their rivals in Europe.

The right-wing tabloid *Daily Mail* is beating the nationalistic drums with a campaign, "Just Say Non," listing French-produced items it urges readers not to buy and promoting British-produced "replacements." This effort is backed by the National Farmers Union, which is dominated by large capitalist farmers.

Farmers are pitted against each other

Farmers from the Mole Valley in Devon protested the ban on British beef outside the French embassy in London October 22, roasting beef and offering it to people passing by. One of the farmers, Geoffrey Cox, commented, "We need the friendship of the French farmers. They are the most politically powerful agricultural force in Europe. Some of our best friends are French farmers. It is the politicians who are getting it all wrong."

Other actions have directly targeted farm products from France, however. Two days before, hundreds of farmers in Poole, England, confronted and turned back two trucks filled with beef when they arrived on a ferry from France. The farmers waved British flags and chanted "No frog food," according to the *Washington Post*.

In response, farmers in France have begun to search trucks arriving from Britain. The *Daily Mail* front page October 27 claimed that "French farmers halt our lorries with blazing barricades."

According to a less exaggerated report in the *Daily Telegraph*, 20 trucks were stopped

and the drivers in each cooperated with the farmers who searched them. No British beef was discovered.

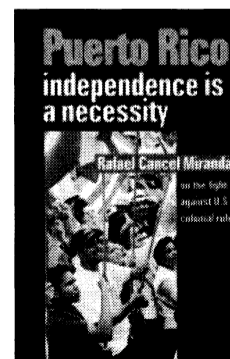
As this trade conflict was escalating, a European "scientific committee" concluded October 29 that regulations for the export of British beef didn't need to be tightened as the French government had been demanding. Following this the German government indicated that it would lift its ban on British beef exports.

There are still estimated to be more than 2,000 cases of mad cow disease, or BSE, among cattle in the UK. Neither the British government nor any other European country has ever proposed immediately destroying all the infected cattle with adequate compensation to farmers.

The "findings" of various scientific bodies largely reflect the balance of forces among the competing European capitalist rulers, and have little to do with protecting the health of working people or the interests of working farmers in France, the UK, or anywhere else.

from Pathfinder

Puerto Rico: Independence Is a Necessity



RAFAEL CANCEL MIRANDA

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

The Right of Nations to Self-Determination

V. I. LENIN

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

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 8,
or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690. Fax: (212) 727-0150.
When ordering by mail, please include \$3 to cover shipping and handling.

Chicago YS pushes to reach fund goal

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

Email: 105162.605@compuserve.com

BY MARCELINA PEDRAZA AND JACOB PERASSO

CHICAGO — As the final weekend of the Young Socialists' National Fund Drive approaches, the Chicago YS chapter has been in active pursuit of reaching their goal, through keeping politically active not only in Chicago, but throughout the Midwest.

On October 23 Migdalia Jiménez spoke at a Pathfinder Fund event in Des Moines, Iowa, on her participation earlier this year in a demonstration in Puerto Rico demanding the release of independence fighters from U.S. jails and the removal of U.S. Navy forces from Vieques. Jiménez traveled to the Des Moines forum with another YS member from Chicago and two other socialist workers from the Midwest. Along the way, the team stopped in Waterloo, Iowa, and sold 11 *Militants* and 4 copies of *Perspectiva Mundial* at the IBP meatpacking plant.

After the forum, a number of participants went to a social event at the United Steelworkers of America Local 164 union hall supporting the Titan Tire workers. YS member Marcelina Pedraza spoke to some of the workers, who have been on strike for more

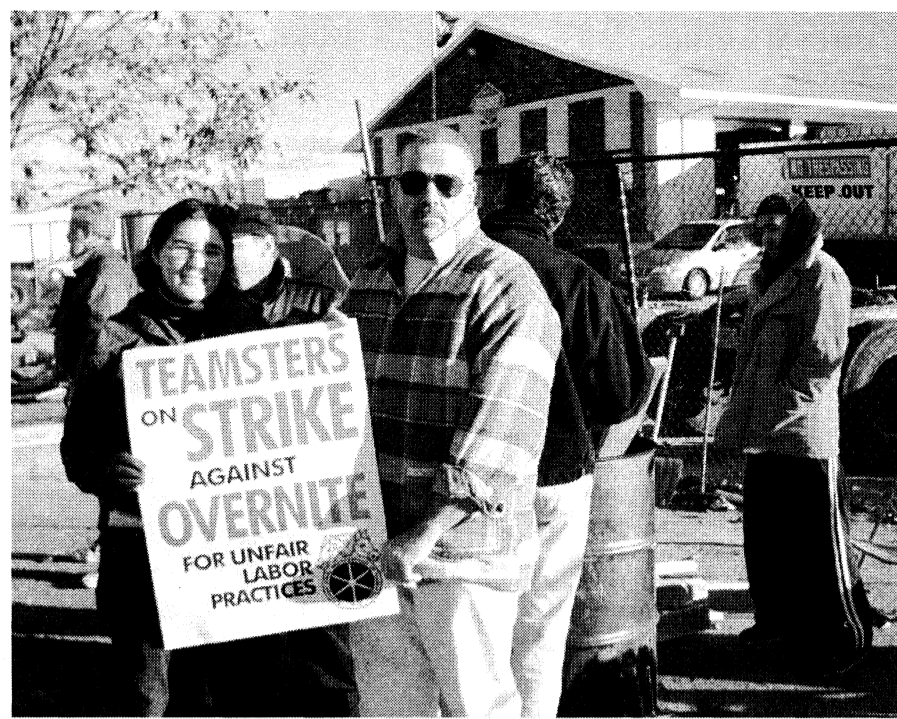
than 18 months now, who said they will stay strong in their fight and were grateful for the amount of support they have received on a nationwide level.

The Chicago YS held a Halloween dinner the following Saturday, which netted \$60 profit. The admission was \$12 without a costume and \$7 with a costume. This encouraged many participants to be creative in choosing a costume. After eating enchiladas, rice, picadillo, Caesar salad, dessert, and more, most stayed for card games and pumpkin carving. Awards for best costumes were given; one of the winners was airport worker Betsey Stone. "It's good that everyone got to relax for a while," she said.

The entire Chicago YS chapter drove to Beloit, Wisconsin, November 1 so that Jiménez and Pedraza could speak about Puerto Rico to students at Beloit College. About 20 students came to the presentation, which was held in the college's Multi-Cultural Center.

The presentation concluded with an interesting question and discussion period. Students were very involved and wanted to hear more from the YS members. There were several questions and comments raised about the independence struggle in Puerto Rico, the Puerto Rican political prisoners, and the fight to demand the U.S. Navy get out of Vieques.

One of the student leaders helped to plan the event and organized a \$195 honorarium from the school for the YS speakers. The honorarium is going towards traveling expenses for the trip to Beloit and the remain-



YS member Elena Tate, left, joins Overnite picket line in Deer Park, New York. Militant

der is going towards the YS National Fund Drive. Some of the other students expressed an interest in the Young Socialists, and one of them purchased a Pathfinder catalogue for the group so they can try to build the center's library with Pathfinder titles.

The Chicago YS will definitely try to do more events like this, not only at Beloit, but at campuses in Chicago and beyond in order to successfully build a larger and stronger YS, while at the same time raising funds for the national goal.

Finally, the chapter here held a yard

sale November 6-7, raising \$275 over the weekend. Items were donated by supporters of the Young Socialists and the sale was staffed by YS members.

Young Socialists Fund Drive

CITY	GOAL COLLECTED		
Philadelphia	\$400	\$438	110%
Chicago	\$1,200	\$957	80%
San Francisco	\$800	\$567	71%
Los Angeles	\$500	\$325	65%
Atlanta	\$250	\$150	60%
Santa Cruz	\$650	\$387	60%
Detroit	\$350	\$207	59%
Seattle	\$400	\$236	59%
Newark	\$700	\$411	59%
Birmingham	\$550	\$320	58%
New York	\$700	\$230	33%
Minneapolis	\$500	\$120	24%
Des Moines	\$130	\$10	8%
Pittsburgh	\$200	\$0	0%
OTHER	\$0	\$183	
TOTAL	\$7,330	\$4,541	62%
SHOULD BE	\$8,000	\$7,360	92%

Solidarity key for striking truckers

Continued from front page
Rockford, Illinois.

Overnite, a subsidiary of rail giant Union Pacific, is the sixth-largest trucking company in the country. Workers have been waging an organizing campaign there for years. A majority of workers have voted to join the Teamsters at terminals representing 45 percent of the workforce of 8,200 drivers and loading dock workers.

Overnite bosses have waged unsuccessful campaigns to decertify the union at 12 terminals. The company is currently trying to get a decertification vote called at the Grand Rapids, Michigan, service center.

Solidarity on the picket line

In Atlanta, the main Overnite terminal is located among a cluster of warehouses and trucking companies, near Confederate and Custer Avenues. There is a constant blaring of truck horns in solidarity with the strikers, from cars, pickups, and the freight trucks headed up the hill toward the Kroger warehouse or arriving at the ABF Holland terminal next door to Overnite.

The strength of the strike rests first of all in the resolve of the strikers to win this battle. Key to their determination is strikers' confidence that they are backed up by the many other workers who come to spend hours on the picket line. Joe, a trucker at ABF in New York who preferred to give his first name only, said, "This strike is monumental. If we win, then we can go after other companies like CCX, Old Dominion, and other non-union companies."

This 30-year veteran of the trucking industry walks the picket at Overnite's Deer Park, New York, terminal on Long Island. Joe said he tries to "teach these young guys I work with who haven't walked picket lines the importance of this strike and coming out here and giving their \$5 per week to the strike fund. Right now my terminal is giving at the rate of 80 percent." There is a campaign for Teamster freight drivers to give \$5 per week to the fight, picketers report.

Strikers and their supporters are also organizing to picket Overnite trucks as they make deliveries, spreading the word about their fight despite the virtual news blackout in the big-business press. Participants in these roving pickets report that union drivers from other companies often refuse to make their deliveries while there are pick-

eters protesting the scab trucks.

Government probes against Teamsters

On July 5 the Teamsters struck at six Overnite terminals to call attention to their fight, in Memphis, Indianapolis, Kansas City, and three terminals in the Atlanta area. After the walkout the company charged the union with violence, and members of the U.S. Senate seized the time to intervene in union affairs.

Weeks later Michael Enzi, Chuck Hagel, and Tim Hutchinson, members of the Senate Subcommittee on Employment, Safety and Training, sent a letter to Teamsters president James P. Hoffa, charging the union with a "pattern of violence" during the July strike.

Overnite and its parent, Union Pacific, had lobbied for this letter, which accuses the union of carrying out potentially illegal acts in its organizing drive at Overnite. According to *Traffic World*, the senators called upon Hoffa to provide a detailed plan to rid the Teamsters

of "mob control" and "to purge itself from criminal acts."

As part of avoiding racketeering charges in 1989, Teamsters officials signed a consent decree allowing the government to oversee the union's affairs. The government intervened in the union shortly after the successful Teamster strike against UPS in 1997 to remove the union president, Ronald Carey, from office.

Atlanta striker Frank Williams was one of many who reported that the company's antiunion campaign now included calling strikers at their homes, trying to sweet talk them into coming back to work — but he doesn't see many going back in.

With 26 years at Overnite, Williams recalled the different forms of company abuse that helped convince workers that they needed to fight and that they needed a union.

He pointed to the fact that "there used to be three women drivers, but none are left because

the company ran them off... But we're going to be here until Overnite does what it needs to do."

Mike Italie is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees. Harvey McArthur in Chicago and Elena Tate in New York contributed to this article.

Roving pickets spread word on strike

BY DOUG JENNESS

BLAINE, Minnesota — When the 18-wheeler pulled out of the Overnite terminal here about 8:00 a.m. November 8 with a scab in the driver's seat, 10 strikers stopped it, then allowed it to slowly proceed out of the driveway. Dan Taylor, one of the strikers, yelled out, "I'll follow this one." He ran to his pickup and pulled behind the truck.

Every morning since the walkout began, this scene has been repeated. Dozens of scabs drive into the terminal in vehicles rented by Overnite management. Shortly afterward, some 10 or 15 scab-driven trucks wheel out of the terminal to be confronted by the strikers, members of Teamsters Local 120. A striker will then often follow the truck to its delivery locations.

To find out what happens, I tagged along behind Taylor. The truck headed west out of Blaine, a northern suburb of the Twin Cities, to the northwestern suburbs of Brooklyn Park and Maple Grove. At one point the driver seemed to be lost as he twisted around back streets, ending up in several dead-ends. But after about 40 minutes of this, it became apparent that he was trying to discourage us and maybe shake us. Finally, he

pulled into his first stop, Hanson, a huge plant that makes prefabricated concrete pieces for bridges and other construction projects. It's organized by the Teamsters.

When the scab went to turn his shipping papers over to the receiving clerk, Taylor followed right along and gave the clerk a written notice explaining that he was receiving struck work and some facts about the Overnite strike. The clerk said he didn't know anything about the strike and would talk to the company president about it, but meanwhile he'd have to accept the shipment.

Outside Taylor talked to the fork lift operators who had pulled up to unload the order from the truck. They said they were in the Teamsters but didn't know anything about the strike. They were interested and expressed support before going ahead to unload the truck.

The next stop was Allegiance, a firm that specializes in transporting medical equipment and supplies. The drivers and warehouse workers there are unorganized, but the worker on the dock told Taylor he'd do what he could to slow the unloading process. Taylor stood outside in front of the

truck, with a strike sign. A United Parcel Service driver pulled up, walked over, and asked what was going on. He said he didn't know about the strike but would do what he could to get support in his local. The UPS drivers are also in the Teamsters and were on strike two years ago.

At one point the scab asked Taylor why he was striking. The Teamster replied, "We're fighting to get a union, with a contract, so that we can have rights and better conditions. Now, we don't even get overtime pay for extra work." The scab said he was from Boston and that he'd been hired by a temp agency there. He said he knew about the strike before he hired on and he'd never been in a union.

The strikers make it clear that they aren't picketing the companies where struck work is delivered, but are picketing the trucks wherever they go. In the face of the blackout of any news coverage whatsoever about the strike in the Twin Cities area, strikers say that the roving pickets help to get the word out to other workers and unionists.

Doug Jenness is a member of the United Steelworkers of America.

'Join the struggle, then talk about the book'

This week we print reports from socialist unionists who are taking part in the campaign to place copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium* in stores and libraries where working people go to find books. *Capitalism's World Disorder* contains five speeches by Jack Barnes, and is Pathfinder's newest title (see ad on front page.) Sales of the book to workers, working farmers, and young people go hand-in-hand with this effort, as these accounts illustrate.

BY ARLENE RUBINSTEIN

ATLANTA — Socialist workers in the International Association of Machinists (IAM) are making the most progress in selling and placing *Capitalism's World Disorder* where they are deeply involved in the resistance of workers and farmers.

In San Francisco, members of the IAM at United Air Lines are part of a group of workers in the union organizing support for the strike by members of the Teamsters at Basic Vegetable Products in King City, California. Larry Lane offered some sound advice based on their experiences: "First join the struggle as a co-fighter, then start to talk about the book. Not in the reverse order."

So far, socialist workers have sold four copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder* at United. A Basic Vegetable striker also bought the book after discussions on the picket line, and participated in an educational conference sponsored by the Young Socialists in Santa Cruz November 6-7.

In other cities, involvement in the national strike by the Teamsters union against Overnite Transportation, in the fight by locked-out Steelworkers at Kaiser Aluminum, and in the struggles of working people in the countryside are yielding similar results.

When we ask those we meet in and around these struggles for help in placing Pathfinder books, we often get an enthusiastic response. They follow what we do and have a sense of accomplishment when a bookstore or library makes an order.

Socialist workers in the IAM are also teaming up with members of other unions in the campaign, taking advantage of the opportu-

nity to learn what workers in other industries face. Volunteering for one of the national teams taking the campaign to the coalfields is one of the best ways to learn about the new social movement of union and nonunion miners in defense of health benefits, pensions, and union rights, and to bring those experiences back to our co-workers.

Studying and discussing the book is also becoming more tied to some of the questions that have come up in the Machinists union. IAM officials are helping to organize a rally in Seattle on November 30 against the World Trade Organization. This action is consistent with their program for "defending American jobs" and supporting the protectionist demands of the bosses. The speeches by Jack Barnes printed in *Capitalism's World Disorder* have a different starting point — that of internationalism and working-class solidarity.

1,000 protest expulsions of Black students at Illinois high school

BY JOEL BRITTON AND SHELTON MCCRAINEY

DECATUR, Illinois — Supporters of expelled students charged with "felony mob action" stemming from a fist fight at a high school football game in mid-September have called a protest march here for November 14.

The seven students, all of whom are Black, were expelled by a mostly white school board after a two-to-three-minute fracas in the bleachers during a football game between Eisenhower and MacArthur high schools. Following protests, including a march of more than 1,000 people November 7, the two-year expulsions were reduced to one year and board officials said the students could attend a school for "troubled" students.

This "compromise" — brokered with the help of Governor George Ryan — was rejected by the students, backed up by leaders of the Decatur and national Rainbow/PUSH. November 8 and 9, the students appeared in the morning at Eisenhower, accompanied by Rev. Jesse Jackson and other supporters, seeking readmission. The school board refused to open Decatur's three high schools those days, claiming a threat to "public safety." Forty-four percent of the public high school students are Black.

Jackson and Rainbow/PUSH attorney Lewis Myers announced to the media and a community rally attended by hundreds November 9 that a suit had been filed in federal court challenging the school board's "zero tolerance for violence" policy as unconstitutional. The suit seeks the students' immediate reinstatement.

Rail workers place books in working-class areas

BY ELLIE GARCIA

NEWARK, New Jersey — Socialist rail workers in New Jersey and New York recently decided that all of us will visit a bookstore, library, or book outlet once a week. We will start with bookstores recommended by other rail workers, and also concentrate on bookstores and libraries around railyards and train stations and in the communities where our co-workers live.

Once we started going out more often and talking to book buyers, we began to get results. We picked up some industry terms. The book buyer for a library is called a "selector," for example, and the book company that libraries order from is a "jobber." We found that it helps to call at the beginning of the week to

find out what the book buyer's schedule is. Our promotion of *Capitalism's World Disorder* helps place other Pathfinder books as well. We've learned that it is important to check the computer or card catalog for Pathfinder titles before meeting the selector.

A number of book buyers not only liked going through the books but also hearing about some of the authors. The photos in *Capitalism's World Disorder* demonstrate that this is a new, up-to-date book that addresses the big events in the world today. By proceeding confidently, with order form at the ready on the assumption that the buyer will be interested, socialist rail workers have placed 14 copies of the book over the last two weeks, and 71 other titles. Among them were 13 copies of *Capitalism's World Disorder* purchased by two bookshops near a rail yard and by a train station.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR Upcoming Labor and Farm Actions

Sun. Nov. 14, 11 a.m. - 3 p.m.
King City, California

March to support Teamsters on Strike against Basic Vegetable

King City Park at the fairground, San Francisco. Exit at Canal St. from Highway 101. For more information contact Teamsters Local 890 (831) 424-5743, (831) 385-4580 or www.teamsters890.org

Tue. Nov. 16, 4 p.m.
New York, New York

Join the Steelworkers demonstration at DeMag Delaval Mannesman corporate headquarters

175 steelworkers at DeMag Delaval have been on strike for 15 months. 470 Park Ave., between 56th & 57 streets. For more information, call USWA Local 3355 at (609) 587-2925.

Sat. November 20th, 12 Noon
Mansfield, Ohio

Join the Rally against Armco/AK Steel's Paramilitary Occupation of Mansfield, Ohio

Mansfield Town Square
For more information, call (419) 522-9375 or (419) 522-9385.

PATHFINDER FUND RAISE \$125,000 TO HELP PRODUCE THE BOOKS WORKERS AND FARMERS NEED NOW			
Area	Goal	Paid	Percent
Sweden	700	760	109%
New Zealand	2,550	2,574	101%
Canada	3,650	3,580	98%
United States			
Detroit	4,500	4,530	101%
Atlanta	3,500	3,511	100%
Boston	4,100	3,775	92%
Houston	6,500	5,865	90%
Cape Girardeau	250	225	90%
Newark	9,000	7,938	88%
New York	13,000	11,462	88%
Philadelphia	3,600	3,003	83%
San Francisco	12,500	10,183	81%
Los Angeles	8,000	6,305	79%
Ft. Collins	500	385	77%
St. Louis	1,300	975	75%
Miami	3,500	2,595	74%
Twin Cities	10,000	7,213	72%
Washington, D.C.	6,000	4,286	71%
Des Moines	1,800	1,273	71%
Pittsburgh	4,500	3,017	67%
Chicago	8,000	5,235	65%
Chippewa Falls	400	250	63%
Cleveland	4,000	2,385	60%
Seattle	11,000	6,510	59%
Birmingham	3,000	1,825	33%
Other U.S.	2,312	2,112	91%
U.S. Total	\$121,262	\$94,858	78%
Australia	950	723	76%
France	500	375	75%
United Kingdom	950	40	4%
Totals	\$130,562	\$102,910	82%
Should be	\$125,000	\$114,583	92%

Fund momentum can put us over the top

BY PAT HUNTER

NEWARK, New Jersey — More than a week before the deadline for the international Pathfinder Fund, supporters in Atlanta and Detroit, as well as in New Zealand and Sweden, had exceeded the quotas they had set. Contributions of \$17,520 received this week indicate that supporters of the fund are gaining the momentum needed to achieve their goals in full by the November 15 deadline.

About \$22,000 is needed to reach the original fund goal of \$125,000. But the aim now should be to collect the entire \$130,562 pledged internationally. Even where supporters have met their local goal, they should work to collect any outstanding individual pledges and give new readers of Pathfinder books an opportunity to contribute, to help put the drive over the top.

A November 6 meeting in Houston gave the local campaign a boost, bringing the contributions received from 45 percent to 90 percent of the goal. One of the speakers was Alejandra Rincón, who described her recent contribution along with others in translating chapters of

Capitalism's World Disorder: Working Class Politics at the Millennium, which Pathfinder is getting ready for publication in Spanish and French early next year.

Rincón described how she had gained in political experience in the process of the translation — both as she dug into the content of the book and as she dealt with the difficulties posed by the translation itself. "A good example was the challenge of translating one of the terms in the book — 'leverage,'" said Rincón. When used to refer to "the strength that Pathfinder books provide to communists in getting out their ideas, it is a very positive term. But in Spanish the word we first chose had a very negative connotation. We had to work harder to get the same meaning. These are the kind of challenges we face in translating these ideas."

Reports sent in from various cities around the world indicate the breadth of support that is coming in for the fund.

Having already exceeded their goal, for instance, supporters in Sweden expect to collect still more. Dag Tirsén writes that the response they got to a fund appeal letter they sent out surpassed their expectations. "Some people made a considerable contribution even before being phoned."

Supporters in France sent in an additional \$125 to the Fund, bringing them to 75 percent

of their goal. Nat London and Thierry Bernard explained that outstanding pledges to the Fund are being collected from supporters in Marseilles and Paris, and that "a special effort is being made this week to get contributions from co-workers at several factories."

Writing from Seattle, Washington, Geoff Mirelowitz reports that the \$11,000 goal set by local Pathfinder supporters is "the largest amount of money that supporters of the publisher have ever tried to raise in the Pacific Northwest." Through a special effort over the past two weeks, they increased pledges to \$11,200, and sent in more than \$1,200 this week alone.

Similar strides towards their goals are being made elsewhere. Fund organizers in Boston collected \$1,405 in one week, bringing them from 58 percent to 92 percent of their goal. Los Angeles supporters sent \$2,125.

To find out more about the Fund, to get involved or to make a contribution, contact your nearest Pathfinder bookstore listed on page 8. Please make all checks and money orders out to Pathfinder, earmarked Pathfinder Fund, and send to:

Pathfinder, 410 West Street, New York, NY 10014.

Jacque Henderson in Houston contributed to this article.

Georgia farmers resist bank foreclosure

BY PAUL CORNELIUS

CHATHAM COUNTY, Georgia — The Green family is fighting against foreclosure of their farm. "We're supposed to have been knocked out of the ring a longtime ago. But I can tell you it's an act of war when somebody comes and tries to take something away from you. We are not leaving our land," said Samuel Green.

Their 222-acre farm has been in the family for more than seven decades. Purchased in 1926 by Ellis Green, Jr., Samuel's father, the farm supplied county groceries and farmer's markets with produce. It was the only farm of its size owned by a Black family in this region of southern Georgia, located on the outskirts of Savannah.

"We grew some of everything — collards, mustard and turnips, rutabagas, tomatoes, peas, okra, sweet potatoes, and beans," explained Annie Mae Green, 75, in an October interview with the Green family. "With a little assistance from the government, we could plant it back like we used to," added the woman, who lived on the farm for 50 years.

According to several of her 12 children—Samuel, Sampson, Ruth, and Ellis III—Annie Mae Green, who died in early November, was a stalwart fighter who kept the family surviving.

Like thousands of farmers who are Black, the Greens were plaintiffs in the *Pigford vs. Glickman* class-action lawsuit against the United States Department of Agriculture for racist discrimination. The judge in the case approved a consent decree granting compensation to the farmers in April, but the first checks have yet to be mailed.

When Ellis Green, Jr. died on Feb. 2, 1980, he did not owe a penny on his land. Nonetheless, the Carver State Bank began foreclosure proceedings in 1981 on the farm. The bank refused to honor a 15-year payment plan to cover a \$65,000 debt on farm equipment, and then used this debt as the pretext to initiate foreclosure proceedings. The bank put the farm up for sale on the county courthouse steps, forcing the Greens to buy their farm back from the bank or risk losing it altogether.

"One of the biggest things I knew was wrong was that the bank's foreclosure proceedings were against my father, even though he was no longer living," said Sampson Green. With little time to counter the bank's move, the family applied for a \$152,000 loan — from the same bank that was foreclosing on them.

By 1986 the bank succeeded in obtaining possession of the Greens' land. In 1996, Jackie Sommers, an oil distributor who owns more than 60 Shell, Texaco, and BP stations in the region, bought 102 acres of the farm from the bank. Sommers, an unsuccessful candidate for Chatham County sheriff, is now trying to evict the Green family from their farm.

When his own tactics of intimidation don't work, Sommers relies on his buddies in the county sheriff's department for back up. As sheriff Al St. Lawrence told the *Savannah Morning News* on March 12, 1998, "We're gonna go out there and do whatever it takes to evict them [the Green family]. We're not concerned to the extent that we can't handle it, but we're going to make sure we have enough people to go out there and do it."

Barbara Green, Sampson's wife, recounted a recent incident. "On Feb. 16, 1999, at about 7:30 a.m., I heard a commotion from the highway, but I wasn't sure what was going on. Thirty minutes later my husband came back with policemen. 'Ma'am, get a few personal items and leave, because this house is being evicted,'



Three generations of the Green family on farm they have been fighting to keep in Chatham County, Georgia. Seated in wheelchair is Annie Mae Green. Militant/Arlene Rubinstein

the officer told me. Every step I took, they took. I asked them 'Can I at least go into the bathroom and change into some decent clothing?' The officer told me, 'You can go, but I'm coming with you.'"

From her window, Barbara Green saw van loads of officers, equipped with bulletproof vests, head gear, and weapons, hiding in the surrounding woods. "You're talking about a small army against a family. When the children came home from school they had no home. How they did us was totally illegal, including the papers that they served us with, which were from 1986," she said.

Later that morning, the trailer that her family lived in was bulldozed. Annie Mae Green suffered several strokes shortly after the experience.

A "no trespassing" sign is now posted at Snow Green Road, the main entrance of the Green farm. Sommers hired a security company owned by a local city councilman to provide a round-the-clock security guard at the entrance. To further press his point,

Sommers subsequently had a ditch 600 feet long, 8 feet deep, and 6 feet wide dug at the entrance. In July 1999 heavy rain caused severe flooding on the road that the Green family still has access to. Having no other exit, family members had to wade to safety in water up to three and a half feet deep, and three of their cars were lost in the flood.

Because the family still refuses to leave their 119-acre farm, Sommers has stepped up his efforts to intimidate them in recent weeks. Family members report being threatened by the security guard while retrieving the mail, and on one occasion the guard said that he was going to get the Ku Klux Klan.

A Chatham County police report confirms the guard's remarks. Family members have seen Sommers driving around the farm with his two rottweiler attack dogs. On one occasion, Sommers sicked a dog on Sampson Green and later that day filed charges of "terroristic activity" against Sampson and his brother Ellis III.

While refusing to hear the Greens' case

regarding their rightful access to their farm, the court has opted to hear Sommers's claim that he should be granted possession of one-third of the 119 acres that the Green family currently owns. In the family's opinion Sommers is trying to force a "partition sale" of the farm, in order to obtain full possession of the entire 119 acres. "That is why he is trying to portray us as violent, but we are the victims, not the criminals," stated Samuel Green.

What Sommers is doing is not only legal, it is how thousands of acres of Black-owned farm land is lost every year. Under "heired property" laws, if a farmer becomes delinquent on a loan or taxes, his or her land can be sold out from underneath them to anyone who can pay the back taxes or loan. An individual family member can also be pressured or intimidated into signing documents that will eventually result in the property's sale, against the family's will.

"When we hear about the travesty that is happening to the Greens, it seems like something out of the overthrow of Reconstruction. But in a capitalist society, money is not just power, but it has the power to buy justice or anything else that money can afford," commented Eddie Slaughter, the national vice-president of the Black Farmers and Agriculturalists Association (BFAA).

Like the Greens, Slaughter has firsthand experience with the use of "heir property" laws against working farmers. When his aunt and uncle died in 1980 he tried to buy their farm, but the bank would not allow the sale. Slaughter was fortunate and discovered the problem in time. A white farmer was trying to get one of Slaughter's relatives, who was an alcoholic, to sign papers authorizing the sale of the farm by getting him drunk. Slaughter ran the white farmer off his land.

The Georgia chapter of BFAA invited the Green family to their September meeting, and is getting involved in their fight.

"Our position on the Green fight is that we stand with them to make sure justice is done and that they get their land back. Whatever it takes to make that happen, we are willing to do it," stated Melvin Bishop, a cattle farmer who is the president of Georgia BFAA.

Arlene Rubinstein contributed to this article.

Minnesota workers reject tax hike to subsidize new stadium in St. Paul

BY DOUG JENNESS

ST. PAUL, Minnesota — Working people scored a victory here on election day as a proposal to raise the city sales tax and publicly subsidize a new baseball stadium was crushed by a large majority. The ballot initiative called for increasing the city sales tax one-half percent in order to cover at least one-third of the \$325-million estimated costs of constructing the stadium in downtown St. Paul. The rest of the expense would be borne by the state government and the private owners. The vote was 58 percent against. It was defeated in all seven of the city's wards, with the highest no vote coming from the poorest working-class areas.

The 50.7 percent voter turnout on November 2 was higher than usual for a year when there is no mayoral race. In fact it was higher than in the mayoral election two years ago, in which only 43 percent of those registered

voted. In an interview with the *Minneapolis Star Tribune*, Erich Mische, a top strategist in the campaign in favor of the tax increase and stadium subsidy, said his committee had been counting on a low voter turnout to win and knew they were in trouble on election day when the turnout remained high.

Campaigners for a yes vote, spearheaded by the mayor's office and the St. Paul Chamber of Commerce, spent \$300,000 in a slick, high-powered advertising campaign. In the final weeks leading up to election day many city residents, as I can personally testify, received at least one professionally printed flier every day in the mail. Thousands of dollars were spent on phone calls, videos, media ads, and lawn signs. The advocates for a no vote in contrast mustered only \$8,000 for their effort.

From the outset, however, the big majority of working people in the city recognized that the stadium scheme was a boondoggle designed to benefit the millionaire owners of the Minnesota Twins, the stadium, construction companies, and downtown businesses. The big bucks promotion of the initiative only served to underline the profit-hungry drive of those interests and their goal of dipping into the public coffers.

In the factory where I work, I heard no one speak in favor of the stadium proposal. Supporters of the Socialist Workers election campaign at other work sites gave similar accounts.

The trade union hierarchy was divided on the proposal. Officials in the construction trades, for example, campaigned for a yes vote. Other unions opposed it but didn't commit resources to it. A staff representative of the St. Paul Trades and Labor Assembly, the umbrella organization of St. Paul unions, explained in a phone interview that

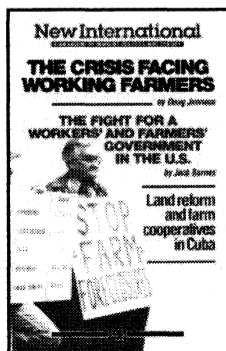
the assembly wouldn't discuss the issue nor take a stand because of the differences.

Many union members who opposed the stadium scheme saw a connection between this move and Mayor Norman Coleman's highly touted plan to privatize city services. Dubbed Compete St. Paul, this operation not only aims to turn park maintenance, water works, and other services over to profit-eager companies but also targets the public employees unions. A rally of some 500 unionists and their supporters in late summer protested this scheme in a rally held at City Hall.

The big-business drive to build a new stadium in St. Paul is part of a general development across the country where profiteers in professional sports are attempting to reap the rewards of recycling stadiums and other athletic facilities every few years and to try to get working people to subsidize them through increased taxes and public subsidies.

The moneybags that pushed for these new stadiums not only want the profits that would come from constructing them but from the revenues that could be attracted by selling expensive box seats to corporations and other rich interests.

During my recent race for city council in St. Paul on the Socialist Workers Party ticket, I was asked a lot about the stadium initiative and Compete St. Paul. I strongly opposed both. I explained that not only was I opposed to adding to the tax burden of working people, my party favors axing all sales taxes and all taxes of any kind on working people. And we oppose the use of public funds to help line the pockets of capitalist profiteers. That's why we urged a no vote on the stadium initiative and join in the celebration of its defeat.



In New International no. 4

- The Fight for a Workers and Farmers Government in the United States by Jack Barnes
- The Crisis Facing Working Farmers by Doug Jenness
- Land Reform and Farm Cooperatives in Cuba, two speeches by Fidel Castro

\$9.00

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 8, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690. Fax: (212) 727-0150. When ordering by mail, please include \$3 to cover shipping and handling.

Coal bosses close more union mines

BY ELYSE HATHAWAY
AND MARIAN RUSSELL

EVANSVILLE, Indiana — The United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) will lose about 8 percent of its working miners' membership in the last four months of this year, close to 1,500 workers, just through closings of mines in southern Indiana, western Kentucky, and southern Illinois.

Peabody Coal closed its last union mine in Illinois, the Marissa mine, on October 23. The company also announced it will suspend operations at two Indiana mines at the end of this year, resulting in a loss of more than 600 union jobs. The Arch Coal Co. and the Brushy Creek Coal Co. have also announced the closing of their mines in Illinois. Consolidation Coal (Consol) intends to seal its Ohio No. 11 mine in western Kentucky as early as November.

Many of the mine closings are blamed by both the companies and UMWA officials on the Clean Air Act. New limits on sulfur dioxide emissions, which contribute to smog and acid rain, go into effect on Jan. 1, 2000. Companies burning high-sulfur coal are required to install pollution controls to meet these new limits. Most Illinois coal is high in sulfur.

Coal can be clean

Coal can be burned cleanly by installing scrubbers to reduce sulfur dioxide emissions. Rather than doing so, which would cost hundreds of millions of dollars and cut into energy company profits, many of the power companies are switching to low-sulfur coal from other mines in the area and from the Powder River Basin in Wyoming. In the case of the southeastern Illinois utility, AmerenCIPS, scrubbers were actually removed from their Newton Power Station to make way for a multimillion dollar conversion to be able to burn western coal.

The state and federal governments, however, are expected to contribute \$57 million to the estimated \$127 million costs to build a new power plant in central Illinois to burn coal from a nonunion mine owned by Turris Coal Co. The power plant, to be built across from the Elkhart mine, plans to test a new low-emission boiler system to burn the 300,000 tons per year of high-sul-

fur coal it will get from Turris. This means an expansion for the mine, including hiring 50 workers.

The average price of electricity is much higher in Illinois than in neighboring states. This is not because of scrubber installation or the Clean Air Act, but because of the state's expensive nuclear plants. In 1997 Illinois had 11 nuclear units, more than any other state in the nation. One of them, Clinton, built in 1987, was slated to cost \$500 million but came in at over \$4 billion. Expenses at Clinton caused Illinois Power to become one of the most expensive suppliers of electricity in the Midwest. The power plant has been inoperable since 1996 due to safety problems, and is a current net user of electricity.

Illinois Power, the Marissa mine's biggest customer, refused to install scrubbers at its Baldwin and Hennepin power plants, saying they would cost too much. Peabody said it will provide low-sulfur coal to the power company from a mine in Wyoming. All of Peabody's operations in Wyoming are nonunion. In the context of the Marissa closing, workers at the preparation plant at the mine shut down that facility for five days by calling in sick, in response to company attacks on seniority.

Bosses expand nonunion mining

Meanwhile, Peabody has actually expanded its coal reserves in the Midwest by acquiring an 82 percent interest in the Black Beauty Coal Co., which mines high- and low-sulfur coal. Black Beauty has nine mines in Indiana, making it the largest coal producer in the state, as well as three in southern Illinois, and has announced the opening of another mine in Illinois. Several miners have noted that Peabody seems to find contracts for high-sulfur Black Beauty coal, but not for the union-organized Marissa mine.

All but one of the Black Beauty mines are nonunion. Workers at the company's Eagle Valley mine are organized by the Boilermakers. Labor for that mine is contracted out to Coal Miners Inc. Other mines owned by Black Beauty also contract out the labor. Contracting is widespread in the Powder River Basin and is even spreading

Miners resist attacks on health benefits

BY JAMES VINCENT

WAYNESBURG, Pennsylvania — The U.S. Supreme Court rejected an appeal by two Pennsylvania companies who requested they be relieved of paying lifetime benefits for retired miners and their families. The November 1 decision was closely watched by the coal industry and was seen as a blow to the coal bosses.

Without comment, the court cast aside the arguments of Unity Real Estate Co. and Barnes & Tucker. The two firms said that the 1992 Coal Industry Retiree Health Benefit Act (Coal Act) violated their rights. The former coal companies, arguing their case along constitutional grounds, claimed they were being forced to pay retroactive health-care benefits and that this amounted to an unconstitutional taking of their property without compensation.

Both companies had subsidiaries in the coal mining business until the 1980s, and each of them signed contracts with the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) in 1974, 1978, and 1981. Unity Real Estate is responsible for 76 beneficiaries and Barnes & Tucker, which closed four mines and left the coal industry in 1986, was assigned 1,200 beneficiaries. The two companies claim the ruling will force them into bankruptcy proceedings.

The Coal Act, signed into law by former president George Bush in 1992, was established to shore up depleted funds needed to cover miners' lifetime health benefits. All companies that signed a UMWA contract after 1974 are required to pay lifetime health benefits to retirees. Since passage of the 1992 legislation, there have been more than 60 challenges to the law. In recent years the union fund has been dealt blows by a hand-

ful of court rulings. The biggest setback came in 1998 when the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that Eastern Enterprises was not required to make payments to the fund. Eastern is today a subsidiary of Peabody Coal.

The UMWA maintains the Combined Benefit Fund (CBF), which was established under the Coal Act and provides benefits for about 70,000 retired miners and their families. The fund has 19,500 beneficiaries in West Virginia, 13,300 in Pennsylvania, 8,230 in Kentucky, 5,580 in Virginia, and 4,500 in Ohio. It is the largest of five pension and benefit funds run by the union. Today the fund is in the red nearly \$50 million, and over the next five years the union estimates the deficit will reach in excess of \$250 million.

The ruling comes in the context of stepped-up efforts by the union to organize its members to demand that the government guarantee health coverage with no cut in benefits. Throughout the country's coalfields, miners and their families have rallied in defense of their right to lifetime health care. Mass meetings of thousands of retired miners were held in Alabama, Indiana, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Utah in September. Since then many union districts have organized petition campaigns in their regions aimed at winning support from Congress. In Pennsylvania, the effort has been led by District 2 of the UMWA.

The fund has a social significance beyond providing health care to miners. Many hospitals in the coalfields were created and maintained by the fund, thereby providing health care to entire communities.

Hospitals in West Virginia's coalfields face an additional threat today due to reductions in the federal Medicare program. The Man Appalachian Regional Hospital in Logan

Florida farmers, farm workers confront hurricane aftermath



Militant/Eric Simpson

Harvey Johnson had to replant entire crop. Government relief is uncertain.

BY ERIC SIMPSON
AND ROLLANDE GIRARD

HOMESTEAD, Florida — "I lost all my crop to Hurricane Irene," said Harvey Johnson. "I have to start all over again." Hurricane Irene hit this town south of Miami October 15.

Johnson rents 175 acres of land, where he plants green beans and okra. "I planted again but I might still lose it to a freeze because it is so late," he said. He said he is one of the Black farmers who cultivates the most land in the area, but his farm is small compared to local white farmers.

Johnson, who has been farming since 1985, has filed for Federal government emergency aid. Government officials in Florida estimate that six counties in the

state lost \$400 million worth of crops to Hurricane Irene's flooding and high winds. Ninety-five percent of the vegetable crop in the Homestead area was destroyed. Johnson doesn't know if he will get money, or when.

He described the situation as a vegetable farmer. "We have no guarantee on how much we will get for the crate of beans; a break-even price would be \$10," he said. "We spend \$1.53 for each box, \$4.50 to pick the beans, and \$1.35 to keep each crate in the cooler before it gets sold."

On top of this, Johnson pays \$300 to \$400 per acre per year to an absentee landlord to rent the land. And "in Florida you need to spray every week against

Continued on Page 10

into traditional UMWA strongholds like southern West Virginia. The expansion of contracting out of work, often at substantially lower pay, is part of the offensive by the coal barons to squeeze more out of miners through speed up of production, extension of working hours, and elimination of job classifications.

At the Eagle Valley mine, wages for bath-

house workers start at just over \$7 per hour and underground miners start at \$9 per hour. At UMWA mines, miners' starting pay is \$16-18 per hour, and bathhouse jobs go to top-seniority workers.

Brushy Creek Coal Co. announced the closing of its mine in southern Illinois in September. Western Fuels, the energy company that owns the mine, also promotes coal from its reserves in Wyoming. About half of the 143 workers laid off at the Brushy Creek mine, which opened in 1979, are just short of the 20 years needed to qualify for company-funded lifetime medical coverage for themselves and their spouses, as well as for a pension. Between 30 and 40 workers at the Marissa mine face the same situation.

In 1946 union miners won the right to full lifetime health coverage. The funds for these benefits have recently been under assault from coal companies trying to chip away at health care for miners and retirees. More than 1,000 UMWA retirees and others were meeting in Evansville to discuss these attacks on the fund when Brushy Creek announced the mine closing. The chances for these laid off miners to get hired at other UMWA mines to complete their 20 years of service is slim.

from Pathfinder

The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

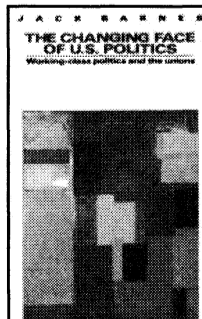
Working-Class Politics and the Unions

JACK BARNES

A handbook for workers coming into the factories, mines, and mills. It shows how millions of workers, as political resistance grows, will revolutionize themselves, their unions, and all of society. Also available in Spanish and French.

\$19.95

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 8



Washington-Beijing conflict marks WTO

Continued from front page

into trade concessions. A report on the failed talks with EU officials in the *International Herald Tribune* noted, "China overall has been reluctant to lower barriers to farm products and to allow other countries freer entry into its state-run sectors such as telecommunications and financial services."

The White House presents itself as eager to come to an agreement. Through a number of rounds of negotiation, however, Washington has blocked the Chinese application to the WTO. In April the White House published a list of concessions it said Chinese president Jiang Zemin had offered during a visit to the United States. Clinton then rejected those terms, stating that the agreement would face strong opposition in Congress.

Following this insult, the Chinese government has whittled down the list of concessions it says it is prepared to make, while insisting on its own conditions. Beijing demands, for example, that Washington pledge not to invoke sanctions against Chinese products that it alleges are being "dumped" on the U.S. market at below-market prices. Even if the two sides reach agreement in the planned talks, the U.S. Treasury secretary has said the deal will not be submitted to Congress for consideration until next year.

Moves to deploy new missile system

Washington's aggressive moves on the military front overshadow these trade negotiations and the WTO meeting itself. Most importantly, the imperialist power is pushing ahead with the development of a missile system designed to give it a first-strike nuclear capacity by intercepting incoming missiles and exploding them before they reached their targets. This missile system operates on similar principles to the "Star Wars" proposal that the government of Republican president Ronald Reagan failed to push through.

Military planners propose deploying such systems in the United States and Asia. The Clinton administration has floated plans to install a network of missiles on the soil of Washington's allies of south Korea, imperialist Japan, and Taiwan. The missiles can also be mounted on naval vessels.

Washington claims that the system is necessary for defense against "rogue states," usually citing north Korea and Iran. But Beijing has no doubt it is the main target. According to the *International Herald Tribune* a "Chinese strategist," told participants in a Paris conference on defense matters November 6 that "if a U.S.-Japanese system covered Taiwan, 'We would go all out to build a force that clearly was strong enough to get through.'"

The big-business press has played up claims that Beijing is developing new nuclear defenses. In March of this year U.S. government figures leveled accusations of nuclear espionage at China, but provided no evidence to back up the charges.

Washington's militaristic policies are aimed also at Moscow, a bigger nuclear

power than Beijing. The Clinton administration is pressing the Russian government to modify the 1972 Antiballistic Missile (ABM) treaty, which bans such missile defense systems. Moscow has refused. "We can't allow a first modification that would open the way to a lot of changes that left the United States with the dominance of defenses combined with its arsenal of strike forces," said a Russian official.

"If they persist absolutely" in refusing modifications to the ABM treaty, said Walter Slocombe, an undersecretary of defense, on November 6, "the United States... will have to face... whether to withdraw." Slocombe said that Clinton would make a decision whether to begin deploying the systems "next summer."

Washington's European allies and rivals express alarm at these developments. "This issue could end up driving a stake through the heart of [NATO]," the *Washington Post* cited a North Atlantic Treaty Organization diplomat as saying in early November. He expressed the "fear that if the system works, American and European security interests will no longer be bound by exposure to the same threats."

Can't reimpose capitalism with dollars

The development and likely deployment of the system indicates the militaristic shift in Washington's China policy. This shift is already well in the past, and stems from the

inevitable limitations of the pro-market reforms the Stalinist regime in Beijing has introduced.

Capitalist corporations based in a number of imperialist countries, as well as wealthier Asian countries like Taiwan and south Korea, have invested billions of dollars in "Special Economic Zones" established by the Chinese government in the 1990s. This investment exceeds that made in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union combined. The capitalists have sought to profit from the low wages paid to workers, guaranteed by Beijing's repressive apparatus, and from the economic growth that has accompanied mass migration from the countryside into mushrooming cities.

But capitalism is not close to being restored into the Asian giant, home to 1.2 billion people. And the significant industrialization has brought into being a bigger working class. Labor disputes are on the rise in China today.

Washington regards China not as a trading partner but as a potential neocolony. Millions of workers and peasants tore this prize from the imperialists' grasp in the 1940s when they defeated the U.S.-backed regime of Chiang Kai-shek. Washington sent tens of thousands of troops, and would have intervened on a larger scale had it not faced mass resistance among the U.S. troops in the Pacific to fighting colonial wars after World War II.

This year, the 50th anniversary of the revolutionary triumph was celebrated in the streets of Beijing with a demonstrative military parade, including rows of infantry, mobile missiles, and a new jet fighter.

Despite the Stalinist misleadership of Mao Zedong, by the early 1950s the Chinese people had ended imperialist domination, unified the nation under a central government, nationalized the land, banks and major means of industrial production, and consigned the rule of the landlords and capitalists to the past.

The imperialists refused to recognize the People's Republic of China, and allotted China's seat at the United Nations and other international bodies to the regime set up by the exiled forces of Chiang Kai-shek on the island of Taiwan. The staying power of the Chinese revolution and the continued revolutionary ferment in Asia and Latin America eventually helped to render many aspects of this blatant anti-China policy untenable. Beijing, which withdrew from the WTO's predecessor, the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT), in 1950, reapplied for membership in 1986.

Beijing has repeatedly called for the return of Taiwan to China's sovereignty. In early 1996 Clinton sent an aircraft carrier into the Taiwan strait, threatening Beijing as tensions between the neighbors rose. Admiral Joseph Prueher, who commanded

Continued on Page 10

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

ILLINOIS

Chicago

Trade Pacts, "Free Trade," and Protectionism — Tools for Enforcing Domination of U.S. Big Business. Fri., Nov. 19, 7 p.m. 1223 N. Milwaukee Ave. Donation: \$4. Tel: (773) 342-1780.

IOWA

Des Moines

The World Trade Organization: Why Protectionist Protests Are a Deadly Trap for the Labor Movement. Speaker: Simone Berg, Socialist Workers Party, member United Steelworkers of America. Fri., Nov. 19, 7:30 p.m., dinner 6:30 p.m. 3720 6th Ave. Donation: \$4. Tel: (515) 288-2970.

MASSACHUSETTS

Boston

Teamster's Strike for Union Rights at Overnite

Transportation. Fri., Nov. 19, 7:30 p.m. Codman Square 683 Washington St., Dorchester. Donation: \$4. Tel: (617) 282-2254.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

How to Fight FBI Harassment of the Workers Movement. Speakers include: Fermin Morales, National Committee to Free the Puerto Rican Prisoners of War and Political Prisoners. Sat., Nov. 20, 7:30 p.m. 1906 South St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (215) 546-8218.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Free Leonard Peltier! Speaker: Carter Camp, Ponca Indian, member and former national chair of the American Indian Movement. Fri., Nov. 19, 7:30 p.m. 3541 14th St. NW, at Perry St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (202) 722-6221.

— IF YOU LIKE THIS PAPER, LOOK US UP —

Where to find Pathfinder books and distributors of the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, *New International*, *Nouvelle Internationale*, *Nueva Internacional* and *Ny International*.

UNITED STATES

ALABAMA: Birmingham: 2232 Magnolia Ave. Zip 35205. Tel: (205) 323-3079. E-mail: 73712.3561@compuserve.com

CALIFORNIA: Los Angeles: 2546 W. Pico Blvd. Zip: 90006. Tel: (213) 380-9460. E-mail: 74642.326@compuserve.com **San Francisco:** 3284 23rd St. Zip: 94110. Tel: (415) 282-6255, 285-5323. E-mail: 75604.556@compuserve.com

FLORIDA: Miami: 4582 N.E. 2nd Ave. Zip: 33137. Tel: (305) 573-3355. E-mail: 103171.1674@compuserve.com

GEORGIA: Atlanta: 230 Auburn Ave. N.E. Zip: 30303. Tel: (404) 577-7976. E-mail: 104226.1245@compuserve.com

ILLINOIS: Chicago: 1223 N. Milwaukee Ave. Zip: 60622. Tel: (773) 342-1780. E-mail: 104077.511@compuserve.com

IOWA: Des Moines: 3720 6th Ave. Zip: 50313. Tel: (515) 288-2970. E-mail: 104107.1412@compuserve.com

MASSACHUSETTS: Boston: 683 Washington St. Mailing address: P.O. Box 702. Zip: 02124. Tel: (617) 282-2254. E-mail: 103426.3430@compuserve.com

MICHIGAN: Detroit: 7414 Woodward Ave. Zip: 48202. Tel: (313) 875-0100. E-mail: 104127.3505@compuserve.com

MINNESOTA: St. Paul: 1569 Sherburne Ave. W., St. Paul. Zip: 55104. Tel: (651) 644-6325. E-mail: 103014.3261@compuserve.com

MISSOURI: St. Louis: Box 19166, 2910

Meramec Street. Zip 63118. Tel: (314) 924-2500. Compuserve: MilPath167@cs.com

NEW JERSEY: Newark: 87A Halsey. Mailing address: Riverfront Plaza, P.O. Box 200117. Zip: 07102-0302. Tel: (973) 643-3341. E-mail: 104216.2703@compuserve.com

NEW YORK: New York City: 59 4th Avenue (corner of Bergen) Brooklyn, NY Zip: 11217. Tel: (718) 399-7257. E-mail: 102064.2642@compuserve.com;

67 Charles St., Manhattan, NY. Zip: 10014. Tel: (212) 366-1973.

OHIO: Cleveland: 7535 Broadway. Zip: 44105. Tel: (216) 641-9405. E-mail: 103253.1111@compuserve.com

PENNSYLVANIA: Philadelphia: 1906 South St. Zip: 19146. Tel: (215) 546-8218. E-mail: 104502.1757@compuserve.com **Pittsburgh:** 1003 E. Carson St. Zip 15203. Tel: (412) 381-9785.

E-mail: 103122.720@compuserve.com

TEXAS: Houston: 6969 Gulf Freeway, Suite 380. Zip: 77087. Tel: (713) 847-0704. E-mail: 102527.2271@compuserve.com

WASHINGTON, D.C.: 3541 14th St. NW Zip: 20010. Tel: (202) 722-6221. E-mail: 75407.3345@compuserve.com

WASHINGTON: Seattle: 2533 16th Ave. South. Zip: 98144. Tel: (206) 323-1755. E-mail: 74461.2544@compuserve.com

AUSTRALIA

Sydney: 1st Flr, 176 Redfern St., Redfern NSW 2016. Mailing address: P.O. Box K879, Haymarket Post Office, NSW 1240. Tel: 02-9690-1533. E-mail: 106450.2216@compuserve.com

BRITAIN

London: 47 The Cut. Postal code: SE1 8LL. Tel: 0171-928-7993. E-mail:

BRITAIN

London

Defend Free Speech. Speaker: Antonis Partasis, found guilty of distributing *Pathfinder* literature and the *Militant* newspaper without a license. Fri., Nov. 19, 7 p.m. 47, The Cut. Donation: £2. Tel: 0171-928-7993.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

The Socialist Campaign in the General Elections. Speaker: Terry Coggan, Communist League candidate for Auckland Central in the general elections. Fri., Nov. 19, 7 p.m. 203 Karangahape Road. Donation: \$3. Tel: (9) 379-3075.

Christchurch

Support the Socialist Election Campaign. Speaker: Ruth Gray, Communist League candidate for Christchurch Central. Fri., Nov. 19, 7 p.m. Gloucester Arcade, 129 Gloucester St. Donation: \$3. Tel: 365 6055.

101515.2702@compuserve.com

Manchester: Unit 4, 60 Shudehill. Postal code: M4 4AA. Tel: 0161-839-1766. E-mail: 106462.327@compuserve.com

CANADA

Montreal: 4581 Saint-Denis. Postal code: H2J 2L4. Tel: (514) 284-7369. E-mail: 104614.2606@compuserve.com

Toronto: 851 Bloor St. West. Postal code: M6G 1M3. Tel: (416) 533-4324. E-mail: 103474.13@compuserve.com

Vancouver: 4321 Fraser. Postal code: V5V 4G4. Tel: (604) 872-8343. E-mail: 103430.1552@compuserve.com

FRANCE

Paris: Centre MBE 175, 23 rue Lecourbe. Postal code: 75015. Tel: (01) 47-26-58-21. E-mail: 73504.442@compuserve.com

ICELAND

Reykjavik: Klapparstig 26. Mailing address: P. Box 0233, IS 121 Reykjavik. Tel: 552 5502. E-mail: milph@mmedia.is

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland: La Gonda Arcade, 203 Karangahape Road. Postal address: P.O. Box 3025. Tel: (9) 379-3075. E-mail: 100035.3205@compuserve.com

Christchurch: Gloucester Arcade, 129 Gloucester St. Postal address: P.O. Box 22-530. Tel: (3) 365-6055. E-mail: 100250.1511@compuserve.com

SWEDEN

Stockholm: Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St Eriksplan). Postal code: S-113 42. Tel: (08) 31 69 33. E-mail: 100416.2362@compuserve.com

— CALENDAR —

NEWYORK

Manhattan

Art and Culture in Cuba Today. Discussion with Norberto Codina, editor of *La Gaceta de Cuba*, and other guests. Wed., Nov. 17, 1-5 p.m. Hunter College, Thomas Hunter Hall Room 105, at Lexington and 68th St. Sponsored by the Hostos Puerto Rican Club at Hunter College.

CANADA

Toronto

The Cuban Revolution & Youth in the World Today. Speakers: Niurka Duménigo, José Martí Pioneers Organization; Irisday Ramirez del Monte, Federation of University Students of Cuba. The Cuban youth leaders will be touring Canada November 14-28 to help build the 12th congress of the Continental Latin America and Caribbean Students Organization (OCLAE) to be held in Havana, Cuba, April 1-4, 2000. Tue. Nov. 16, 7:30 p.m. *Wetmore Dining Hall, New College, University of Toronto, Wilcocks and Spadina (South of Harbord).* For more information call: (416) 530-0051 or (905) 763-9941, Fax: (905) 763-8806 or cubanyouthtour@hotmail.com

A Young Socialist/Communist League Class Series on Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium. Class held every Sunday at 11 a.m. *Pathfinder Bookstore, 851 Bloor St. W.* For more information, call (416) 588-4324.

'Agrarian law defined Cuban revolution'

Meeting recalls fight to transform land ownership structure in Cuba

BY LUIS MADRID

HAVANA, Cuba — "The agrarian reform defined the Cuban revolution. But it also defined imperialism's hostility toward the revolution," said Bonifacio Hernández at a meeting held October 29 at Cuba's Institute of History. This gathering, which commemorated the First National Forum on the Agrarian Reform, was one of many events that have taken place across Cuba this year celebrating the 40th anniversary of the May 1959 Agrarian Reform Law.

Hernández, other panelists at the event — Oscar Pino Santos, Alfredo Menéndez, and César García del Pino — as well as several people in the audience, were among those who argued for, drafted, and waged the fight to implement the law four decades ago.

Immediately following Cuban prime minister Fidel Castro's May 17, 1959, speech at La Plata in the Sierra Maestra mountains, where he announced the agrarian reform and signed it into law, a commission was formed headed by Hernández. Working out of the Havana Province headquarters of the July 26 Movement, its task was to publicize the law and "organize Cuban working people to become knowledgeable of our economic reality, and therefore of the fairness of the agrarian reform." The commission was also charged with mobilizing peasants and workers throughout the country in support of the measure building towards a mass rally in Havana on July 26, the anniversary of the opening of the revolutionary struggle against the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in 1953.

Cadres of the Rebel Army and July 26 Movement were central in leading the implementation of the agrarian reform and other revolutionary measures at the time. Under Castro's leadership they had led toilers in Cuba through a revolutionary war that had culminated six months earlier in the overthrow of the dictatorship. Rebel Army captains Pablo Rivalta, Rafael Garrido, and José Ramón Cartaya were assigned to work with Hernández and others to lead the educational tasks as well as the mobilization efforts behind the agrarian reform. They involved in the work other political forces supporting the revolution, including cadres from the Popular Socialist Party and the Revolutionary Directorate.

The First National Forum on the Agrarian Reform became a vehicle to win broad political understanding and support for the law. Nightly, for two weeks in a nationally televised debate, leaders of the revolution joined issue with opponents of the decree, clarifying and advancing the raging debates taking place in the country as a whole. Simultaneously, under the guidance of the National Institute of Agrarian Reform (INRA), the first land seizures were taking place across the island, backed by the Rebel Army and organized groups of peasants and workers.

Commander of the Revolution Raúl Castro gave the opening address at the forum on June 28, 1959. "Our country's independence will never be complete if it doesn't rest on economic freedom," declared Castro. "And without agrarian reform there will be no economic independence in our country, nor will there be industrial development or social welfare either."

In his presentation to the forum on another evening, Rebel Army captain Antonio Núñez Jiménez, director of INRA, described the specifics of how the law was going to be applied. Each night, the forum



Above: Militant/Luis Madrid. Above, Bonifacio Hernández, left, and Oscar Pino Santos participate in event commemorating 40th anniversary of Cuba's first agrarian reform. Peasants played a crucial role in mobilizing to implement the revolutionary law that gave peasants the authority to take over the large plantations owned by capitalist landowners. At right, militiamen from Jovellanos, Matanzas, in the early years of the revolution.



opened with a presentation on a key aspect of the agrarian law. Individuals representing the full range of class interests then joined the debate. Fidel Castro gave the closing speech July 12.

Spokespersons from nearly 80 institutions took part in the proceedings, including 28 government entities and 17 organizations representing landowners, ranchers, and the chamber of commerce. Five peasants' associations, six trade unions, six political organizations speaking for a range of class interests, and guests from 18 countries participated. The debates were televised live. The sessions were scheduled to begin at 10 p.m. because the TV stations, which were still in private hands, only agreed to broadcast them following their prime-time programming.

Speaking at the seminar commemorating the 40th anniversary of the forum, Hernández explained that the revolutionary leadership had been deeply marked by the profound effect Law no. 3 of the Sierra Maestra had on both peasants and revolutionists during the war against the dictatorship.

He was referring to the law proclaimed Oct. 10, 1958, by the Rebel Army, granting tenant farmers, squatters, and sharecroppers ownership over the land they worked, as long as the total area was less than two *caballerías* (a *caballería* is about 33 acres). "Although we had no long-term strategy,

we knew what had to be done," he continued. "We knew the agrarian reform was fundamental to the revolution."

Speaking for the revolutionary leadership at the 1959 forum, Raúl Castro said they were confident of winning "the debate in defense of our program and our aims before the eyes of the entire people of Cuba and the world." He used his speech to denounce the land ownership structure in the island: "157,000 farms, or 99 percent of all Cuban farms, account for . . . 53 percent of the total area," he noted. In other words, ownership over half of the land rested in 1 percent of the proprietors. Only 30 percent of Cuba's working farmers owned the land they tilled.

Condemning U.S. imperialist interests, Castro continued, "Do they think they can keep on living in a world where their comfort, the luxuries some of them enjoy . . . depend on the backwardness, the misery and the insecurity of millions of men and women in Latin America who live in peonage in the land holdings of United Fruit; American Sugar; Francisco Sugar Co.; the Braden mines; in Mr. Clayton's cotton plantations; in the oil fields of the Standard Oil Co.?" Responding to U.S. media reports that U.S. sugar companies were now willing to put idle lands into production, Castro said, "Why did it take them 50 years to realize

this had to be done?"

"Mass pressure was such," recalled Pino Santos, one of the drafters of the law, "that virtually no one opposed it openly; just about everyone was 'for it.'" Some landowners, for instance, would pay lip service to the law's limit of 30 *caballerías*, and in the same breath argue for increasing the number of exceptions for holdings larger than 100 *caballerías* that were permitted.

The panelists recalled how landowners searched for loopholes and employed all kinds of delaying tactics. Some did not really believe the agrarian reform was going to be carried out; they were sure Washington would stop it. One of them told Menéndez, "I'm leaving for Miami, Alfredo. But I'll be back in three months." That was 40 years ago.

The most heated debates, the panelists explained, took place during discussions involving ranchers and sugarcane and tobacco growers. The forum simply reflected the intense discussion and sharpening class polarization taking place across the country, they said.

Throughout the month of June the first land seizures were carried out by the Rebel Army, by organized peasants, or both. These were accompanied by massive mobilizations throughout the island, under the leadership of the July 26 Movement: In Santa Clara 100,000 poured into the city for a rally addressed by Fidel Castro (see speech published in May 31, 1999 *Militant*);

75,000 came together in Matanzas to back the agrarian reform decree; 10,000 did so in Camagüey.

The momentum of the local rallies kept building as the July 26 celebrations approached. Led by Camilo Cienfuegos and other commanders of the revolution, 2,000 peasants rode into the capital on horseback. Their "Invading Column" — for whom the workers of Havana opened their homes — joined in a rally of more than 1 million people — one of the largest Havana had ever seen — in support of the measures being adopted by the revolutionary regime.

Under the dictatorship, "the administrator of a sugar cane mill would simply phone the local army headquarters, request a couple of soldiers, and have workers punished," recalled Menéndez.

"Today," said Raúl Castro to the 1959 forum, "the military commanders work for the benefit of the economy, and the peasants — identifying with the revolution — see to it that our skies and our coasts are being watched." Castro concluded by stressing the watchword peasants in Camagüey had embraced during their mobilizations: "Agrarian reform or death."

Mary-Alice Waters contributed to this article.

UN vote condemns U.S. embargo of Cuba

BY BRIANTAYLOR

For the eighth consecutive year the United Nations General Assembly voted overwhelmingly in favor of a resolution condemning the U.S. government's nearly 40-year-old embargo against Cuba. The

tally of the November 9 vote: 155 governments in favor, 2 opposed (Washington and Tel Aviv), and 8 abstaining. Affirmative votes by representatives of St. Vincent and Cameroon were not counted this year over a technicality.

Several of Washington's imperialist allies, who are also competitors, including a representative of the European Union, took the occasion to complain of the "extraterritorial" application of the U.S. embargo in explaining their votes for the resolution. Moves by the U.S. rulers to tighten the embargo over the last few years — particularly the so-called Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, often called the Helms-Burton law — have included penalties for companies based outside the United States that do business in Cuba.

While opposing Washington's attempt to dictate where they do business, the capitalist rulers in Europe, Canada, and the other imperialist countries share the U.S. government's undying hostility to workers and farmers holding power in Cuba. An Australian delegate, for example, declared that there's "no democracy in Cuba," but the embargo

isn't the way to change the system there.

U.S. representative Peter Burtleigh, during a brief intervention at the assembly, attempted to paint the embargo as a "bilateral issue" that makes no attempt to impose other nations' trade options. He stated that the sanctions were intended to pressure Havana to respect "human rights" and implement "democracy" on the island.

Ricardo Alarcón, president of Cuba's National Assembly, took the floor and responded by pointing out that Washington "backed to the very end" the repressive dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista. "Cubans," said Alarcón, "have had to suffer, survive, and develop in absolutely unjust and unjustifiable conditions imposed in a cold, calculated way" by U.S. rulers with the embargo since the 1959 revolution swept aside Batista and brought a government of workers and farmers to power.

Shortly before the General Assembly voted on the anti-embargo resolution, Alarcón announced a \$100-billion lawsuit against Washington "on account of the enormous damages caused to the people of Cuba by the blockade."

AVAILABLE FROM PATHFINDER

The Second Declaration of Havana



The Second Declaration of Havana

In 1962, as the example of Cuba's socialist revolution spread throughout the Americas, the workers and farmers of Cuba issued their uncompromising call for a continent-wide revolutionary struggle. Also available in Spanish, French, and Greek. \$4.50

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 8

Workers' enemy is Washington

The U.S. rulers' preparations for coming wars will stamp their involvement in the meeting of the World Trade Organization (WTO) in Seattle starting November 30. The protests outside, with their theme of defending the "sovereignty" of Washington against the WTO, provide ammunition to these war preparations. The imperialists need to win working people to identify with the "nation" to go to war, and that is the service the protest leaders provide.

Socialist workers and youth have an obligation to intervene energetically in the political discussions that the Seattle events are stirring up. This is an opportunity to explain, in sharp opposition to petty-bourgeois misleaders of all stripes, the real character of U.S. imperialism and the danger of working people being drawn into identification with it. Far from standing above Washington and the other capitalist powers, the WTO is a tool of their exploitative policies. That is why class-conscious workers oppose the WTO, and call for its abolition.

The anti-WTO actions, cloaked in concern over "sweatshops," child labor, and environmental destruction, in reality promote protectionism and economic nationalism. They lead workers toward the America First politics of the ultraright.

Clearly taking on these questions is the only way to find those individuals who are repelled by the injustices of capitalism and are open to a scientific, Marxist view of the big class questions tied up in these events.

The Clinton government's pursuit of a first-strike nuclear missile strategy, aimed primarily against the Chinese and Russian workers states, registers the shift in imperialist policy toward greater use of military might against these countries. This shift is rooted in the failure of the capitalists to reintroduce the market system in Russia, China, and the other workers states, and thereby open up new fields for capitalist expansion. That route of temporarily arresting the decline of their system has proved to be closed.

Thomas Friedman, a senior columnist for the liberal *New York Times*, gave a sense of this change in a major article in a March issue of the newspaper's weekly magazine, decorated with a clenched fist colored red, white, and blue. "We Americans are ... the prophets of the free market and the high priests of high tech," he wrote. But "the hidden hand of

the market will never work without a hidden fist ... called the United States Army, Air Force, Navy and Marine Corps."

The rulers are acting on a conviction that greater armed strength is necessary to maintain U.S. dominance among its imperialist rivals in Japan and Europe, to defend their system of exploitation of the Third World, and to have a shot at overturning the nationalized economies in the workers states.

Socialist workers and Young Socialists will be in the streets of Seattle during the WTO meeting, selling *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*. The book is the single best source of answers to the questions posed in the debate over the WTO. It draws on experiences that the international working class vanguard has accumulated in more than 150 years of struggles. In its pages, working people will find a scientific explanation for the disorder that many sense today.

The wars and social dislocations, unemployment, the destitution that whole layers of the population have to endure, the hammer blows directed at the living conditions of the working people in the third world, the degradation of the environment — these injustices are engendered and deepened by imperialism in decline. This disorder is rooted not in the WTO or in "global corporations," but in the economic crisis of the capitalist system as a whole, which drives the bosses to greater competition with each other and to attempt to grind more profits out of the labor of the toilers around the world. The enemy is not some independent WTO, but Washington.

Capitalism's World Disorder describes the growing resistance of working people to capitalist brutality that points the way forward. It argues why the labor movement needs to break in practice and theory from the politics of pro-imperialist nationalism.

Ultrarightist Patrick Buchanan will be in Seattle seeking to recruit cadres to his incipient fascist movement. Socialist workers and Young Socialists will be there too, seeking to recruit to the internationalist, working-class program and organizations that are essential to forge a leadership for the class struggles that are coming, one that can lead the struggle to overturn capitalist rule and bring a government of workers and farmers to power.

U.S. gov't moves against China

Continued from Page 8

the U.S. forces in the Pacific at the time, has been nominated as the next Ambassador to China.

In 1997 the faded colonial power of United Kingdom returned sovereignty of Hong Kong to China. On December 19 the Portuguese government will formally cede its 442-year colonial rule of the Chinese port city of Macao. These victories have encouraged Beijing to press for the reintegration of Taiwan.

For the imperialists the balance sheet of a decade of "neoliberalism" and "globalization" in relation to China is not positive. China remains a workers state with a nationalized economy in which central planning plays a key role. And Beijing does not approach the coming trade, diplomatic, or military confrontations with Washington from a position of weakness. These demonstrated facts are behind Washington's shift towards military pressure.

Chauvinist anti-WTO protests planned

This shift will provide a potent backdrop to the trade talks that Charlene Barshefsky and others will hold in Beijing, and the deliberations of the World Trade Organization in Seattle.

A range of groups, including union officials, environmental groups, and other liberal and radical middle-class forces, are planning to protest outside the Seattle conference. The publicity for these actions strikes strongly nationalist themes.

Some of the protesters will specifically target China. Among these will be the "Tibetan Rights Campaign,"

which opposes China's application for WTO membership. Their demand for a "free Tibet" provides Washington, which falsely poses as a champion of human rights in Tibet, with an opportunity to attack the Chinese revolution. This fits in with their goal of overthrowing the workers states and restoring imperialist domination of the territory, including Tibet.

Some AFL-CIO forces—primarily among those who style themselves as its "progressive" wing—have called a march on November 30, calling for incorporation of "workers rights" into the WTO. This demand echoes the demagogic U.S. officials sometimes use to demand governments of semicolonial countries bow to their trade demands. It effectively advocates protectionist measures against Third World countries, as well as Washington's imperialist rivals. Many top AFL-CIO officials are hesitant about the rally, however, worried it could embarrass Democratic presidential candidate Albert Gore, whom the labor federation endorsed at its October convention.

Sensing an opportunity for recruitment to his forces, the fascist-minded politician Patrick Buchanan urged his "Buchanan Brigades" to be in Seattle with their union jackets. Buchanan's courting of a layer of union officials, especially Teamsters head James Hoffa, is grounded in a common economic nationalism — defending "American sovereignty" and "American jobs."

Buchanan's politics are deeply hostile to the real struggles of unions and the international solidarity of the working class. Actions like the protests in Seattle put wind in the sails of his reactionary campaign.

Farmers face hurricane aftermath

Continued from Page 7

the many different illnesses," he explained.

Farm workers have also been seriously affected. Many of them face two months without work and are not eligible to receive unemployment benefits. Miami Dade County and United Way contributed \$250,000 in emergency aid. "This is not enough," explained Francisco Garza, a leader of the Farm workers Association of Florida. "Around 8,000 families are in this same situation." The aid comes in the form of food donations and checks of up to \$500 per month per family to pay rent and utility bills. According to the *Miami Herald*, the quota of 1,000 cases was met within days.

The *Herald* reported that on some days aid workers have turned away dozens of farm workers because of lack of funds. One bus load of Haitian laborers was turned away recently. When Hurricane Irene hit South Florida, it was the beginning of the winter season when most mi-

grant laborers come to the area for employment. Seventy percent of the green beans sold in the United States are grown in South Florida.

Garza said a rumor circulated that Red Cross workers were questioning people's immigration status, so "people stayed home and we had to go tell them there was no danger they would be deported." Government funds are only available to documented workers, but aid from private agencies like the Red Cross can be given to anyone.

As the hurricane was destroying South Florida's crops, many farm workers drove 20 hours up to Washington, D.C., and back to join a protest of 5,000 people demanding a halt to deportation and status for all immigrants.

Eric Simpson is a member of Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees Local 415. Rollande Girard is a member of International Association of Machinists Local 1126.

Editor of noted Cuban cultural magazine speaks in Chicago

BY BETSEY STONE

Chicago — Cuban poet Noberto Codina began a series of U.S. speaking engagements in early November as part of an exchange between the Center for Latino Research at DePaul University here and the Union of Writers and Artists of Cuba (UNEAC). Codina, who has been addressing campus audiences on the subject of art and culture in Cuba today, is the editor of *La Gaceta de Cuba*, the Caribbean nation's foremost cultural magazine, published by UNEAC.

Codina spoke before a Spanish literature class at DePaul November 9 and will speak at a public meeting at DePaul on November 16. The Havana Gallery, a new center of contemporary Cuban art in Chicago, will host a reception and poetry reading for him on November 13. He has also been invited to speak at Olivet College and Wayne State University in Michigan.

"The most important cultural event in the revolution was the campaign for literacy," he said, referring to the effort in the early years of the Cuban revolution that virtually wiped out illiteracy there. By wielding state power, Cuban working people have been able to dramatically broaden access to culture among the entire population.

Codina's arrival here coincided with the appearance of two well-known Cuban musical groups — the Buena Vista Social Club and Irakere. Codina, who attended the concerts, discussed both the importance and the challenges of such cultural exchanges at a reception hosted by the Chicago Pathfinder bookstore on November 7.

For the past 40 years, the U.S. government has imposed a tight economic embargo and travel ban on revolutionary Cuba. It has barred many Cubans from visiting this country, especially those who support the revolution. Partly because of trying to maintain the appearance not opposing the "free flow of ideas" and academic exchanges, however, Washington has allowed numerous Cuban artists and academics to visit in recent years.

Codina said musicians he spoke to from Irakere told him they had enjoyed visits to Chicago area schools where they taught music classes and discussed Cuban music.

Visits by musical groups from the island will give people in the United States a glimpse of "the high quality and professionalism" of Cuban artists today, he said, including musicians from the very young to the very old.

On the other hand, there are also "risks and challenges" posed by the social dimensions of such cultural exchanges, he said. This question has been discussed at gatherings of the Union of Artists and Writers of Cuba (UNEAC).

At its national congress in November 1998, writers and artists active in UNEAC discussed how to help defend the cultural gains of the Cuban people in face of the pressures of the capitalist market. These pressures, which reinforce bourgeois ideas and values, have led to social differentiation.

Since the collapse in favorable trade relations with the Soviet bloc countries a decade ago, Cuba has had to obtain hard currency in order to purchase needed goods on the world market. Many Cuban musical groups now have access to dollars through the tourist trade or travel abroad, giving them relatively high incomes.

Codina pointed out that anything that is affected by the laws of the capitalist market is open to corruption. What is needed is an active response to combat these negative effects and reinforce the social and political values of the revolution.

"Artists have always had to struggle to maintain their principles" in revolutionary Cuba, he said.

He described steps taken to counteract what UNEAC has termed the increased "dollarization" of culture and the undermining of the revolution's values of human solidarity and equality. Cuba's revolutionary leadership has encouraged artists to use some of their earnings from concerts and sales of art as a contribution to support the country's free public schools of art, music and dance, as well as the publication of literature and poetry.

Codina discussed what a UNEAC congress resolution called the "Americanization" and "banalization" of culture. Referring to the influence of Hollywood in the world, he commented, "It's a form of censorship when 95 percent of the films come from one country."

"This problem can't be solved by decrees," he added. "No one person can decide what is superficial or not." He criticized censorship in countries where capitalism has been overthrown when government officials take it upon themselves to decide what is "bad" art and not to be shown, pointing to Eastern Europe where this was "taken to extremes." In contrast, the policy of the Cuban revolution has been to foster a wide variety of art and other cultural expressions.

Answering a question about the recent trip to Cuba by Illinois Gov. George Ryan, who headed a large delegation of businessmen, professionals and media, he commented that the visit created a positive impression in Cuba because it indicated opposition among some forces in the United States to Washington's embargo.

But he said he was not optimistic that the U.S. government would end its embargo soon. "All 52 governors could go to Cuba, and it would not change the policy," he said. "Bigger interests are at stake, and the legal system is structured to support those interests."

Teamsters strikers picket offices of Basic Vegetable

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

We invite you to contribute short items to this column as a way for other fighting workers around the

gence of the bosses. The company is refusing to negotiate with the workers and has insisted that the 300 scabs now working inside the plant will permanently replace the Teamster members on strike.

Approximately 750 workers are on strike against this major pro-

ON THE PICKET LINE

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.

SAN FRANCISCO — One hundred fifty striking members of Teamsters Local 890 and their supporters took to the streets of downtown San Francisco November 4 for a spirited noontime picket line. The action took place outside the offices of William and George Hume, the board chairman and president, respectively, of the company that owns and controls Basic Vegetable Products, where the Teamsters have been on strike since July 7.

Some 60 strikers made the three-hour trip from King City, where the Basic Vegetable plant is located, to protest the continuing intransi-

ducer of onion and garlic powder. The main issues in the strike are the bosses' demands for a three-year wage freeze, the right to contract out jobs, a reduction of the workweek to 37.5 hours for half of the workforce, new rules making it easier for supervisors to do bargaining-unit work, two-tier wages, an increase in co-payment for health insurance, and an elimination of the existing pension plan in exchange for a 401k plan at one-third the company contribution level.

The strikers called the San Francisco action to help build a march and rally that has been called in King City, in the Salinas Valley, for November 14. They have been reaching out to other unions throughout the Bay Area to attend the event in King City.

Chanting "Si se puede!" (Yes we can!) and "Teamster, si! Basic, no!" the strikers were joined by members of Teamsters Local 78, International Longshoremen's and Ware-



Militant/Nat London

Workers at Epeda, which produces mattresses and related material, march October 23 in Paris suburb to demand halt to plant closures. Demonstrators wore costumes made of mattress material.

housemen's Union, International Association of Machinists, United Transportation Union, Service Employees International Union, and United Auto Workers. Members of the United Steelworkers of America locked out at Kaiser Aluminum plants in Washington, Ohio, and Louisiana, as well as Steelworkers on strike at Colorado Fuel and Iron in Pueblo, Colorado, also participated. Groups of workers from both fights are now in San Francisco building solidarity for their fights.

The picketers handed out flyers explaining the strike to interested passersby. Several members of the union went into the building to meet

with company president George Hume, but were told he was not there. They reported that the mechanics and electricians inside the building put down their tools and stopped working when they found out about the picket line.

Mattress workers fight plant closures in France

SAINT QUENTIN EN YVELINES, France — Three hundred striking workers and supporters from Epeda mattress factories in La Charité and Mer in the center of France demonstrated in this Paris suburb October 28, as company offi-

cial met with union representatives, protesting the projected closing of the two plants. The jobs of 430 workers are on the line.

Local actions against the closings since they were announced in early September, along with the announcement of 7,500 job losses for Michelin workers over the next three years, have helped fuel recent protests in France against layoffs.

Alain Mignot, a veteran Epeda worker and member of the General Confederation of Labor from Mer, told the *Militant* that in early September 2,000 workers had demonstrated against the Epeda plant closing there. Mer has a population of 6,000 people. Mignot explained that local farmers had participated in donating to the Epeda workers' fight.

Epeda claims the decline of the market for spring mattresses will lead to losses of 51 million francs (\$8.2 million) in 1999. Slumberland, which owns Epeda, claims it has an excess capacity of 20 to 25 percent in France and needs to recenter its production in two other sites.

The protests led to a September 30 decision by labor ministry officials to reject the first restructuring plan proposed by Epeda, forcing it to come up with a second plan and go through a series of legally required meetings with union representatives, such as the one held October 28. This has given workers more time to reach out and broaden support for their fight.

According to Alain Mignot, 226 of the 296 employees in Mer, half of whom are women, made the two-hour bus trip to demonstrate October 28, along with many workers from La Charité. Workers in Mer are planning a large public debate November 17, inviting local political forces to speak out on the plant closings. They are also organizing an "open house" visit of the factory for November 28 to which they hope to attract 10,000 people.

Ellen Berman, a member of the United Transportation Union in San Francisco, and Derek Jeffers in Paris contributed to this column

Delta Air Lines workers step up union drive

Continued from front page

said the instructors' vote "was a huge win." He added that the election results should help the organizing campaigns of ramp workers, flight attendants, and mechanics. The TWU expects to file a petition by the end of the year for an election among some 10,000 ramp workers.

A 1997 bid for an election among ramp workers failed when federal labor officials ruled that the union lacked the required signatures. Clerical staff had worked overtime to match signature cards requesting the

union election with signatures on original employment applications. Any signature that did not match exactly was challenged.

The TWU and AFA, both of which have offices in Atlanta, are now collecting election request cards, holding open houses, and passing out leaflets and videos to Delta workers in Atlanta and across the country.

At Delta's board meeting held October 28 in Boston, the company's board of directors named Leo Mullin chairman, adding to his titles of president and chief executive. One of the

50 pilots who attended the meeting asked Mullin to verify or dispute estimates that Delta has spent \$2.5 million on consultants to defeat the organizing drives. Mullin acknowledged the use of consultants, but claimed ignorance on how much had been spent. He repeated his oft-stated contention that further unionization at Delta would hurt "employee relations" and drive up costs.

To gain an election, a union has to collect signed cards over a 12-month period from at least 35 percent of the targeted work group. The cards are submitted to the National Mediation Board, which determines the size of the eligible work group and whether the union has the needed support. If an election is approved, more than half the eligible workers must cast "yes" votes for the union to be certified.

Opinions are divided among workers at Atlanta's sprawling airport. A ramp worker named Dave, who did not want to give his last name, told the *Militant*, "I have been working for Delta for 25 years and I never thought we needed a union. Now I think not only do we need a union, but it is just a matter of time."

According to the *Atlanta Journal Constitution*, Brian Vaughn, a volun-

teer organizer for the TWU and a Delta ramp worker for 12 years, said, "What bothers me is the lack of a contract to protect us when the top guys decide to outsource jobs or cut benefits."

One of the biggest issues is the lack of a contract. Workers are afraid that the benefits and wages they have today could be taken away tomorrow. They notice the fact that Delta posted a \$1.1 billion profit for its fiscal year that ended June 30, and gave Mullin a multimillion-dollar bonus, but recently cut the wage scale for new customer service agents. Other workers are opposed to the union or are not sure that a union is the answer. Delta issues leaflets opposing the union's efforts, and according to union officials the company has intimidated and hindered efforts to get out union information. "We've had cases where management has had all the furniture removed from where we have set up in the lounges or sent a bunch of supervisors to hang out in the lounge, which obviously keeps a lot of people away from our table," said AFA organizer David Borer.

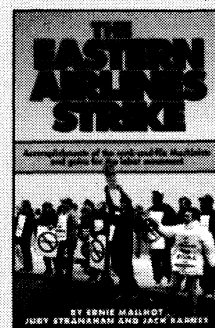
Despite the resistance by the company, many workers are optimistic that the year 2000 will bring unionization to Delta workers.

from Pathfinder

The Eastern Airlines Strike

Accomplishments of the Rank-and-File Machinists and Gains for the Labor Movement

Ernie Mailhot, Judy Stranahan, and Jack Barnes
The story of the 686-day strike in which a rank-and-file resistance by Machinists prevented Eastern's union-busting onslaught from becoming the road to a profitable nonunion airline. \$9.95



Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 8, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690. Fax: (212) 727-0150.

LETTERS

End mandatory sentencing

The editorial demanding the freedom of Mumia Abu-Jamal and abolition of the death penalty [in the November 1 *Militant*] points out how more and more laws have been passed that ultimately restrict democratic rights. I don't think this can be overstated. And yet there should also be demands for an end to mandatory sentencing and life without parole — death by incarceration.

Even if the death penalty were to be abolished, how many hundreds of thousands of people, mostly Blacks, will still be forced to die in prison? Even more subtle is the fact that many people cannot get jobs or hous-

ing because they have been arrested for misdemeanors or without cause at all — many are victims of the so-called War on Drugs. A criminal background record can mean a death sentence. These are the people who will die on the streets, again, mostly young Blacks.

As the editors point out, this is not only a race question. It is no accident that despite crime rates dropping, the prison population continues to escalate; and despite so-called record profits on Wall Street, layoffs continue and low-wage jobs dominate our "record employment." As the most oppressed layers of society will lead in the struggle to liberation, this

fight for Mumia and against laws that take away democratic rights is in the interest of the majority.

P.K.
Inver Grove, Minnesota

Put book ads on website

I think the new *Militant* website is a wonderful resource but I was wondering if it couldn't also be used to help in the campaign to broaden out the availability of Pathfinder books. The printed paper regularly features ads of different Pathfinder books that relate to the political topics in the articles. If there is any way to also include similar ads on the website it

would introduce Pathfinder to many more fighters.

Kari Sachs
Newark New Jersey

Can't trust those cops

The *Seattle Times* ran this story with the following opening lines: "Key documents compiled by a citizen panel that looked into the Seattle Police Department's internal-review process have disappeared just before they were to be made public."

"The documents disappeared after Mayor Paul Schell's office handed them over to police—breaking a

promise by the citizen panel to the people it interviewed that their statements would be confidential."

So much for confidence and trust in government and the police.
J.K.

Seattle, Washington

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.

Natives press for fishing rights, wage fight for self-determination in Canada

BY MICHEL DUGRÉ
AND GRANT HARGRAVE

BURNT CHURCH, New Brunswick — Native peoples are taking advantage of a September 17 Supreme Court ruling to assert their rights across Canada. The Supreme Court ruled that Natives have the right to sell fish caught outside the legal fishing season. The ruling is based on a 1760 treaty between the British government and Mi'kmaq, Maliseet, and Passamaquoddy peoples, covering practically the entire Atlantic coast of Canada. It reflects the growing struggles by Natives in Canada over the last decade.

In the days following the ruling Natives set up lobster traps, even though it was not fishing season, along the coast of the Atlantic provinces of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia. "This is a question of establishing in life our right to fish," said Clarke Dedam from the Burnt Church Mi'kmaq community.

Natives argue that the ruling applies to other sectors of their activities as well. In mid-October, Mi'kmaqs from Big Cove, some 100 miles southwest of Burnt Church, cut logs from Crown (publicly owned) land and transported them to a saw mill in a widely publicized demonstration to assert their rights. The New Brunswick government seized the wood, arguing the operation was illegal. Provincial authorities warned saw mills not to accept logs unless the timber was cut by a licensed logging enterprise, thus excluding Natives.

On October 21, Mi'kmaqs succeeded in getting the Federal Court of Appeal to halt a multibillion dollar natural-gas project scheduled to be functioning by the end of November. Bernd Christmas, lawyer for the Nova Scotia Mi'kmaqs, said Natives are not willing to let the consortium pump gas from Sable Island, off Nova Scotia, until the socioeconomic impact of the project on Native people is dealt with.

On the West Coast, five Vancouver Island native bands stated their intention to open an unauthorized salmon fishery, citing the Supreme Court ruling.

Government attacks Natives' rights

These mobilizations, however, are running up against the opposition of the Canadian government. Preston Manning, leader of the right-wing Reform Party, the main opposition party in the federal government in Ottawa, said the Supreme Court was wrong to grant fishing rights to Natives. He denounced the ruling as being "race based," and posed as a defender of the environment, as cover to his racist stance. "I don't think the court took into account the environmental consequences at all," Manning declared.

While recognizing that the Natives had the right to sell their fish all year round, the Supreme Court itself contradicted this first part of its ruling by giving Ottawa power to unilaterally limit Natives' fishing to allow them a "moderate living." The *Toronto Globe and Mail* underlined the fact that Ottawa's power "does not presume [Natives']

agreement."

Natives got an idea of what Ottawa thinks a "moderate living" is for a Native when Canada Fisheries minister Herb Dhaliwal ruled that the Mi'kmaqs from Burnt Church would be limited to 600 lobster traps among 1,450 people. In the same area, commercial fishermen are allowed 325 traps each. On October 22, Ottawa's Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) seized Natives' lobster traps, claiming that they exceeded the limit of 600.

Ottawa itself presided over the exclusion of Natives from the lobster industry, through the establishment of a system of licenses in



Top, residents at the Burnt Church reserve demonstrate in support of Native peoples' fishing rights October 10. Above, Mi'kmaq lobster fishermen near Burnt Church, New Brunswick.

the 1970s. Natives were prevented from buying these licenses because they could not afford to buy large, technologically advanced boats to qualify for them. Non-Native fishermen could get loans from provincial governments. Native fishermen were told they didn't qualify because they were a federal responsibility under the Canadian Indian Act.

Since the 1970s no new licenses have been issued. The only way to get a license today is to buy one from a retiring fisherman. These licenses are now worth between Can\$50,000 and as much as Can\$250,000 (Can \$1=US\$0.67).

In the early 1990s, the Supreme Court ruled Natives had the right to fish for food and ceremonial purposes as long as they didn't sell their catch. The Mi'kmaqs from Burnt Church were allowed 375,000 pounds of lobster. "But what we need is an income, a job," said Clifford Larry, a Mi'kmaq fisherman from Burnt Church. "We proposed to the Canadian government to reduce the amount of lobster we were allowed for food to 125,000 pounds in exchange for commercial licenses. The DFO promised us 10 commercial licenses. In the end we got only five for the whole community."



Peter John Levi, a 61-year-old Mi'kmaq from Big Cove, explained how he was prevented from fishing. "For decades, my salmon fishing nets were regularly stolen," said Levi. "It took me some time before I finally discovered that the RCMP [Royal Canadian Mounted Police] was stealing my fishing nets. They never charged me. All they wanted was to prevent me from fishing." Levi was in Burnt Church to support local Native fishers.

Their exclusion from fishing and working the forests is one of the reasons Natives earn much less on average than whites. Their life expectancy is shorter, infantile mortality much higher; illiteracy is far more than double. In Burnt Church, for example, 90 percent of the population lives on social welfare.

"We cannot give up, now that some things are coming our way," said Peter John Levi. "If we negotiate [with Ottawa] without fighting, we will offer them our weakness."

This sentiment is particularly strong in Burnt Church, one of the two Native communities that rejected a temporary moratorium on fishing accepted by representatives of 35 Native communities after the Supreme Court ruling.

Reaching out to non-Native fishermen

On October 22 the Acadia First Nation and Nova Scotia commercial fishermen came to an agreement that Native fishermen will participate in the winter lobster fishing season beginning at the end of November. The settlement was reached behind Ottawa's back. Natives and commercial fishermen said they have two things in common: their interest in preserving the resources and their refusal to work with Ottawa.

Prior to this agreement, a series of clashes had taken place between Natives and fishermen. On October 3, some 150 non-Native fishermen went on a rampage, destroying more than 2,000 Native lobster traps in Burnt Church. This well-organized action took place in front of RCMP officers and several Coast Guard boats, while Native fishermen were standing on the wharf, outnumbered and unable to intervene.

The Department of Fisheries "could have

prevented this," noted Ray Kimball, a Mi'kmaq from Burnt Church.

Later that night, three young Natives were savagely attacked by a white fisherman with a baseball bat.

Lobster fishers are small exploited producers. While licensed fishermen need one or two other persons on their boats during the fishing, usually these are members of their family. Fishermen hope that as long as there are no new licenses issued and the fishery is profitable, they will be able to sell their license at the end of their active life for more than they paid for it. These prospects hinge on restricting access to commercial lobster fishing. It is in this context that some of them see the emergence of Native fishermen as a threat.

In a statement released October 4, the day after the rampage off Burnt Church, the Maritime Fishermen's Union (MFU) said, "Licensed fishermen were forced to disable lobster traps," because "the Government of Canada...drove the fishermen into the position of having to defend their own livelihood." The statement asserted, "We do not accept that such treaty rights allows for unlimited and unregulated Native fishing."

Fisheries minister Dhaliwal acknowledged that what Natives were catching was less than 1 percent of the overall harvest.

The MFU is not opposed to sharing the lobster fishery with Native fishermen. "Natives are not represented in the commercial fishery, there is some catching up to do," said Maurice Thériault from the MFU office in Shédiac, New Brunswick.

"The vast majority of our own members consider themselves fortunate if they make a 'moderate living,'" said the MFU statement. "We expect any Micmac people interested in earning a moderate livelihood from fishing will be able to do so in the commercial fisheries as they are conducted presently."

Natives and commercial fishermen are severely affected by the economic crisis hitting Canada's Atlantic Coast particularly hard. The region has been hit by the closing down of the east coast cod fishery due to overfishing by big fish companies. Federal government cutbacks on unemployment insurance led to big demonstrations by workers in northern New Brunswick and the adjoining Gaspé region of Quebec in the mid-1990s. Among the main targets of these cuts were workers relying on seasonal jobs, such as fishermen.

Acadians, a French-speaking oppressed nationality, played a big role in these mobilizations. They also successfully fought against attempts by the provincial government to shut down some of their schools. Many of the non-Native fishermen from Northern New Brunswick are Acadians. "We don't hold Acadians as a whole responsible for the October 3 attack against us," said Clifford Larry, from Burnt Church. "In fact Acadians and Natives have had good relations in the past."

The majority of the 300-plus workers at the Néguaic Seafood fish processing plant, only few minutes from Burnt Church, earn the equivalent of US\$4 an hour. Because of the lack of other jobs, some workers travel one hour each way to work there even though they rarely work 40 hours a week.

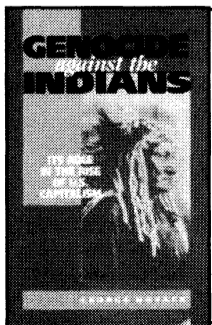
This struggle by Natives is an example of the kind of fight that they have put up in the past that led to the Supreme Court ruling. These struggles also break the isolation of Natives from other fighters and win support for the justice of their demands for access to jobs, for the settlement of land claims, and for Native self-government.

Michel Dugré is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Textile and Industrial Employees and Grant Hargrave, of the International Association of Machinists. Both are from Montreal.

GENOCIDE AGAINST THE INDIANS

George Novack

PATHFINDER



Why did the leaders of the Europeans who settled in North America try to exterminate the peoples already living there? How was the campaign of genocide against the Indians linked to the expansion of capitalism in the United States? Noted Marxist George Novack answers these questions. \$4.00

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 8, or write Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014. Tel: (212) 741-0690. Fax: (212) 727-0150. When ordering by mail, please include \$3 to cover shipping and handling.