

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Rail safety 'too expensive' for bosses to implement

— PAGE 11

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 60 NO. 46 DECEMBER 23, 1996

Palestinians protest Tel Aviv's settlements

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

In a provocative move, an Israeli planning commission announced December 10 that it had approved the construction of a housing development for Jews in Ras el-Amud, a Palestinian neighborhood in East Jerusalem. "This is a clear invitation to conflict, friction, and violence, and it is entirely irresponsible," declared Hanan Ashrawi, the Palestinian minister of higher education and a representative of Jerusalem in the Palestinian legislative council.

The regime of President Benjamin Netanyahu has stepped up the expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank as well, where the Palestine Authority has limited control. In mid-November, Israeli defense minister Yitzhak Mordechai approved the construction of 1,100 new housing units for Israeli settlers in Immanuel, eight miles southwest of the Palestinian city of Nablus.

Talks have deadlocked over the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Hebron, West Bank. Under the accords between Tel Aviv and the Palestine Liberation Organization, Israeli forces were supposed to have pulled out of that city last March. Now Netanyahu is insisting that the Israeli Army have the "right" to re-enter Palestinian-controlled areas of Hebron at will.

Reflecting the resistance mounting in that region, 300 Palestinian students occupied Hebron University December 9, saying they

Continued on Page 12

Young Socialists call convention in Atlanta

BY TOM ALTER

ST. PAUL, Minnesota — The Young Socialists National Committee issued a call for a National Convention of the organization at a hard-working leadership conference held here December 7-8. The convention is projected to take place the last weekend of March in Atlanta, Georgia.

YS National Committee members, elected representatives from chapters where there is not a NC member, and representatives from the Socialist Workers Party and the YS in Canada took part in the meeting. Participants evaluated the recent recruitment drive, during which 70 young fighters joined the YS ranks, and took some big steps toward transforming the organizational principles of the communist youth group.

This meeting came one week after four regional socialist educational conferences that analyzed the political situation today and the kind of communist organizations that must be forged to be capable of leading workers and their allies in struggle to take state power. (See article on page 8.)

Discussion at the YS National Committee meeting centered on two major reports: "Propaganda as the axis of the YS," given by Verónica Poses and "Organizing the Young Socialists," presented by Jack Willey.

"The most important political question before the national leadership is organizing

Continued on Page 6

Clinton floats plan to privatize Social Security

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

As the U.S. rulers probe to deepen their assault on entitlements, the big-business news media floated three plans to privatize Social Security benefits. The plans had been debated by a bipartisan Advisory Council on Social Security appointed by Donna Shalala, secretary of Health and Human Services, in 1994, to study ways to gut Social Security benefits. The advisory council is supposed to present its official report later in December. All three schemes it suggests include cutting retirement payments and investing some portion of Social Security funds in stocks and equities.

The plans were publicized less than one week after a Congress-appointed commis-

Protest assault on Social Security!

— editorial, page 14

sion issued a December 4 report claiming the government's consumer price index (CPI) has overstated inflation by 1.1 percent for at least a decade. Several of Clinton administration officials have already declared their support for making a corresponding "adjustment" lowering cost-of-living raises in Social Security and other entitlements.

The Social Security Act of 1935 codified gains won by the labor movement as it pressed for social guarantees offering some measure of lifelong protection to the working class as a whole. These gains were extended through the continued labor struggles in the 1930s, and the civil rights battles of the 1950s and '60s. Social Security includes pensions for those over 65, as well as benefits for disabled workers and their dependents.

UK gov't stalls, fearing Ireland talks

MARCELLA FITZGERALD AND CAROLINE BELLAMY

LONDON — At the end of November it emerged that Sinn Féin and the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) in Ireland had placed a new initiative — referred to as the Hume/Adams proposals — before the British government six weeks earlier and had not received a response.

The proposals by Sinn Féin president Gerry Adams and SDLP leader John Hume were that a new Irish Republican Army (IRA) cease-fire could be declared if three conditions were met. These were:

- speedy entry for Sinn Féin, the leading party opposing British rule in northern Ireland, into all-party talks, with "an indicative time frame" of six months for a settlement to be achieved;
- putting the issue of giving up weapons to one side; and
- for the UK government to demonstrate its intention to have real negotiations through measures such as the early release of political prisoners.

After stalling for so long, Prime Minister John Major was forced to respond after Sinn Féin leader Martin McGuinness made the proposals public at a Mid-Ulster Sinn Féin Conference of 300 in Athboy in the Irish Republic.

Major announced that his government had rejected the proposals in a letter sent to



Militant/Eric Simpson

Unionists at 1981 Solidarity Day rally in Washington, D.C. Bipartisan drive to slash Social Security is part of the employing class's offensive against labor.

While the 13 members of the Advisory Committee on Social Security expressed differences, the majority agreed that retirees pay should pay taxes on Social Security benefits and the annual cost-of-living adjustment in the benefits should be reduced to reflect any "corrections" made to the CPI by the Labor Department.

Five members of the panel, led by Sylvester Schieber, vice president of the benefits consulting firm Watson Wyatt Worldwide, are pressing for the deepest assault to Social Security entitlements. Their plan calls for a two-tier system that would privatize a large portion of the system. Under this scheme guaranteed benefits would drop to \$410 a month for all retirees, from a current average of \$724. Each worker would be required to take 40 percent of their current Social Security payroll taxes to invest

in "private retirement accounts." These retirement accounts would supposedly replace the balance of Social Security benefits, with each worker's future individually tied to the fluctuations of the stock and bond markets.

Advisory council chairman Robert Gramlich and one other council member are advocating a plan that would establish mandatory individual savings accounts. Gramlich, a professor of economics at the University of Michigan, called for imposing an additional 1.6 percent tax on workers' wages, which would be invested in mutual funds and other private retirement plans, administered by the government.

Six members of Clinton's advisory council are presenting a third scheme. Their proposal involves cutting benefits by 3 percent, increase income tax on the benefits work-

Continued on Page 12



An Phoblacht/Republican News

Protesters demand repatriation of Irish political prisoners held in British jails

go-between Hume.

The government was slow to make a public statement rejecting the proposals outright. They also made the rejection in the face of the public disagreement of the Irish government, which issued a statement calling on Major to accept the proposals.

Writing in the *Sunday Business Post* December 1, reporter Tom Gurk ascribed London's lack of interest in entering into negotiations with Sinn Féin to "the inevi-

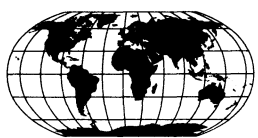
table change in the status quo which will follow."

Westminster has made no proposals of their own; instead they make apparently contradictory moves to fend off different pressures.

For six weeks British officials told SDLP leader Hume that they were considering the Hume/Adams proposals, while at the same time inviting pro-British paramilitary lead-

Continued on Page 10

Socialists discuss struggle for proletarian party today — page 8



Soldiers mutiny against gov't in Central African Republic

Rebel soldiers in the Central African Republic fired mortars December 5 at a French-owned hotel in the capital city of Bangui, opening a two-hour fire fight with French troops and presidential guards. The mutinous troops took up arms on November 15 to protest low pay. It is their third uprising this year. Paris, which maintains 1,300 soldiers and military advisers in its former colony, had French troops fight along side the government soldiers.

Paris is losing influence over its former colonies, as well as facing a challenge for imperial domination of the African continent by its rival in Washington. "France is no longer capable of imposing itself in Africa," U.S. ambassador Daniel Simpson told reporters in Zaire.

Rebels seize more cities in Zaire

The Alliance of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Congo-Zaire, the rebel force fighting in Zaire, seized a swath of cities along the eastern border December 3-4, including Kindu, an important diamond trading center. The leader of the rebellion, Laurent Désiré Kabila, said they intend to overthrow President Mobutu Sese Seko. Rebel fighters are advancing to the East Kasai province, site of the country's most profitable diamond operations. Within a few days, a battle looms for Kisangani, Zaire's most significant inland river port. Aid groups have left the city in droves, while the government has sent in reinforcements from the Presidential Guard.

Taiwan gov't cuts S. African ties

Taiwan foreign minister John Chang announced December 5 that Taipei was suspending all aid projects and treaties with the South African government. The statement followed a November 27 announcement by South African president Nelson Mandela that Pretoria would switch its diplomatic relations from Taipei to Beijing in 1997. Taiwan, which had close ties to the old apartheid regime, is South Africa's seventh largest trading partner. Trade between the two countries totaled \$1.2 billion in 1995 and both regimes were discussing plans to build



Workers in Germany march in October against cut in sick pay benefits. As the government tries to impose austerity measures, unemployment has soared to 4.1 million.

a \$3.5 billion petrochemical plant in Johannesburg.

In another developments, South Africa's highest court approved the nation's new constitution. Mandela will sign it into law December 11 in Sharpeville.

Washington signs Okinawa pact

The Clinton administration reached an agreement with Tokyo December 2 to return 20 percent of the land occupied by U.S. military forces in Okinawa within 12 years. The deal includes moving a U.S. marine helicopter base to an offshore airfield, to be paid for by the Japanese government at an estimated \$2 billion.

Some 28,000 U.S. marines will remain on the island, where approximately 100,000 Okinawans — a third of the population — were killed by U.S. troops during World War II. U.S. and Japanese government officials reached the accord under mounting pressures from Okinawans demanding the ouster of Washington's troops. Some of the largest protests against the U.S. military in Japan were triggered when a local school girl was

raped by three U.S. GIs in 1995.

India completes nuke research

The defense ministry of India announced December 5 that it had "successfully completed" research on the Agni, an intermediate-range missile with nuclear capability. The government of Pakistan, which has fought three wars with India in recent decades, criticized Delhi's development of this missile and a smaller mobile-launched Prithvi missile. The Prithvi has a payload of one metric ton with a 250 km range.

Government officials in India said they are not now producing and deploying the missile system, but a decision to do so could be taken "at the appropriate time with the prevailing threat perception." The announcement followed a visit by Chinese president Jiang Zemin and discussions to resolve disputes along their 3,000 km border. Brahma Chellai, a defense analyst in Delhi declared, "The Agni is fundamentally India's deterrent against China."

UN soldiers to stay in Haiti

The United Nations Security Council voted 15-0 on December 5 to extend the imperialist military force of 1,300 troops and 300 cops in Haiti until May 31. Moscow and Beijing demanded that the operation be shut down entirely after eight months.

Washington led an invasion force of 22,000 troops in 1995 that restored the elected president Jean-Bertrand Aristide to power. A 1991 military coup, with U.S. tacit support, overthrew Aristide.

German jobless at postwar high

Unemployment soared in all regions of Germany in November, setting a postwar record of 4.1 million. The figures were released as the bosses in the electrical and

metal industries in Lower Saxony agreed to union demands to maintain sick pay levels at 100 percent of wages. The agreement overrides recent legislation, dealing a setback to Chancellor Helmut Kohl's effort to press austerity measures.

The government seeks to cut 2.5 percent from public spending in its budget for 1997. Spending cuts in the jobs program for workers in eastern Germany would prompt a rise in the jobless rate to 23 percent there, London's *Financial Times* reports.

Executions stepped-up in U.S.

The U.S. Justice Department issued a report December 4 stating 56 men were executed in 1995. The Bureau of Justice at the department reported the state-sanctioned murders were the most since 1957, when 65 inmates were killed. There were 3,046 prisoners on death row at the beginning of 1996. U.S. president William Clinton signed bipartisan legislation imposing limits on inmates rights to appeal convictions in order to speed up executions. Some 313 people have been executed since the Supreme Court restored capital punishment in 1976. "In the 1930s" — during the union organizing drives involving masses of workers — yearly "execution totals always exceeded 120 and sometimes approached 200," the *New York Times* reported.

Auto rivals sharpen competition

Japanese car companies Toyota and Honda and the two largest European auto makers, BMW and Volkswagen, have increased their share of the U.S. auto market, reporting sales gains of between 13 and 29 percent in November compared to a year earlier. According to the *Wall Street Journal*, the Japanese companies gained nearly three percentage points of the U.S. market share in November, capturing 24.1 percent of sales. The gains of the Japanese auto companies of 1.5 percent in October and November is equal to about 225,000 cars or \$4 billion. The Big Three auto makers in the United States lost 3.2 percent of the market share, dropping to 71.5 percent. Meanwhile, the U.S. Labor Department reported productivity fell 0.3 percent in the third quarter, the first decline since the end of last year.

Judge ends ban on gay marriage

State Circuit Judge Kevin Chang struck down Hawaii's ban on gay marriages December 3, stating that the state constitution requires the recognition of same sex unions. The ruling stemmed from a suit filed almost six years ago when three gay couples were refused applications for marriage licenses.

Other officials in Hawaii said they plan to appeal the decision to the state Supreme Court. U.S. president William Clinton signed a law in September that denies benefits to same-sex spouses of federal employees and allows states to pass legislation declaring they won't recognize gay marriages licensed in other states.

— MAURICE WILLIAMS

THE MILITANT

Defend the Cuban Revolution

The recent political attacks on the Cuban Revolution by the imperialist powers in the European Union shows how capitalism is irreconcilably opposed to the workers and farmers government there. The 'Militant' provides ongoing coverage of developments in Cuba. Don't miss a single issue!



SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

NEW READERS

☐ \$10 for 12 issues

☐ \$15 for 12 weeks

RENEWAL

☐ \$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\$12 • Caribbean and Latin America, \$15 • Europe, Africa, and the Middle East, £8 • Belgium, 375 BF • France, FF80 • Iceland, Kr1,300 • New Zealand, NZ\$15 • Sweden, Kr75 (Send payment to addresses listed in business information box)

The Militant

Vol. 60/No. 46

Closing news date: December 12, 1996

Editor: NAOMI CRAINE

Business Manager: MAURICE WILLIAMS

Editorial Staff: Megan Arney, Hilda Cuzco, Martín Koppel, Argiris Malapanis, Brian Taylor, and Maurice Williams.

Published weekly except for one week in December and biweekly from mid-June to mid-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: 73311,2720

Internet: 73311.2720@compuserve.com

The Militant can be accessed on the internet at: gopher://gopher.igc.apc.org/11/pubs/militant

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, and at additional mailing offices. 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 subscription 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 FF300 for one-year subscription to Militant, 8 allée Berlioz, 94800 Villejuif cheque postale: 25-465-01-S, Paris.

Belgium: BF 1,900 for one year on account no. 000-1543112-36 of IMei Fonds/Fonds du 1 mai,

2140 Antwerp. **Iceland:** Send 5,000 Icelandic kronur for one-year subscription to Militant, P.O. Box 233, 121 Reykjavík.

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 \$90 to P.O. Box 3025, Auckland, New Zealand.

Australia: Send Australian \$75 to P.O. Box K879, Haymarket, NSW 2000, Australia.

Pacific Islands: Send New Zealand \$90 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.

Cubans celebrate 40 years of rebel army

BY ERNIE MAILHOT

HAVANA — More than 100,000 Habaneros, as Havana residents are called here, marched December 2 in celebration of the 40th anniversary of the birth of what today are the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba.

On this date in 1956 the rebel forces led by Fidel Castro disembarked from the yacht *Granma* at Las Coloradas beach in the Cuban province of Oriente. They had left Tuxpan, Mexico November 25. Three days after the landing, on December 5, the troops of the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship surprised the rebel forces, killing or capturing most of them. Many outstanding fighters were lost, including Juan Manuel Márquez, the second in command on the *Granma*, who was captured and then murdered. His role and that of others was discussed in Cuban television coverage of the 40th anniversary celebration.

Among the survivors were Fidel and Raul Castro, Ernesto Che Guevara, Camilo Cienfuegos, and Juan Almeida. They regrouped the Rebel Army in the Sierra Maestra mountains and with new recruits and a rebel network in the cities they organized a movement that on Jan. 1, 1959, brought down the Batista dictatorship.

The massive and enthusiastic outpouring at this year's commemoration showed the popular support for the military preparedness of the Revolutionary Armed Forces. This remains true despite the scarcity of resources over the last half decade.

I started for the demonstration at 7:30 am. and had no problem finding the Plaza of the Revolution. I simply headed in the same direction as the many thousands of Cubans streaming through the Havana streets.

Most were going to the assembly point where they would enter the march. I joined the crowd of spectators about a quarter mile from the reviewing stand that marked the end of the march. On the stand were leaders of the Cuban military and of the Cuban government, some international guests and



Demonstration on Health Care Workers Day December 3 in La Lisa municipality. This municipality was the winner as the most productive in health care work in Havana.

others, including workers chosen for the exceptional role they played in their workplaces.

The group I stood in was just across from a replica of the *Granma* stationed in the middle of the large boulevard leading to the plaza. On the bow stood Norberto Collado, who as a young man had piloted the *Granma* on its famed trip to Cuba. The lower part of the boat's hull couldn't be seen because it was surrounded by a sea of 3,000 junior high school students in school uniforms.

The contingents passing by told the history of a century of struggle against imperialist domination of Cuba. Two columns of horseback riders approached dressed in the garb of the Mambises, the 19th century Cuban fighters against Spanish colonialism.

A huge cheer went up when the next contingent was announced — more than 100 veterans of the Rebel Army of the Sierra Maestra who had fought and routed the Batista army. They were in perfect step, as were the contingents who came after them. These were the veterans of the Escambray mountains, who had defeated counterrevolutionary bands supported by Washington in the early 1960s, followed by the combatants of Playa Giron, who in less than 72 hours smashed the 1961 U.S.-sponsored invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs.

Then came the internationalist fighters representing the over 350,000 Cubans who have served on military missions around the world. Many of these marchers had served in Angola, where Havana sent more than

300,000 volunteers between 1975 and 1988. In answer to the Angolan government's request for military aid to defend the country against repeated invasions by the apartheid South African army, the Cuban people shed their blood at the side of fighters from Angola, the African National Congress of South Africa, and the South West Africa People's Organization, which was fighting South African colonial rule over Namibia.

The parade of columns continued with armed students from various military schools. More than 100 athletes from sporting academies marched by carrying rifles that were longer than usual and had thicker barrels that tapered off somewhat at the end. When the loudspeakers said that these weapons were Cuban-made specifically to shoot down helicopters, the crowd erupted once more. Groups of soldiers and militia members carried various other Cuban-made weapons.

The Navy contingent passed by, as did some 100 police and a much larger group of armed members of the territorial troop militia. An armed militia made up of students from the University of Havana followed. A women's militia unit passed.

One of the last of the military groups had several hundred people in civilian clothes all armed with rifles. They were from the production and defense brigades organized in workplaces around the country. As this group marched by three Cuban MIG-29s flew by just above us.

Behind the half-hour parade of military groups was a massive wave of tens of thousands human beings of all ages.

Two huge Cuban flags were carried by young people and many banners and individual signs could be seen. Some designated different municipalities, such as one from Boyeros. Others were from different workplaces. Some carried handmade signs denouncing the Helms-Burton law, which tightened the Washington's economic embargo against Cuba. Others wore T-shirts from the Blas Roca work contingent. Many carried posters of Che Guevara, Camilo Cienfuegos, Fidel Castro, and Raul Castro.

One person told me that Cienfuegos, an immensely popular leader of the Cuban revolutionary war, was especially thought of on this day. He was killed in October 1959 when his plane was lost at sea while helping to organize the fight against the counterrevolution. One of the quotes Cienfuegos was known for, my friend told me, was, "The rebel army is the people in uniform."

Ernie Mailhot is a member of Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees Local 694B in Miami.

European Union governments issue unanimous political attack on Cuba

BY MEGAN ARNEY

The European Union, made up of 15 member states, adopted a resolution December 2 stating that "The European Union strongly believes that a democratic system of government must be installed in Cuba as a matter of priority." While proclaiming the EU's "firm wish to be Cuba's partner in the progressive and irreversible opening of the Cuban economy," the statement said, "full cooperation with Cuba will depend on improvements in human rights and political freedom."

The Clinton administration had earlier indicated some action like this was needed for the U.S. president to renew a waiver halting implementation of some aspects of the misnamed Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity Act, or Helms-Burton law. This law, which tightened Washington's economic war against Cuba, includes provisions for sanctions and legal suits against companies in third countries that do business with the Cuban workers' state or "traffic" in property confiscated in the 1959 revolution there.

In August, Clinton waived many of these provisions for six months, saying he would extend the exemption if European governments joined in pressuring the Cuban government for "reforms." The deadline for extending the waiver is January 16. EU officials insisted that the resolution is not a concession to the United States, but simply marks the first time the 15 states put their position in writing. "It's an expression of EU policy," a spokesman for Irish Foreign minister and EU president Dick Spring said. The resolution doesn't include any changes to that policy, he said.

The EU is challenging Helms-Burton in the World Trade Organization. The EU trade commissioner, Leon Brittan from London, explained November 7, "By opposing Helms-Burton, Europe is challenging one country's presumed right to impose its foreign policy on others by using the threat of trade sanctions. This has nothing whatever to do with human rights." On November 12, all EU members unanimously backed an overwhelming UN General Assembly vote

calling for the lifting of the 36-year-old U.S. embargo against Cuba.

Brittan went on to explain to the *Financial Times* of London that the United States and the EU have tactical differences in relations with Cuba, but the same goal. Brittan insisted the EU's "constructive engagement" will bring "reforms" to Cuba, declaring that the EU has not gone "soft" on Cuba.

U.S. State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns said the Clinton administration "welcomes" the EU policy statement, but said it would not guarantee an extension of the Helms-Burton waiver.

As for the WTO, U.S. undersecretary of commerce Stuart Eizenstat said Washington will do "whatever is necessary" to avoid a ruling against the Helms-Burton law. In response, Cuban president Fidel Castro said in a speech in late November, "Everyone is coming to give us recipes and impose conditions. Who do they think they are? We won't kneel before anyone, nor seek charity from anyone."

The EU resolution was sponsored by Spain, one of Cuba's main trading partners and investors. Currently, Spanish capitalists have invested an estimated \$80 million in tourism and other sectors. Madrid has been increasing its exports to the island, expected to reach around \$560 million.

In a November 26 statement, the Cuban government said the Spanish government had "transformed itself into a spearhead for U.S. interests within the EU." Havana refused to accept the appointment of José Coderch Planas as the new Spanish ambassador to Cuba, citing Madrid's "flagrant interference in the internal affairs of Cuba." Coderch had stated in a newspaper interview that he intended to maintain contacts with and assist opponents of the Cuban revolution.

The Cuban economy has felt the affects of the Helms-Burton law. Under the threat of U.S. sanctions, two large banks — the Dutch bank ING and Spain's Banco Bilbao Vizcaya — have backed out financing Cuba's sugar harvest in five Cuban provinces. This forces the Cuban government to find financ-

ing for seed and fertilizer at higher interest rates of up to 20 percent. In addition, two European companies that sell Cuban sugar have stopped doing business with Havana.

Two companies have been sanctioned by Washington so far under Helms-Burton. Top officials from the Canadian-owned Sherritt mining company and the Mexican telecommunications conglomerate Grupo Doms have been denied permission to visit the United States. Sherritt, which extracts nickel from Moa Bay, has recently raised over \$500 million to continue investment in Cuba.

The Cuban revolution in world politics

To Speak the Truth

WHY WASHINGTON'S 'COLD WAR' AGAINST CUBA DOESN'T END

Fidel Castro and Che Guevara

In historic speeches before the United Nations and its bodies, Guevara and Castro address the workers of the world, explaining why the U.S. government is determined to destroy the example set by the socialist revolution in Cuba and why its effort will fail. \$16.95

Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War, 1956-58

Ernesto Che Guevara

Firsthand account of the military campaigns and political events that culminated in the January 1959 popular insurrection that overthrew the U.S.-backed dictatorship in Cuba. Guevara's *Episodes* appears complete for the first time in English. Introduction by Mary-Alice Waters. \$23.95

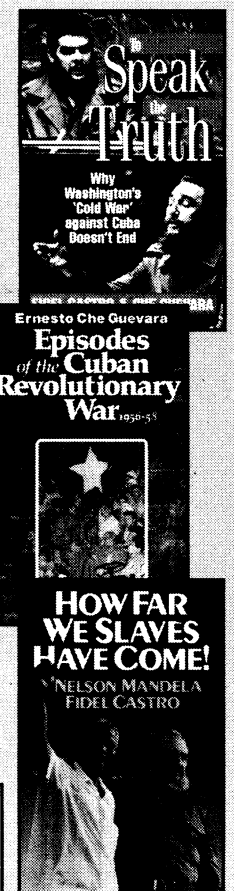
How Far We Slaves Have Come!

SOUTH AFRICA AND CUBA IN TODAY'S WORLD

Nelson Mandela, Fidel Castro

Speaking together in Cuba in 1991, Mandela and Castro discuss the unique relationship and example of the struggles of the South African and Cuban peoples. \$8.95

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



Canadian gov't attacks airline workers

BY NED DMYTRYSHYN
AND MONICA JONES

VANCOUVER, British Columbia — In an unprecedented attack on union rights, the Canadian government announced on December 4 that it would force 3,900 ticket and reservation agents represented by the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) at Canadian Airlines International (CAI) to vote on a company wage cut ultimatum. Canadian Airlines, with 16,400 workers, is the second largest carrier in Canada.

The government proposal steps over the heads of elected union representatives and imposes a vote on wage rollbacks in the name of the "democratic right" of members to "save their jobs." Officials of the other five unions at the airline had already tentatively agreed to proposals that include wage cuts.

British Columbia Federation of Labor secretary-treasurer Angela Schira said the government move "is really the introduction of the War Measures Act of labor relations.... It opens the door for more abuse in the future."

"The government has jumped completely in bed with the company and ordered the workers, with a shotgun at their head, to take a wage cut or lose their job," declared Basil Hargrove, president of the CAW, following the announcement. The CAW decided not to challenge the order in court, however, and indicated there will be a vote on a wage cut.

A discussion is unfolding among airline workers on the issues posed with the company ultimatum and the government-imposed vote.

IAM member Neil Koleszar, a cleaner for seven years at CAI, told the *Militant*, "It seems the extent of the government's participation was to support the company, but they should let unions go with their own process. This is a situation where government is stepping in where it shouldn't."

IAM member Chris Bertrand, a ramp worker with Canadian for three years, said he thought "the government was right in doing what it did and that its time to save the airline," but "this is a band-aid solution."

The vote ordered by federal Labor Minister Alfonso Gagliano is the latest turn in a confrontation between the airline and many of its 16,400 employees that opened on November 11, when company president Kevin Benson unveiled a "restructuring" plan for the company that included a demand that the unions reopen their contracts and accept a 10 percent pay cut. "If we don't get the support of our employees," he said, "then we must plan a shutdown of the airline." He gave a deadline of November 27.

Many CAI workers are opposed to the cuts, and there have been some protests, including a picket of 75 unionists here November 17.

"Canadian Airlines wants another 10 percent wage cut," CAW member Billie Mortimer told the *Vancouver Sun*. "But we've already given. For what? So they could put more empty seats in the air in



Militant/Monica Jones

Workers rally at Vancouver airport November 17 to protest a 10 percent wage cut

hopes of driving Air Canada [CAI's main competitor] out of business?"

Mortimer was referring to the fact that workers at Canadian have given three rounds of wage cuts and work rule changes since 1992, totaling more than \$300 million, in the name of staving off bankruptcy. The latest threat followed an agreement negotiated in the past few months with the five unions at CAI involving concessions on work rules, benefits, and a wage freeze that add up to a 17 percent productivity increase.

The company says it has lost \$1.4 billion dollars since 1992. Airline industry analyst David Gersovitz commented that a "radical downsizing," including cutting 4,000 jobs, is needed to compete with Air Canada.

The Canadian government stepped into the fray on the side of the company. "The president of the company has put forward a thorough plan," said Transport Minister David Anderson on November 15. "There really are no alternatives."

Anderson spent the next two weeks pressuring workers and union officials to give in. The federal government refused union

calls for financial aid to the company until the unions accepted the cuts. "We won't solve anything by loaning money to the company," Prime Minister Jean Chretien told a Vancouver audience on November 20. "What the company needs is to carry through its restructuring plan."

The International Association of Machinists (IAM), which represents 5,300 maintenance and service workers, and the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE), representing 2,600 flight attendants, joined in November 26 negotiations with Canadian Airlines to discuss the company restructuring plan to accept wage cuts. Earlier both the CUPE and the CAW had said they would oppose the 10 percent cut.

The IAM and CUPE announced a four-year deal with Canadian Airlines the following day that would meet about half the company's wage cut goal of \$70 million per year. Wages would be cut along a sliding scale, beginning at 1 percent for salaries above \$25,000 and reaching about 8 percent for pilots.

The airline will receive some \$36 million

per year in tax breaks from the Canadian, Alberta, and British Columbia governments. The provincial government here will also give \$12 million in tax breaks to workers whose wages will be cut.

Following the agreement with CUPE and the IAM, the company and government turned their fire on the CAW, saying that its intransigence threatened the future of the airline.

CAW officials say they want the federal government to give \$400 million in grants and tax breaks to the airline over the next four years, and Hargrove called for regulation of prices and competition of domestic flights. Many regulations governing domestic competition were phased out in 1988.

Hargrove has also echoed the chauvinist, anti-Quebecois arguments of some newspaper editorialists in western Canada. "We're trying to get... a recognition by this [federal] government," he said on November 30, "that Western Canadians, when they are in crisis, are entitled to the same amount of support as Eastern Canadians."

"It just infuriates me that General Motors... in Quebec gets \$200 million from this government to support 3,000 jobs, and we're offered a lousy \$20 million to support 16,000 workers." GM received an interest-free loan from the Canadian government in 1987 to upgrade its assembly factory in Quebec.

Brian de Ridder, IAM member and a ramp worker at Canadian Airlines for eight years, explained "The CAW was right in opposing wage cuts. Someone has to stand up for workers. Society is being run by the corporate elite. To say that a few million dollars from the CAW in wages would make or break the company is ridiculous. Forcing a vote shows that the government is on the side of the corporations."

IAM member Neil Koleszar said, "The last raise that I've had was in March of 1992. Now I will lose up to 2.5 percent of my wage if the proposal goes through."

Ned Dmytryshyn and Monica Jones are members of IAM Lodge 764 in Vancouver. Monica Jones works at Canadian Airlines.

Quebec: Thousands protest wage cuts

BY KATY LEROUGETEL

QUEBEC CITY, Quebec — Between 5,000 and 8,000 public sector workers, members the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN), one of six major unions representing over 400,000 provincial public sector workers, in the wind and falling snow December 7. They were protesting the provincial government's plans to cut wages by 5 percent. The government proposes to cease pension deductions for these workers up until the summer of 1998 because of a surplus in the pension fund. This, the government claims, would mean workers' take-home pay would remain the same.

Banners indicated participation from all over the province. Three busloads of demonstrators travelled 10 hours overnight from the northern region of Abitibi-Temiscamingue. Almost all the marchers were public sector workers.

Jacques Morin, a worker with 28 years' seniority at a psychiatric institute in Roberval, said, "In 1982 we lost 20 percent of our salary — for good. Since 1992, we haven't had a single raise. We don't have any protection against inflation." Referring to the recently announced closure of a meat products distribution center, he added, "Look at Maple Leaf. They've been here for 75 years and now they're leaving. We don't have a choice but to be out here."

Coming up on the busses from Montreal, Nicole Champagne, a retirement home worker, explained that last week's paycheck was the first full week's pay she had received since July. She works on call. Government dipping into union pension funds "is the kiss of death. We have to stop the government's scheming," Champagne declared.

Her co-worker, Louise Brisebois, added, "There are thousands of workers on layoff because of the hospital closures six months ago. They're being paid to stay home and do nothing. Why? When I was sick last week, the administration called in someone from a temp agency to replace me. I think they're going to privatize our services over the next 10 years."

Sylvain Bédard, the union local president at the IGA grocery store in Chicoutimi, explained that 25 of the 63 workers on strike there had come in on the busses to show solidarity. They sold donuts and carried hand-made signs.

Students Daphnée Savard and Jonathan Juneau from the Quebec City junior college of Garneau said that they had also marched with the union demonstration of 15,000 two weeks ago in Quebec City. They were wearing buttons which said, "YES to free schooling." They had blacked out the line limiting the demand to the junior college level, explaining, "We think schooling should be free

for everyone." Up to 60,000 students in the province recently organized strikes and demonstrations against tuition fee hikes.

Referring to the fact that provincial premier Lucien Bouchard leads the pro-sovereignty Parti Québécois, supported by union officials and many workers, Gilles Deschaînes, a retirement home worker, commented, "We're separatist, but there are limits." A number of placards held by marchers from the Louis H. Lafontaine hospital in Montreal showed CSN president Gerald Larose holding the reins of a carriage being pulled by Bouchard, with the caption, "The CSN takes back the reins."

Government ministers are frequent targets for union pickets at their public appearances around the province these days. On December 5, several thousands of teachers held a mock funeral procession for education, complete with coffins and some marchers in executioners' garb.

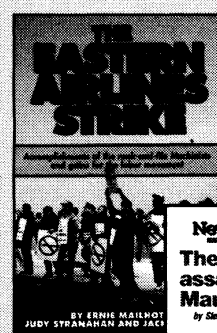
The six union federations representing public sector workers are organizing strike votes in preparation of a 24-hour strike that may be held before Christmas. While often hotly debated, many strike votes are coming in at 80 percent and more in favor. Under Provincial Law 160, many workers face loss of one year of seniority for every day of strike, explained Louise Brisebois. She lost two years' seniority as a result of her strike participation in 1989.

At economic summits held this spring and fall, provincial union, business, and government officials reached consensus that all would work towards a zero government deficit by the year 2000. Many union placards at the demonstration read "Public finances: a problem for all society" and "Service cutbacks won't solve the deficit."

"It's not up to us to pay the deficit," commented Nicole Champagne. "Go get the money out of the pockets of those who earn \$100,000 a year or more."

Katy LeRougetel is a member of Canadian Auto Workers union Local 187 in Ste. Eustache, Quebec.

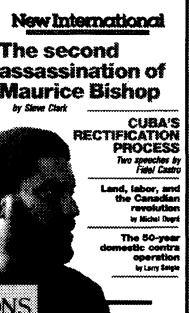
Available from Pathfinder



The Eastern Airline Strike: Accomplishments of the Rank-and-File Machinists

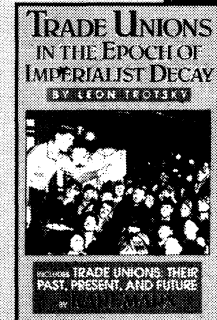
by Earnie Mailhot, Judy Stranahan, and Jack Barnes

The story of the 686-day strike of rank-and-file resistance by Machinists that prevented Eastern's antiunion onslaught from becoming the road to a profitable nonunion airline. \$9.95



In New International no. 6 Land, Labor, and the Canadian Revolution

by Michel Dugré \$10.00



Trade Unions in the Epoch of Imperialist Decay

FEATURING THE ARTICLE: TRADE UNIONS: THEIR PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE by Karl Marx \$14.95

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

SELL THE BOOKS WORKERS OF THE WORLD NEED

Join the campaign to sell Pathfinder books and pamphlets

Socialists sell more than 2,000 books in November

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Sales of Pathfinder titles grew in November as socialist workers and youth sold more than 2,000 books and pamphlets to co-workers, students, and others involved in political activity around the world. Consistent sales work leads to more opportunities to reach out to fighters like the Wheeling-Pitt strikers, young activists defending death row inmate Mumia Abu-Jamal, and others like the workers and farmers protesting in Greece. Communists can provide them with the political weapons needed to understand challenges facing the working class and recruit them to the socialist movement.

Ved Dookhun, a member of the Young Socialists in Peoria, reports, "One week before the regional socialist educational conference, we organized a sales team Novem-

ber 21 at the University of Illinois in Carbondale. We went there to meet Adam Turl, a part-time student who learned about the YS through the Internet. He staffed the literature table with us and later took us to see his friend who owns a bookstore. His friend bought 23 books, including the eight copies of the Marxist magazine *New International*."

Dookhun said Turl joined the team at a campus table in St. Louis the next day, asked to join the Young Socialists, and is now a member.

Activists in Miami topped the charts, selling 172 books in November, almost four times their monthly goal of 45. They sold 120 titles, including 16 copies of *New International*, at the Miami Bookfair November 22-24.

Supporters of Pathfinder in Washington, D.C., sold nearly 200 books in November, including a set of the *Collected Works* of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels and the *Collected Works* of Russian Revolution leader V.I. Lenin.

Socialist workers in London reported, "One worker at the Ford plant in Dagenham was inspired to buy *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War, 1956-58* by Ernesto Che Guevara after visiting Cuba for a vacation last summer. 'I'm really enjoying it,' the auto worker said. 'It's real. It's the truth.'"

"Another worker from Nigeria was shocked by coverage in the *Militant*, which reported on South Africa's new laws legalizing abortion, but was interested in discussing why women should have the right to choose abortion. She bought the pamphlet *Women's Liberation and the African Freedom Struggle* by Thomas Sankara, the leader of the Burkina Faso revolution."

In San Francisco, rail worker Joan Radin said socialist workers at Amtrak sold seven books to co-workers in November. "We sold two issues of *New International* including issue no. 4, which features the fight for a workers and farmers government. One co-worker, a Latino youth in his 20s, bought a copy of *Marx and Engels on the United States*." Radin said another co-worker who is a member of the Pathfinder Readers Club bought *New International* no. 6. "A big key for us is to get people to sign up for the readers club. Many of our sales are to co-workers who are members of the Pathfinder Readers Club."

"One of the highlights of this month's sales were the four books sold at an event commemorating the anniversary of Che Guevara's death at which the Cuban ambassador spoke," wrote Natasha Terlexis from Athens, Greece. Terlexis said socialist activists there sold another three books at an anti-war rally and solidarity meeting between Greek, Turkish, and Turkish-Cypriot and Greek-Cypriot activists.

At a November 24 educational conference hosted by the Committee of Friends of the *Militant* newspaper, Terlexis added, "we sold one of the last copies of Evelyn Reed's *Problems of Women's Liberation* in Greek."



Pathfinder supporters in Manila, Philippines, at conference protesting APEC summit (see article on back page) sold 62 titles, including 10 copies of *New International*. Militant/Ron Poulsen

Monthly Sales of Pathfinder Books

Countries/Cities	November			Previous months		
	Goal	Sold	%Sold	Oct.	Sept.	Aug.
AUSTRALIA	36	40	111%	103%	128%	119%
FRANCE	25	26	104%	0%		
GREECE	13	13	100%	100%	115%	
CANADA						
Vancouver	32	41	128%	106%	38%	100%
Montreal	72	64	89%	89%	93%	40%
Toronto	80	62	78%	128%	108%	50%
CANADA Total	184	167	91%	109%	90%	68%
SWEDEN	40	36	90%	220%	105%	88%
UNITED STATES						
Miami	45	172	382%	178%	73%	96%
Washington, D.C.	64	194	303%	105%	75%	56%
Chicago	77	152	197%	97%	155%	79%
Atlanta	48	93	194%	140%	104%	98%
San Francisco	95	184	194%	145%	118%	106%
Los Angeles	120	159	133%	126%	111%	129%
Peoria	40	48	120%	44%	85%	104%
Houston	45	49	109%	138%	38%	51%
Seattle	80	81	101%	116%	69%	85%
Detroit	70	64	91%	116%	114%	103%
Philadelphia	50	42	84%	104%	35%	38%
Twin Cities	104	85	82%	60%	63%	62%
Boston	65	47	72%	100%	100%	71%
Birmingham	50	29	58%	68%	38%	60%
Pittsburgh	63	27	43%	87%	37%	59%
Greensboro	77	30	39%	26%	39%	85%
Salt Lake City	40	14	35%	48%	45%	46%
Cleveland	50	14	28%	100%	0%	74%
Newark	171	44	26%	32%	63%	58%
New York	340	84	25%	76%	70%	54%
Morgantown	32	7	22%	106%	34%	75%
Des Moines*	45		0%	31%	33%	49%
U.S. Total	1771	1619	90%	86%	76%	74%
Goal/Should be	1800	1800	100%			
NEW ZEALAND						
Auckland	56	44	79%	70%	52%	65%
Christchurch	32	20	63%	56%	56%	91%
NZ Total	88	64	73%	65%	53%	73%
UNITED KINGDOM						
London	170	123	72%	100%	88%	182%
Manchester	76	48	63%	58%	183%	128%
UK Total	246	171	70%	87%	108%	150%
*No new report						

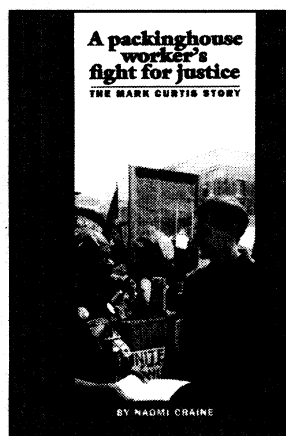
Books sold to Co-workers

Unions	Goal			October		
AUSTRALIA	Goal	Sold	%	Oct.	Sept.	Aug.
AMWU	4	6	150%	0%	50%	250%
CANADA						
USWA	8	8	100%	75%	143%	
IAM	8	4	50%	0%	63%	23%
CAW	6	2	33%	67%		
Total CANADA	14	6	43%	0%	100%	23%
UNITED STATES						
UFCW	6	3	50%	83%	33%	0%
IAM	61	29	48%	87%	46%	44%
UNITE	26	11	42%	35%	92%	46%
UTU	94	21	22%	23%	0%	46%
UMWA	5	1	20%	80%	80%	40%
OCAW	44	7	16%	17%	33%	50%
USWA	46	7	15%	30%	28%	34%
*UAW	65		0%	23%	55%	42%
U.S. Total	347	79	23%	29%	35%	45%
UNITED KINGDOM						
AEEU	10	4	40%	0%	50%	0%
TGWU	7	2	29%	0%	100%	0%
RMT	10	0	0%	50%	0%	50%
Total U.K.	27	6	22%	0%	56%	19%
Goal/Should be	400	400	100%			
* No new report						

IAM— International Association of Machinists; OCAW— Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers; UAW—United Auto Workers; UFCW— United Food and Commercial Workers; UMWA— United Mine Workers of America; UNITE— Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees; USWA— United Steelworkers of America; UTU—United Transportation Union.

New! From Pathfinder

A packinghouse worker's fight for justice



The Mark Curtis Story

Naomi Craine

The story of the victorious eight-year battle to defeat the political frame-up of Mark Curtis, a union activist and socialist sentenced in 1988 to twenty-five years in prison on trumped up charges of attempted rape and burglary.

The pamphlet describes what happened to Curtis on the day of his arrest, the fight to defend immigrant rights he was a part of, and the international campaign that finally won his freedom in 1996. \$6.00

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

PRISONER SUBSCRIPTION FUND

The *Militant* offers reduced subscription rates to workers and farmers behind bars. A six-month subscription to the *Militant* costs \$6, and one year costs \$12. We send a free sample copy on request. Contributions make these special rates possible for those who cannot afford regular rates. Please send your donation to: *Militant* Prisoner Fund, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

Leaders assess next steps in building YS

‘Most important question is organizing the YS with proletarian methods’

Continued from front page
the YS with proletarian methods,” stated Willey at the opening of his report.

YS leaders discussed the opportunities in front of the communist movement that were registered through the recruitment drive and the kind of organization that must be forged to integrate these young fighters into the weekly work of chapters.

The NC considered whether to organize another recruitment drive now, and decided instead that every chapter should put recruitment as a top priority of the day-to-day work of the YS. This includes holding classes, recruitment dinners, and social events after Militant Labor Forums — in other words seeking every opportunity to discuss politics and draw fighters toward communism.

Willey explained that the YS is a proletarian organization because it looks to the working class as the only social force that can lead the overthrow of capitalism and it looks to the vanguard party of the working class, the Socialist Workers Party, for political leadership.

Communist work in the unions

YS leaders discussed the recent decision made by both the YS and SWP leaderships to organize joint industrial trade-union fractions. These fractions will be composed of two or more members of the SWP and the YS who are part of the same trade union and work at the same place. They will make decisions together on the day-to-day work of selling Pathfinder books, the *Militant*, and *Perspectiva Mundial* on the job; participating in the life of the union; involving co-workers in political activity; and working to recruit others to the communist movement.

“Factories are combat arenas in industry,” said Willey. “We’ve made this decision because of a need for common discipline and to maximize our striking power as a movement. Communists need to meet weekly to discuss how to relate to developments on the job and follow up on co-workers attracted to the our movement. We need to carry out a clear, common political line,” he added.

“Our chapter just started to meet weekly and four members are part of a joint SWP-YS fraction building jobs committee,” explained Doug Nelson from Atlanta. “The party and YS are working together to get into union organized factories to carry out communist work in the unions.”

The meeting discussed the importance of sending some of the central leaders of the YS to coal mining and meatpacking regions of the country in order to strengthen the communist movement in these important industrial areas. Tom Alter, who had been a full-time YS organizer for the last several months, is moving to Des Moines, an area where there has been ongoing resistance to the attacks of the packinghouse bosses and to a step-up in factory raids by the immigration cops. Diana Newberry recently moved from New York to Morgantown, West Virginia, in the western Pennsylvania-West Virginia coal mining region.

As part of the leadership moves in the YS,

Meg Novak, a member of the United Steelworkers of America in Peoria, Illinois, is moving to Minneapolis/St. Paul to be part of the newly established National Executive Committee. Dennis Richter, a leader of the SWP’s National Trade Union Committee, gave greetings to the meeting on behalf of the party’s Political Committee. Richter noted, “The victory marked at the meeting of 70 new members recruited to the YS since July shows it is objectively possible for every branch of the SWP to find and collaborate with young rebels who are beginning to function as a Young Socialists chapter. This means the challenge before the SWP is building a combat party that sets an example for these young communists today.”

Principle of democratic centralism

The central aim of the YS is the abolition of capitalism against the most powerful and ruthless ruling class in the history of the world.

In order to carry out its goals, the National Committee voted to organize and structure itself based on the principle of democratic centralism. The national convention of the YS decides the policies and campaigns of the organization and elects a National Committee responsible for organizing the implementation of convention decisions. The National Committee is authorized by the convention to act in the name of the YS between conventions and meets several times a year to evaluate the work of the YS.

At its meeting here, the YS National Committee for the first time elected a National Executive Committee, not a national steering committee. This new body is a sub-committee responsible for leading the implementation of National Committee decisions and organizing the daily work of the YS nationally. This establishes the chain of responsibility in the organization.

Each local chapter is responsible for voting people into membership based on political agreement with the principles of the YS and a plan to actively participate in the work of the organization. The chapter decides on local implementation of national policies and carries out weekly functions of the YS. In order to do this, each chapter is responsible for holding weekly business meetings that decide the tasks for the upcoming week, discuss following up on young fighters interested in the YS, and include an educational discussion on a *Militant* article or other reading.

In order to carry through the transformation of YS functioning, the NC established that all chapters elect an executive committee, which elects an organizer. The executive committee is responsible for organizing the entire membership to implement the decisions of the weekly chapter meeting. This leadership committee is also responsible for bringing a proposed agenda into each chapter meeting and organizing a discussion on finances at the beginning of each month.

The day following the NC meeting, the Minneapolis/St. Paul chapter, the largest in the country, elected an executive committee of three that met directly after the chapter meeting and elected an organizer.

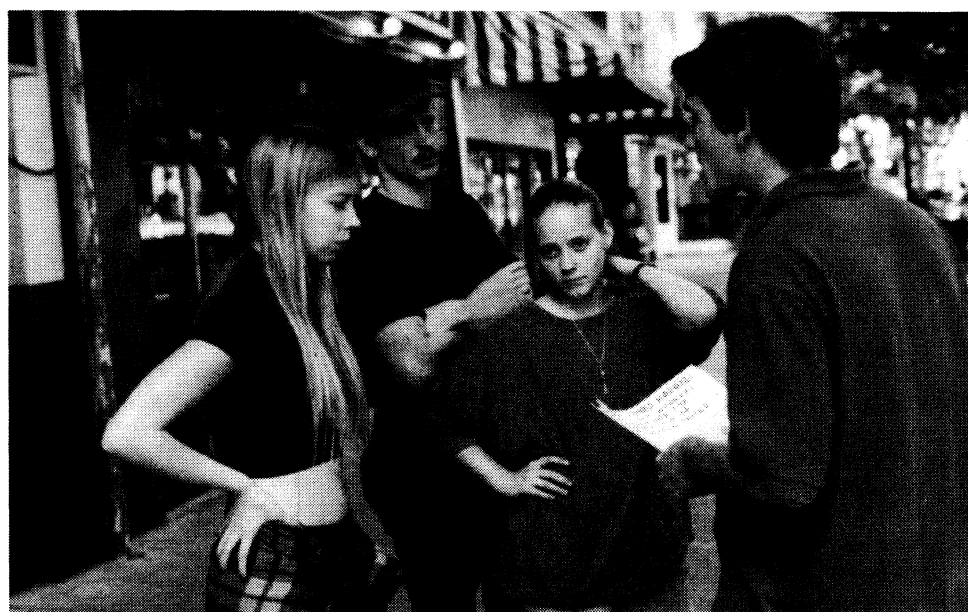
In small chapters, roughly five or less, an organizer may be elected in place of an executive committee.

The National Executive Committee is producing a brief “YS Organizer” for all chapters to use. It will explain the principle of democratic centralism, the different bodies of the Young Socialists and their responsibilities, as well as the YS’s financial structure and other information needed to organize local chapters.

Propaganda axis of YS

Bringing organizational methods in harmony with its political principles allows the YS to organize all of its political work around the axis of propaganda — using Pathfinder books, the *Militant*, and other literature to win others to a communist perspective.

“Many young people radicalize around what they are against,” reported Ponce. “There are a number of radical organizations they can join to be involved in dem-



Militant/Leonel Cabrera

YS member Daniel Rhodes (right) campaigning in Athens, Georgia, in September. YS leaders discussed propaganda work and called a national convention for March 1997.

onstrations. But we are the only movement that points a way forward for workers and youth, that challenges young fighters to study the history of working class battles, analyze the workings of capitalism and apply this information to the fights taking place today.” The YS members noted that when they began to get on this axis over the fall, the YS recruitment drive gained momentum. Of the 70 youth who joined between July 10 and December 1, out of a goal of 80, half joined in the last six weeks.

The Changing Face of U.S. Politics — Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions was referred to several times as “the handbook of the YS.” This book helps explain why only the working class can lead humanity out of the social crisis of capitalism in decline and what kind of organizations it will take to do this.

This book explains what communist work is in the trade unions and protest movements and how the starting point in all struggles is how they relate to strengthening the working class and building revolutionary organizations. It also explains the role of oppressed nationalities in the coming American revolution and how the fight by Blacks and Chicanos against national oppression is tied directly to the struggle by workers against the same repressive system; capitalism.

Meg Novak pointed to how participants in “La Marcha” — the march for affirmative action that started in Sacramento, California, and went down to San Diego — were reading sections from this book out loud as they marched. “They looked up Chicano nationalism in the index and started reading” she said. “These fighters have a better understanding of the kind of movement we are building and some have decided to join us in this fight.”

A representative from the YS in Montreal gave greetings to the meeting. She explained that several YS members in Canada are actively involved in translating *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* into French. This comes at a time when there is growing resistance by Quebecois for self-determination and a series of demonstrations organized by the labor unions. YS members in the United States are helping to get the book out in Spanish as well.

Several people spoke to the importance of chapters taking part in sales of the *Militant* and Pathfinder books every week and following through by organizing classes and other events to draw those interested in communism closer to joining the YS.

“Even when mass struggles break out, fighters can only find their way toward communism through reading the living history of the working class and meeting the bearers of that history,” explained Brock Satter from Newark, New Jersey.

YS leaders pledged to return to their chapters and organize classes on *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*, *New International* no. 7, containing the article, “Opening Guns of World War III,” and the *Education for Socialists* pamphlet, “The Structure and Organizational Principles of the Party,” by longtime SWP leader Farrell Dobbs.

NC member Ryan Kelly recently volunteered to take a few year stint in the printshop of the communist movement to help produce the political weapons YS members are studying and selling. Young Socialists will play an increasing role in the production of these weapons and the newly elected National Executive Committee will organize for more young communists to have the opportunity to take part in this special assignment.

Helping keep Pathfinder books in print

Several YS members from Sweden and cities across the United States are taking part in mini-brigades that are setting up the “pick and pack” distribution of Pathfinder books and *New International* from the Pathfinder building in New York. Between now and the end of the year, volunteers will be setting up shelves, bringing truckloads of books back from a commercial distributor, and organizing them to be shipped from the printshop. This will put the shop in the best shape to rapidly print and reprint the books as they are needed by communist workers and youth.

Kelly stated, “Just before coming to this meeting, we reprinted *Nouvelle Internationale* no. 5 — the French-language magazine containing the article “Imperialism’s March Toward Fascism and War” — which was out of stock. This made it possible for communists in Quebec to get this weapon in the hands of fighters participating in a demonstration this weekend in Quebec City called by public sector trade unions. This comes at a time when increasing numbers of Quebecois fighters are looking for ways to advance their struggle for independence.”

The NC voted to organize speaking tours of Young Socialists leaders to every place where there are chapters, speaking in high schools, colleges and citywide meetings about world politics and working with chapters to draw young fighters into the YS.

Available from Pathfinder

The Structure and Organizational Principles of the Party by Farrell Dobbs

In a series of talks presented in 1970, Socialist Workers Party leader Farrell Dobbs explains the principles of democratic centralism and how socialist workers and youth have applied them in building a revolutionary movement in the United States. **\$6.00**

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

Young Socialists pamphlet!

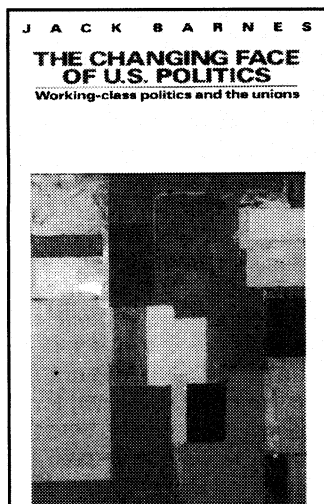
Political Principles, Campaigns and Rules of Organization



1-9 copies, \$4 each; 10 or more copies, \$3 each. Checks made payable to Young Socialists, P.O. Box 14392, St. Paul, MN 55114.

Holiday reading suggestions

FROM PATHFINDER

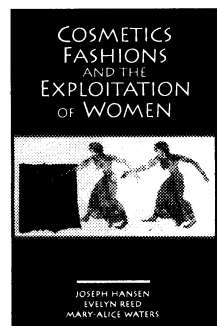


The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions

JACK BARNES

A handbook for workers coming into the factories, mines, and mills, as they react to the uncertain life, ceaseless turmoil, and brutality of capitalism in the closing years of the twentieth century. It shows how millions of workers, as political resistance grows, will revolutionize themselves, their unions, and all of society. \$19.95



The Struggle for a Proletarian Party

JAMES P. CANNON

In this companion to Trotsky's *In Defense of Marxism*, Cannon and other leaders of the Socialist Workers Party defend the political and organizational principles of Marxism against a petty-bourgeois current in the party. The debate unfolded as Washington prepared to drag U.S. working people into the slaughter of World War II. \$19.95

Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women

JOSEPH HANSEN, EVELYN REED, AND MARY-ALICE WATERS

How big business promotes cosmetics to generate profits and perpetuate the oppression of women. In her introduction, Mary-Alice Waters explains how the entry of millions of women into the workforce during and after World War II irreversibly changed U.S. society and laid the basis for a renewed rise of struggles for women's equality. \$12.95



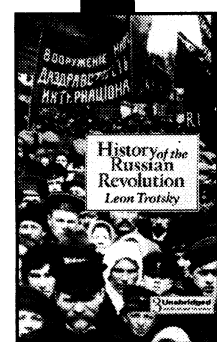
Malcolm X Talks to Young People

"I for one will join in with anyone, I don't care what color you are, as long as you want to change this miserable condition that exists on this earth"—Malcolm X, Britain, December 1964. Also includes his 1965 interview with the *Young Socialist* magazine. \$10.95

The History of the Russian Revolution

LEON TROTSKY

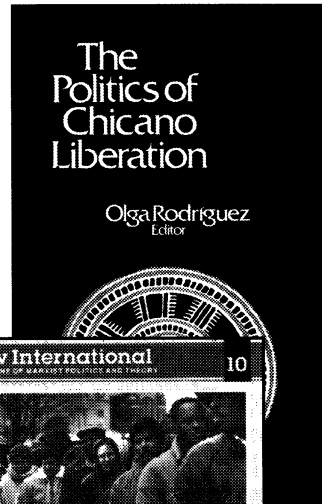
The social, economic, and political dynamics of the first socialist revolution. The story is told by one of the principal leaders of this victorious struggle for workers power headed by the Bolshevik party. Also available in Russian. Unabridged edition, 3 vols. in one. \$35.95



Che Guevara, Cuba, and the Road to Socialism

ARTICLES BY ERNESTO CHE GUEVARA, CARLOS RAFAEL RODRÍGUEZ, CARLOS TABLADA, MARY-ALICE WATERS, STEVE CLARK, JACK BARNES

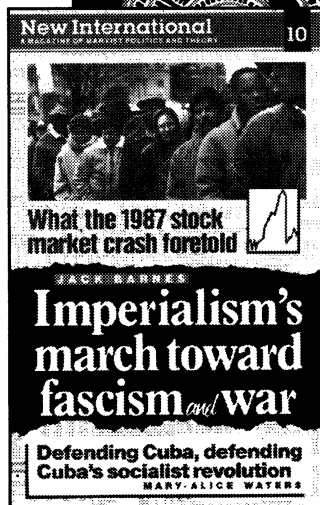
Exchanges from the early 1960s and from today on the relevance of the political and economic perspectives defended by Ernesto Che Guevara. In *New International* no. 8. \$10.00



The Politics of Chicano Liberation

EDITED BY OLGA RODRIGUEZ

Lessons from the rise of the Chicano movement in the United States in the 1960s and 1970s, which dealt a lasting blow against the oppression of the Chicano people. Presents a fighting program for those determined to combat divisions within the working class based on language and national origin and build a revolutionary movement capable of leading humanity out of the wars, racist assaults, and social crisis of capitalism in its decline. \$15.95



New International no. 10

- *Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War* by Jack Barnes
- *What the 1987 Stock Market Crash Foretold*
- *Defending Cuba, Defending Cuba's Socialist Revolution* by Mary-Alice Waters
- *The Curve of Capitalist Development* by Leon Trotsky. \$14.00

Also available in French, Spanish, and Swedish



POSTERS FROM THE PATHFINDER MURAL

The Pathfinder Mural features portraits of revolutionary leaders whose writings and speeches are published by Pathfinder. The mural, painted on the Pathfinder Building at the corner of West and Charles streets in Manhattan, was completed in 1989. More than 80 artists from 20 countries worked on the two-year project. The mural was covered this year to repair the wall of the Pathfinder building, which houses the editorial offices and printshop where Pathfinder books are produced. Order your copy of the large color poster of the entire mural. Also available are posters and postcards of the portrait of Malcolm X painted on the mural by Carole Byard, and the portrait of Nelson Mandela painted on the mural by Dumile Feni.

MALCOLM X: 18" x 24" color poster \$8.00

NELSON MANDELA: 16" x 23" color poster \$8.00

MURAL: Color poster of entire mural, 16" x 20" \$20.00

GET 15% OFF

JOIN THE PATHFINDER READERS CLUB OR BUY A MEMBERSHIP FOR A FRIEND

Pathfinder is the leading international publisher of books and pamphlets by revolutionary fighters whose struggles against imperialism, racism, exploitation, and oppression point the way forward for humanity. Joining the Pathfinder Readers Club makes it easy and less expensive to get the books you want to read and study.

For a U.S. \$10 annual fee, members receive a 15 percent discount on all Pathfinder books and pamphlets at any Pathfinder bookstore. You will also enjoy even higher discounts on special selected titles.

Contact the Pathfinder bookstore nearest you or send U.S. \$10 to Pathfinder, 410 West St., New York, NY 10014.

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 for the first item and \$0.50 for each additional item to cover shipping and handling.

Hundreds at socialist conferences discuss struggle for a proletarian party today

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

Nearly 500 industrial workers, students, and others took part in four regional educational conferences in Atlanta, Peoria, San Francisco, and Washington, D.C. November 29-December 1. The gatherings were sponsored by the Young Socialists and the Socialist Workers Party.

Participants celebrated the accomplishments of the five-month-long YS recruitment drive and discussed what steps to take to consolidate the growth of the Young Socialists into functioning chapters of a proletarian youth organization. Seven youth joined the Young Socialists at the conferences, bringing to 70 the number of new members of the YS. Many of the new recruits, who include a small but significant number of industrial workers, participated in the regional meetings.

The main reports to the conferences explained why spreading communist ideas on the job, at plant gates, picket lines, door-to-door in working-class communities, campuses, and elsewhere is the axis of work by the SWP and the Young Socialists. Participants discussed the necessity and opportunities for reconquering proletarian habits and methods of functioning in the party today, which slipped during the retreat of the labor movement in the last decade and a half. These are a precondition to taking maximum advantage of increased openings to build a communist party based among industrial workers and their unions as the class struggle sharpens today.

Socialist workers at the meetings also launched a \$280,000 capital fund to finance long-term improvements in the printing plant and editorial facilities of the communist movement in New York, where Pathfinder books and the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* are produced.

Nearly 100 of those who attended were 26 years or younger. The Atlanta regional conference had the highest percentage of youth and people attending a socialist gathering for the first time. Of the 80 people registered at that conference, 26 were in their teens and early 20s. Four young people joined the YS at the Atlanta meeting, two at the San Francisco event, and one in Peoria. In Washington, D.C., two dozen participants came from Canada, Greece, Iceland, Sweden, and the United Kingdom — the majority from Toronto and Montreal. A young steelworker from Toronto who went to the Washington event asked to join the Young Socialists in Canada. Three YS members asked to join the Socialist Workers Party.

More than 200 of those who attended the four conferences were industrial workers and members of trade unions. About 50 were students. Many were active in local Cuba coalitions. Those attending had also been involved in fights against police brutality, for abortion rights, and defending immigrant rights.

Participants at the four conferences bought some 200 books and pamphlets worth \$2,052. The top three sellers were the newly released *A Packinghouse Worker's Fight For Justice: The Mark Curtis Story* with 55 copies sold; *Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions* with 14 copies sold; and *Politics of Chicano Liberation* with 9 copies sold.

The gatherings were built on the theme "The changing face of U.S. politics: Charting the working-class road to socialist revolution." In addition to the feature presentations, the events included classes, socials, "Meet the Young Socialists" get-togethers, and book sales.

Volatility of stock market

"If you have been following the business dailies you will notice that the stock market has been skyrocketing in the last several months," said Jack Willey in the opening presentation at the Washington, D.C. conference. The talk was titled, "Resisting the bipartisan offensive on the working class; Organizing the gravediggers of capitalism." Willey is the organizer of the YS National Executive Committee, formerly the steering committee. He is also a member of the SWP's National Trade Union Committee.

The main presentations at the four conferences were given by leaders of the SWP and

YS, drawing from the party's National Trade Union Committee and National Committee, and the Young Socialists National Committee.

Recent articles in the big-business press have pointed to the volatility of the stock market, Willey said. "If you were [Federal Reserve] chairman Alan Greenspan wouldn't you be worried about the soaring stock market?" began an article in the front page of the November 25 *Wall Street Journal*. That day the Dow Jones industrial average exceeded 6,500, an all-time record. "A rising stock market is usually reassuring," the *Journal* said, "but one that rises a lot faster than economic fundamentals warrant is vulnerable to sudden decline."

The article continued, "Suggestions that Mr. Greenspan will raise in-



ing people of world capitalism's depression conditions, the SWP leader said.

"Offering political weapons such as *New International* no. 10 to workers and youth today is the most valuable thing communists can do," Willey stated.

Willey and speakers at other conferences said that the capitalist class has exhausted every alternative they've tried to shore up declining profit rates and open up a new period of sustained economic growth.



Militant/Leonel Cabrera (top), Hilda Cuzco (left) Above, Young Socialists leader Brock Satter addresses Atlanta conference. Lots of participants were eager to speak in discussion on talk by Joe Swanson on "Communist work and the trade unions" at gathering in Washington, D.C. (left).

terest rates, primarily to push down stock prices, are misguided. The last time the fed deliberately tried that was in the late 1920s. The result wasn't pretty. It's very hard to surgically prick a balloon. You may let out a lot more air than you bargained for."

Four days after the conferences, Greenspan gave a speech at the American Enterprise Institute. He said, in reference to the stock market, that "irrational exuberance has unusually escalated asset values, which then become subject to unexpected and prolonged contractions as they have in Japan over the past decade." The next morning, stock market prices in Europe and Asia tumbled two to four percent and the Dow Jones experienced its largest slide since this summer.

When events such as these unfold, the communist movement has invaluable political weapons to turn to, Willey said in his talk. He pointed to "What the 1987 stock market crash foretold," a resolution adopted by the 1988 convention of the Socialist Workers Party and published in the Marxist magazine *New International* no. 10.

The document explains that throughout the history of capitalism, every major economic and social crisis has been signaled in the most volatile and vulnerable spot in the capitalist economy: the arena of credit and monetary relations. In their ceaseless quest for higher returns on investments, and faced with declining profit rates since the mid-1970s, the capitalists have been pouring money in paper values in the stock and bond markets rather than investing to expand capacity of industrial plants and equipment. The 1988 resolution refers to the observation by Karl Marx that under capitalism "the production process appears simply as an unavoidable middle term, a necessary evil for the purpose of money making."

As the SWP document pointed out, Willey said, "The 1987 stock market crash was a warning sign that a creeping social crisis will become the reality for the vast majority of workers and farmers around the world... whose inevitable product will be mass political battles that will tie together as never before in human history prospects for working people in city and countryside."

The recent fit of giddiness by Wall Street investors and the rulers' fears that their frenzied speculation has made financial markets more vulnerable to another crash point to the devastating consequences for work-

The prospects for opening vast new markets for capitalist investment and trade in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe after the collapse of the Stalinist regimes there have turned out to be nothing but illusions, said *Militant* editor Naomi Craine, who gave the first feature presentation in Peoria. The ceaseless economic and political instability in Russia, the recent wave of protests against the Milosevic regime in Yugoslavia, and the tense relations between Washington and Beijing are few of the examples pointing to this reality, Craine said.

The Clinton administration's decision to maintain the NATO occupation force in Bosnia for another 18 months shows the difficulty the imperialist powers face to overturn the non-capitalist social relations in a workers state, even with tanks and armed forces on the ground.

Since the mid-1980s, the capitalists have used code words like "downsizing" and "re-engineering" to describe the cost-cutting course forced on them through stiffening competition, noted Willey in his talk. But the combination of layoffs, speed up, chipping away at wages, and computerization has not reversed the bosses' long-term profits slide.

The only real option for the owners of capital to boost profit rates and beat their competitors today is a frontal assault on the wages, working and living conditions, and social entitlements of working people, Willey said. At the dawn of the 21st century capitalism has nothing more in store for humanity than economic depression, instability, rise of incipient fascist currents, sharp trade conflicts, and more wars.

Ultimate target is industrial workers

"Our handbook, *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*, clearly points out what the main target of the bourgeoisie is," said Willey, referring to a section of the book by SWP national secretary Jack Barnes.

"The ultimate target of the rulers' austerity drive is the industrial workers," Barnes says, "for the same reason that the industrial workers have been at the center of our strategy since the founding of Marxism — their economic strength; their social weight; the example they set for the whole class; the power of their unions to affect the wages, conditions, and thus the entire social framework of the class struggle; their resulting potential political power vis-à-vis the enemy class; the obstacle they pose to rightist so-

lutions by the bourgeoisie. The industrial workers are both the source of most of the rulers' surplus value and the ultimate enemy that the rulers must defeat if the entire economic and social crisis of their system is to be turned around."

The Democratic administration of William Clinton has led the bipartisan assault on the working class, said Dennis Richter, who gave the opening talk at the San Francisco conference. Richter, a rail worker and member of the United Transportation Union from Morgantown, West Virginia, is a member of the SWP's National Trade Union Committee. He pointed to the anti-immigrant legislation, Defense of Marriage Act, and the Welfare Reform Bill Clinton signed before being re-elected this year as harbingers of the second Clinton term.

"Now Democrats and Republicans are preparing a multi-faceted assault on Social Security retirement pensions as a universal entitlement," Richter said. "Their goal is to undermine working-class solidarity and reinforce the dog-eat-dog competition capitalism imposes on workers."

On the morning of December 1, as the conferences were in their final session, Democratic Senator Daniel Moynihan appeared on the NBC television show "Meet the Press" to publicize his endorsement for arbitrarily lowering the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The index is used as a measure of inflation to calculate cost-of-living adjustments for Social Security and other federal programs and for many union contracts. A week later, Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin announced his support for rigging the CPI, while a bipartisan panel appointed by Clinton declared it will soon issue a report with several options for privatizing Social Security.

Going hand-in-hand with the assault on the social wage are restrictions on democratic rights, Richter said. He pointed to the administration's "anti-crime" and "anti-terrorism" bills that have expanded use of the death penalty and pushed back freedom from illegal search and seizure.

Widespread allegations of corruption and sexual misconduct by public officials have also become a permanent feature of bourgeois politics, the SWP leader pointed out. This coarsening of politics, which reaches new heights during the election campaign, fuels resentment in the middle classes. If workers pick up on it, social solidarity among working people is undercut.

It's important for class-conscious workers to always take the moral high ground and explain why only the working class can lead humanity out of the corruption and decay bred by the profit system.

"The recent exposures of rape and sexual harassment of female recruits by their officers in U.S. army bases illustrates the immorality of the U.S. military brass and of its masters in Washington, whose system perpetrates the degradation of women throughout society," stated Richter.

The Pentagon's record here stands in sharp contrast to that of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces — an army born out of a successful socialist revolution and in a state where workers are in power with a communist leadership, the SWP leader pointed out. The FAR's policy of prohibiting violence and harassment against women was implemented unambiguously in Angola, where tens of thousands of Cuban volunteers helped defeat the apartheid army of South Africa in the late 1980s, as well as in many other internationalist missions.

Workers, youth resist

It is this kind of revolutionary example that many young people, many workers can be won to emulate in the United States today as they resist the bosses' offensive, Richter said.

Most of the speakers and many of the conference participants during discussion periods pointed to numerous examples of working-class resistance — from the 10-week-old strike by 4,500 steelworkers against Wheeling-Pittsburgh Steel in the Midwest, to protests against police brutality in Florida and Mississippi, and marches to defend affirmative action in California.

Meg Novak, a member of the National Committee of the Young Socialists and a steelworker in Peoria, Illinois, gave the second feature presentation in Washington, D.C. In her talk, she announced the just-concluded victory of the truckers in France who tied up transportation in that country for 12 days, winning a lowering of the retirement age and other demands.

Michel Dugré, a leader of the Communist League in Canada and a member of the United Steelworkers of America in Montreal, explained under discussion how the Quebecois struggle for independence is intertwined with new labor protests against austerity in that province.

"We are meeting a growing number of youth attracted to the working class and the revolutionary workers party," said Novak. "Young people who are repelled by the greed, hypocrisy, brutality, and inhumanity they see all around them; who are attracted to ideas and have political imagination. We find individuals and groupings of young people on high school and college campuses who consider themselves anticapitalist. They are getting together and discussing and going into their school libraries hoping they'll find some answers on how to fight the injustices of capitalism."

Stirrings of radicalization among youth signal broader social conflicts that are building up below, the YS leader said.

Propaganda, axis of party building

Large-scale and sustained class battles are not unfolding right now in most capitalist countries, said Verónica Ponce, who gave the talk "Youth and the Communist Movement" in San Francisco.

"But the political space is wide open for the communist movement to carry out steady propaganda work in the factories and in the streets, selling the books with the history and lessons of the labor movement, explaining what is unfolding in politics around the world now and why our class needs to lead a fight to overturn the wages system."

Socialists are building a party and youth organization that put propaganda as the axis of our political work, said Ponce, a member of the YS National Executive Committee. Getting the *Militant*, *Perspectiva Mundial*, and, above all, *New International* and Pathfinder books into the hands of fellow workers, students, and others is the number-one priority of socialists as they join demonstrations, participate in political meetings, or go to work, the YS leader pointed out.

"We are recruiting to imagination and deeds," she continued. "It takes a little imagination and study of the lessons of the past for young people who radicalize to go beyond what they react against and see concretely what they are for and how to achieve it." Young people are in the front ranks of those taking to the streets to demand that killer cops be brought to justice or who are looking to take a piece out of the ultrarightists who assault abortion clinics. Many of them become interested in radical ideas and in newspapers, magazines, books, and pamphlets that can give them clear answers to the questions they are grappling with. A number start checking out socialist organizations, hoping to find one serious enough to join.

"That's what we have to offer," Ponce pointed out, "not frenetic activity or more interesting street actions many other radical groups specialize in."

If communists are not an overwhelmingly propaganda movement, it is easier to leap outside the existing relationship of class forces and begin chasing illusions, putting more weight on any given strike or demonstration than it can bear, and then getting disappointed when it doesn't turn into a movement.

Don't we recruit mostly to activity? was one of the first questions asked at the Peoria conference. This was discussed widely at the regional gatherings.

What is to be done?

Several of the speakers drew an analogy between the strategic tasks of communists



Taking communist ideas to workers and others involved in struggle, such as Wheeling-Pittsburgh steel strikers, is axis of building proletarian party and youth organization.

today and the propaganda work of the Bolsheviks in the years leading up to the 1917 Russian revolution.

"Lenin was ridiculed by many currents in the workers movement at the time for arguing that propaganda work for the overthrow of the bourgeoisie must be the focus of Bolshevik work," Craine said in her talk in Peoria.

In the opening years of this century, communists within the Russian Social-Democratic Labor Party fought to build the kind of proletarian party needed to lead workers and peasants to a revolutionary seizure of power. This struggle led to a split in the party in 1903 between the Bolsheviks and the reformist Mensheviks. The pamphlet *What Is to Be Done?* by V.I. Lenin was published as part of the polemic the Bolsheviks led.

"Social-Democracy leads the struggle of the working class, not only for better terms for the sale of labor power, but for the abolition of the social system that compels the

propertyless to sell themselves to the rich," Lenin wrote in that pamphlet.

"We must take up actively the political education of the working class and the development of its political consciousness," Lenin argued. "The question arises, what should that political education consist in?... It is not enough to *explain* to the workers that they are politically oppressed." Revolutionary social-democracy has always included the struggle for reforms as part of its activities, the Bolshevik leader said, but it subordinates that "to the revolutionary struggle for freedom and for socialism."

Classes on the history of the Russian revolution were among the most popular at the conferences.

Discussion on the place of propaganda in party-building work was not confined to the conference sessions but spilled over into the classes and the informal get-togethers during breaks.

At a class at the Atlanta conference on

'It's a good time to get serious, join YS'

Seven people joined the Young Socialists in the United States and one in Canada during the regional socialist educational conferences. Below are interviews with some of them and others who attended their first socialist gathering.

SAN FRANCISCO — Among those attending the Western Regional Socialist Educational Conference here November 29-December 1 were members of the newly-formed Spokane, Washington, chapter of the Young Socialists. Brandon Greenwood, 17; Casey Hamer, 18; and Wil Elder, 17, discussed their plans to build the Young Socialists with *Militant* reporters here. The two-week old YS chapter has six members, including one who joined at the conference.

Prior to joining the Young Socialists, the Spokane youth had begun to get involved in political activity. They joined recent protests against racist violence in Spokane, and set up meetings for Socialist Workers Party members from Seattle to speak on the Cuban Revolution. Greenwood, along with others who, as he put it, "want and desire to make a change," attended these meetings, and discussed politics with Elder, who had met the SWP two years ago at a radical philosophy conference in Des Moines, Iowa. "A two-year pounding into their heads on why [socialism] was the right road" has paid off, Elder said. They had been trying to set up a socialist youth organization for some time, he explained, and "it was perfect timing — the YS asking us to get involved. Better to belong to an international organization. We have to be serious, organized."

Elder said that the socialist conference made a big impact on all of them. Long nights of political discussion, and the meetings where Socialist Workers Party leaders talked specifically with young people "broke down for us" the power and social weight of the industrial workers.

The Spokane Young Socialists plan to get a weekly bundle of 5 *Militants* and Pathfinder literature, which they want to sell downtown, at community colleges, and at places where large numbers of young workers are employed. They also will be taking socialist literature to unionists at Boeing and the large Kaiser aluminum smelter in Spokane, as well as joining SWP members from

Seattle in selling communist propaganda to farm workers in the Wenatchee apple orchard region.

— Jim Altenberg and Chris Rayson

ATLANTA — Miles Merz, a 21-year-old student at Miami Dade College, decided to join the Young Socialists at the Atlanta conference. "I've been reading some Marx, some history, and about labor struggles for some time now. I came in contact with the movement several months ago. At the conference I can see it's not a bunch of experts, but common people like us who can change society."

Jason Fults, also 21 and a college student from Lakeland, Florida, met the Young Socialists at the October 12 march on Washington for immigrant rights, and at a Common Ground conference in Orlando. "I bought the *Militant* at the march, found out about the conference, and Miles and I decided we would go," Fults said. "What impressed me about the conference is I've never met such a knowledgeable and articulate group of workers. The presentation on imperialism blew me away," he continued. "I've always viewed things like corporate greed and corporate corruption as separate things, but I'm beginning to see that they're all connected. It's not just the corporations, but capitalism that sucks."

Fults bought *Imperialism: the Highest Stage of Capitalism* by V.I. Lenin, and *The Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels.

— Betsy Farley and Andrew Blake

PEORIA — Asked what he got out of the socialist conference, Tony Simon, 19, said, "After attending classes on the Russian revolution and the Cuban revolution, I plan to study some Marxist classics to get a better foundation." Simon, who is a second year

"Black Liberation and Socialism," Gale Shangold, a garment worker and member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees in Los Angeles, explained how socialist workers play an essential role in the fight for affirmative action.

"We don't just join demonstrations," stated Shangold, who is also a member of the SWP's National Trade Union Committee. She read from a leaflet produced by liberal forces in California that was distributed at mobilizations protesting the anti-affirmative action Proposition 209 in that state. The flyer, produced by the Metropolitan Alliance, sought support by arguing that it's a myth that affirmative action promotes quotas. "We say affirmative action is a weapon for working people against the bosses only if it's enforced *with* quotas," Shangold said. "We join in, argue a communist political line, and sell books like *The Changing Face* that has the best explanation of the class character of the battle for affirmative action."

Young Socialists members from the newly formed YS chapters in Athens, Georgia; McAllen, Texas; Fresno, California; and Spokane, Washington, attended the conferences in Atlanta and San Francisco. There are no party branches or Pathfinder bookstores in those cities. By the end of the conferences, YSers in these groups who hadn't already done so decided to put in orders for Pathfinder books and bundles of the *Militant*.

Salm Kolis, a member of the United Auto Workers who assembles cars at the Ford

Continued on Page 14



Militant/Carole Lesnick

From left are Brandon Greenwood, Casey Hamer, and Wil Elder, members of new Young Socialists chapter in Spokane.

student at Drake University in Des Moines, Iowa, joined the Young Socialists at the conference.

Simon said his first political involvement was with the Sierra Club, an environmental group. About a year ago Simon bought an introductory subscription to the *Militant*, which was a big help, he said, in his desire to find out more about politics. For the past few weeks Simon has been reading *The Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels and *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War, 1956-58* by Ernesto Che Guevara.

Simon said the report and discussion on communist trade union work was the most interesting topic. At the conference he bought a copy of *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics — Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions* by Socialist Workers Party National Secretary Jack Barnes.

Manuel Fernández, a part-time factory worker and a student at St. Augustine College in Chicago, said the conference was very interesting and that he now had "a better understanding of the ideas of socialism." He attended classes on the Cuban revolution and immigrant workers. Fernández, 31, said one of the highlights of the weekend was the drive to Peoria, where he learned about the recent United Auto Workers strike against Caterpillar.

— Frank Forrestal and Sara Katz

'Hedged' contracts, high prices squeeze working farmers

BY SHIRLEY PEÑA
AND DOUG JENNESS

DES MOINES, Iowa — A federal agency announced November 13 that it is challenging the legality of grain contracts that have been in dispute between corn and soybean farmers and the owners of grain elevators throughout the Midwest. The Commodity Futures Trading Commission (CFTC), a federal regulatory agency, has filed administrative complaints against Grain Land Cooperative in Blue Earth, Minnesota, two other grain marketing cooperatives, a St. Louis brokerage firm, and a marketing consultant, over promotion and marketing of grain derivative contracts referred to as "hedge-to-arrive" (HTA) contracts.

Two days later, in a seemingly contradictory move, a county judge in southwestern Minnesota ordered 58 farmers to deliver more than 1 million bushels of corn under the same type of contracts that the CFTC has declared illegal.

Throughout the Midwest this past year, thousands of grain farmers have faced losses of tens of millions of dollars because they are unable to meet contracts signed with elevator owners and other grain buyers. Losses in Iowa alone are running upwards of \$120 million; potential losses are estimated at \$1 billion for all of the Corn Belt. In Dayton, Iowa, a 50-year-old farmer, Marlan Bloomquist, is reported to have hung himself over money owed to a local elevator.

The crisis has reached the point where farmers have felt their only recourse is refusing to deliver grain under conditions grain merchants and elevator operators claimed were agreed upon by hedge-to-arrive contracts. For example, in June, 150 farmers informed the Grain Land Cooperative in Blue Earth County, which has 3,000 members, that they wouldn't fulfill their contractual obligations to deliver their grain to the co-op.

The resulting loss for the cooperative is estimated at up to \$20 million. In response, the managers of the Grain Land Cooperative filed suit against some of the producers, who it claimed had broken contracts for the delivery of hundreds of thousands of bushels of corn. Nationally, elevator owners are suing farmers for amounts ranging from \$31,400 to \$1.5 million.

In October, the Blue Earth farmers responded, filing a suit asking the federal district court to declare the hedge-to-arrive contracts unenforceable.

The finger of blame for disastrous effects of the hedge-to-arrive contracts has been pointed at everything from alleged poor business practices of individual farmers to inept policies of local grain elevator operators.

Due to the insecurity of the capitalist market with its sudden fluctuations, most farm-

ers don't sell all their grain in direct cash sales. If they did, farmers would often end up getting paid less than the cost of production if the selling price is especially low at the time of delivery.

The wide disparity in prices is shown in the highest and lowest cash prices for a bushel of soybeans. In 1995, the disparity was \$2.67; in 1994, it was \$1.69.

Farmers try to offset market insecurity

To try to protect themselves against the hazards of the market, farmers over the years have employed a variety of methods, including futures and options contracts traded at commodity exchanges and handled by a broker or local grain merchant. This allows them to expand the time span they are able to market their produce.

There are at least a dozen types of contracts a farmer can enter into in the futures market. A typical one is when the grain seller contracts to deliver a promised quantity of grain and the elevator owner pays an agreed upon "locked-in" price during a specified time period. This contract is employed when the farmer tries to "hedge" against a drop in grain prices by receiving a guaranteed price.

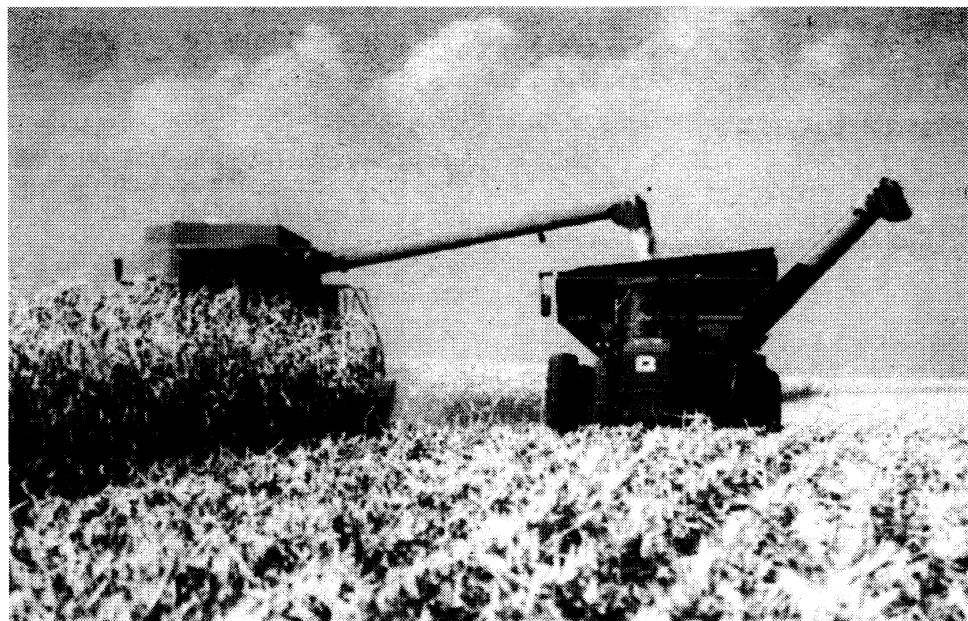
Many of the grain buyers are middlemen between the farmers and the big grain traders. They also take steps to "hedge" their future costs and increase their profit margins by entering into futures and options contracts in the grain market using their contracts with farmers as collateral. (In addition to grain sellers and buyers, there are speculators who have nothing to do with the grain business but simply buy and sell commodity futures on various commodity exchanges, much like their ilk play the stocks and bonds market on Wall Street.)

The hedge-to-arrive contracts, which started being used in the early 1980s, are designed to be a defense against falling prices. The contract specifies delivery at a set price, but at no set date. Some farmers will tie up as much as five years of crops in such contracts — if they believe that the market is heading downward.

If the price, however, on the Chicago Board of Trade goes up and is higher than the designated future price, the buyer, not the farmer, collects the difference. In such cases, farmers would do better to sell their grain on the open cash market and many do, with the intention of buying more grain later at lower prices to meet their contract obligations to the grain elevator owners.

George Naylor, a farmer from Churdan, Iowa, explained to the Associated Press, "There's nothing wrong if you're really hedging grain during a time when you have grain in hand. It's when you're speculating that there's a problem."

This year, however, grain prices went through the roof as the result of a smaller



Harvesting corn in Iowa. When grain prices shot up, working farmers who had signed contracts to protect themselves from falling prices were confronted with crisis.

than usual crop in 1995 and a big increase in exports, especially to China. As one savings bank president asked rhetorically, in a *Wall Street Journal* report last summer, "Who'd ever think \$5 corn could break farmers?"

High grain prices spur crisis

Many farmers holding HTA contracts expected they would be able to "roll over" their promised delivery into next year's harvest, a common practice in pricing contracts. But with skyrocketing grain prices, many farmers were unwilling to wait to deliver their grain to the elevator owners when they could sell it for unusually high prices right away. They argued that the HTA contracts gave them the right to choose when they delivered their corn and at a price they liked or to sell in the open market at a higher price and defer delivery indefinitely to the grain elevators. This has meant that the elevator owners began losing money hand-over-fist as they did not have the grain to fulfill their own futures contracts they had sold on the grain exchange; thus, the intensified conflict between farmers and grain dealers.

Many farmers caught up in the contract crisis have pointed to misleading agreements that did not spell out who would bear the cost if grain prices shot up. In June, 40 Iowa farmers filed a federal class-action suit charging fraud against ADM Investors Services, a futures dealer owned by Archer-Daniels Midland Co., one of the world's largest agribusinesses. In response to mounting anger among farmers, the CFTC announced that it would "aggressively investigate" alleged fraud in the HTA contracts.

A minority of grain farmers have been using this particularly risky form of contract and even many of them have worked out compromises with the grain dealers. In cases like the Grain Land Cooperative — most of whose 3,000 members aren't using hedge-

to-arrive contracts — many farmers are resentful that they will have to share the burden of the cost of contract breaches by a minority. The operators are attempting to use this to pit farmer against farmer.

The recent contract crisis has underscored again the true nature of producers cooperatives in the United States today as capitalist, profit-making enterprises in which the interests of working farmers count for little.

At the same time, the current crisis is another reminder of how working farm families can't achieve any kind of security within the framework of the capitalist market. The dog-eat-dog competition of capitalism is reflected in the manner in which agribusiness functions — from the futures market, the international trade monopoly of farm machinery, seeds, and pesticides to the bankers.

The Socialist Workers Party candidates in the recent elections explained that profit-making has to be taken out of the trade of all agricultural commodities, including grain. This can only be accomplished, they explained, through government monopoly of farm trade in which farmers can be guaranteed a price to meet production expenses and have a decent living standard. To establish a state monopoly of trade that will truly benefit working people, wage workers and working farmers will need to mobilize a mass revolutionary movement that can sweep aside capitalist political rule and establish a government of workers and farmers.

Shirley Peña is a member of United Auto Workers Local 997 in Newton, Iowa and was the 1996 Socialist Workers candidate for U.S. senate in Iowa. Doug Jenness is a member of United Steelworkers of America Local 9198 in Roseville, Minnesota, and author of Farmers Face the Crisis of the 1990s.

UK gov't stalls on Ireland

Continued from front page

ers David Irvine and Gary McMichael for talks at 10 Downing Street. They have repatriated three political prisoners to Ireland and at the same time intensified the brutality of the conditions for those in British jails.

British Secretary of State for northern Ireland Patrick Mayhew, speaking in Manchester, England, stated, "Sinn Fein say they believe real negotiations are the only way forward. I agree." At exactly that same moment in northern Ireland the Royal Ulster Constabulary were sent to raid homes and community centers, beating people up in Ballymurphy, Belfast.

The day after their rejection of Sinn Fein's proposals the British government announced that 1,000 pounds of home-made explosives had been found near a British army barracks in Armagh, northern Ireland. The British press carried major stories of how the Sinn Fein leadership was not to be trusted.

Since then the government has arrested Roisin McAliskey, whose mother is former Irish nationalist MP Bernadette McAliskey nee Devlin, alleging that she was involved in a IRA mortar attack on a British Army base in Germany.

The background to this situation is the progress made through the summer. Nationalist communities across northern Ireland significantly increased their organization and self-confidence in the course of resisting the systematic Unionist aggression of

the "marching season," a series of rightist parades that attempt to pass through nationalist areas.

Over the last two weeks Unionist gangs of up to 500 have carried out attacks on Catholics going to Mass in Ballymena, northern Ireland. "We will protest here as long as [the Catholics] have a church to go to — and that might not be very long" one of those interviewed told the press.

In an attempt to reverse the gains made over the summer, and divert attention from the pressure for negotiations, pro-British forces have carried out a series of provocative attacks against fighters for Irish unity. The most vicious was the police raid in Hammersmith, London, in late September when Diarmuid O'Neill was murdered. Several street actions and public meetings have already been called to protest the police action and demand a public inquiry into the killing of O'Neill.

The court appearances by Roisin McAliskey have been marked by noisy pickets against the British government. The brutal conditions in which she was being held — despite being four and a half months pregnant — have been ameliorated.

The initial response to these attacks is in marked contrast to the campaign to break the 1974 frame-up of the Irish workers who became known as the Birmingham Six. That defense campaign did not get off the ground for several years, and even then campaigners were spat at on the street.

for further reading from Pathfinder

FARMERS FACE THE CRISIS OF THE 1990s



Farmers Face the Crisis of the 1990s

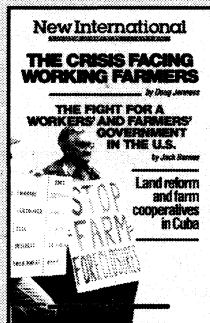
Doug Jenness

Examines the deepening economic and social crisis in the capitalist world and explains how farmers and workers can unite internationally against the mounting assaults from the billionaire bankers, industrialists, and merchants of grain. \$3.50

The Fight for a Workers and Farmers Government in the United States

Jack Barnes

The shared exploitation of workers and working farmers by banking, industrial, and commercial capital lays the basis for their alliance in a revolutionary fight for a government of the producers. In *New International* no 4. Also includes "The Crisis Facing Working Farmers" by Doug Jenness and "Land Reform and Farm Cooperatives in Cuba." \$9.00



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

Profit drive causes Eurotunnel disaster

BY PETE CLIFFORD

LONDON — "I think that another minute or two and everyone would have been dead in that train" said lorry (truck) driver John Harvey, a survivor of the Channel Tunnel fire November 18.

The fire was on a freight train 11 miles into the world's longest undersea tunnel, between France and England. It began on wagons containing freight lorries at the rear of the train. Within minutes toxic smoke swept the length of the train towards the compartment containing 31 lorry drivers. Temperatures reached 1000°C, leaving wagons welded to the track. Nineteen people were treated at hospitals from the blaze.

Harvey's statement contrasts sharply with that of Alain Bertrand, Eurotunnel's operations director, who initially claimed, "Existing safety procedures have worked pretty well."

Within a few days, however Eurotunnel management was forced to admit that they had to fall back on their third, last ditch option for coping with fires. The first op-

tion was that the train driver should continue a further 20 miles to the exit on the English side, relying on the ventilation system to prevent the spread of the fire or smoke. This was impossible under the circumstances. In that case, the passenger carriage and front locomotive should have automatically uncoupled from the rest of the train; a power failure prevented this.

The third option was then used. The train crew led the passengers off the train to a central service tunnel, which was sealed from the effects of smoke. This took some 20 minutes. From there they were put on a train in the second tunnel and evacuated.

Bertrand had to admit that the fire had been "very serious." Two Eurostar passenger trains, two tourist shuttles, and two lorry shuttles were in the tunnel at the time.

One survivor, Ian Edwards, explained that the smoke "just started getting thicker and thicker. People were coughing and choking and some were vomiting.... We all genuinely thought we were goners." Edwards and other drivers were only able to breathe through

paper towels soaked in water; he criticized the lack of oxygen equipment and sprinkler systems.

The fire, which took nearly 14 hours to put out, damaged at least 600 meters of the tunnel. The concrete lining was scorched, miles of power cables were destroyed, and a section of the track buckled beyond repair. The fire destroyed the rear locomotive and nine lorries.

Train's design helped fire spread

Safety experts and the Fire Brigade Union are blaming the design of the wagons used to carry lorries as being responsible for the fire spreading so rapidly. Unlike the trains that carry cars and smaller freight lorries, which are enclosed and have a fire door between every four vehicles, these trains have semi-open wagons. Drivers travel in a separate compartment at the front of the train.

An article in the November 20 *London Times* described how safety officials insisted that semi-open wagons presented an unac-

ceptable risk, especially if one caught fire and a free flow of air spread the fire. But Eurotunnel had already ordered the shuttles from the designer and pressed for the semi-open wagons because they would be lighter and able to carry lorries of up to 44 tons at a faster speed and lower cost than the cross-channel ferries. The *Times* writer concluded that "the safety authority, under the threat of legal action from Eurotunnel, abandoned its better judgment."

The Fire Brigades Union has also criticized the car trains, noting that passengers stay in their cars for the 35-minute journey. The union says this opens them to the danger of car fires from electrical faults. There would be less of a danger if passengers traveled separately, but it would add to the travel time.

Eurotunnel is currently negotiating with banks over its £8.8 [\$US 14.5] billion debt. It is estimated it will make the second largest corporate loss ever in the UK, according to the *Financial Times*.

When the Channel Tunnel was opened two years ago, the tunnel companies claimed it was the eighth wonder of the world. They aimed to take the bulk of the trade from the ferries, especially in the light of the 1987 Zeebrugge ferry disaster when 188 people drowned due to the car ferry's bow doors still being open as it left the port.

Since the opening of the tunnel two years ago, over 50 percent of vehicles travel through it rather than on the ferries, and the airlines report a 30 percent decline in trade, mainly lost to the passenger train company Eurostar. Behind this is a massive price war between those competing for the channel traffic. To cut costs the ferry companies have made substantial lay-offs, and Eurotunnel was planning to save £30m through redundancies (layoffs).

Eurostar too was seeking a 10 percent cut in its wage bill through redundancies and increased workload. It became a fully private corporation in May 1996. London and Continental, Eurostar's owners, aim to achieve profitability by 1998, three years ahead of schedule. This, they say, will aid funding their main enterprise — a new rail link from London to the tunnel. When they bought the rights to this for £3 billion, Eurostar and other assets worth £5.7 billion were thrown in as a sweetener by the government.

Drive for profits threatens safety

It is this drive for profits fueled by the competition between the ferry companies, airlines, and tunnel companies that leads to unsafe travel conditions. The *Times* reported that Eurotunnel had expected a fire once a year. "Basically we were expecting a fire from day one," the paper cited one Eurotunnel spokesperson as saying.

Nor is this danger restricted to the tunnel. This was brought home in the days following the fire, when a near miss was reported over Heathrow airport and the entire London underground system was brought to a standstill by an electrical fault.

The *Times* noted that more "elaborate precautions" were made to protect the tunnel against "terrorist threats" than against the kind of fire that occurred. Two days after the fire, Eurotunnel was running enclosed wagon trains with freight along the undamaged tunnel and confirmed plans to purchase another 72 semi-open wagons. Eurostar aimed to resume its passenger trains in the coming week without the damaged tunnel being totally repaired and running.

The Channel Tunnel safety authority announced November 19 it was launching an inquiry into the fire, however its deliberations will be in secret. In response, the Fire Brigades Union has called for a full public inquiry. Both of the main rail unions in the UK — the Rail, Maritime and Transport union and the drivers union ASLEF — have made no statement about the fire.

At a meeting of Eurostar RMT members, though, one worker raised, "If the Consumers Association and all kinds of safety bodies can have something to say, why can't the rail unions." The union branch decided to press the RMT to issue a statement about the fire. Before and after the meeting, several workers discussed how it is only workers and their unions that can organize the fight for safety that's needed.

Pete Clifford is a member of the Rail, Maritime and Transport workers union.

Aged equipment behind rail accident

BY LINDA MARCUS
AND RUTH ROBINETT

NEWARK, New Jersey — On the morning of November 23 at 6:30 a.m., an Amtrak mail and passenger train eastbound from Newark to New York derailed on an 88-year-old swing bridge in Secaucus, New Jersey.

Two engines, a baggage car and three passenger coaches — half the train set — crashed 30 feet down an embankment into a marshy ravine. Safety guide rails on the Portal Bridge kept the train upright until the lead cars had traversed the bridge, although the train was off the rails.

The National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) and the Federal Railroad Administration's (FRA) initial investigation agreed with union officials on-site that the immediate cause of the derailment was a broken connecting plate on the running rail, where the miter joints open and close to allow movement of the bridge.

A mechanism lifts the bridge structure up away from the stationary rail before it pivots 90 degrees to allow river traffic through. The bridge apparently closed incompletely and the miter rail sat on top of the connecting rail, touching but not aligned. This acted as a ramp from which the train's wheel shot, and landed on the ties, but inside the safety rails on the 100 feet high bridge.

Some 32 passengers of the 108 people aboard — 16 employees and 16 others — suffered minor injuries, mainly sprained necks and backs, though two off-duty union members were hospitalized for several days. The operating engineer received lacerations and 13 stitches.

As Amtrak's Mail 12 Train tumbled southward, it fouled the adjoining west-bound track and side-swiped an Amtrak train en route to Richmond, Virginia, with another 100 plus passengers aboard. The mail train's track was bent and pulled off the main line downhill, and the overhead catenary wires were ripped out on both tracks, shutting down rail travel here for 24 hours. This section of Amtrak-owned railroad services New Jersey Transit commuter trains as well; combined it carries more than 300 trains a day, one of the heaviest trafficked pieces of territory in the country.

The engineer was running at 60 mph in 70 mph territory through a green (clear) signal indication. In the case of a break in the rail, the system is supposed to display a red stop signal. But the automatic signal system read the misaligned rail as a connected rail because the contact made a complete circuit.

Earlier that night, the bridge tender reported trouble opening the Portal Bridge for a tug to pass. A Building & Bridges electrical inspector found nothing amiss during the night-time visual inspection. Both union employees were taken out of service (suspended) pending the investigation and drug and alcohol testing. Generally, the regular schedule for inspection of these moveable bridges is every two weeks. The Portal Bridge opens and closes 3 or 4 times a day.

The FRA did agree to "inspect" all of the nation's 200 or so moving bridges by December 31. Edward English, the agency's director of safety, said the bridges had worked well for decades. "We're going to

be looking for any problem that may exist, but frankly, I don't expect to find any," English told the *New York Times*.

All moveable bridges are fairly old since new bridge technology builds them high enough for river traffic to pass beneath them. The Northeast has the highest concentration of moveable bridges in the country, with a total of 36 between Washington and Boston.

The initial reaction by co-workers in the New York crew base was one of relief that the injuries suffered by passengers and fellow workers were less severe than they could have been. There was a furious sharing of names of employees "deadheading" (commuting to work on Amtrak) on the Mail 12, the earliest train east to New York Penn Station to make their various job assignments.

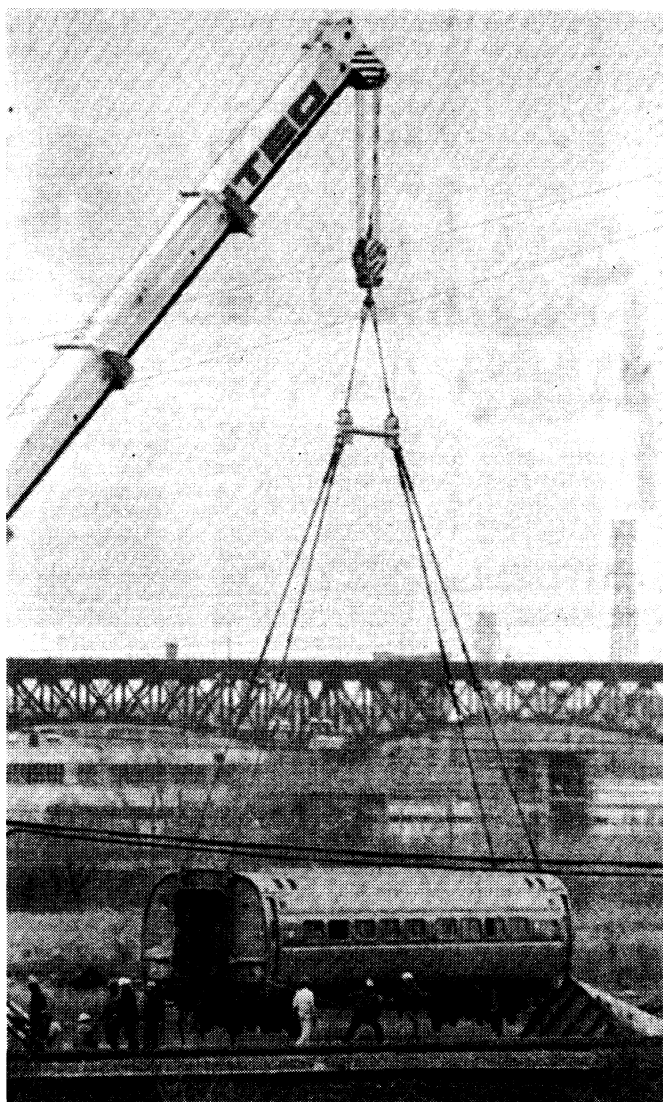
The framework of a deteriorating railroad infrastructure, increasing pressure from rail traffic, and declining operating capital from the state and federal governments, which place a low priority on public transportation, set the stage for future disasters. Mike Flora, a longtime engineer from Washington pointed out "job cuts in Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employees means less maintenance and inspection will more and more have a cost in the safety of the traveling public and the railroad employees."

Rider demand is often higher than Amtrak's limited equipment can meet. As a result we find crowded conditions on certain peak trains. Conductor R.P. Riggs from Washington commented that "if this accident had taken place a few days later, during the heaviest travel days of the year for Amtrak [the Thanksgiving Holiday weekend], there would have been people poured into the coaches like sardines. Then the seriousness of this accident would be clear.... There would be bodies all over the place in Secaucus. Amtrak got lucky."

The underlying cause of the accident was exposed when several *New York Times* articles revealed industry and agency debates on whether to use current laser and other sensing systems on heavily used bridges. Clarence V. Monin, international president of the Brotherhood of Locomotive engineers said "The technology is there to detect bridge misalignments. These accidents don't have to happen."

The FRA, the agency that could require the devices, gets to the heart of the matter saying they cost too much.

The NTSB first recommended some kind



Derailed Amtrak car hoisted out of a marsh in New Jersey

of sensor in 1979 after a derailment in Utah. Ideas advocated range from the mounting of a monitor on the magnetic field on either end of a bridge to detect movement on the rails, to an electric eye technology which is described as "no more complicated than a garage door opener."

Advocates of the sensor systems say accidents like this one could have been prevented, as well as the most tragic accident in Amtrak's history. In 1993, a train plunged into the Alabama Bayou eight minutes after a barge hit a railroad bridge, knocking the rail several feet out of place. This wreck killed 47 people and injured 103 others.

After the Alabama disaster, Congress ordered the FRA to consider various sensor proposals. The FRA, which has the power to impose safety regulations, concluded, "the cost was too high because there were only a few rail accidents a year that involve bridges," and they have not required them.

The FRA and the NTSB both function within the framework of government regulations designed to protect big business' profitability. This is codified under a 20-year-old presidential order that mandates that the railroads are not permitted to impose new rules unless they meet strict calculations of cost and number of lives it would save.

Linda Marcus and Ruth Robinett are members of UTU Local 1370 at Amtrak.

Bipartisan probes against Social Security

Continued from front page

ers receive when they retire, and allowing Washington to invest up to 40 percent of the Social Security trust fund in stocks.

Panel members backing this plan include George Kourpias, president of the International Association of Machinists; Gerald Shea, assistant to the president of the AFL-CIO; and Gloria Johnson, director of social action for the International Union of Electrical Workers.

Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan, who supports proposals to cut Social Security and raise the retirement age, expressed reservations at the idea of sinking Social Security funds into private stocks. Putting these funds in the stock market may not "increase the rate of return on Social Security trust fund assets," Greenspan said in a December 8 speech, "and to whatever extent it does, would likely be mirrored by a comparable decline in the incomes of private pensions and retirement funds." Greenspan chaired a bipartisan congressional panel in 1983 that proposed taxing Social Security payments and increasing Social Security deductions from workers' wages, measures that President Ronald Reagan later signed into law. The federal reserve chair stated his approval of the CPI commission report.

Clinton officials endorse rigging CPI

The consumer price index is used to calculate increases in federal pensions for veterans and civil service employees, Social Security benefits, alimony and child support payments, standard deductions for income tax, and cost of living adjustments for many union contracts. The railroad retirement program, with some 800,000 beneficiaries, is also pegged to the consumer price index.

Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin and other Clinton administration officials endorsed the CPI commission report. "We have to do exactly what Michael Boskin in his report said," said Rubin on the December 8 NBC television program "Meet the Press." He was responding to a question from the program host about the recommendations led by commission chair Michael Boskin, a former Chairman of the President's Council of Economic Advisers under President George Bush.

Another White House official, budget director Franklin Raines, said the administration would work with Congress to study the Boskin commission's report in an "expeditious way," the *Washington Post* reported.

Rubin, who is also the chairman of the Medicare trust fund, commented on other attacks on entitlements. He stated the Clinton administration had proposed "a much more limited set of Medicare cuts" than the Republicans. Clinton called for chopping \$124 billion from the Medicare budget between 1995 and 2002, while Congress pressed for a \$158 billion cut. "The Medicare trust fund," Rubin asserted, "has an exhaustion date that is now estimated to be 2001." Under Boskin's proposals Wash-

ington would supposedly save some \$1 trillion over the next 12 years through smaller cost-of-living increases to Social Security recipients and higher taxes. The government would pay lower benefits to nearly 45 million beneficiaries receiving Social Security and 6.5 million elderly recipients of Supplemental Security Income. The commission's recommendations would also lower funds for the 26 million people receiving food stamps and the 25 million children participating in subsidized nutrition programs, while some 5 million students would receive less money from federal student grants.

Clinton continues to lead the charge against the social wage won from decades of struggles by working people. He recently bragged about the 15 percent drop in the welfare rolls since his election in 1992. Some 121 million people have stopped receiving welfare payments since January 1993. "That is the biggest drop in the welfare rolls in history," Clinton declared in a radio address December 7. "Our strategy has worked," he crowed.

A November 30 article in the *New York Times* reported that 10 million poor children account for two-thirds of the beneficiaries of welfare checks, and 5 million more receive other forms of aid, such as hearing aids and school breakfasts. Some 20 percent of the children in the United States live below the poverty line, which the U.S. government set at \$15,771 for a family of four in 1995. Six million of these children are considered extremely poor, existing on less than half that income.

Maintaining bipartisan foreign policy

Meanwhile, Clinton's recent cabinet appointments reflect a decision to maintain the same bipartisan course on foreign policy of using more military intervention abroad. On December 5, the president announced his choice for secretary of state, Madeline Albright. As the chief U.S. delegate to the United Nations, she has been in the forefront of Washington's attacks on the Cuban revolution.

Albright has been a stronger proponent than most White House officials in arguing for using military force in Yugoslavia, Iraq, Haiti, and elsewhere around the globe. "What's the point of having this superb military you're always talking about if we can't use it?" she reportedly chided former Gen. Colin Powell during a discussion on Bosnia.

Clinton also selected William Cohen, a former Republican senator, as his defense secretary and Samuel Berger for his national security adviser. Berger called for expanding NATO and using Washington's military might in "Bosnia, the Middle East or elsewhere."

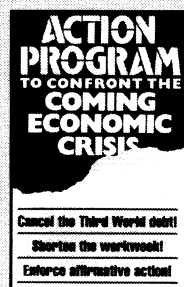
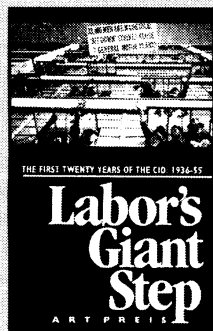
Reflecting an increasing willingness in the Clinton administration to use U.S. troops abroad, Gen. John Shalikashvili, who will remain Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, told the *Financial Times* of London on December 10, "In today's world we need to consider the use of military forces when America's other interests are threatened." Shalikashvili emphasized the U.S. rulers would "pay any price" when their vital interests were at stake.

FROM PATHFINDER

Labor's Giant Step The First Twenty Years of the CIO: 1936-55

by Art Preis

The story of the explosive labor struggles and political battles in the 1930s that built the industrial unions. And how those unions became the vanguard of a mass social movement that began transforming U.S. society. \$26.95



An Action Program to Confront the Coming Economic Crisis

Available in English, French, Icelandic, Spanish \$3.00

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

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

ALABAMA

Birmingham

U.S. Troops Out of Yugoslavia! Speaker: Alyson Kennedy, Socialist Workers Party, and member of United Mine Workers of America Local 1928. Fri., Dec. 20, 7:30 p.m. 111 21st St. South. Donation: \$4. Tel: (205) 323-3079.

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Roots of the Yugoslav Crisis. Speakers: Dan Dickenson, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Dec. 20, 7:30 p.m. 2546 W. Pico Blvd. (1 1/2 blocks west of Vermont.) Donation: \$4. Tel: (213) 380-9460.

FLORIDA

Miami

Eyewitness Report Back on Cuba. Discussion with activists who recently returned from Cuba. Fri., Dec. 20, 7:30 p.m. 137 N.E. 54th St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (305) 756-1020.

IOWA

Des Moines

The World Food Summit: A Perspective to Feed the World's Hungry? Fri., Dec. 20, 7:30 p.m. 2724 Douglas Ave. (one block west of Martin Luther King Blvd.) Donation: \$4. Tel: (515) 277-4600.

MICHIGAN

Detroit

Yugoslavia: Behind the Recent Events. Fri., Dec. 20, 7 p.m. Dinner 6 p.m. 7414 Woodward

Av. Donation: \$4. Dinner: \$5. Tel: (313) 875-0100.

MINNESOTA

St. Paul

The Irish Freedom Struggle. Speaker: Gaetan Whiston, Young Socialists. Fri., Dec. 20, 7:30 p.m. 2490 University Av. Donation: \$4. Tel: (612) 644-6325.

BRITAIN

Manchester

Police Attacks Hillborough and Workers Rights. Speaker: Paul Galloway. Fri., Dec. 20, 7 p.m. 60 Shudehill. Donation: £2. Tel: 0161 839 1766.

—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: 111 21st St. South. Mailing address: Suite 252, 267 West Valley Avenue Zip 35209. Tel: (205) 323-3079. Compuserve: 73712,3561

CALIFORNIA: Los Angeles: 2546 W. Pico Blvd. Zip: 90006. Tel: (213) 380-9460, 380-9640. Compuserve: 74642,326 **San Francisco:** 3284 23rd St. Zip: 94110. Tel: (415) 282-6255, 285-5323. Compuserve: 75604,556

CONNECTICUT: New Haven: Mailing address: P.O. Box 16751, Baybrook Station, West Haven. Zip: 06516.

FLORIDA: Miami: 137 N.E. 54th St. Zip: 33137. Tel: (305) 756-1020. Compuserve: 103171,1674

GEORGIA: Atlanta: 803 Peachtree St. NE. Zip: 30308. Tel: (404) 724-9759. Compuserve: 104226,1245

ILLINOIS: Chicago: 1223 N. Milwaukee Ave. Zip: 60622. Tel: (773) 342-1780. Compuserve: 104077,511 **Peoria:** 915 N. Western. Zip: 61650-0302. Mailing address: P.O. Box 302. Tel: (309) 676-2472. Compuserve: 104612,147

IOWA: Des Moines: 2724 Douglas Ave. Zip: 50310. Tel: (515) 277-4600. Compuserve: 104107,1412

MASSACHUSETTS: Boston: 780 Tremont St. Zip: 02118. Tel: (617) 247-6772. Compuserve: 103426,3430

MICHIGAN: Detroit: 7414 Woodward Ave. Zip: 48202. Compuserve: 104127,3505 Tel: (313) 875-0100.

MINNESOTA: Twin Cities: 2490 University Ave. W., St. Paul. Zip: 55114. Tel: (612) 644-6325. Compuserve: 103014,3261

NEW JERSEY: Newark: 87A Halsey. Mailing address: 1188 Raymond Blvd., Suite 222. Zip: 07102. Tel: (201) 643-3341. Compuserve: 104216,2703

NEW YORK: New York City: 59 4th Avenue (corner of Bergen) Brooklyn, NY Zip: 11217. Tel: (718) 399-7257. Compuserve: 102064,2642. Compuserve: 104075,35 ; 167 Charles St., Manhattan, NY. Zip: 10014. Tel: (212) 366-1973.

NORTH CAROLINA: Greensboro: 2000-C S. Elm-Eugene St. Zip 27406. Tel: (910) 272-5996. Compuserve: 103475,672.

OHIO: Cincinnati: P.O. Box 19484. Zip: 45219. Tel: (513) 662-1931. **Cleveland:** 1832 Euclid. Zip: 44115. Tel: (216) 861-6150. Compuserve: 103253,1111

PENNSYLVANIA: Philadelphia: 1906 South St. Zip: 19146. Tel: (215) 546-8218. Compuserve: 104502,1757 **Pittsburgh:** 1103 E. Carson St. Zip 15203. Tel: (412) 381-9785. Compuserve: 103122,720

TEXAS: Houston: 3260 South Loop West. Zip: 77025. Tel: (713) 349-0090. Compuserve: 102527,2271

UTAH: Salt Lake City: 209 E. 300 S. Zip: 84111. Tel: (801) 355-1124. Compuserve: 76714,1545

WASHINGTON, D.C.: 1930 18th St. N.W. Suite #3 (Entrance on Florida Av.). Zip: 20009. Tel: (202) 387-2185. Compuserve: 75407,3345.

WASHINGTON: Seattle: 1405 E. Madison. Zip: 98122. Tel: (206) 323-1755. Compuserve: 74461,2544.

WEST VIRGINIA: Morgantown: 242 Walnut. Mailing address: P.O. Box 203. Zip: 26507. Tel: (304) 296-0055. Compuserve: 70543,1637

Palestinian struggle

Continued from front page

would not leave until it was reopened. The Israeli government shut the school down in March as part of a crackdown against Palestinian resistance. "We're not terrorists," said Issa Jaradat, "We didn't kill Yitzhak Rabin, Yigal Amir [an Israeli rightist] did, but they didn't shut down Bar-Ilan University," where Amir attended. Students held strong while Israeli armed soldiers surrounded the campus. After over seven hours, Tel Aviv agreed to reopen a Polytechnical College, while entering talks with the students on reopening Hebron University.

CORRECTION

The photostory on the Washington State speaking tour of Johana Tablada, third secretary of the Cuban Interests section, which appeared in the December 16 *Militant*, incorrectly stated that she spoke at a citywide meeting at El Centro de la Raza in Seattle. Tablada did tour that community center, and met with its director, but the citywide meeting took place at a different venue.

Freudian slip — As Thanksgiving approached, more than 6,000 New Yorkers were chopped from welfare rolls because of a computer error. Form letters had been sent



Harry Ring

asking if they wanted to remain on welfare (!). The private company processing the responses logged in "yes" as "no."

He's been around the block —

A New York Legal Aid lawyer commented on the welfare mess-up: "We are obviously very anxious. We have found them to be much more efficient in closing cases than in opening them."

It's mom, not capitalism—Researchers say they've found a gene that stimulates self-confidence and good cheer and another, much more common, gene that prompts chronic anxiety. However, they report, such genes affect only 4 percent of people. Most important of the many other genetic and environmental factors, they advise, is parenting practices.

We'll check our thrift shop —

"If you buy that [\$1,200] quilted Dior bag, you spend a lot of money and you feel great. It's like we're allowed to sin when we shop again." — Retailer consultant David Wolfe.

The caring system — Protests in Rockford, Illinois, forced the resignation of James Shelden, head of the city zoning board. The board was considering a proposal to build a fence that was needed, reportedly, to keep a single patient at a mental home from wandering into traffic on a nearby road. Said Shelden, the best thing that could happen is if the resident "got out and climbed over the fence.... It would save us a lot of money."

Life of the party — Known for his "off-beat" comments, Shelden explained that his remarks about the disabled person was intended to break up the monotony. "The meetings get quite dull," he said.

Like Uncle — UK's Ministry of Defense admitted 200 people had been used over a 40-year period as radiation guinea pigs. Evidence compiled by the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament forced the admission after a denial two years earlier. The CND charged that civil service workers, under heavy pressure, agreed to inhale, eat, or be injected with radioactive substances. Officials said the amount was "negligible."

Includes foam-at-the-mouth lather — A CD ROM game offers a "flight simulation game where the top guns of the United States Navy defend its air station at Guantanamo Bay. Join a heroic squadron of veteran pilots, enter the danger zone over the Caribbean island, and try to destroy precious resources which fuel the enemy machine."

On the one hand — The London Stock Exchange reports that during the fiscal year that ended in June, 250 brokerages racked up profits totaling £719 million (about \$1.2 billion U.S.).

...and on the other — In Britain, during 1995-96, 30 percent of babies were born into poverty.

Marx: workers' labor is the source of all value

In attempting justify their assault on Social Security, Medicare, and other conquests of the working class, the capitalist press and politicians try to convince workers that there is a set amount of resources available for such things, and that there will simply not be enough to go around tomorrow if there aren't cutbacks today. This myth is false to the core, and it's not a new question.

BOOK OF THE WEEK

In 1865 John Weston, a workers' representative from England and member of the General Council of the International Workingmen's Association, put forward the often-heard assertion that wage increases do not benefit workers and the struggle for them is in fact harmful to workers' interests. Karl Marx answered him in two speeches to the organization, explaining how capitalists derive their profit, or surplus value, from workers' labor. The division of the value created by labor is not set in stone, and therefore a rise in wages means a fall in profits, or vice versa.

Marx's presentation was published in a pamphlet, *Value, Price and Profit*, which remains a classic of scientific socialism today. The excerpts below are from the chapters titled "Production of surplus value" and "General relation of profits, wages and prices." Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY KARL MARX

Now suppose that the average amount of the daily necessities of a labouring man require *six hours of average labour* for their production. Suppose, moreover, six hours of average labour to be also realised in a quantity of gold equal to 3s [shillings]. Then 3s. would be the *Price*, or the monetary expression of the *Daily Value* of that man's *Labouring Power*. If he worked daily six hours he would daily produce a value sufficient to buy the average amount of his daily necessities, or to maintain himself as a labouring man.

But our man is a wages labourer. He must,

therefore, sell his labouring power to a capitalist. If he sells it at 3s. daily, or 18s. weekly, he sells it at its value. Suppose him to be a spinner. If he works six hours daily he will add to the cotton a value of 3s. daily. This value, daily added by him, would be an exact equivalent for the wages, or the price of his labouring power, received daily. But in that case no *surplus value* or *surplus produce* whatever would go to the capitalist. Here, then, we come to the rub.

In buying the labouring power of the workman, and paying its value, the capitalist, like every other purchaser, has acquired the right to consume or use the commodity bought. You consume or use the labouring power of a man by making him work, as you consume or use a machine by making it run. By paying the daily or weekly value of the labouring power of the workman, the capitalist has, therefore, acquired the right to use or make that labouring power work during the *whole day or week*. The working day or the working week has, of course, certain limits, but those we shall afterwards look more closely at.

The value of labor power

For the present I want to turn your attention to one decisive point.

The *value* of the labouring power is determined by the quantity of labour necessary to maintain or reproduce it, but the *use* of that labouring power is only limited by the active energies and physical strength of the labourer. The daily or weekly value of the labouring power is quite distinct from the daily or weekly exercise of that power, the same as the food a horse wants and the time it can carry the horse are quite distinct. The quantity of labour by which the *value* of the workman's labouring power is limited forms by no means a limit to the quantity of labour which his labouring power is apt to perform.

Take the example of our spinner. We have seen that, to daily reproduce his labouring power, he must daily reproduce a value of three shillings, which he will do by working six hours daily. But this does not disable him from working ten or twelve or more hours a day. But by paying the daily or weekly *value* of the spinner's labouring power the capitalist has acquired the right of using that labouring power during the *whole day or week*. He will, therefore, make him work daily, say, *twelve hours*. *Over and above* the six hours required to replace his wages, or the value of his labouring power, he will, therefore, have to work *six other hours*, which I shall call hours of *surplus labour*, which surplus labour will realise itself in a surplus *value* and a *surplus produce*.

If our spinner, for example, by his daily labour of six hours, added three shillings' value to the cotton, a value forming an exact equivalent to his wages, he will, in twelve hours, add six shillings' worth to the cotton, and produce a *proportional surplus of yarn*. As he has sold his labouring power to the capitalist, the whole value or produce created by him belongs to the capitalist, the owner *pro tem*. of his labouring power. By advancing three shillings, the capitalist will, therefore, realise a value of six shillings, because, advancing a value in which six hours of labour are crystallised, he will receive in return a value in which twelve hours of labour are crystallised.

By repeating this same process daily, the capitalist will daily advance three shillings and daily pocket six shillings, one half of which will go to pay wages anew, and the other half of which will form the *surplus value*, for which the capitalist pays no equivalent.

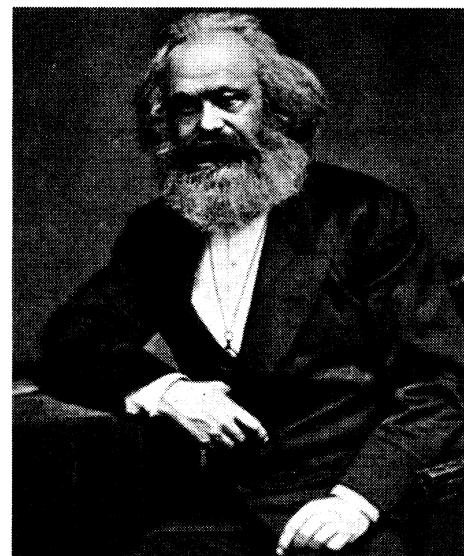
It is this *sort of exchange between capital and labour* upon which capitalistic production, or the wages system, is founded, and which must constantly result in reproducing the working man as a working man, and the capitalist as a capitalist.

The *rate of surplus value*, all other circumstances remaining the same, will depend on the proportion between that part of the working day necessary to reproduce the value of the labouring power and the *surplus time or surplus labour* performed for the capitalist. It will, therefore, depend on the *ratio in which the working day is prolonged over and above that extent*, by working which the working man would only reproduce the value of his labouring power, or replace his wages....

Relation between profits and wages

Deduct from the value of a commodity the value replacing the value of the raw materials, and other means of production used upon it, that is to say, deduct the value representing the *past labour* contained in it, and the remainder of its value will resolve into the quantity of labour added by the working man *last* employed. If that working man works twelve hours daily, if twelve hours of average labour crystallise themselves in an amount of gold equal to six shillings, this additional value of six shillings is the only value his labour will have created.

This given value, determined by the time of his labour, is the only fund from which both he and the capitalist have to draw their respective shares or dividends, the only value to be divided into wages and profits.

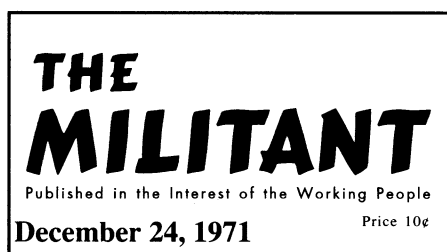


Karl Marx

It is evident that this value itself will not be altered by the variable proportions in which it may be divided amongst the two parties. There will also be nothing changed if in the place of one working man you put the whole working population, twelve million working days, for example, instead of one.

Since the capitalist and workman have only to divide this limited value, that is, the value measured by the total labour of the working man, the more the one gets the less will the other get, and vice versa. Whenever a quantity is given, one part of it will increase inversely as the other decreases. If the wages change, profits will change in an opposite direction. If wages fall, profits will rise; and if wages rise, profits will fall.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—



SAN ANTONIO, Texas — Over 1,200 Chicanos marched and rallied here November 20 to protest the almost daily beatings Chicanos have been suffering at the hands of police. The march also protested the fact that 10 Chicanos have been murdered by police in 1971 alone.

The marchers, starting out about 500 strong, gathered strength as they marched five miles through the predominantly Chicano West Side of San Antonio to the Alamo. Organized by Mario Cantú, (a Raza Unida Party supporter and owner of Mario's Restaurant in San Antonio), Father Edmundo Rodríguez of Guadalupe Parish, and the Brown Berets, the demonstration attracted support from other areas, including Crystal City, Houston, Dallas, and the Rio Grande Valley.

The demonstration had a great impact on Chicano by-standers. Hundreds joined as the march progressed including a number of GIs, who heard the shouts of "Raza Sí, Guerra No!" and "Raza Sí, Gringo No!" and joined the rally at the Alamo.

The rally, which was held in Spanish and chaired by Mario Cantú, included as speakers Gregoria McCumber; Dr. Jorge Lara Braud, a priest and professor at Our Lady of the Lake College; José Morales, leader of the San Antonio Brown Berets; and

Mario Obledo, director of the Mexican-American Legal Defense and Educational Fund (MALDEF) in California.



December 21, 1946

Secretary of State James Byrnes officially admitted before the United Nations General Assembly December 13 that 96,000 American troops are still garrisoned in the Philippines. This is more than two-thirds the size of the active standing army in the United States in the interval between the two world wars.

Why is Washington holding these huge forces in the Philippine Republic a half year after the declaration of Philippine "independence"? One objective is to threaten the Philippine people with Wall Street's armed might if they attempt to carry forward the rebellion against the native landlords and capitalists that reached heroic heights during and after the Japanese occupation. Another obvious objective is to make sure Wall Street retains its imperialist grip on the islands' economy.

The day before Byrnes admitted the enormous size of the garrisons in the Philippines, the press reported Washington "has been pressing for a dozen first-rate military and naval bases in the Philippine Republic".

These "major positions" would be tied together with a network of smaller stations, converting the islands into a tightly woven military area for operations throughout the North Pacific and the Asiatic mainland.

Available from Pathfinder

Selected Works of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels

in three volumes

Value, Price and Profit is included in the second volume of this collection, and the first contains *Wage-Labor and Capital*. These two pamphlets are based on speeches by Marx to working-class organizations. They offer an essential introduction to understanding the economic underpinnings of class-divided society and why the working class must lead the fight to overturn the wages system.

Each volume: \$19.95

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

Protest attack on Social Security!

Now is the time for working people to protest the wealthy rulers' probes to privatize Social Security and gut other social entitlements. During the first week of December, the bosses' political servants claimed that the consumer price index overstates inflation, so cost-of-living raises in Social Security and other benefits are "too high." After seeing no response to this trial balloon, they floated the schemes of a bipartisan commission, set up by the Clinton administration, to map out deeper attacks on social entitlements.

This is a crucial question for the labor movement. It is the height of class collaboration for top union officials to participate in a commission whose purpose is to plan out how to tear up the social wage of the working class as a whole. Instead of brainstorming for a kinder, gentler scheme to shaft working people, labor needs to be mobilizing to defend these rights. These gains are the fruits of the blood and sweat from decades of struggle — of the mighty class battles in the 1930s and the gigantic civil rights movement in the 1950s and 60s.

By placing a portion of Social Security funds on the stock market and into private retirement savings accounts — promoted in the plans pushed by Clinton's advisory council — the rulers aim to shift the burden of the capitalist crisis on to the family and break down solidarity among the toilers.

The crisis is not in the so-called Social Security trust fund, but in the declining profit margins of the capitalist class. In order to reverse the long-term decline in their average rate of profit, the employers need to increase the portion of value created by workers' labor that goes into their pockets, not ours. As part of this they need to get rid of "welfare as we know it," Social Security "as we know it," unemployment compensation, student grants, Medicare, Medicaid, and all other entitlements.

The bosses can only accomplish their aims by waging a direct assault on the industrial working class. Working people around the world are faced with the same probes by the capitalist rulers as those in the United States. In Europe, hundreds of thousands of workers have marched in the streets, waged strikes, and held other protest actions when the bosses tried to push similar austerity measures there. The corporate barons at the Daimler-Benz auto company and other employers in Germany were forced to back down after 100,000 workers hit the bricks when they tried to impose a 20 percent cut in sick-pay benefits.

This is an example for workers in the United States. It is only through resistance that we gain the collective strength to keep the wealthy class and their political servants, like Clinton, from throwing the elderly, the disabled, and millions of children onto the streets — and forge the unity needed to overturn their dog-eat-dog system.

Oppose Ottawa's assault on labor

The Ottawa government's move to force Canadian Auto Workers members at Canadian Airlines to vote on the company's concessions demands is an attack on democratic and union rights that the entire labor movement should oppose. It is a small indication of how far the capitalist rulers and their government are willing to go to wring more profits out of workers' hides. The company originally threatened to close down if workers did not agree to wage cuts of up to 10 percent.

The government's intervention follows moves by provincial governments to use legislation denying public sector workers' right to strike, and these governments' scrapping of collective agreements. By pushing the union bodies aside in order to impose a vote, Ottawa's action is a frontal attack on the unions — workers' principal defensive organizations.

As the bosses increasingly feel the squeeze of falling profit rates, pushing them to fiercer competition among themselves, they have no options left but to face off with workers in an effort to make them bear the brunt of the economic crisis. General Motors in Canada was willing to see its workforce strike, as it pushed for the concessions it needed from the union.

As the employers follow this course, they seek to narrow and eliminate workers' ability to unite and organize their resistance to the rulers' attacks. They must weaken and eliminate the industrial unions forged in battles during the last great capitalist depression.

Working people need to respond by standing up against every aspect of this offensive, from the concession demands of Canadian Airlines, to provincial cutbacks in education and health care, to chauvinist attacks on immigrants, Quebecois, and other oppressed nationalities.

The Canadian government's outrageous anti-democratic intervention into CAW members' union life should be denounced by all those fighting the rulers' austerity drive; by students demonstrating against tuition fee hikes, public sector workers marching against wage roll-backs and by all unions whose members will increasingly feel the need for union power in the battles ahead.

Building a proletarian party

Continued from Page 9

plant in Atlanta, is a leader of the SWP in that city. She said in an interview that consistent propaganda work by the party branches in the South during the election campaign and in the month preceding the conference, led to the success of the regional gathering there. "Instead of plowing new territory all the time we focused doggedly everywhere in the region we had some contacts," she stated.

As Brock Satter, a YS National Committee member who gave the talk in Atlanta on building the Young Socialists, put it, "Following through to discuss communist politics with those who buy our books and show some interest is the true trail to recruitment."

Build proletarian youth organization

Speaking at the Washington, D.C., conference, Novak pointed to *The Struggle for a Proletarian Party* by James P. Cannon, a founder of the communist movement in the United States and of the SWP. "This book is the real founding document of our party," she said. It is a manual of Leninist party organization. It documents a political struggle in the late 1930s with a petty-bourgeois current in the SWP, during which Cannon and other party leaders defended the political and organizational principles of Marxism. The debate unfolded as Washington prepared to drag working people into the slaughter of World War II.

The Struggle for a Proletarian Party served as the handbook for the young fighters who founded the Young Socialist Alliance in the heat of the battles to overthrow racist Jim Crow segregation and defend the victorious socialist revolution in Cuba in the late 1950s and early 1960s, Novak said. The YSA was the predecessor of the Young Socialists.

"In the same way, *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics* is our handbook today," she stated. Novak announced that Pathfinder plans to publish a Spanish-language edition of the book by June 1. This will be a big help in building the communist movement in Des Moines, Iowa, and other areas with increasing numbers of Latino workers, especially in meatpacking, she said. It will also boost party-building in Texas, California, Illinois, and other states where a rising militancy by Chicanos and Mexicans is increasingly marking politics.

Later in the program, Michel Prairie, editor of *Nouvelle Internationale*, said that a large team of volunteers in Quebec, France, and the United States are translating *Changing Face* into French. The French-language edition will be published in October.

These steps are necessary to build a proletarian youth organization and communist workers party today, Novak said. She pointed out that a number of industrial workers in factories where party members work have joined the Young Socialists over the last few months — in Atlanta, Des Moines, and Washington, D.C. This has led the party and the Young Socialists to decide forming joint industrial union fractions in plants where two or more members of the two organizations work together. Novak said this would be one of the steps the YS National Committee would discuss at its upcoming meeting a week after the conferences (see article on front page).

Communist work in the unions

As part of this process, the party has to reconquer the proletarian methods of functioning and forms of organization outlined in *Changing Face*, said Sam Manuel who gave the last major presentation in Peoria. Many branches of the party will also be forming joint fraction-building jobs committees with the Young Socialists, Manuel said, where YS members have decided to get into industrial unions.

The goal of every party branch is to have several fractions of two to three members each in a number of different unionized plants in the region, carrying out consistent propaganda work on the job with a weekly rhythm that fits working-class life, the SWP leader said. In addition, every party member is assigned to a team that sells communist literature at a plant gate once a week. Branches are now taking steps to regularize these weekly plant gate sales at all the factories where the party has union fractions, reinforcing the propaganda work of communists inside the worksite, as well as at other plants and mine portals.

On the job socialist workers get the *Militant* around, sell books, and convince fellow workers to participate together in Militant Labor Forums, classes at the party headquarters, and other political activities, Manuel said.

"We measure our success by how well we do in meeting quantitative goals we set for ourselves on selling socialist literature," he stated. He reminded participants of a series of motions that established monthly goals for sales of Pathfinder books on the job and city-wide everywhere there is a party branch. These decisions were made by a party trade union leadership conference and an expanded meeting of the National Committee last February.

"When struggles break out, the structure, proletarian methods of functioning, and steady-as-she goes approach become more, not less, important," Manuel said.

SWP branches in New York and New Jersey took steps to revitalize such Bolshevik methods of functioning and forms of organization during a recent organizational tour by party and YS leaders of the branches and YS chapters in the region. The lessons of that tour were incorporated in the reports by Manuel and other speakers at the confer-

ences, beginning a discussion to generalize that experience throughout the party.

The four Thanksgiving regional conferences were the first in a series of party and YS meetings leading up to the SWP convention in June of 1997, Manuel said.

Propaganda-producing apparatus

"The last time the communist movement made a concerted effort to qualitatively transform its striking power and reconquer proletarian methods was while waging a working-class campaign against the imperialist assault on Iraq in 1990-91," said Joe Swanson, a meatpacker and member of the United Food and Commercial Workers in Des Moines. Swanson is also a member of the party's National Trade Union Committee. He gave the concluding talk at the Washington, D.C., conference.

He pointed participants to the dedication in issue no. 7 of the *New International*, featuring the talk by Jack Barnes "Washington's assault on Iraq: Opening guns of World War III."

"Numbers 7 and 8 of *New International*, issues against imperialism and war and on the political contributions of Ernesto Che Guevara, are dedicated to the men and women, who, in unflinching opposition to the war drive of Washington and its allies, produced a vast arsenal of political weapons — publications that tell the truth about imperialism and war and why the interests of working people the world over are irreconcilable with those of the exploiting classes," reads the dedication.

Those issues were also dedicated to worker-bolsheviks in ten industrial unions in North America, and those like them in other countries, "who took this arsenal and transformed their capacity as thinking workers to oppose imperialist war and to join with others in fights, on and off the job, against exploitation and oppression."

At that time the party made simultaneous progress in the union fractions and the apparatus producing these political weapons, Swanson said. "That's what we are also doing today."

At its 1991 convention, the party adopted a resolution by long-time SWP leader Mary-Alice Waters that is titled "Extending the arsenal of communist propaganda and reconquering the apparatus through revolutionary centralism." The document, which had been published in an internal party bulletin, was made available for sale to all participants at the conferences, and 85 copies were sold.

Classes on this resolution were organized at all the conferences, and were among the best attended. Many of the young people at the gatherings took part.

Chris Hoepfner, general manager of the printshop that produces Pathfinder books, and Kevin Dwire, who heads up the shop's bindery, presented the class in Washington, D.C.

"As Waters says, the only reason for the existence of the apparatus is 'to implement the decisions of the party's democratically elected leadership committees related to producing and improving our growing arsenal of communist propaganda,'" Dwire said in his presentation. "The document also laid the basis for reconquering the centralist methods of functioning that eroded in the 1980s. Worker-bolsheviks who quit their jobs and volunteer for three-year stints in the printshop come out of the experience politically stronger."

Hoepfner explained that by January 1 the warehousing and shipping of Pathfinder books and pamphlets will be transferred back to the Pathfinder building in New York, which houses the publisher's printshop and editorial facilities. For the last five years, Pathfinder books and pamphlets were stored and shipped out of a commercial warehouse.

The entire "pick-and-pack" operation will now be run out of the Pathfinder building and will be organized by the shop, utilizing previously wasted space on the third floor of the building. This will expand the factory producing the arsenal of political weapons, Hoepfner said.

The shipping and fulfillment operation will be organized on a just-in-time production schedule. Books will be produced every week to ensure none of the 300 titles Pathfinder distributes go out of stock. The publisher will provide a six-month list of books that are running low, which the shop will reprint in short runs, Hoepfner said. "Doing so, will allow us to decrease capital tied up in inventory as well as increase productivity, cut waste, and reduce printing costs."

Capital fund

At the conferences, over 35 participants — from some of the newest YS members in Spokane to veterans of the communist movement — volunteered to come to New York in December to help with the needed renovation, setting up shelves, and transfer of over 100,000 books.

To make this project possible and to finance other long-term capital needs, such as completing the repair of the south wall of the Pathfinder building, which was beginning to sustain structural damage from water leakage, a \$280,000 fund was launched at the four conferences.

The capital fund will last until February 28. So far some \$190,000 has been raised from more than 50 contributors. Donations come from individuals who through inheritance, job bonuses, company profit sharing, or other financial windfalls are in a position to contribute \$1,000 or more.

Those who would like to contribute can write to Pathfinder at 410 West St., New York, NY 10014, or call (212) 741-0690.

Workers have no interest in steel bosses' profits

BY DAVE FEAGIN

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah — Geneva Steel announced in October that it lost \$7.2 million in the year ending September 30. Sales of the steel coil, plate, and slab that Geneva makes rose 7 percent to \$712.7 million in the same period. In the third quarter, Geneva Steel set a record for steel production yet lost almost \$4 million.

United Steelworkers of America (USWA) local 2701 organizes workers at Geneva and currently has around 2,200 members.

Geneva Steel, located in Orem, Utah is the only integrated steel mill west of the Mis-

The July 18 *Wall Street Journal* ran an article by Erle Norton on this topic under the headline "Metal Fatigue: U.S. Steelmakers Run Mills Close to Capacity But Still Earn Little." Norton writes, "Yet despite strong demand and slowing imports, some major steelmakers are earning just a few measly bucks a ton." Norton interviewed Paul Wilhelm, president of USX Corp. U.S. Steel Group, the nation's biggest steelmaker, who stated, "We get shortsighted and cut the prices too easily."

It is not "shortsightedness" that is responsible for the low prices of steel today and therefore the low profits margins for the steel barons. After they have done all their modernization, computerization and downsizing possible, the steel companies are at each others throats in cutting prices in order to sell the steel. They are simultaneously forced to go after workers throats by slashing wages and benefits in order to compete.

Declining profit rates

Profits rates are declining and have been for nearly 25 years. The world capitalist economy has entered a depression, even though we are presently experiencing the end of an upturn in the capitalist business cycle in the U.S.

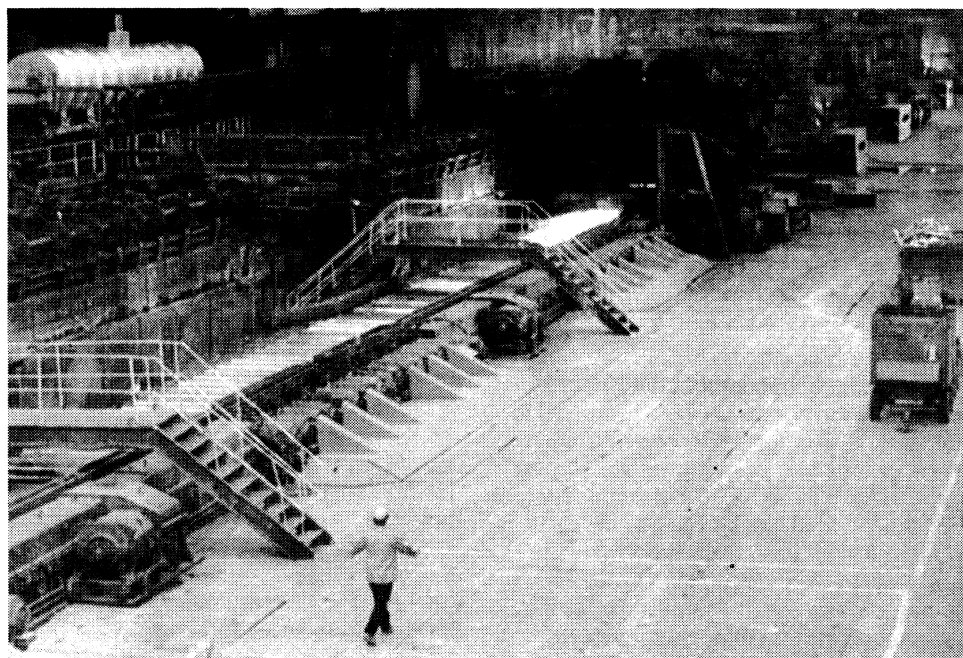
The *Wall Street Journal* article adds, "And by steelmakers inability to make much money is raising questions about what will happen when demand dries up, as it inevitable will in such a cyclical business." The article describes the steel industry "in its third consecutive year of booming production and theoretically in a position to rake in enormous profits. But profitless prosperity may be about as good as it gets."

You can see the nervousness and anxiety of the capitalist class in this article. The capitalist fear a deflationary collapse like the one that marked the opening years of the Great Depression of the 1930s.

They face a problem of overproduction. Under capitalism, overproduction is not measured in relation to social needs, but what can be sold at a price high enough to realize a competitive profit.

U.S. Steel's Wilhelm told the *Journal* what it will take to bolster profits will be to "strike labor agreements that reflect today's markets." This is their diplomatic language for deep concessions by the steelworkers union.

November 30 was the last day for some



Despite modern mills, computerization, and downsizing, steelmakers are forced to go after workers' wages and conditions in an attempt to raise their profits.

75 production workers at Geneva as the company laid them off due to falling orders. USWA local 2701's newsletter in November reported that orders in November were approximately half of what they were for October and they decline from there for succeeding months.

Some 30 miles north of Orem on the west side of Salt Lake City lies Kennecott Utah Copper, whose workers are also organized primarily by the United Steelworkers of America. A six-year concession contract was recently negotiated there. The copper industry faces the same deflationary pressures for the same reasons. The price of copper on the world market dropped from about \$1.20 a pound at the beginning of the year to around 90 cents a pound in September.

Kennecott earned \$93 million for the first half of 1996 — about one-third of the \$271 million reported during the same period last year.

Like in the steel industry, copper barons have modernized their facilities with expensive equipment to decrease the cost of producing a pound of copper. Last year Kennecott finished its \$880 million "state of the art" smelter here. (After being more than a year on line, there are still major problems running the smelter.)

Up to the mid 80s, Kennecott employed

7,500 workers before they shut down production, built a new concentrator and waited for copper prices to rise. After two years of shut-down, only a few thousand workers were called back.

Kennecott used to brag about its Bingham Canyon open pit copper mine here being the largest in the world. Chile now has a larger one and other copper mines have opened in Chile and other countries, leading to increased competition for market share and a fall in prices.

An analyst for the London-based Brandeis Brokers Ltd. told Bloomberg News Service that copper production will exceed demand by a record 240,000 tons in 1997. The 1996 surplus is estimated at 100,000 tons.

"1998 will be a very grim year indeed for copper prices," said Merrill Lynch's Monthly Base and Precious Metals Report in September. It predicts prices as low as 70 to 75 cents a pound by 1998.

Intensified competition spurred by declining profit margins is driving the employers in all industries to deepen their assaults on our wages, benefits, and working conditions. By clearly explaining this and pointing to the struggles of fighters like the striking steelworkers at Wheeling-Pitt, socialist solutions will get a larger hearing among USWA members and all working people.

UNION TALK

Mississippi River. (An integrated steel mill involves the total steelmaking process in one facility, from the iron ore to the finished steel product.) USX used to own the mill until it locked out its workers for almost two years in the mid-80s and then sold it to Joe Cannon, a local capitalist. Cannon promised the union members that if they made deep concessions so that he could modernize the plant, he would be able to save their jobs and would share the prosperity that would come a little later. Workers now have a lower hourly rate than when USX locked them out in 1986.

Like other steel producers in the United States, Geneva Steel spent millions in modernization of its facilities in order to increase productivity and lower the cost of producing a ton of steel. Some fifteen years ago the steel barons in this country cried "unfair foreign competition is ruining the U.S. steel industry" and demanded the U.S. government do something about it. None of that is heard today. With the modernizations and the cut in wages, the cost of production of steel in the United States is lower than in many other countries.

Price competition is the name of the game today. Deflationary pressures coming from increased competition, is responsible for Geneva's record steel production while losing money at the same time. Two decades ago, the six major integrated steelmakers controlled two-thirds of the industry. Today, amid dozens of steelmakers (especially minimills, which remill scrap steel), the Big Six control a third of the market.

LETTERS

50th anniversary of strike

In 1945/46, the end of World War II signaled an immense outbreak of long pent up militancy on the part of the working class here. The long hard period of the "no strike pledge" enforced by the labor leadership, burst apart at the seams, reaching a point in 1946 when upwards of 4.4 million workers were on strike. The high point of that strike wave was the Oakland, California General Strike in December of 1946, fifty years ago, when 125,000 workers affiliated with the AFL Alameda Central Labor Council launched a general strike demanding that the Oakland Police Department depart from its long time habit of beating up pickets seeking to organize unions. The event that triggered this upheaval was the attempts by the Retail Clerks' Union to gain a union contract for women salespersons employed by two downtown department stores. Many of the women there had been laid off from their defense industry job and forced back to traditional "women's work." In the course of this struggle, the Oakland Police Department followed its usual practice of scabhearding.

The strike provided an awesome view of working class power. The police disappeared from sight and the town was shut down tight. You could not buy a newspaper, ride a bus, eat at a restaurant, get gas, listen to the radio, etc....

The strike was successful: the cops were forced to halt their scabhearding and the retail clerks achieved recognition of their union.

In the aftermath of the strike, under the slogan, "why fight city hall; let's take it over," the Oakland Voters League ran labor candidates, won the election and took over control of the city.

All in all, it was a mighty demonstration of the power of working people then, offering today's new young fighters an example of labor's power and lessons for the future.

Paul Montauk
Oakland, California

Essential information

The *Militant* is an essential source of information for working-class fighters and social activists. Continue to remain an example of journalistic integrity.

W.C.
Freehold, New Jersey

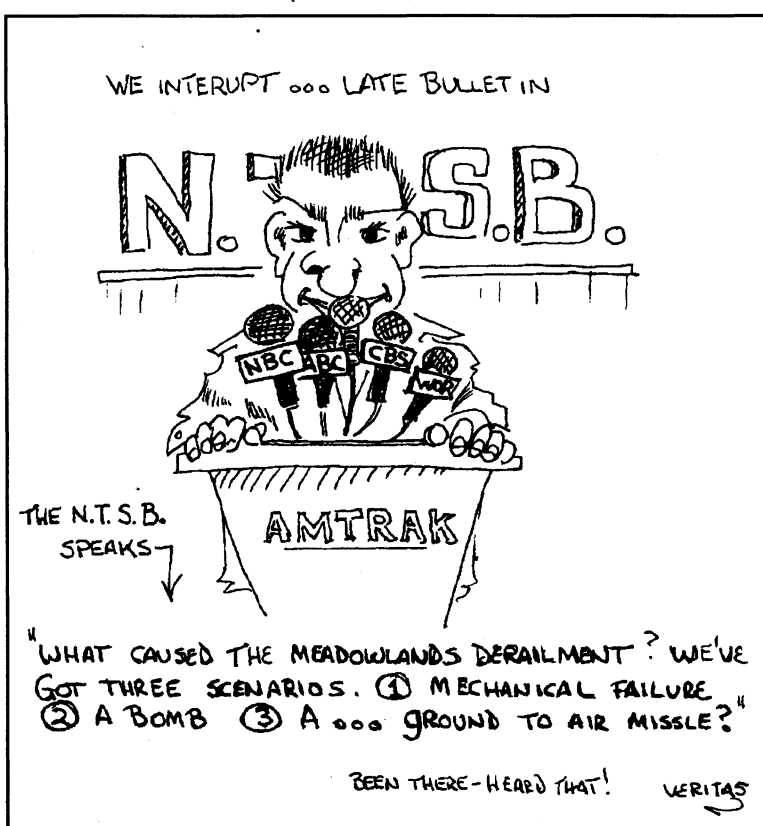
A good source for workers

I like your articles. The *Militant* is one of a few sources which reports actions of workers and immigrants for me. Good job.

H.F.
New York, New York

U.S. Navy in Puerto Rico

After a year of silence, the U.S. navy waited until after the election to revive its proposal to build in this U.S. colony, an over the horizon radar that can monitor air traffic over the northern half of South America, as far south as Bolivia. The Navy says that the proposed radar is needed to detect aircraft that



are smuggling illegal drugs. In 1995, tens of thousands in Puerto Rico protested the radar.

The Navy wants to build the transmitter on the island of Vieques and the receiver in the town of Juana Díaz on the main island. A year ago, the Navy touched off massive protests in a number of cities in Puerto Rico with its proposal to build the radar on Vieques and Lajas (see *Militant* November 20, 1995). The Lajas end would have been on land that is currently used for agriculture

and while the Navy already controls two-thirds of Vieques and could put the radar on land currently occupied by the military. Many of the protesters focused on the loss of farm land to the military so the Navy revised its proposal and hopes to defuse protests by putting both ends on existing military bases.

The Juana Díaz end will be at Fort Allen, a Navy facility that is used by the Puerto Rico National Guard for training. The Navy currently operates two of these radars

in Chesapeake, Virginia, near the border with North Carolina and in Kingsville, Texas, in the northeast part of that state. These radars were developed to be installed in Alaska to detect Soviet Backfire bombers taking off from airfields in Siberia. With the end of the Soviet Union they were diverted to cover Latin America and the Caribbean. The Navy says that the sole function of the radar is to look for drug traffickers and denies that they will be used for military purposes.

"I have no military task whatsoever," Robert Hillery, Commanding Officer of the Fleet Surveillance Support Command, told a group of journalists and law enforcement officers visiting the over the horizon radar in Chesapeake, Virginia. The Navy had paid the expenses of the group to travel from Puerto Rico to see the operating radar. When a reporter pressed him if the system has the potential to be used for military purposes he responded, "Why? Can a jeep be used for military purposes? I defer the question."

Although no new protests have yet been announced, a number of groups have promised to protest the new version of the radar.

Ron Richards
San Juan, Puerto Rico

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.

Farmers blockade roads in Greece

BY NATASHA TERLEXIS

ORHOMENOS, Greece — Cars heading north out of Athens on the county's all important North-South axis highway first meet police barricades about an hour and a half outside the city, where they are instructed to turn back. A few kilometers of totally empty roadway later you come up on the burning tires and the hundred or so parked tractors of the farmers' road block closest to the city.

The farmers here from the Orhomenos and Kastro Agricultural Associations fielded *Militant* reporters' questions as they dealt with requests from several vehicles to cross. Travel is not possible on this road without a signed and sealed letter from the Coordinating Committee of their struggle, located in Larisa, central Greece. Once such a document is produced to the farmers, who hold large sticks, the chain across the road comes down.

"We have no choice," said farm leader Giorgos Kostis, "not only are we prepared to spend Christmas on the roadblocks, but Easter, too."

Local and international land transport has come to a halt in this country and fuel and food shortages are beginning to appear. With its airport and port blockaded as well, nothing moves in and out of Thessaloniki, the county's second largest city and a major transport center for the Balkans.

The protests began November 28, with 5,000 tractors in the central region of Larisa cutting the country in half. They have now spread throughout Greece to include a fleet of about 10,000 tractors. The farmers are pressing demands for price supports, cheaper fuel, the rescheduling of \$1.3 billion worth of debts, and lower value added tax (VAT) on farm equipment.

"I would rather the government fell than back down!" was the response of recently elected Premier Costas Simitis one week into

the movement. He has stated categorically that his government will not retreat from its austerity budget by making up for subsidies no longer given by the European Union (EU).

The government's hard-line response is driven by fear that militant resistance to the budget, by public sector workers especially, would mushroom in the wake of a victory for the farmers. Simitis and the capitalists he represents aim to continue their attacks on the standard of living of workers and farmers, cut back further in social spending, and finance an extensive arms program to the tune of \$17 billion.

Their fears are well founded. Public employees have set a general strike for December 17, expecting a decision from the General Federation of Greek Workers to join them, while teachers unions are set to go out in the preceding days. Simitis has appealed to those farmers who voted his social-democratic PASOK party into power to turn their tractors back home.

In response to this tough stance, the December 7 national meeting of the local coordinating committees of the farmers' struggle responded that they would escalate the struggle. By the hour more tractors have been joining, including a new wave of PASOK-voting farmers, bringing the number of roadblocks to 97. They have cut off Athens entirely, as well as the passage to the south through the Corinth canal.

Farmers in Crete, who had been allowing the Athens market to be supplied by boat, have also put road blocks up. The coordi-



Farmers' tractors block main highway north of Athens

nating committee is planning a tractorcade with Athens as the destination.

Farmers here in Orhomenos grow mostly cotton. Greek cotton production is the largest by far in the EU. As prices have plummeted and subsidies fade, these farmers have spearheaded the protests. "Last year we got 320GRD per kilo of cotton [\$1US = 243GRD], this year we are getting between 185 and 205. All the government is proposing is a 40 GRD loan on top of that," said Kostis. "It costs about 65,000GRD to cultivate one stremma of cotton [one stremma = 1/4 acre], if you have your own well. Now what we get for the cotton is 55,000GRD — how are we supposed to make it?" Farmers are 20 percent of Greece's active population, double the EU average, while the average size of their lots is one-quarter the average.

Farmers here described how there are about 50 companies in Greece that concen-

trate and market the cotton. These large companies suck off everyone else's work, pocketing the lion's share of the subsidies from the European Union. They pay small farmers for the cotton they produce, the protesters said, and then they show a different weight to the EU people to collect more subsidy money. Also widespread among the farmers at the roadblock was the idea that the EU unfairly imports agricultural products from countries like the US and Turkey.

"We borrow from the Agricultural bank at 23 percent interest, and after 6 months the interest owed is added to the principle. On top of this

the penalties for late payments are very high," added Kostis. "I can show you my papers. The result of all of this is that when you borrow 1 million GRD from the bank in May, by next November you have to pay 1.45 million GRD."

Farmers here explained that land prices have dropped in the area by 30-40 percent as a result of foreclosures.

Industrialists' and exporters' associations throughout Greece have been railing against the actions, threatening even to not pay workers their Christmas bonuses. Local prosecutors have filed charges against some of the farmers, though the police have not made any attempt at arrests. There have also been reports of fights breaking out between farmers and stranded foreign truckers, for whom provisions have not been made.

Natasha Terlexis is an airline worker in Athens, Greece.

Workers protest imperialist-led summit in Philippines

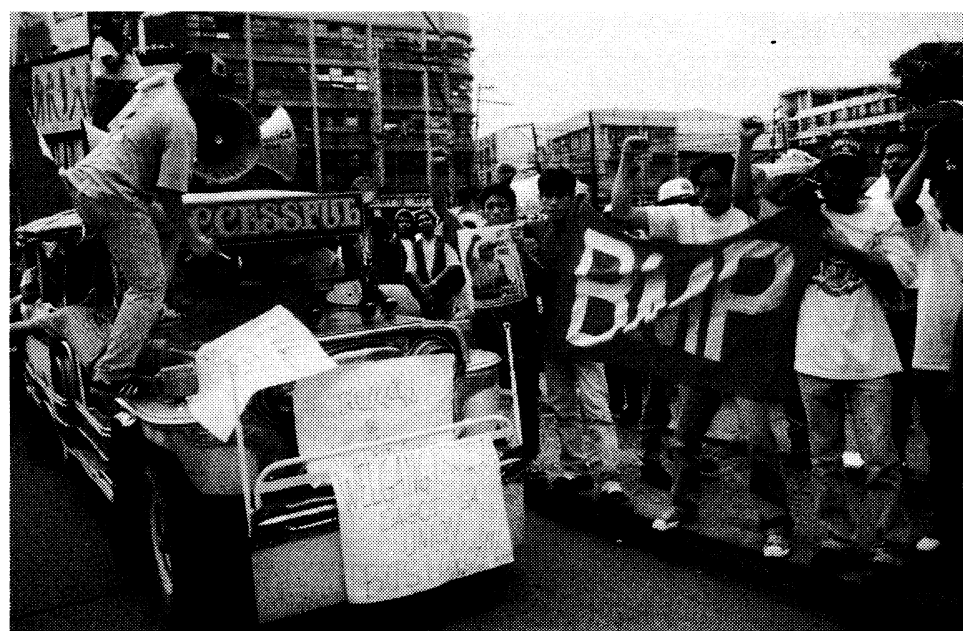
BY EUGEN LEPOU AND RON POULSEN

MANILA, Philippines — "Mass protests the way to answer union-busting!" read a large hand-printed placard in Tagalog, the national language of the Philippines, at a rally of striking unionists here November 25. About 500 workers and youthful supporters of Bukluran Ng Manggagawang Pilipino (BMP or Solidarity of Filipino Workers) marched past sympathetic onlookers to the Malacañang Palace, the offices of Philippines President Fidel Ramos.

An impromptu rally was staged at a police roadblock near the palace with speakers using loudspeakers from on top of a "jeepney," the windowless minibuses that are Manila's main public transport. The march was part of a range of protests over the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit on that day.

The unionists were also protesting the arrest on November 12 by the military of BMP chair Filemon "Popoy" Lagman on trumped-up murder charges over an incident some years ago. Lagman was released on November 28 but the charges are "still being held over his head," said Sonny Melencio, the international officer of BMP currently in Sydney, Australia, in a phone interview December 5. His detention was "clearly timed to coincide with APEC" as part of a broader security drive by the Filipino police and military surrounding the event.

A series of conferences and rallies protesting APEC's "free market" agenda set by Washington and embraced by Manila were held leading up to the APEC summit. The Peoples' Conference against Imperialist Globalization (PCAIG) was associated with Bayan (the New Patriotic Alliance, whose acronym in Tagalog means "nation") and the KMU, the May First Movement of unions. The Solidarity of Labor against APEC ("SLAM APEC") conference was sponsored by the BMP, the National Confederation of



Militant/ Ron Poulsen

Rally held in Manila November 25 gathered 500 workers and youth against the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit taking place that day. Placard in front reads in Tagalog, "Mass protests the answer to union busting."

Labor in the Philippines, the KPUP (Fraternity of Union Presidents in the Philippines) and Sanlakas, which describes itself as "a multisector alliance."

A third gathering, the Manila People's Forum on APEC, involved non-governmental organization representatives.

These conferences ran concurrently and were covered by the daily Manila papers in the lead up to the APEC summit. Then caravans with several thousand protesters, organized out of these meetings, headed for the APEC meeting at Subic Free Port, the site of the former U.S. naval base and now a tax-free industrial zone for overseas investors. Deliberate harassment at police checkpoints stretched the four hour trip over two days, however, and prevented all but token numbers from arriving in time to pro-

test the imperialist-led conference.

A common theme of speakers at these anti-APEC meetings, was opposition to "imperialist globalization," to "the multinational," and to "neo-liberalism." What these abstract terms refer to is the reality of Washington's trade offensive against its imperialist rivals, as well as against weaker capitalist classes in semicolonial countries like the Philippines, at a time of worldwide competition over depressed markets and profits. The prevailing politics of the official talks at these conferences was economic nationalism.

The sponsors were the divergent political currents that came out of the Maoist Communist Party of the Philippines (CPP) in the early 1990s. In 1986, the U.S.-backed dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos was

toppled by mass mobilizations of millions of Filipino working people. The CPP's abstentionism in the face of this popular outpouring, and the subsequent opening up of more democratic space for the workers movement, led to internal divisions and a split in 1994.

The SLAM APEC conference was attended by close to a thousand, mainly workers, in a unused factory. These reporters had numerous discussions with students, workers and some peasants that ranged over broader questions of world politics, from the Russian revolution and its Stalinist degeneration to the character of the Cuban revolution and its leadership; from questions about the worker-peasant alliance to women's liberation. As one young fighter put it, "We think you have to understand the world first in order to understand politics here in the Philippines."

APEC currently groups 18 disparate countries including imperialist powers (the United States, Japan, Australia, Canada and New Zealand), the Chinese workers state, and a range of capitalist countries at various levels of underdevelopment, mainly from southeast and east Asia but also Mexico and Chile.

Newsweek's front page issued the week of the APEC summit heralded the Philippines as "Asia's New Tiger," a reference to the so-called industrializing or "tiger" economies of some semi-colonial countries of Asia. But the grinding poverty facing millions of Filipino working people is in stark contrast to the profiteering dreams of imperialist investors from New York, Tokyo, or Sydney. In a country of 73 million, the foreign debt is US\$38 billion, up from \$26 billion a decade ago under Marcos. As *Newsweek* explained to its big-business readers eager to exploit cheap labor abroad, "The average incomes are less than a tenth those in neighboring Taiwan." However the press is also keeping a nervous eye on the combative ranks of Filipino workers.