

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Vigil will condemn bombings
at Atlanta abortion clinic

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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Clinton prepares major cuts in Medicaid

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

Democratic president William Clinton has taken the lead in preparing major cuts in Medicaid, the federal program that provides health care to low income families in the United States. When he unveils his federal budget to Congress on February 6, Clinton will reportedly seek cuts in Medicaid ranging between \$11 and \$22 billion in the next five years.

This is the bosses' latest step in a multifaceted assault on the social wage of working people. Since Clinton's reelection last November, the White House has been in the forefront of the drive by big business to win acceptance for dismantling Social Security and doing away with Medicare and Medicaid as social entitlements.

At the same time, the scandal-mongering among the top layers of Democrats and Republicans has reached a higher pitch — reflecting the nervousness and tactical divisions among the wealthy rulers over how best to orchestrate the employers' war on labor. Barely a week before Clinton's second inauguration, three-year-old sexual harassment charges against the president by former Arkansas state employee Paula Jones, and the "ethics" investigation of House Speaker Newton Gingrich dominated headline news and editorial pages.

According to the *New York Times*, Clinton will propose a "cap" on Medicaid, which

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Workers, others raise \$250,000 for capital fund

BY NAOMI CRAINE

Nearly 100 individuals have contributed \$1,000 or more to help fund the long-term capital needs of producing Pathfinder books. As of January 15, \$253,000 has been raised toward a goal of \$280,000. The fund, which was launched on November 29 at four socialist educational conferences, runs through the end of February.

Contributions include \$10,700 from 16 members of industrial trade unions who pooled year-end and other bonuses. Six members of the International Association of Machinists who work at Boeing in Seattle made a collective contribution of more than \$4,600. Other donations have ranged from \$1,000 to \$20,000, and come from bequests, industrial accident settlements, and other windfalls. Contributors from the United Kingdom, Canada, France, New Zealand, and the United States have kicked in.

These large contributions will be applied toward necessary expenditures to maintain the physical plant and equipment used to produce the books by revolutionary and working-class leaders that Pathfinder publishes. A portion of the fund covered the completion of repairs on the south wall of the six-story Pathfinder building, which had developed cracks that threatened the long-term stability of the structure. It has been repaired and covered with metal siding that will protect the wall — and the offices

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Korea strikers expand fight over antilabor law

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

January 15 was the biggest day yet as protest strikes in south Korea entered their fourth week. Union officials say 630,000 workers participated in the strike that day, and tens of thousands flooded the streets of Seoul and other cities demanding the repeal of antilabor laws adopted by the legislature December 26.

The Associated Press described a confrontation between 40,000 demonstrators and thousands of riot police in downtown Seoul, the capital. Cops in armored vans threatened to arrest strike leaders and fired "volley after volley of tear gas" into the crowd. "Protesters ripped up the sidewalk, broke it into fist sized concrete chunks and hurled them at police," the news agency reported. "Because police fired rapid volleys of tear gas, protesters were unable to get close enough to hit them with their steel pipes."

"Kim Yong Sam step down!" many of the protesters chanted, referring to the president. His ruling New Korea Party rammed the package of antilabor laws through the National Assembly at a predawn meeting December 26 without any opposition legislators present. The measures make it easier for employers to lay off workers and replace strikers. They maintain a ban on the Federation of Democratic Unions, the second largest labor federation in the country. And another provision grants expanded



Nurses demonstrate in Seoul demanding repeal of antilabor legislation. The south Korean government has been unable to quell three weeks of labor protests.

powers to Seoul's political police.

Walkouts demanding the repeal of these laws began just hours after they were passed. The bosses argue that the new laws are necessary to give companies the flexibility to compete on world markets and help build the slowing south Korean economy.

As they have done throughout the strike, the south Korean rulers are downplaying its impact. Seoul claimed just 110,000 workers were out January 15, less than a fifth of the union's figures.

The *Wall Street Journal*, which has gen-

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Protests weaken regime in Belgrade

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

In a sign of weakening of the Stalinist regime, the government-controlled electoral commissions in the capital Belgrade and Nis, Serbia's second largest city, announced January 14 that opposition victories in earlier municipal elections in those cities should be respected.

The regime of Socialist Party chief Slobodan Milosevic annulled results of the November 17 ballot, when the opposition coalition called Zajedno (Together) claimed it won majorities in 14 of the Yugoslav republic's 19 largest cities. An unprecedented wave of daily protests against this antidemocratic move erupted immediately in Belgrade and 30 other cities.

The demonstrations, led by Zajedno and students at Belgrade University, have not subsided despite official restrictions on street protests, deployment of thousands of riot police in the Serbian capital, and a number of violent assaults on protesters and reporters by cops at the end of 1996 that led to the death of one marcher. The protests have entered their ninth week. One of the biggest antigovernment crowds, nearly 300,000 people, gathered in central Belgrade on January 13, partly to celebrate the Serbian New Year.

The state-controlled media had announced January 8 the government was ready to concede the election in Nis. The electoral commission in that industrial center, where the protests began, subsequently balked at Belgrade's promise to give in Nis. The January 14 decision is a new indication that the ruling Socialist Party may be preparing larger concessions in exchange for retaining control of federal power. This may include ceding the majority of the city council to Zajedno in Belgrade, with 20 percent

of Serbia's population.

As we go to press, Milosevic has not announced whether the governing coalition, which includes the Yugoslav United Left run by Milosevic's wife Mirjana Markovic, will accept or appeal the electoral commission verdict in the republic's capital. The regime faced a January 16 deadline to make a decision.

The unyielding student marches, and the separate Zajedno protests, fueled in part by a deep economic crisis, have caused cracks even in the ranks of the Socialist Party. Two deputy prime ministers in the Milosevic government made public announcements on January 11 that the municipal election re-

sults should be respected. Nebojsa Covic, the mayor of Belgrade, who has been reportedly ready to hand over city hall to Zajedno leaders, has also called on the government to abide by the November 17 election. Covic was subsequently expelled from the Socialist Party.

The government of neighboring Montenegro, the Yugoslav republic allied with Belgrade, has temporarily suspended links to the Yugoslav government until a resolution is found to the crisis.

Top commanders of the Yugoslav army have also publicly stated their opposition to using the armed forces for any crackdown

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Tel Aviv concedes Hebron pact; much is unresolved

BY HILDA CUZCO

Israeli prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestine Authority leader Yasir Arafat agreed January 15 to a plan for the withdrawal of Tel Aviv's forces from 80 percent of the city of Hebron, in the Israeli-occupied West Bank. They also approved a "note of agreement" on other issues, including further Israeli troop redeployments in the West Bank. The agreement was announced by U.S. negotiator Dennis Ross at a 2:45 a.m. press conference; neither Netanyahu nor Arafat spoke.

Under previous accords, Tel Aviv was supposed to have pulled out of Hebron by March 1996. The Israeli regime didn't comply, however.

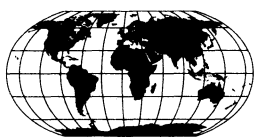
Negotiations on this and other unfulfilled

aspects of the 1993 Israeli-Palestinian accords resumed three months ago, following an explosion of Palestinian resistance to the occupation force. For three days last September, Palestinian security forces fired back at Israeli soldiers who were attacking protesters, for the first time ever.

The new accord is a shift for Netanyahu, of the right-wing Likud party. He waged his election campaign against former Labor prime minister Shimon Peres last year on a platform of opposition to any agreement with Palestinians or withdrawal from the occupied territories.

Hebron is a city of some 130,000 Palestinians and fewer than 500 Israeli settlers. Under the new agreement, the city will be

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Ankara threatens Cyprus attack

On January 9, the Turkish government threatened to launch a military strike to prevent the Greek-Cypriot government from receiving a shipment of S-300 ground-to-air missiles it bought from Russia. The Greek-Cypriot government also recently purchased 41 T-80 tanks to upgrade its 10,000-troop National Guard. The Turkish foreign ministry warned that it "will not tolerate any developments which can change the balance between Turkey and Greece in the eastern Mediterranean," according to the *Financial Times* of London.

Representatives of the Greek-Cypriot government played down the threats, characterizing them as "nothing new," and pointed to its "right to strengthen its defense capabilities...." According to a report by the United Nations, which maintains 1,200 troops on the island, there have been 900 front line border skirmishes in 1996 alone, resulting in the death of four people. Rauf Denktash, Turkish-Cypriot leader, said the current trends on the island of Cyprus are leading towards war.

German economy worsens

The Federal Labor Office report placed unemployment in Germany at 10.8 percent in December of last year, the highest in half a century. The figure was likely to worsen in the near future, the report said, because the economy "doesn't have enough strength" to improve the job market. A second government report stated the rate of that European country's economic growth was only 1.4 percent in 1996 — down from 1.9 percent in 1995 and 2.9 percent the year before.

Corporate collapses in Germany are up to 15.5 percent, the highest in 50 years, according to a survey released January 8 by the business information company Dun and Bradstreet Schimmelpfeng. In 1996, approximately 25,800 businesses went under. Reuters news agency reports that construction was the worst hit sector, with 7,100 company collapses. Dun and Bradstreet projects another 28,000 corporate failures in 1997.

Geneva hits unemployed record

Switzerland faced 5.3 percent unemploy-



The new year started with tens of thousands of Bulgarians walking off the job, out of classes, and into the streets. On January 12, as 100,000 people demonstrated in the capital city Sofia, tens of thousands protested in other cities. They were demanding better living conditions and early elections. Last year inflation was 310 percent, unemployment is at 14 percent, the average monthly wage is \$20, and basic food prices rose 20 to 40 percent in the first 10 days of this year.

ment in December, the highest level since World War II. This is up from 5.1 percent in November. The Swiss Office of Trade, Industry, and Labor announced that while the year finished at an unexpectedly high rate, the annual jobless rate did rise to an average of 4.7 percent and was likely to climb further in 1997.

Moscow pulls out of Chechnya

Moscow said January 5 that it had withdrawn its last 18,000 troops from Chechnya. The country's first independent elections are scheduled for January 27. Demanding independence, Chechen rebels militarily and morally defeated Russian troops during the two-year conflict, which left some 80,000 dead. At its height, 60,000 Russian troops occupied the tiny republic. Opponents of Russian president Boris Yeltsin criticized the pullout as a humiliating capitulation. Moscow insists that Chechnya is still an integral

part of the Russian federation, while Chechen leaders say it is now fully independent.

Cambodia police attack workers

On January 9, about 100 military riot police were sent into the Tack Fat garment factory in Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia, in an attempt to squash labor protests at the plant. Workers said police toting AK-47 rifles stood watch over the plant floor. About half the workers struck or stayed home that day. Cops at the plant fired shots in the air at one point and assaulted opposition leader Sam Rainsy and his deputy, who were calling for other workers to join the strike.

Afrikaner rightists kill four

The Boer Attack Force (BAF), a rightist Afrikaner group, claimed responsibility for a New Year's Eve bombing in Worcester near Cape Town, South Africa. Four people were killed with more than 60 wounded. The Afrikaner separatist group demanded all Afrikaner white supremacist "freedom fighters" be released from prison and all prosecutions for political misdemeanors be suspended.

They also demanded their own territory, their own government, and "rightful recognition" for the already official Afrikaans language. The BAF threatened new attacks if their demands were not met. South African Police Services spokesperson John Sterrenberg said police are taking the group "extremely seriously."

Brazil peasants occupy land

More than 7,000 families stationed on or

around five ranches in Brazil's southwestern region are carrying out a land occupation. Before sunrise January 5, some 1,200 families began the action occupying the ranches in the Pontal de Paranapanema region, 370 miles northwest of São Paulo. Zelito da Silva, a leader of the Movement of Landless Rural Workers told Associated Press reporters that a total of 3,600 families occupy the 33,000-acre tract.

Da Silva added that 3,600 more families are camped near the site, prepared to move onto the land if the government turns it over to the peasants. More than 1,000 people have been killed in the last decade in the fight for land. Ninety percent of Brazilian land is owned by 20 percent of the population, while the poorest 40 percent own a mere 1 percent of the land.

Triple execution in Arkansas

On the night of January 8, the State of Arkansas executed three men who had been convicted of murder. A triple execution was performed once before in Arkansas in 1994. Prison officials say scheduling multiple executions is cheaper and more efficient. Protests took place on the day of the executions at the state capitol, organized by the Arkansas Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty and the American Civil Liberties Union.

Earl Van Denton and Paul Ruiz were put to death first, by lethal injection. Kirt Wainwright was already strapped on a gurney when he was granted a temporary stay of execution, while the Supreme Court decided whether to hear his appeal. Wainwright's attorneys argued that since the Arkansas governor, who sets execution dates and can grant clemency, knew the people Wainwright was charged with killing, he should have removed himself from the case. The condemned man lay for an hour with the fatal needle already in his arm, before the court decided the execution should proceed.

Public doctors put on 'piece rate'

The Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons, and New York City's public hospital agency agreed on a contract that for the first time will link doctors' pay to their performance rate — the number of patients they see and procedures they carry out. The university medical school provides doctors for Harlem Hospital. The city government has immediately begun to make cuts in the health budget, giving Columbia \$7 million less next year. Columbia must also improve its services or be fined.

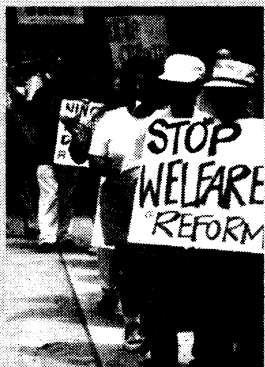
The city agency says it will use this precedent to pressure other medical affiliates to agree to similar terms, threatening to replace unwilling medical institutions through public bidding. The Albert Einstein College of Medicine refused a similar proposition, saying the higher productivity expectations are unfair and incompatible with the careful training of medical students. New York Medical College also refused to agree to the city agency's new terms.

— BRIAN TAYLOR

THE MILITANT

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Rebellion in Central Africa stings Paris

BY MEGAN ARNEY

Soldiers in the Central African Republic have been in a rebellion for the last two months in the capital city of Bangui, against government and French forces. This uprising, in addition to crises in Zaire, Rwanda, and Burundi, highlights the ongoing resistance to imperialism in the area, the weakening of Paris's domination, and the increasing tensions between the rulers of France and the United States in their rivalry for domination of the resource-rich area.

The latest rebellion in the Central African Republic — the third in less than a year — continues at press time, with negotiations taking place between rebel soldiers and the French-backed government of President Ange-Felix Patasse. Starting on November 15, some 200 soldiers entered Bangui, taking an army base on November 16. They demanded back wages and a pay raise, saying that they had not been paid in months. Many workers in the country had also not been paid for months. By the beginning of December, rebel soldiers were also calling for the ouster of Patasse.

Two other rebellions, in April and May of last year, were put down by French imperialist troops. In May 10,000 people poured into the streets of Bangui to protest the French military attacks aimed at crushing the army rebellion. Defying a ban on demonstrations, the protesters continued for three days. They shouted from the streets, "Death to the French!" and other anti-French slogans, and razed a French cultural center.

Confronting the rebels are presidential guards, backed by a beefed-up force of 2,000 French soldiers who are based in the former colony of Paris. In early December, rebel soldiers fired mortars at a French-owned hotel in Bangui, opening a two-hour fire fight with French troops and the presidential guards. Throughout December, rebel soldiers seized main parts of the city, including the main armory, according to news agency and radio reports from the capital.

On January 5, French troops — using armored cars and helicopter gunships — attacked the rebel troops. Among those killed were 21 rebel soldiers, and 11 civilians. The French defense minister claimed the raid was a "legitimate defense" in reprisal for two French soldiers killed January 4. Another defense spokesman was cruder, saying, "No one kills French soldiers and gets away with it," according to the *Economist*, a British magazine.

Extensive French military in Africa

France has seven military bases in its former African colonies, totaling 9,000 troops, and maintains "military cooperation agreements" with 23 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Paris maintains its second-largest military establishment on the continent in the Central African Republic.

Since launching an assault on Gabon in 1964, Paris has militarily intervened on the African continent an average of once a year — 35 times in 34 years.

While Paris's minister of foreign assistance, Jacques Godfrain, implied French forces were acting to maintain "the democratic state," other government officials have been more blunt about Paris's interest in central Africa. Former minister of foreign assistance Bernard Debré told *Juene Afrique* last year, "For France, Africa is also a market. Not a captive market, certainly, but not a sieve either. When we aid a country, we must have a minimum in return."

The Central African Republic is among a number of mineral-rich African countries plundered by Paris. In 1992, 74 percent of the country's exports went to France. The main exports are coffee, diamonds, timber, and cotton. More than 400,000 carats of gem diamonds were mined in 1992, which provide about 27 percent of the country's exports. There are also significant deposits of uranium.

The African franc (CAF) is the currency shared by 13 central and western African countries. Former French prime minister Edouard Balladur and then-foreign minister Alain Juppé — now the prime minister — accepted the International Monetary Fund's urging and devalued the CAF, which is pegged to the French franc, in 1994. This effectively slashed by half the buying power for imported goods of workers and peasants in the 13 African countries that use the CAF. The Central African Republic bought 51 percent of its 1992 imports from France.

Living conditions for workers and peasants in the Central African Republic are among the worst in Africa. Life expectancy is 42.5 years and in 1992 the adult illiteracy rate was 62 percent. Arable land makes up 3 percent of the country, and 85 percent of the labor force is in agriculture.

History of Central African Republic

Paris colonized central Africa in 1894. The Central African Republic was created by French imperialists to allow French businesses to produce rubber and mine diamonds there. Hit with an upsurge in colonial struggles, Paris was forced to grant the country independence in 1960, but has continued to prop up governments there that serve French interests. David Dacko became the first president after independence.

Jacques Foccart, who was an adviser to French dictator Charles de Gaulle and his two successors, recently boasted how he had run Africa like a proconsul, appointing presidents, sacking them, and getting their opponents killed by French secret-service agents, according to the *Economist*.

Jean-Bedel Bokassa, who seized power in a 1965 military coup, proclaimed himself constitutional emperor in 1976. Bokassa's rule was marked by ruthlessness. He was backed by France for years, sup-

ported by hundreds of millions of dollars in aid. In his recently published book, Foccart recalled that Bokassa was "a very francophile military man." Only after a massacre of school children in 1979 did the French government organize a coup to oust Bokassa.

At the time the urban masses of the Central African Republic were mobilizing against Bokassa. Serious opposition to the regime began to emerge in January 1979. Students demonstrated and were joined by workers and residents from Bangui's poorest sections. Workers went out on strike, and several underground groups formed. Police arrested scores of activists and students. The French regime of Valéry Giscard d'Estaing felt it was necessary to step in directly to protect French political and economic interests there.

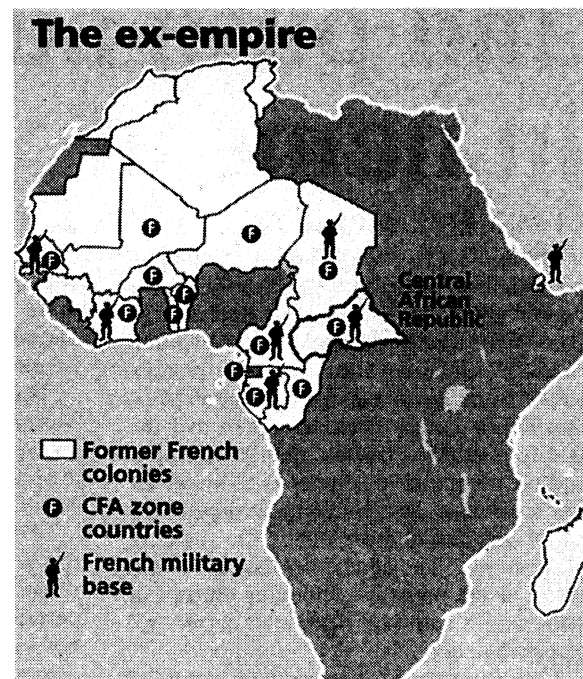
In September 1979, French military transport planes carrying hundreds of troops arrived in Bangui. They brought with them Dacko, who had spent the previous two months in France. With the backing of Paris, Dacko declared himself president once again. The current Patasse government came to power in 1993, and today continues to receive the support of Paris.

The 1979 coup came in the context of a broader French imperialist offensive in Africa, including bombing raids against Western Saharan freedom fighters, direct military intervention against Chad, and — in direct collusion with Washington — the sending of troops to douse rebellions in Zaire. Washington heralded the Paris-made coup. A U.S. state department spokesman at the time responded, "Vive la France!" And an editorial in the Sept. 25, 1979, *Wall Street Journal* lamented that the political climate was not conducive to a U.S. intervention, no matter what "the size of U.S. interests" involved.

Today, as rivalries between Washington and Paris intensify, the tone is not so enthusiastic. In a January 10 editorial headlined "The Virtual Empire," the *Wall Street Journal* declared that France's "purposes of past interventions has not been nearly as altruistic." Instead, "the combination of substantial business interests and the grandeur afforded by having a 'virtual empire' more often appear to be the main drivers of French policy." Recent tension points between the rulers of France and the United States include central Africa, the Mideast, and control of NATO forces in southern Europe.

Continued instability in Zaire

On January 7, the French government acknowledged that European mercenaries might be operating in Zaire to prop up the



Map shows deployment of French imperialist forces in central Africa

government of President Mobutu Sese Seko and his army against rebel forces that have taken over a strip of eastern Zaire.

In an eight-week offensive, the rebels have driven the Zairian army from a 300-mile long and 100-mile wide strip along the borders of Rwanda, Burundi and Uganda. French aid minister Godfrain told journalists, "There are European mercenaries in the region."

He was responding to a report by the French daily *Le Monde* that former French presidential guards were recruiting mercenaries to help Zaire's army. *Le Monde* reported January 7 that Zairian rebels claimed Paris had sent up to 1,000 troops to Kisangani in north eastern Zaire — Paris denied this. According to the French daily, Alain Le Carro, a former lieutenant colonel in the Elysée protection unit, is involved in recruiting South African, Angolan, Mozambican, Belgian, and British mercenaries.

After nearly four months on the French Riviera recovering from cancer treatment, Mobutu returned to Zaire December 17. He quickly named a new army chief of staff. Gen. Mahele Lieko Bokungo is a notorious veteran of campaigns to put down several uprisings in the region. Mobutu also formed a 'crisis government' with opposition leaders, retaining the unpopular Premier Leon Kengo wa Dondo. Mobutu left Zaire for France again January 9.

The Canadian government announced December 13 that it would end its intervention plans to central Africa, abandoning a scheme endorsed by the United Nations in November to send 15,000 troops under the auspices of "humanitarian aid," for Rwandan refugees in Zaire. Paris had called for UN intervention, and continued to push for an early action. However, after the UN force was announced, which was to include troops from France, the United States, Britain, and Canada, hundreds of thousands of refugees returned to Rwanda — effectively undercutting the excuse for imperialist intervention.

Paris's former colonies in Africa are not the only areas giving the French ruling class headaches lately. Last November student and worker protests exploded in Cayenne, the capital of Guyane, a French colony on the Caribbean coast of South America.

Protests in Yugoslavia

Continued from front page

on the protesters. General Momcilo Perisic held a meeting on the issue with student leaders at Belgrade University January 6.

"Gen. Perisic underlined the Yugoslav army's special interest in seeing that all current problems are overcome within the legal institutions of the system in a manner deployed in democratic countries," said an army statement after the meeting.

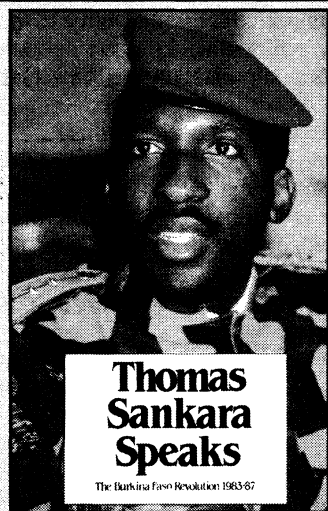
"We have found ourselves on the same side since both they and we demand that the constitution be observed," said student leader Cedomir Jovanovic, one of the students who met with the army command. Dusan Vasiljevic, another student leader, told the press that Perisic had promised "no repeat of 1991," when the government deployed tanks in the streets to quell student-led protests against the Belgrade-initiated war in Bosnia.

The government of Greece, which has been a close ally of Milosevic for the last half decade, has also called on Belgrade to honor the November 17 ballot.

Washington and other imperialist powers — which maintain an occupation force of 60,000 NATO troops in the Yugoslav workers state, mostly in Bosnia — have continued their push to exploit the situation and install a more openly pro-imperialist regime in Belgrade. U.S. assistant secretary

of state John Kornblum said Washington has drawn an "action plan" for Serbia, which includes a possible unilateral freeze on trade deals and diplomatic relations and aid to opposition groups. Two U.S. Senators, Democrats Carl Levin of Michigan and Jack Reed of Rhode Island, addressed a Zajedno rally of 20,000 in Belgrade January 15.

From Pathfinder



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EU rulers compete and push austerity in name of 'euro'

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

BROOKLYN, New York — "Capitalist politicians in the European Union [EU] say that they have to reduce public spending to qualify for the European Monetary Union, [EMU]," said Sven Carlsson, a communist leader from Sweden, at a December 6 Militant Labor Forum here. He noted that the falling rate of the bosses' industrial profits and the competitive edge of U.S. imperialists is driving their rivals in Europe to attempt to squeeze more out of the working class there. "The attacks by the bosses are made in the name of achieving European unity and a common European currency," he explained.

Carlsson stated the deepening capitalist economic crisis is tearing apart the European Union, not leading to any convergence or unity among those regimes. The rulers are pressed to gut the social wage of working people, but with unemployment hovering at post-war highs, they are fearful of provoking social explosions as they attempt to carry out these assaults. While participants in a recent meeting of EU ministers agreed that governments in Europe must try to end what they term the "dependency culture," they passed a resolution acknowledging that social benefits "can make a significant contribution to the maintenance of social peace."

These social gains are the product of massive struggles by workers in Europe. In Germany, for instance, 60,000 steelworkers waged a 114-day strike in 1957 that ended with the unions establishing sick pay benefits of 90 percent where none existed before. The workweek for many there is 35 hours, and some plants in the steel industry shut down for five minutes once an hour. Employees are entitled to four weeks at a health spa every three years and workers suffering from stress or backache are prescribed breaks in mountain resorts, which do not count as holidays.

Carlsson pointed to the 12-day truckers strike in France last November, where drivers won demands for higher pay, better sick benefits, shorter hours, a ban on Sunday driving, and a retirement age of 55, instead of 60, on a pension at 75 percent of gross wages. In 1995, French prime minister Alain Juppé tried to raise the retirement age for public workers to 60 years. This measure was pushed back, after it ignited a strike wave in November-December led by rail workers. A third of France's public workers retire at 50, including rail conductors and Paris bus drivers.

Editors of London's *Financial Times* expressed "outrage" at the "substantial victory" by the truckers, and worried that their victory might be "contagious."

Criteria to join monetary union

The heads of state in the European capitalist governments declared Jan. 1, 1999, as the date to establish a common currency — the euro — and to qualify for membership in the EMU. The requirements for membership include slashing public deficits to no more than 3 percent of gross domestic prod-

uct and a two-year membership in the Exchange Rate Mechanism (ERM) system, which limits currency fluctuations to a range of 15 percent above or below the German D-mark. Twelve of the 15 EU countries participate in the ERM.

The terms were derived from the Maastricht Treaty adopted in 1991, which was renamed the "stability and growth pact" at an EU summit held in Dublin December 12-14.

In his talk Carlsson explained, "European unity was promoted in the late 1980s by rulers in France to as a way to counter competition on capitalists in Europe from U.S. bosses." French president Jacques Chirac recently declared on television that Paris wishes to use the euro as a "means to fight against the U.S. dollar."

If capitalist bosses in Europe do not consolidate their enterprises, "it will be impossible to challenge the U.S. giants," wrote Bernard Gray for the London daily *Financial Times*.

An assault by the U.S. bosses on the working class in the 1980s lowered their production costs by driving down the price of labor power, Carlsson said. Before 1985, the hourly wage rates in the United States were higher than any of its major imperialist competitors in Japan, Germany, France, Britain, Italy, or Canada. Within a decade, U.S. capitalists became more competitive against their rivals in Europe or Japan.

Manufacturing output in the United States rose by more than 57 percent between 1980 and 1995, while the output of countries in the EU increased only 23.4 percent during this period. The U.S. industrial output per person remains the highest in the world. Capitalists in Germany and other countries in Europe are hampered by the fact that they have not yet been able to smash the system of social insurance and related gains — health care, unemployment compensation, pensions, vacations — that the working class and labor movement won in the decades following World War II.

Unified Germany doesn't resolve crisis

Carlsson explained how capitalists throughout Europe dreamed of massive profits with the fall of the Stalinist police apparatuses Eastern Europe in the beginning of 1989, which opened the door for reunification of Germany. "The capitalists exuberated a huge euphoria over prospects for capitalist growth in Eastern Europe, Central Europe, and the former Soviet Union," said Carlsson. "They all jumped on the train, pegging their currencies to the D-mark, even Sweden."

In the post-war economic boom in the 1970s, the "German miracle" became an expression as West German capitalism had rebuilt its productive capacity with the latest technology, becoming the dominant power in Europe.

The rulers in France, the United States, the Soviet Union, and elsewhere wanted to keep Germany divided. Reunification, Carlsson pointed out, was feared by Paris and London because it meant reduced sta-



Militant/Natasha Terlexis

A December 20 march of 4,000 farmers in Athens, Greece. The capitalists' drive to up profits at the expense of workers will provoke a growing resistance to these attacks.

tus for them in world politics and less weight in politics in Europe. Also Britain's capitalist rulers are less able to lean on a "special relationship" with Washington as a counterbalance to the growing dominance of Germany in Europe and the continuing decline of British imperialism.

"We underestimated the problems in eastern Germany," stated Chancellor Helmut Kohl in 1992. "To get the economy going the east will take longer and cost more money than we thought." By the end of 1995, Bonn was spending between DM150 and DM200 billion a year [US\$59-127 billion] to subsidize state-owned industries in the eastern part of the country. Lothar Späth, a prominent west German politician and businessman, estimated in September 1995 "the new federal states are dependent on subsidies in amounts comparable to today for at least 10 years." The social relations of the workers state in eastern Germany block profitable capitalist investments, and will not be reversed short of violence to re-establish capitalist property relations.

Bonn has also paid \$70 billion in loans and aid to Russia since reunification, including money Moscow demanded to pull its troops out of eastern Germany. The German government has paid a disproportionate amount of the sums paid by the IMF and World Bank to Russia. France and other capitalist countries in Europe had squeezed Bonn to do so because the German mark had grown very strong.

Reunification has become a tremendous burden on German mark, and in fact makes the prospects for a united Euro dimmer than ever. Bonn pays nearly two-thirds of the nearly \$100 billion a year budget of the European Union that financed mostly agriculture subsidies for countries in the south-west of Europe — France, and especially Italy, Greece and Spain.

Rising tensions in currency talks

The November 25 admittance of Rome to the exchange rate mechanism highlights the growing tensions between the capitalist regimes in Europe. Along with London, Rome was booted out the currency system, following a devaluation of the lira in 1992. Finance ministers debated the terms of agreement for two days in Brussels.

Rome introduced a special "Euro tax" in November which would be applied on a one-off basis for 1997, starting at 1.5 percent of incomes over US\$14,973 a year. The tax is part of an austerity package designed as an attempt to meet the criteria for Italy to join the EMU. The government has pledged to repay up to 60 percent of the tax beginning in 1999.

The right-wing opposition led by former prime minister Silvio Berlusconi attacked the levy and organized a demonstration in Rome on November 9 of 500,000 people to protest the tax increase. Groups of young fascists participated in the rally shouting "Duce" and raising their arm in the fascist greeting as a tribute to Benito Mussolini.

Other capitalists in Italy expressed disappointment with the agreement for the country's reentry into the exchange rate mechanism. "There isn't anyone in the chancelleries of Europe who does not know that one of the conditions of success of the euro is that Italy remain outside," wrote a commentator in the Italian daily *Il Messaggero*. "First of all, neither the Germans nor the French want us."

Chirac accused Italian government of joining the EMU for competitive advantages because of the weak lira. "Paris wants the

lira to be brought back into a system that favors French exports," Carlsson explained. According to the *International Herald Tribune*, diplomats say Paris has been pushing for the lira to be readmitted at a rate of 950 lira to the D-mark rather than 1,000 the Italian rulers wanted.

When the lira was accepted into the ERM at 990, Hans Tietmeyer, president of the Bundesbank in Germany remarked, "It is certainly not a comment on Italy's qualifications for monetary union." Tietmeyer said the decision did not guarantee Rome's chances of being admitted to the monetary union. He denounced as "tricky maneuvers" the attempts by the governments of Italy, Spain, and France to achieve the requirements of the EMU.

French officials call for devaluation

In another EU controversy, Valéry Giscard d'Estaing, former president of France and a founder of the European Monetary System, sparked a ruckus when he asserted that the franc needed to be devalued, particularly against the dollar, to make French industries more competitive. He said the move would also boost growth and reduce unemployment, which is nearly 13 percent of the workforce.

Two members of the Bank of France's monetary council have also called for a devaluation of both the franc and the D-mark against the dollar. They openly questioned whether the government's 14-year policy of linking the franc with the mark has become too burdensome.

Aides to Chirac say any abandonment of the franc-mark parity would inflict a mortal blow to future European unity and would encourage Bonn to establish a mark zone in central Europe, leaving France stranded on the periphery.

Tietmeyer, however, asserted that Europe's fate may depend less on whether it creates a single currency than on its ability to restructure the welfare state — that is slash workers' social wage — and cope with the strategic repercussions from the collapse of the former Soviet Union. He stated Europe's competitiveness can only be restored when politicians show the courage to cut deficits as stipulated by the Maastricht treaty and if discipline is enforced to make the new euro as sound as the D-mark.

"There is no chance for Europe to become a federal state like the United States. We do not have the same binding forces, with one big single budget, the same tax and pension system," said Tietmeyer. "That's why, in 10 years time we in Europe will still live in separate nation-states."

Meanwhile, government officials of two of the three EU countries still outside the ERM, Britain and Sweden, opined that participating in the exchange rate system would not be a decisive condition for joining the EMU. "Our position is clear: we do not intend to join the ERM and we cannot be forced to join," one UK treasury official told the *Financial Times* in late November.

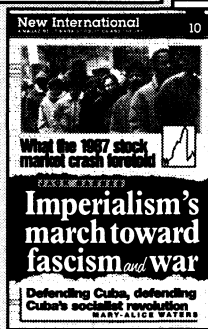
Erik Asbrink, finance minister from Sweden, asserted that Rome's decision to enter the ERM would "not influence Sweden's decision on ERM participation."

Yannos Papandonioui, national economy and finance minister of Greece, the other EU country outside the exchange rate mechanism, said November 25 that he was preparing the "toughest budget in 15 years" to ensure the country was ready for EMU.

Carlsson pointed to the Maastricht treaty as "sort of a political action program for the

Continued on Page 6

Pathfinder



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
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SELL THE BOOKS WORKERS OF THE WORLD NEED

Join the campaign to sell Pathfinder books and pamphlets

Sales up in 1996

This week we're running the chart of sales by Pathfinder Bookstores for the last six months of 1996. Sales of Pathfinder books and pamphlets to these outlets for 1996 was \$117,243 — an increase of 70 percent over the previous year. By continuing this trend, socialists can broaden their reach to recruit working-class fighters and radicalizing youth to the communist movement. The following articles highlight some successful sales of revolutionary literature by socialist activists participating in political events around the world.

BY RON POULSEN AND LINDA HARRIS

SYDNEY, Australia — Over the past five months Pathfinder supporters in Sydney have been consistently reaching and going over our monthly goal for sales of Pathfinder books.

Increased sales were spurred last August by the visit of U.S. Socialist Workers presidential candidate James Harris. This coincided with a mass rally of unionists, Aboriginal fighters and student activists in Canberra. Pathfinder supporters mobilized to reach as many workers and youth as possible at the rally. Using a special offer that focused on books that are important to workers helped maximize sales and sign up a new Pathfinder Readers Club member.

In the past few months, using the circulation drive to reach out with the *Militant* and the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist*, gave a boost to Pathfinder sales. Sales on the job were a particularly important part of this. We have sold 28 units in three different factories in the last five months. Suggesting the books that people may want to read stemming from political discussions is key. Catalogs and Pathfinder Readers Club leaflets with book covers displayed have also helped. Two workmates bought copies of *Woman's Evolution: From Matriarchal Clan to Patriarchal Family* by Evelyn Reed in one week from such a leaflet!

Another big plus for sales was a trip by Pathfinder supporters from Sydney and Auckland to the Philippines. At two conferences of workers, students and international delegates, which mobilized to oppose the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) summit, we sold 62 titles, including 10 *New Internationalists*.

Consistently convincing people of the advantages of belonging to the Pathfinder Readers Club led to a

boost in the numbers of people joining. Signing up new members to the Pathfinder Readers Club has increased our sales of revolutionary literature. At the end of last year, a special offer drew big sales to new members. One new member bought 19 books in the last two months.

Pathfinder supporters consistently set up book stalls at many political events. Neat and attractive placards that feature book covers help draw people to the stall. Our best sales have been at an East Timor conference and a festival for Cuba.

BY MARY NELL BOCKMAN

BOSTON — A highlight of sales this month was at the "Rethinking Marxism" conference sponsored by the magazine of the same name on December 5-8 at the University of Massachusetts in Amherst. Around 800 students and academics from around the world attended including participants from South Africa, the United Kingdom, Australia, Canada, France, Mexico, Japan, Germany, Italy, and many universities in the United States. Volunteers staffed a Pathfinder table on all four days of the conference and sold a total of 44 books and pamphlets. The Pathfinder table also became a center for discussion among participants who came to the conference looking for an opportunity to discuss the relevance and application of Marxist ideas today.

Pathfinder books were familiar to many of the participants. A professor from Mexico had bought books at our table at the Mexico City Book Fair last year. Someone else had seen us at the New England Booksellers Association trade show.

A number of people said they had been in Pathfinder bookstores in different cities as well. Others weren't familiar with titles before they came, but left with catalogs and books. Two graduate students from Korea came by the table several times, finally purchasing a copy of *New Internationalist no. 10* that features the article "Imperialism's March toward Fascism and War."

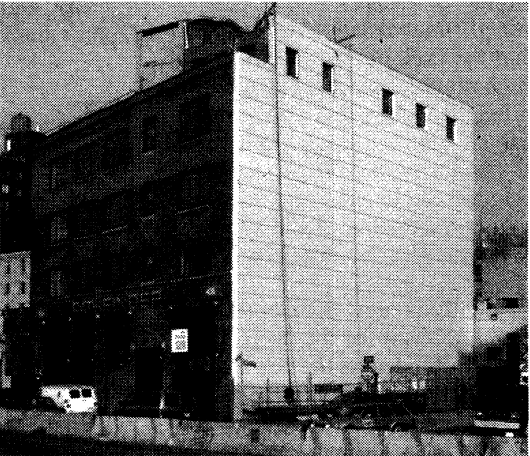
Three copies of *New Internationalist* and five Pathfinder titles on the Cuban revolution were among the books sold at the conference. The official program included only one academic paper on Cuba out of the 600 presented at 190 workshops during the conference.

Pathfinder was the only table among the 15 booksellers and groups that had Marx and Engels

Monthly Sales of Pathfinder Books									
December Totals				Previous Months					
Countries/Cities	Goal	Sold	% Sold	Nov.	Oct.	Sept.	Aug.	July	
AUSTRALIA	36	49	136%	111%	103%	128%	119%	53%	
SWEDEN	40	44	110%	90%	0%	105%	88%	130%	
FRANCE	25	21	84%	104%					
CANADA									
Toronto	80	94	118%	78%	128%	108%	50%	79%	
Montreal	72	39	54%	89%	89%	93%	40%	96%	
Vancouver	32	11	34%	128%	106%	38%	100%	9%	
Total	184	144	78%	91%	109%	90%	68%	74%	
NEW ZEALAND									
Auckland	56	51	91%	79%	70%	52%	65%	48%	
Christchurch	32	9	28%	63%	56%	56%	91%	38%	
Total	88	60	68%	73%	65%	53%	73%	44%	
UNITED STATES									
Houston	45	54	120%	109%	138%	38%	51%	35%	
Atlanta	48	55	115%	194%	140%	104%	98%	63%	
Boston	65	72	111%	72%	100%	100%	71%	40%	
Chicago	77	83	108%	197%	97%	155%	79%	64%	
Washington, DC	64	68	106%	303%	105%	75%	56%	102%	
Los Angeles	120	87	73%	133%	126%	111%	129%	73%	
Greensboro	77	54	70%	39%	26%	39%	85%	80%	
Salt Lake City	40	28	70%	35%	48%	45%	46%	72%	
San Francisco	95	60	63%	194%	145%	118%	106%	52%	
Miami	45	28	62%	382%	178%	73%	96%	56%	
Peoria	36	21	58%	120%	44%	85%	104%	93%	
Detroit	70	35	50%	91%	116%	114%	103%	69%	
Pittsburgh	63	31	49%	43%	87%	37%	59%	27%	
Twin Cities	104	48	46%	82%	60%	63%	62%	106%	
Cleveland	50	22	44%	28%	100%	0%	74%	0%	
New York	128	52	41%	25%	76%	70%	54%	59%	
Des Moines	45	14	31%	0%	31%	33%	49%	0%	
Birmingham	50	15	30%	58%	68%	38%	60%	43%	
Seattle	80	24	30%	101%	116%	69%	85%	35%	
Morgantown	32	8	25%	22%	106%	34%	75%	25%	
Newark*	171		0%	26%	32%	63%	58%	20%	
Philadelphia*	50		0%	84%	104%	35%	38%	48%	
Total	1555	859	48%	90%	86%	76%	74%	53%	
Goal/Should be	1800	1800	100%	100%	100%				
UNITED KINGDOM									
London	170	78	46%	72%	100%	88%	182%	121%	
Manchester	78	10	13%	63%	58%	183%	128%	0%	
Total	248	88	35%	70%	87%	108%	150%	74%	
GREECE*	13		0%	100%	0%	115%			
*No new report									

IN THE UNIONS									
Unions	December			Previous months					
	Goal	Sale	Total	Nov.	Oct.	Sept.	Aug.	July	
AUSTRALIA									
AMWU	4	5	125%	150%	0%	50%	250		
CANADA									
USWA	8	13	163%	100%	75%	143			
IAM	8	10	125%	50%	0%	63%	23%	62%	
CAW	6	1	17%	33%	67%				
Total	14	11	79%	43%	0%	100	23%	62%	
UNITED STATES									
UNITE	26	11	42%	42%	35%	92%	46%	19%	
UAW	65	25	38%	0%	23%	55%	42%	0%	
UFCW	6	2	33%	50%	83%	33%	0%	0%	
IAM	59	19	32%	48%	87%	46%	44%	11%	
USWA	46	12	26%	15%	30%	28%	34%	0%	
OCAW	44	11	25%	16%	17%	33%	50%	33%	
UTU	94	11	12%	22%	23%	0%	46%	0%	
UMWA	5	0	0%	20%	80%	80%	40%	40%	
Total	345	91	26%	23%	29%	35%	45%	18%	
BRITAIN									
AEEU	10	4	40%	40%	0%	50%	0%	90%	
RMT*	10		0%	0%	50%	0%	50%	0%	
TCWU	7		0%	29%	0%	100	0%	29%	
Total	27	4	15%	22%	0%	56%	19%	56%	
Goal	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.									

for sale at the conference. We distributed about 80 copies of the 1996 Pathfinder catalog and sold eight books on the Russian revolution and the Communist International, including two copies of *To See the Dawn: Baku, 1920 — First Congress of the Peoples of the East*. Altogether, participants bought nearly \$650 worth of Pathfinder books.



Militant/Eric Simpson

Capital fund contributions helped complete repair of Pathfinder building's south wall.

Capital fund, sales of Marxist classics

Continued from front page

and factory behind it — for the next several decades. The capital fund also financed the project carried out by dozens of volunteers over the month of December to return Pathfinder's fulfillment operation to the building in New York.

"We'll be making a special effort over the next few weeks to reach the \$280,000," said fund director Dave Prince. "This will put us in a position to look toward accelerating payments on major equipment purchases —" thereby saving interest.

Meanwhile, Pathfinder's special sale of the works of Karl Marx, Frederick Engels, and V.I. Lenin has been picking up steam. Two weeks into January more than three dozen individuals had taken advantage of Pathfinder's special sale of the collected works of the communist leaders. To date, some 37 sets of the *Collected Works of Marx and*

Engels and 22 sets of the *Collected Works of Lenin* have been ordered. The offer ends on January 31, although sets will be held until the end of March with a 25 percent down payment. (See ad on pages 8-9.)

The new owners of these important writings by the revolutionary leaders are from 11 cities in the United States, as well as the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada.

The response to the sale has been better than anticipated. On January 12 and 13 some 50 volunteers gathered at the Pathfinder building to collate additional sets of the collected works in preparation for anticipated orders during the last two weeks of the offer. Volunteers also put on the finishing touches of the new distribution operation that has been set up here to ship Pathfinder titles to customers around the world.



Militant/Georges Mehrabian

The March of "Sans Papiers" (Undocumented). An international team of volunteers staffing a Pathfinder table at a Nov. 30, 1996, demonstration for immigrant rights in Paris, France.

Newark YS chapter puts politics into practice

This column is written and edited by the Young Socialists (YS), an international organization of young workers, students, and other youth fighting for socialism. For more information about the YS write to: Young Socialists, P.O. Box 14392, St. Paul, MN 55104. Tel: (612) 644-0015. Compuserve: 105162,605

BY STEFANIE TRICE

NEWARK, New Jersey — Young Socialists in New York and New Jersey finished off the New Year with a joint raffle held at a party celebrating the successful set-up of Pathfinder's new pick and pack fulfillment operation. Young activists, including one from Algeria, were among those who came. We raised \$105 dollars for the YS national office.

Coming out of the successful recruitment drive in the final months of 1996, the New Jersey Young Socialists chapter started the new year with a meeting to chart out our

tasks and perspectives for the coming year.

Weekly meetings, classes

Central to the tasks of the newly doubled chapter was concretely setting into action the perspectives we've been discussing since the national leadership meeting this December: building a proletarian youth organization. Our starting point was the essential need to organize ourselves through weekly membership meetings, without which our chapter will cease to exist. We decided to affirm Sundays as the day for our chapter meeting, the only day it's been consistently possible to have full membership meetings. With this, we concluded, other priorities such as classes will have to be scheduled so that they don't push this essential institution aside.

We voted to start on a new leg of our class series, public classes Saturday nights, which will take up Marxist classics, as well as *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions* and "The Opening Guns of World War III" from *New International* no.7, in preparation for the upcoming convention in Atlanta. We're presently working with the local branch of the Socialist Workers Party, who have co-sponsored our most recent classes, to develop and co-sponsor a detailed syllabus.

In looking at our success in recruitment over the past period, we addressed the question of "What are we recruiting to?" We concurred with the conclusions of the national leadership meeting in December 1996: that to recruit to a communist youth organization we must be on an axis of propaganda. With that conclusion, we voted to take the following steps:

Engage jointly in Sunday mobilizations with the SWP to further propaganda and recruitment work; selling the *Militant* and Pathfinder books; to actively build Friday evening Militant Labor Forums; to establish "Recruitment Wednesdays": organizing to do collective work each Wednesday to follow up with contacts and set up book tables in communities and at political events. We also voted to pay regular attention to advancing our work in New Brunswick, where one member of our chapter attends Rutgers University and where we have the potential

for a new chapter; to have a recruitment point at each chapter meeting, using it to organize our work on Wednesdays; to propose to the SWP that a YS member chosen by the chapter be added to their committee, which organizes weekly sales work such as the Sunday mobilizations;

These decisions are how we intend to make recruitment part of everything we do. We consider writing for the YS column in the *Militant* as part of recruitment work as well, letting people who read the paper know that there's an organization they can join.

Finances

The chapter also assigned a financial director to bring in a financial point at the first meeting of each month, organize collection of dues, oversee fundraising activities, and present budgets to the chapter for approval.

We see finances as one of the points we've been weakest at, so we're looking forward to launching some aggressive fundraising in the upcoming months, beginning with a party in late January. We will continue to organize frequent raffles, dinners, and socials while pursuing campus speaking engagements that often pay honorarium.

Fundraising, if organized politically, often intersects with recruitment. One example of this is the opportunity we have to work with a student from northeast Pennsylvania who expressed interest in joining the Young Socialists and wants us to speak at her high school. We are going to visit her, and we want to raise money to send a team to the Wheeling-Pitt strike in Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia, bringing people like her with us.

Finally, we voted to send 50 percent of all funds we raise at upcoming events to the Young Socialists National Office and to launch a local "Countdown to Atlanta Fund" to facilitate the participation of all youth who want to attend the 2nd Convention of the Young Socialists this March.

Putting it into practice

As soon as we adjourned our January 4, Sunday meeting, we dispatched a sales team to attend a local symposium in downtown Newark called: The State of Black and

Latino Youth, sponsored by a local Maoist group, Black NIA F.O.R.C.E. The main speakers were Sista Souljah, an activist and writer, and Kathleen Cleaver, a former Black Panther member and presently a lawyer. Approximately 400 people, many of whom were young, attended the event. While references were frequently made to the chronic violence of capitalism, the solutions presented mainly focused on individual morality, education and the strengthening of the family. There were no revolutionary or communist perspectives presented. People flocked to the table set up by the Young Socialists outside the building where the event was held. Six books were sold in less than an hour with titles ranging from *What is to be Done?* by V.I. Lenin; *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War*, by Che Guevara; and *FBI on Trial*. Others bought catalogs; copies of the socialist newspaper, the *Militant*; took leaflets on upcoming classes and forums; and signed up for more information on the Young Socialists.

On Wednesday, January 8, we worked through the backlog of contact names which for too long have been unattended. We began to pare them down enough to be able to focus on those who are truly potential recruits and institute more timely follow up on those we meet weekly.

On Friday, January 10, we met a young worker named André interested in the YS at the Militant Labor Forum on "Sexual Harassment in the Military." The next day, the chapter held a successful class on the *Communist Manifesto*, led by Ric, the newest member of our chapter, and Luis Madrid, a member of the National Committee of the SWP. The weekend progressed on Sunday, January 12, with more than half of the chapter participating in voluntary labor to complete some final work on the pick-and-pack operation and collate volumes of the Collected Works of Marx and Engels and V.I. Lenin. We held discussions on the potential for SWP and YS members to work together in the trade unions in New Jersey, and finished with a successful chapter meeting.

Stefanie Trice is a member of the United Transportation Union. YS member Brock Satter contributed to this article.

Your pictures could run with this column! The *Militant* encourages its readers to send in pictures of YSers in political activity and selling Pathfinder books.

Now available: YS 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.

Japan stock market balloon sinks to two-year low

BY BOB MILLER

The Japanese stock market nosedived 11 percent and the first section lost \$266 billion in the first week of trading in 1997. This was capped by a 4.3 percent rout on January 10, the largest one day loss in two years.

Tokyo Stock Exchange officials said that in this one day of trading, the lost value in shares listed on the exchange's first section totaled \$108 billion — more than the stock market value of Toyota Motor Corp.

The Tokyo stock market, the second largest in the world, has fallen more than 16 percent in five weeks and 24 percent below the 1996 peak last June.

Financial shares have been taking the worst beating. Shares in banks, security firms and insurance companies have been pummeled. "The sell-off has pushed the shares of some banks, which are struggling to dispose of billions of dollars in sour loans, to precarious levels," the *New York Times* reported.

In order to meet international standards, banks need to maintain capital equal to 8 percent of outstanding loans. According to the *Economist*, with the Nikkei stock market index at 17,000, half of the top 20 Japanese banks will be undercapitalized. The Nikkei closed at 17,303 on January 10.

The banks are "caught in a dangerous spiral. As overall shares fall, bank stock portfolios shrink, eroding the profits and capital they use to write off bad loans. Investors then sell bank shares again on fears the workout of their bad loan problems will be delayed, driving down the market again," the *Wall Street Journal* remarked.

The *Financial Times* compared the Japanese market to the United States following the stock market collapse on 1929. "It has been caught in a liquidity trap." Continuing, "even with short term interest rates at half a percent and the long bond yield at 2

and 1/2 percent, Japanese companies cannot find attractive investment opportunities in Japan." Capital investment in capacity increasing industrial plant and equipment is not expanding.

The *Financial Times* also noted, "there is little sign that the collapse in the price of property, which provides the main collateral for bank lending, is at an end." This "comment and analysis" column recalled a recession in 1937-38 during the Great Depression in the United States, adding, "it took the heavy military spending of the second world war to put the U.S. economy back on its feet."

"There was really no new developments that alone could account for the drop. The massive selling itself became the news, and just lured more panic sellers into the market," said Yasuo Ueki, director of equities operations at Nikko Securities.

Last month Japan's Economic Planning Agency estimated that the gross domestic product would grow only 1.9 percent in the fiscal year ending March 31, 1998 — its lowest forecast since World War II. Japan is only one year out of a five year long recession, the deepest in fifty years.

Japan's prime minister, Ryutaro Hashimoto, has also announced that there will be no more government efforts to jump start the economy. In 1996, some \$97 billion in public cash outlays and tax breaks helped boost the economy. This year the government's deficit will grow to an estimated 3.7 percent of GDP compared to a 3.4 percent surplus in 1991.

Estimates for growth in corporate earnings for the year ending in March have been cut in half. Meanwhile, the Japanese yen is at a 45-month low against the dollar.

Since the inflated bubble of stock and land prices was pricked in 1989, the bank stock index has lost 61 percent of its value. Bad loans have yet to be cleared. "I think we are

much closer to a meltdown in Japanese financial assets now than we have ever been," said Jeff Uscher, the editor of Grant's *Asia Observer*.

"Any worsening in the condition of Japan's banks is likely to be much more

contagious across the world than a slide in the Japanese equity market," the *Financial Times* warned.

Bob Miller is a member of UAW Local 980 in Edison, New Jersey.

European Union crisis

Continued from Page 4

ruling classes in Europe." They must wage assaults on the working there and lower the social wage, Carlsson said. "When the bosses in Germany attempted to implement a cut in sick pay benefits, they set off defensive strikes and protests involving hundreds of thousands of workers.

"Giscard d'Estaing can dream of devaluing the franc, and sell more commodities, but in the end you can't make a dent by writing down your currency," he explained. "You have to lower the social wage. But like the French truckers strike, there will be more battles by workers that destabilize capitalist equilibrium."

Carlsson mentioned the walkout of more than 400,000 steelworkers in Germany on October 24 protesting the bosses' attempts to cut sick pay benefits. An earlier strike and demonstrations involving up to some 100,000 workers forced the employers at Mercedes-Benz and other companies to back down over the sick pay dispute.

Elsewhere in Europe, a national strike involving some 7 million workers demanding higher wages was organized December 13 in Italy, while thousands of working farmers in Greece ended their road blockades just before Christmas. The farmers, who were calling for higher prices for their products to guarantee them a living income among other de-

mands, had mobilized up to 10,000 tractors to shut down the country's main transportation arteries.

Carlsson noted that some figures in the workers movement, such as Socialist Party leader Lionel Jospin of France, have called for supporting the EMU. But workers should not get trapped in the framework of the EMU debate.

"Whether there will be a European Monetary Union is not so important for the working class," Carlsson explained. "The key is to resist attacks by bosses. Workers need their own action program." Defending immigrant rights and extending social entitlements are an important part of a working class program to fight against the bosses' austerity measures. The fight for a shorter workweek with no cut in pay and jobs for all is essential to forging unity among the working class, he said. More than four million people are unemployed in Germany while the jobless rate in France is at record highs. Above all, he said, working people need international solidarity, not to take sides in the conflict among capitalists over a common currency.

"There will be more and more instability in Europe," Carlsson stated. "The great thing about this is the struggles and the political polarization, which will increase. The rulers in Europe today have to go directly after the working class as a whole and that will provide great openings for communists."

Tel Aviv agrees to withdrawal plan

Continued from front page

divided into two sections, one to be patrolled by Palestinian police and the other by Israeli forces. "Joint mobile units" are to patrol the "commanding heights" overlooking the city, a neighborhood called Abu Sneineh. The Israeli soldiers in these units will be armed with M-16 rifles, while the Palestinian Authority officers will have Mini-Ingram submachine guns, which are less accurate and have a shorter range. The joint units may be deployed anywhere in the city by a joint District Coordination Office.

The 400 Palestinian police allowed under the agreement will be required to keep their rifles locked in their stations, to be used by special police units only after notifying Israeli officials. In addition, Palestinians are not to carry weapons in a "buffer zone" around the Israeli-controlled area without Israeli permission and are mandated to set up checkpoints to control Arabs entering the area, where some 30,000 Palestinians reside.

Many issues still not resolved

The "declaration of principles" reached in Oslo between Arafat and the former Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin in September 1993 established stages for Palestinians to take control over occupied lands of Gaza Strip and the West Bank. The first was control over Gaza and Jericho; the second, which began in September 1995, called for Israeli withdrawal from Palestinian towns in the West Bank, followed by the election of a Palestinian Legislative Council. A three-stage withdrawal of Israeli forces from the West Bank over 18 months was to be completed by September 1997. A final round of talks over the status of Jerusalem, the Jewish settlements, and borders, was to finish the process by May 1999. Under that agreement, by that time there should be 85 percent Palestinian control over the West Bank. As of now, the Palestinian Authority has direct control over 7 percent of the area, and administrative control in other settlements of about 25 percent.

The "note of agreement" accompanying the new accord on Hebron lists the outstanding issues that were to have been addressed by the Oslo accord. Among other things, it states Tel Aviv will complete three troop withdrawals from the West Bank by mid-1998, though the Israeli regime says it will unilaterally decide the extent and location of the redeployments.

Washington brokered the new accord, with the aid of the Jordanian regime. U.S. envoy Ross, who headed the negotiations, had threatened to quit the talks when it reached a deadlock after Netanyahu refused to set a final deadline for withdrawal of the troops.

Palestinian leaders had initially rejected Washington's proposals stating that it breaks the Oslo interim accords of 1995. "Israel has

proposed to end the last stage of further redeployments from the rest of the West Bank in 1999," Tayeb Abdel-Rahim, general secretary of the Palestinian presidency, told the Reuters news agency. "We rejected that, so to break the deadlock in the talks, Ross proposed as a compromise in mid-1998, and we rejected this as well." The Palestinians also demanded dates for the release of Palestinian prisoners, the right to open an airport in the Gaza strip, and a road allowing free passage between Palestinian-controlled areas in the West Bank and Gaza.

In an interview with the *Wall Street Journal* days before reaching the accord, Netanyahu reiterated his intention to prevent Palestinians from having full sovereignty in their state. "The Palestinians should have self-government absent those powers normally associated with sovereignty that could threaten the state of Israel, such as control of airspace or control of underground water resources or the ability to make military pacts with regimes like Iran or Iraq," said the prime minister.

Though it is not legally required, Netanyahu is submitting the new accord to his 18-member cabinet for approval. Seven members of that body indicated they would vote against it, and five others stated they were undecided.

Struggle continues on the ground

Other right wing leaders have expressed their resistance to accept the agreements. Yisrael Harel, one of the founders of the Council of Jewish Settlements in Judea and Samaria said, "I must tell you that the founding fathers of the Council have reached a



Thousands of Palestinians rally at the Khan Yunis refugee camp December 20 in the Gaza Strip. The agreement reached by Israeli and Palestinian officials will not resolve conflicts until settlers and occupation army are withdrawn from Palestinian lands.

point that it is better to bring down the government than let this government bring down our dreams and our beliefs," he told the *New York Times*. Leaders of the Zionist settlers met January 14 in Jerusalem to plan a protest campaign against the government over the accords.

Palestinians in Hebron have already started preparing for the withdrawal of the Zionist troops by painting over political graffiti on the storefront shutters in the downtown Bab Izawiya area of Hebron. Izzedine Sharabati, one of the Palestinians living in the area that will remain under Israeli control told reporters, "There will be no peace between us and the settlers. The only solution is to get them out of Hebron"

altogether.

Meanwhile, Israeli troops bulldozed three metal shacks January 14 that were home to a Bedouin family as part of expanding a Jewish settlement. Some 45 families from the Jahalin Bedouin tribe have lived in the territory near Jerusalem for decades. The Jahalin, who have been ordered by the Israeli Supreme Court to leave in August, had been offered land near Abus Dis, a West Bank village on the outskirts of Jerusalem. They rejected the rocky area, as it is too close to a garbage dump. Around 2,000 Jahalin live in the Maale Adumim area, the largest West Bank settlement. Tens of thousands of other Jahalin live in Israeli-controlled areas.

UK rulers face growing divisions

Continued from back page

won a majority in the parliamentary elections it would form an administration for the first time in 17 years. It would be only the sixth Labour government this century, during which time Labour has been in office for a total of less than 22 years. While the Labour Party program today is the most right wing in its history, a Labour government will carry the expectations of millions of workers. In an effort to dampen these expectations Blair pledges that he will make no promises he cannot keep. However, the bosses are fully aware that a Labour government, tied as it is to the trade union bureaucracy, will come under destabilizing pressures from fights which break out in the ranks.

At the Trades Union Congress in August, the Labour Party officials intervened to demonstrate to the rulers their ability to resist such pressures, and break free of union in-

fluence. In addressing the ongoing industrial action of rail and postal workers, they threatened a Labour Government would be prepared to introduce legislation curtailing the right to strike in the public sector.

Both Labour and Conservative Party conferences avoided confronting the question of what they intend to do to drive down public spending on workers' pensions, education, health care, and unemployment benefit — the key issue which the ruling class wants resolved. The major obstacle that the rulers face, whichever party holds office, is the capacity of working people to resist, which is a permanent factor despite the slow pace of actions today. The continuing fight by Liverpool dockers to a company lock-out 14 months ago and a summer of one-day actions to defend pay and conditions by rail and postal workers have indicated to the bosses the challenge they must still confront.

The *Economist*, a British financial weekly, reviewing the record of 17 years of Conservative Party rule, dwelt on the limitations of inroads made against the social wage. Since the Conservative government came to power in 1979, it pointed out, the cost of welfare has risen by half in real terms, and from 23 percent to 26 percent of GDP, even if on previous governments' records recessions might have driven it much higher. The Tories had to "squeeze hard" in some areas, "But the broad goals of the system and the resulting cost to taxpayers, have

changed much less than most of the government's critics allow — and less than some of its critics would have wished."

An editorial in the conservative *Daily Telegraph* headlined: "But would Blair cut welfare?" poured scorn on the Labour Party leader's September 16 speech to a gathering of City Of London Business people.

"When a Labour leader says: 'We want people to consume more. We want high quality public services. We want people to pay lower taxes,' then the more cynical might be forgiven for counting the spoons...." Also noting that "After 17 years of trying to cut back the state they [the Conservative government] have merely succeeded in preventing it from absorbing more of the national output than it did in 1979," the editorial goes on to complain, "To deliver rising living standards, and lower taxation, this bill must be cut, but perhaps a public acknowledgment of this was a bridge too far yesterday, even for a reforming Labour leader."

The *Financial Times* in an editorial reviewing the party conferences on October 12 commented, "Mr. Major has yet to explain how he can offer lower taxes without cutting into the core of the Welfare State. Mr. Blair insists that a radical improvement in public services would carry only the smallest price tag. In reality, the next Government will be obliged to make much harder choices than either will admit."

200 rally in N.Y. for Irish activist

BY MARC LICHTMAN

NEW YORK — Some 200 people participated in a spirited demonstration at the German airline Lufthansa here January 11 in support of bail for Róisín McAliskey, the daughter of longtime Irish nationalist and human rights campaigner Bernadette Devlin McAliskey.

Róisín McAliskey is being held in a London prison facing extradition to Germany for alleged participation in an Irish Republican Army attack on a British military base there. No credible evidence of her involvement has been presented. McAliskey is six months pregnant and has a number of serious medical problems, but the German government opposes her release on bail while the extradition proceedings take place.

On her many speaking tours of the United

States, Bernadette Devlin McAliskey has become known as a fierce opponent of all forms of racism. The demonstration for her daughter attracted Black rights activists and campaigners for imprisoned Native American activist Leonard Peltier, as well as many Irish American and other activists. Former New York City Mayor David Dinkins sent greetings. Demonstrations were held on the same day in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C.

The Friends of Róisín McAliskey can be reached c/o O'Dwyer and Bernstien, 52 Duane St., New York, NY 10007, or at (718) 436-4770. They are requesting that people telephone the German Embassy in Washington, D.C., and the various German Consulates demanding that Bonn drop its opposition to bail.

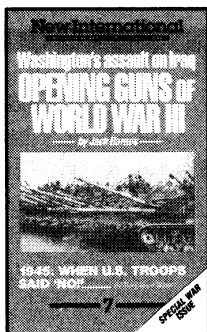
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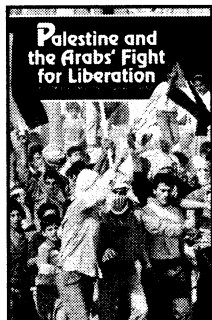
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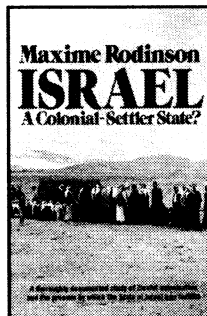


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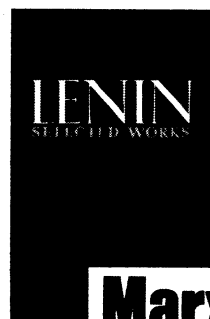
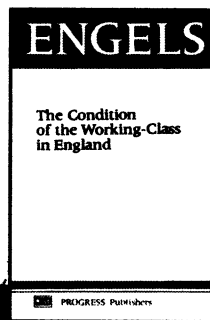
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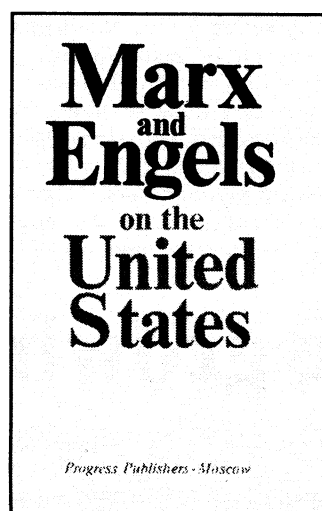
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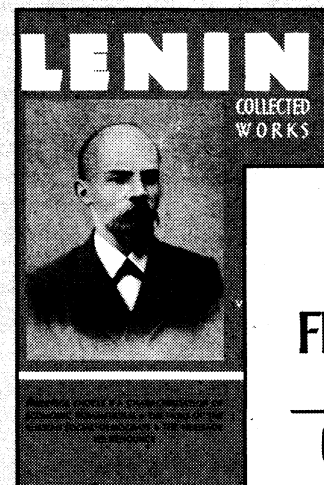
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'Ebonics' and the fight for education

BY NICK SANDS

SAN FRANCISCO — A special task force appointed by the Oakland Unified School Board (OUSD) announced January 13 that it had redrafted a resolution on "Ebonics" that had been debated across the country for nearly a month.

On December 18, school board members had unanimously voted, based on the recommendations of this task force, to recognize "the existence and the cultural and historic bases of West and Niger-Congo African Language Systems...as the predomi-

AS I SEE IT

nately primary language of African-American students." The resolution immediately stirred a controversy that many right-wing forces have picked up on as part of their "culture war" to attack gains won by Blacks and other working people. For workers it posed the question of how to fight for decent public education, especially for Blacks.

The Oakland resolution claimed that African Language systems or Ebonics are "genetically based and not a dialect of English." The resolution added that bilingual education programs, similar to those used for students whose first language is Chinese or Spanish, are needed for Black youth, whose test scores and grades average well below the overall district average. It calls for teachers to be trained and their pay upgraded to that of bilingual education teachers.

The term "Ebonics" combines the words ebony and phonics. Since the resolution was announced, radio and television talk shows by the dozens have taken place on the subject and scores of articles have appeared in papers across the country.

In a statement posted on the City of Oakland Web page, OUSD members said that in passing the resolution, it has "adopted a policy on teaching English, not Ebonics."

"Unfortunately," the Board continues, "because of the misconceptions in the resulting press stories, the actions of the Board of Education have been publicly misunderstood." The task force's new draft resolution has been modified to say, "These language systems have origins in West (African) and Niger-Congo languages and are not merely dialects of English." The words "genetically based" are dropped.

Also altered are provisions that called Ebonics or African Language systems a primary language of Oakland's Black students. The new wording states, "standardized tests and grades...will be remedied by application of a program featuring African Language Systems principles to move students from the language patterns they bring to school to English proficiency." The school board is expected to ratify the changes in the resolution at its January 15 meeting.

Much of the debate centers on whether

"Ebonics" is a distinct language, rather than a dialect or slang derived from English. Also being debated is whether teachers should be competent in Ebonics as a method of teaching young people "proper or standard English."

Democratic Party politician Jesse Jackson paid a much publicized visit to Board members at the end of 1996. Jackson initially criticized the resolution as justifying talking "garbage," but switched gears complementing the Board for opening a national debate on the necessity of improving the English proficiency of Black youth.

The California State Superintendent of Instruction, Delaine Eastin, and the Clinton administration rapidly weighed in against the proposal. U.S. department of education head Richard Riley stated that no federal funds will be made available to teach Ebonics.

Opponents of bilingual education have seized upon the opening created by the debate on Ebonics to deepen their attacks on bilingual education. Stanley Diamond from the California English campaign blasted the plan as did Ward Connerly, the University of California Regent, who spearheaded the anti-affirmative action proposition 209 on the 1996 California state ballot.

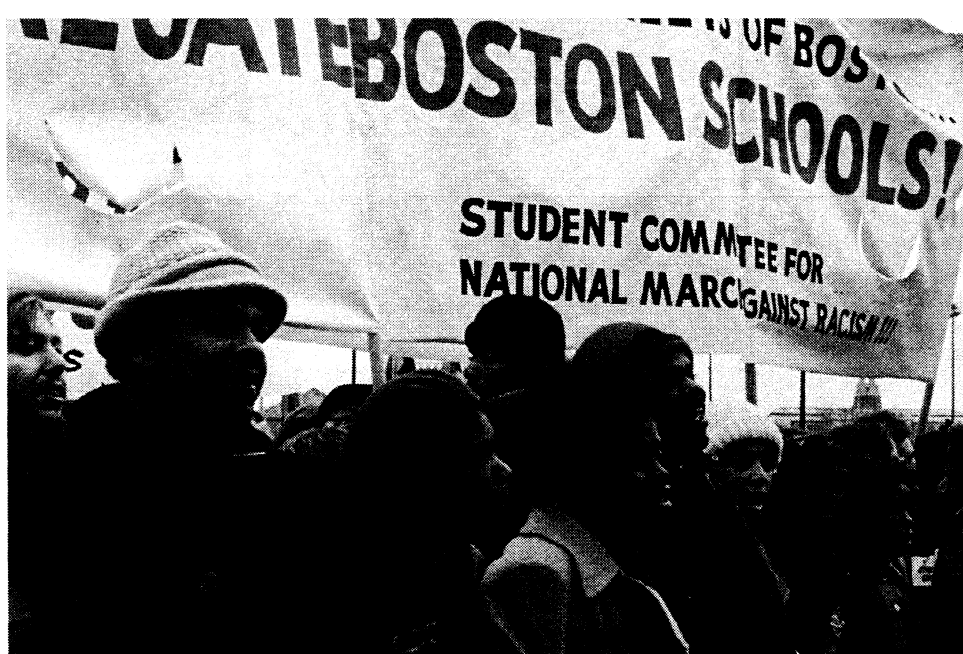
New York Republican Congressman Peter King, a strong proponent of making English the official U.S. language, introduced a bill into Congress January 8 that would bar federal funding for schools programs based on Ebonics. King stated that Ebonics "is a racial stew of inner-city street slang and bad grammar."

Conditions in the public schools

Deplorable conditions exist in the Oakland schools. Because of overcrowding, classes are taught in the hallways, on auditorium stages, and lunchroom corners. Schools lack basic supplies including text books. Fifty-three percent of the students in the city schools are Black. Seventy-one percent of the students in special education last year were Black, as were 80 percent of those suspended from school, and 71 percent of those required to repeat a grade. The grade point average of Black students was 1.8 on a scale of 4, compared to the average of 2.4

These conditions are by no means unique to this Bay Area city and are of major concern to workers who are Black, Latino, and Asian who want schools to provide the opportunity for learning and lay a basis for finding jobs with decent pay.

The Oakland School Board's Ebonics proposal is a schema put forward by a group of elected officials. Its funding arguments plays into the hands of those who want to pit Blacks against Latinos and Asians and undermine bilingual educational programs. It is my opinion that Ebonics is not a language. Moreover, whether or not Ebonics is used as a "tool" by a handful of teachers to attempt to raise standard English proficiency for youth who are Black will make



Militant

Freedom March in 1974 for school desegregation in Boston. Struggle to defend desegregation, affirmative action, and other gains is key to fighting racism in education.

little difference in changing education in Oakland or anywhere else. But I don't think this is decisive in coming to understand what is behind the Oakland debate and what the road forward should be.

Education is a class question

Education, like every other question, has to be looked at in class terms. You can't get a handle on the Oakland controversy by simply discussing how you are going to improve the schools there.

In response to the worldwide economic depression, shrinking markets and their declining rates of profits, the small handful of billionaire families that rule this country are using their two capitalist political parties to slash funding for education, public hospitals, social services, and the infrastructure. They are trying to role back gains won in struggle by Blacks and their supporters in the 1950s, '60s, and early '70s. They are eliminating school busing programs across the country and trying to make inroads into curtailing affirmative action. They are promoting "charter schools" and other schemes that undercut public education.

The Black population has class differentiation within it with a growing middle class layer. But capitalism's day-to-day workings, with their legacy of racial inequality, breed less integration and more resegregation. Especially hard hit are Black working-class areas across the country where high unemployment, poor housing, and decaying schools are a fact of life in the grinding circumstances faced by millions. This is what led to the conditions in Oakland's schools.

Low test scores among Black youth are a reflection of the unequal education working-class youth receive under capitalism, and particularly those who are Black and of other oppressed nationalities. This, not how language is taught, is the key question that must be addressed. Working people need to fight concretely to defend and extend busing, affirmative action, and other measures that were fought for and won as part of the fight for Black rights, all of which are under attack today. And we must oppose any discrimination against youth who are Black, in school or on the job, for using idioms referred to as "Black English" or slang.

These assaults are accompanied by an ideological barrage directed at the working-class. The rulers attempt to sow division by targeting immigrants, and those they term "welfare cheats," "the criminal element," and the "underclass," for scapegoating. The hatred toward working-class youth who are Black has come through the press, radio, and television talk shows dealing with the Oakland Ebonics resolution, frequently peppered with blatantly racist jokes. The *Economist* magazine even illustrated their article, headlined "The Ebonics virus," with a photo of three Black children and the question, "Speaking another language?"

During the massive civil rights struggles of 1960s and early 70s, Jim Crow segregation was smashed as fighters raised demands against the government based on the objective needs of the Black community. The dignity of workers who are Black was raised by their participation in the struggle. They won respect of workers who were white.

In its June 20, 1969 edition, the *Militant* ran "A Transition Program for Black Liberation." Adopted as a resolution by the 1969 Socialist Workers Party convention a few months later, the "Transitional Program for Black Liberation" included demands for self-determination of the Black community including community control of education.

This program was circulated among Black fighters and other workers and youth. It noted that mass social struggles in this epoch tend to point toward which class rules and will exercise governmental power. The SWP program called for the formation of a Black political party, independent of the Democratic and Republican Parties.

Demands for Black community control of education were also incorporated into the Charter of the National Black Independent Political Party that existed in the early 1980s.

The Oakland School Board's resolution, however, does not come out of a struggle. It is a maneuver by elected officials whose framework is appealing for funds within the boundaries of ever-shrinking budgetary allotments set by Democratic and Republican party politicians in Washington, Sacramento, and Oakland city hall.

Schools under capitalism

Schools are a reflection of the class society we live in. The ruling rich have no interest in education per se. The so-called better educated are trained to believe they are more important than those who work in factories. This is one of the primary ways the ruling class gets the "educated" to defend this system and to reinforce their class rule.

At best, for working-class youth, schools offer the possibility to learn, to read, write, compute, and to increase your attention span, though the capitalists don't care if you are functionally illiterate. They only require that you have the minimum knowledge needed to operate their machinery without damaging it. Everything taught in history and other social science classes is designed to hide the truth about how the ruling class makes its billions off of our backs through its plunder at home and abroad.

The capitalists want youth in school to learn to be obedient, to get ready to work hard throughout your life as a wage laborer and to be grateful that you are employed.

A socialist society that values human beings and social solidarity will undertake education as a lifetime pursuit. Education is not just a "youth question." Why should education end at 17, 18, or 21?

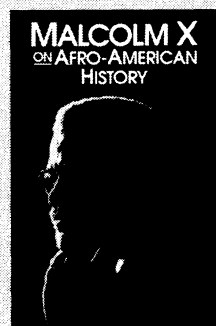
History has shown that it is only the working class in power that can deal with education in a meaningful way.

The great revolutions of the 20th century from the Russian Revolution in 1917 to the Cuban revolution in 1959 put a premium on organizing literacy campaigns so that the entire population could participate equally in building the new society. This was necessary to overcome the legacy of illiteracy in those countries fostered by capitalism and to break down the divisions between the factory workers in the city and the peasantry in the country side.

If you read the speeches and writings of the communist and revolutionary leaders who have arisen from the ranks of the oppressed here or internationally in this century you will note that they never talked down to fellow fighters, never adapted their speech so it sounded like jargon or slang, regardless of the level of development in the country they lived in.

This is true for Malcolm X and Nelson Mandela, for Maurice Bishop in Grenada, for Thomas Sankara in Burkina Faso, and Fidel Castro and Che Guevara in Cuba. This is testimony to their confidence in the fact that working people are capable of rapidly rising above the degradation produced by capitalism and using the most powerful ideas developed by humanity to begin forging themselves into new men and women.

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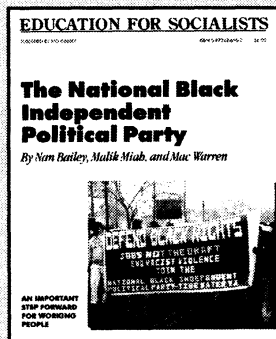


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THE TRANSITIONAL PROGRAM FOR SOCIALIST REVOLUTION

LEON TROTSKY

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Clinton plans to cut Medicaid

Continued from front page

will limit growth in spending for the program to 4-5 percent annually. The pretext once again is balancing the federal budget. At the moment, benefits for Medicaid, a means-tested program, are available to anyone who meets federal and state eligibility standards.

Medicaid was enacted in 1965 along with Medicare, which provides health coverage for the elderly and disabled. These programs were an extension of the concessions working people won through earlier labor battles, registered in the Social Security Act of 1935.

Together, these benefits make up the social wage — an elementary safety net giving workers the possibility to make it through a lifetime by having some care for the young, minimal health coverage for the elderly, pensions, unemployment insurance, and workers compensation for injuries on the job. The labor movement fought to win them as entitlements — programs that are not up for review in every yearly budget — in order to increase social solidarity and undercut the dog-eat-dog competition imposed on the working class by the profit system. Winning these benefits reduced the proportion of the value working people produce through their labor that the employers are able to expropriate as surplus value.

In their quest to shore up declining profit rates, the bosses are trying to make inroads in this social wage. Their first major successful foray was Clinton's signing of the Welfare Reform Act last August. With a stroke of the pen, the Democratic president made good on his pledge to "end welfare as we know it." He eliminated Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), hacking a piece out of the Social Security Act for the first time in 60 years.

That law, along with the anti-immigrant legislation Clinton signed last year, is already affecting millions previously eligible for Medicaid. Last year, Medicaid spending grew 3.3 percent before inflation, compared to an average yearly growth of 15 percent between 1985 and 1995.

At the same time, the number of working people and their children who lack health insurance, either from private employers or the federal government, is steadily rising. The January 15 *Wall Street Journal* reported that in 1995, 9.8 million children, almost 14 percent of all children in the United States, were uninsured for the entire year, up from 8.2 million in 1987. "The total would have been even higher if Medicaid hadn't expanded rapidly, partly offsetting a sharp drop in employer-sponsored coverage," the *Journal* said. "Advocates worry that changes in the welfare law may increase the number of uninsured children by making it more complicated for some families to sign up for Medicaid."

Liberals' hypocritical concern for kids

The Clinton administration and many of the president's fellow liberal Democrats are cynically using this situation to justify the White House assault on Medicaid. The same article in the *Journal* pointed out that "Senate Democrats will hold a news conference tomorrow [January 16] to tout their plans for extending health coverage to uninsured children," which they have dubbed "Kid Care."

Clinton is reportedly considering a proposal for a \$750 million-a-year program to help insure the so-called "gap kids." These are children whose families can't afford private insurance nor are eligible for Medicaid. Where's the money going to come from, according to the Democratic administration? From "Medicaid savings," that is cutting this program, which will mean that more workers and their children will go without health coverage.

"A cap on Medicaid spending could directly affect the people who depend on the program for health insurance," said an article in the January 14 *New York Times*. "If a state reached its limit, it would have two choices. It could cut back the amount or the scope of its Medicaid benefits, or it could curb payments to doctors, nursing homes and other health care providers, reducing the incentive for them to serve Medicaid patients."

Democratic Senator Daniel Moynihan has been in the front ranks of those pushing the capitalists' propaganda offensive against these programs. During a December 1 appearance in the NBC television show "Meet the Press," Moynihan stated, "The Medic-

aid fund is not going broke. It is broke. It has been in a negative cash flow for four years." On that program, Moynihan also campaigned for cutting Medicare and reducing cost-of-living adjustments to Social Security pensions by arbitrarily lowering the Consumer Price Index.

In early November, Clinton had already outlined his latest plan for cutting Medicare, which now covers 38 million elderly and disabled. During last year's election campaign Clinton blasted Republicans for their 1994 proposals to slash \$270 billion out of Medicare and do away with Medicaid altogether by replacing it with federal "block grants" to state governments. The Democratic president, however, often omitted the fact that he had offered to chop \$124 billion from Medicare a year ago.

Some Democrats, like Rep. John Dingell of Michigan and Senator Robert Graham of Florida, are reportedly urging the White House to drop the plan for a ceiling on Medicaid spending. These liberals argue that Republicans have withdrawn many of their most draconian measures of the now defunct "Contract with America," including the proposal to junk Medicaid. Clinton, however, who never pushed his agenda to counter the "Republican right" but to best serve the interests of the ruling rich, appears resolved to drive on this front.

Scandal-mongering spreads

Meanwhile, allegations of corruption and sexual misconduct of top public officials have continued to spread.

Gingrich, who was reelected Speaker of

the House of Representatives in a close vote January 7, faced new charges of illegally "masterminding" his defense in the ongoing "ethics" investigation into his conduct.

The controversy heated up after the January 10 *New York Times* published a portion of the transcript of a telephone call between Gingrich and his associates, where the House Speaker discussed how his allies should respond to his admission he had misled the House investigation. Democrats said this showed Gingrich broke a pledge to the "ethics" committee he would not orchestrate a counterattack. Congress is supposed to vote on a proposed sanction against the Republican January 21.

The tape leaked to the *Times* was supposedly recorded through a private scanner by John and Alice Martin, a couple of Florida Democrats, who turned it over to Rep. James McDermott, a Democrat on the House "ethics" committee.

The Republicans quickly counterattacked, accusing McDermott of violating federal law and forcing him to quit the committee January 14. The FBI opened an investigation into "possible illegal telephone interception and the subsequent dissemination of the contents of the telephone call." And the chairman of the House commerce committee asked the Federal Communications Commission to launch an inquiry into how the Martins intercepted the Gingrich call.

At same time, the charges of sexual misconduct against Clinton, first raised by Paula



The number of working people without medical insurance rises, as Washington prepares cuts in the already meager Medicare and Medicaid health care programs. Public workers (above) demand government funded health care outside New York city hall, October 1990.

Jones in a civil suit in February 1994, got new life and prominence in the media. The case is now before the Supreme Court, which is weighing a motion by Clinton's lawyers that a sitting president should be virtually immune from civil litigation until his term expires.

The pornographication of bourgeois politics

The excerpt below is reprinted from the Marxist magazine *New International no. 10* (see ad on page 4). The entire talk by Socialist Workers Party national secretary Jack Barnes, titled "Imperialism's March Toward Fascism and War," was adopted by the 1994 SWP national convention. It can be found in that issue of the magazine, pages 219-333. It is copyright © 408 Printing and Publishing and is reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY JACK BARNES

What we see happening in the imperialist countries today... marks a shift from what most working people, including ourselves, have experienced so far in our lives. There is a rise in political polarization and ultraright demagoguery and activity in the imperialist countries.

As working-class resistance to the capitalist offensive grows, more fascist outfits will take to the streets to assault strikers, union meetings, and social protest demonstrations. Ultrarightist forces will more often gain strength in bourgeois governments, as we see previewed in Italy today. The pace of history, that is, the pace of class conflict, will quicken.

The workers movement can and must fight to defend and extend democratic rights when they come under attack by rightist movements and by the capitalist government. Doing so, and drawing broad layers of the population into the fight, is part of the process of mobilizing opposition to rising fascist currents and building a communist vanguard of the working class.

Coarsening of capitalist politics

During periods like we live in today — when a capitalist social crisis is deepening but a communist leadership is not yet growing out of rising mass workers struggles — demagogues get a hearing not only in the middle class but also in the labor movement. If no solutions are being advanced on any mass level to the burning problems created by the decline of capitalism and liberal democracy, then growing numbers reach out for radical, "decisive," and "popular" answers, regardless of their scientific value and ultimate class implications. Growing numbers become susceptible to crank ideas, conspiracy theories, and a variety of reactionary explanations of why society is gripped in a deepening crisis and what can be done to "restore order."

It is from this vantage point that communist workers must judge how we respond to and politically explain the interlaced sexual

and financial scandals involving ruling-class figures in many of the imperialist countries. Headlines are being grabbed by exposés involving President Clinton and Hillary Clinton in the United States, Prince Charles and members of Parliament and cabinet ministers in the United Kingdom, prominent bourgeois politicians in Germany, Italy, Spain, and other countries.

The reason that political figures seem more vulnerable to scandals today is not that such conduct is something new in ruling circles over the history of capitalism or class society. Whatever the facts about Clinton's libido, lechery, and all-around offensive behavior, he is certainly not unique among U.S. presidents — including hallowed liberal icons like Franklin Roosevelt, let alone John Kennedy. Nothing that comes out about the current royal family in the United Kingdom can approach King Henry VIII more than four hundred years ago and many of both sexes who followed him. The greater vulnerability to scandals today is a reflection of the instability of the world imperialist order and the growing lack of confidence in this system and its leading personnel expressed both by its beneficiaries and by millions of others.

Of course, most workers justly despise the hypocrisy, the pretenses, the sanctimonious sermonizing of bourgeois politicians in both parties. We despise the "humane" excuses they give for degrading social brutality and racist abuse. We detest the way hired scribes of the parasitic classes write off entire layers of our class as lazy or self-indulgent. We're sickened by their gall in demagogically railing against "the greed of the eighties," while they themselves have actively engaged in and profited handily from the same greed-inspired conduct.

'Exposures' don't help workers

But the working-class vanguard must not fall into the trap of thinking that simply "exposing" the dissoluteness and corruption of bourgeois politicians helps the workers movement. It's barking up the wrong tree. The problem with the capitalists and their political representatives is not that they are immoral, hypocritical people as individuals. The scandalmongering is an effort — organized from within bourgeois politics, largely by its ultraright wing — to exacerbate and profit from middle-class panic and to drag workers along with the declining class itself down into the pit of resentment and salacious envy.

This "pornographication of politics," as we might call it, is part of the politics of resentment that benefits the ultraright, not the

working class. It is demagogues like the Buchanans who raise the banner of "the culture war" and "the religious war" and rail against the degeneracy of "the elite" who set a bad example for the working class. This became a stock-in-trade of the Nazis in the 1920s and early 1930s as they decried the "filth" and "degeneracy" of the Weimar Republic and its dominant bourgeois parties, politicians, and moneyed beneficiaries. This was how the Nazis explained Germany's increasingly desperate economic and social conditions to small shopkeepers and other petty-bourgeois sectors, to housewives and women in the countryside, and to layers of workers as well.

From the standpoint of the working class, it's much better when every worker could care less about the sex life of Clinton, or Kennedy, or Prince Charles — or of any other public figure. It's an enervating diversion, one that gets swept aside in times of ascending class battles.

What the working class needs is not exposés of bourgeois politicians and their personal weaknesses. We need to be able to explain politically why the working class has no common interests with the class these bourgeois politicians speak for. We need to spotlight every form of abuse of power by them, individual or corporate, including the so-called "Whitewater" revelations of how Bill and Hillary Clinton used the Arkansas state house to enrich themselves and promote big-business interests at the expense of working people and the unions — and then used the White House to cover up those earlier abuses. We need to advance a class understanding of politics and help our class forge an independent proletarian political organization that can lead a fight for a social and political program to advance the interests of the oppressed and exploited.

Until resistance grows to the point that workers begin generalizing lessons stimulated by sharp struggles and swelling the ranks of a communist party, the ideology of the ruling class — including its unctuous and hypocritical official moralism — will continue to shape the ideas and values of all but a small vanguard of the working class. But communists and other thinking workers must always fight for our class and its organizations to take the moral high ground and chart our own course independent of the bourgeoisie, its opinion makers, and the middle-class layers they set into motion.

The workers movement strives to develop our own values, collectively, out of working-class political practice.

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The European Union in Crisis: Workers Fight Austerity Drive. Speaker: Maurice Williams, *Militant* staff writer. Fri., Jan., 24, 7:30 p.m. 87A Halsey St. (1 block west of Broad, 2 blocks north of Raymond). Donation: \$4. Tel: (201) 643-3341.

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The Politics of Chicano Liberation. Speaker: Olga Rodríguez, editor of the Pathfinder book on the foundations of the movement for Chicano rights. Fri., Jan. 24, 7:30 p.m.

Korea: The Workers' Strikes. Fri., Jan. 31, 7:30 p.m. Both events held at 1906 South St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (215) 546-8218.

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Defend Abortion Rights; Defend the Clinics — 24 Years After Roe v. Wade. Speaker: Mary Martin, Socialist Workers Party, member of International Association of Machinists. Fri., Jan. 24, 7:30 p.m. 1930 18th St. NW (at 18th and Florida, entrance on Florida). Donation: \$4. Tel: (202) 387-2185.

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Evita: What the Movie Leaves Out About the Rule of Juan Perón. Speaker: Jill Fein, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Jan. 24, 7:30 p.m. 209 East 300 South. Donation: \$4. For more infor-

mation. Tel: (801) 355-1124.

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Britain, the Helms-Burton Bill and Cuba. Speaker: Martin Hill. Fri., Jan. 24, 7 p.m. 47, The Cut. Donation: £2. Tel: 0171-928-7993.

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

Upsurge in South Korea: Workers Fight Anti-union Laws. Fri., Jan. 24, 7 p.m. La Gonda Arcade, 203 Karangahape Road. Donation: \$3. Tel: (9) 379-3075.

Korean strikers expand fight over antilabor laws

Continued from front page

erally belittled the actions, admitted that public support lies with the strikers.

"The labor law only reflects what big business wants," commented Huh In Sook, a 44-year-old woman observing the demonstration in Seoul. An opinion poll cited in the January 11 *Financial Times* stated, "87 per cent of Koreans believe the new laws should be repealed, while 54 percent support the strikes."

Workers at one of the two subway systems in Seoul went out January 15, the 21st day of the actions. Many manufacturing plants were also paralyzed by the strike. The day before, about two-thirds of the 87,000 taxicab drivers joined the strike, along with bank employees, who carried out half-day work stoppages. Auto workers and shipbuilders are at the core of the fight, in a country that is the sixth largest auto producer and fills a third of the world's shipping orders.

Officials of the Federation of Democratic Unions said they expected 350,000 more workers to join the strike January 15.

The unions had set a deadline of January 14 for the government to rescind the antilabor laws, or see an expanded strike. As the deadline approached, thousands of strikers, students, and others took part in street protests, often confronting the cops. Some 20,000 workers at Hyundai Motor Co. in the southern industrial city of Ulsan defied a company lockout and held a rally inside their plant January 13.

The next day 3,000 bank clerks marched in downtown Seoul denouncing the Kim regime. "Throw the evil law in the garbage can!" they shouted. On January 12, about 3,000 workers and students clashed with riot police who were trying to block a march from the Myongdong Cathedral, where union officials are based, to a downtown shopping district. Cops went through the crowds clubbing protesters. Right before this action 2,000 workers held a protest against the new laws at the cathedral.

The president sent ruling party chairman Lee Hong Koo to the Myongdong Cathedral January 13, to try to get the strike called off. "Get out! Get out!" workers yelled, swarming around him. Lee challenged Kwon Young Kil and other union leaders to a television debate on the new antilabor laws. Kwon rejected the challenge, calling it a ploy and reaffirmed that workers would not compromise.

Despite numerous threats, only one union leader was arrested January 14.

The bosses are turning up the pressure for workers to end their walkout. Hyundai Heavy Industries has threatened to withhold strikers' annual bonuses, a major chunk of annual wages. Hyundai Motors announced a lockout and suspension of its operations, which means workers will not be paid. At one medical center 200 workers reportedly returned to work on threats of expulsion.

Despite the increased number of strikers out, the growing demonstrations, and the loss of over \$2 billion since the strike began, the big-business press insists that somehow the strike is slackening. "Still," the *Wall Street Journal* admitted, "the strikes and daily rallies have dragged on far longer than business and government officials expected... putting more pressure on the government to end the controversy."

Choi Byong Kuk, a south Korean senior prosecutor, accused the north Korean gov-

ernment in Pyongyang of inciting the strike actions. His supposed evidence is that the Korean Central News Agency in the north is running daily reports on the strikes. This, Choi argues, is agitational. "If workers do not stop their illegal strikes immediately, the government will act in a firm and resolute way to protect national security," he said.

Record of Kim Young Sam regime

Kim Young Sam took office in 1993, and has sought to promote an image as bringing "democracy" to Korea. He has faced protests from students and workers, though, that give lie to this. Last April, just prior to the National Assembly elections, 10,000 students held an antigovernment rally in Seoul protesting the death of Roh Soo Sok, a student demonstrator who was beaten by cops the week before. Kim's New Korea Party lost its majority in the assembly in the April vote, though it has been able to get enough votes from independent legislators to rule.

Following years of protests, Kim's presidential predecessors, Roh Tae Woo and Chun Doo Hwan, were found guilty last summer for their role in a 1979 coup and subsequent military repression, especially the massacre of hundreds of student demonstrators by soldiers in 1980 at Kwangju. They were also convicted on corruption charges for accepting millions of dollars in bribes. Chun, who seized power in 1979,

was sentenced to death. Roh, who ran the Seoul regime from 1988 to 1993, received a 22-year prison term. Hundreds of thousands of youth and workers had participated in the boycotts, strikes, and rallies demanding that the two be punished.

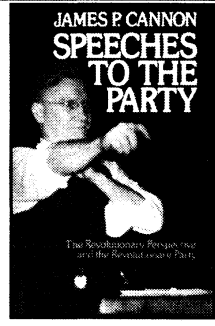
Since Kim came into office, political repression and the denial of democratic rights has continued. In the demonstrations aimed at the ex-presidents, for instance, riot cops were sent out by the thousands to physically break up protests.

The regime, like every government in the south for the last half century, maintains close ties with Washington. Some 37,000 U.S. troops are based in south Korea, many along the so-called "demilitarized zone" that has divided the peninsula in two since the

U.S.-led Korean War, which left 4 million people dead. U.S. and south Korean forces regularly carry out joint military exercises provocatively directed against Pyongyang.

There is a genuine demand for unification that comes from inside south Korea. To try to counter this, Seoul's laws prohibit any political activity in support of reunification and any unauthorized contact with Koreans living in the north. In September of 1995, students tried to participate in the annual commemoration of Korea's liberation from Japan that consists of a walk from Seoul to north Korea along what is called Unification Road. They were met by 5,000 cops. One year later thousands of students engaged in a nine day confrontation with the government, demanding reunification.

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Christchurch: 199 High St. Postal address: P.O. Box 22-530. Tel: (3) 365-6055. Compuserve: 100250,1511

SWEDEN

Stockholm: Vikingagatan 10 (T-bana St Eriksplan). Postal code: S-113 42. Tel: (08) 31 69 33. Compuserve: 100416,2362

Dilbert's new boss? — A red mouse pad that "provides traction for your [computer] mouse as well as words of inspiration from Chairman Mao." For instance: "Don't



Harry Ring

wait until problems pile up and cause a lot of trouble before trying to solve them." From China Books, \$9.95.

Lucid, no? — "One theory says that if employers pay their employees more, they will be more reluctant to goof off because higher

wages create more unemployment, making it harder to find a comparable job

"But offering workers merit pay ... may result in greater effort but won't necessarily reduce shirking because workers may value both higher pay and goofing off, according to Craig Marcott... associate professor in economics." — St. Paul *Pioneer Press*.

'Capitalism fouls things up (I) — A Texas jury ordered Chevron to pay \$61 million to a contractor whose workers were sickened by hazardous conditions at the company's El Paso refinery.

Meanwhile Phelps Dodge, the copper mogul, was ordered to pay the Postal Service \$21 million and take back 37 acres of contaminated land it sold the agency in 1986.

Capitalism fouls things up (II) — A study of England's Tyne estuary, found sex changes in 94 percent of male fish. The *Times* of London said the study "comes amid growing alarm over the effect on the environment of man-made chemicals."

Describing the malformations found in the fish, Christina Lye, the marine scientist who did the study, commented tersely: "I would not like to eat these fish."

From Heaven? — In Greece, a widower filed suit against priests for refusing to bury his wife because they had been married in city hall, not the Orthodox Church. A priest explained, "I receive orders from above. I'm just a plain priest."

Breeding counts — Somewhat

like working people, aging horses often face glum times. When they can't work any more, it's the glue factory or the slaughterhouse. Except for some thoroughbred race horses. "A tranquil life, marked by constant and loving care." That's what the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation says your check will help provide.

...meanwhile — The federal Bureau of Land Management is supposed to save wild horses from the slaughterhouse by rounding them up and offering them for adoption for a \$125 fee.

But a survey found that of those adopted — mainly by people connected with the program — 90 percent wind up in slaughterhouses. Horse meat fetches a good price abroad and slaughterhouses are

paying \$700 each.

Also, don't call them — Sweden's state-operated employment agency — perhaps at wit's end — drew flack with a suggestion to job-hunters: approach a pregnant woman; ask where they work and if they're planning to take a maternity leave.

Funniest idea of the week — To cope with London police corruption, Scotland Yard will use undercover cops posing (?) as criminals to catch other cops.

New York's "finest" — whose corruption is exceeded only by their brutality — will crack up to learn that the Yard says many of its ideas on this came from a study of internal affairs operations of the New York force.

Why Cuba nationalized capitalist properties

Below we reprint an excerpt from "The case of Cuba is the case of all underdeveloped countries," an address given by Fidel Castro to the United Nations General Assembly Sept. 26, 1960. From that platform the Cuban revolutionary leader explained the measures taken by the Cu-

BOOK OF THE WEEK

ban workers and farmers that had so outraged the U.S. rulers and condemned Washington's aggression against the Caribbean island. The entire speech appears in *To Speak the Truth: Why Washington's 'Cold War' against Cuba Doesn't End*, by Fidel Castro and Ernesto Che Guevara. The book is copyright © Pathfinder Press. Reprinted with permission.

BY FIDEL CASTRO

The revolutionary government began to take its first steps. The first was a 50 percent reduction in rents paid by families. This was a very just measure since, as I said earlier, there were families paying up to one-third of their income for rent. The people had been the victims of housing speculation; urban real estate had also been subject to speculation, to the detriment of the entire Cuban people. But when the revolutionary government reduced rents by 50 percent, there were those who were considerably upset; yes, a few who owned the buildings and apartment houses were upset. But the people rushed into the streets rejoicing, as they would in any country — even here in New York — if rents were reduced by 50 percent for all families. But it caused no problems with the monopolies. Some of the U.S. companies owned large buildings, but they were relatively few in number.

Then another law was passed, a law cancelling the concessions that had been granted by the Batista dictatorship to the telephone company, which was a U.S. monopoly. Aided by having a population without means to defend itself, valuable concessions had been obtained. The revolutionary government cancelled those concessions and reestablished the prices for telephone services that had existed previously. This was the first conflict with the U.S. monopolies.

The third measure was the reduction of electricity rates, which had been among the highest in the world. This led to the second conflict with the U.S. monopolies. Already they were beginning to paint us as Reds, simply because we had clashed with the interests of the U.S. monopolies.

Then came another law, an essential law, an inevitable law — inevitable for the Cuban people and inevitable, sooner or later, for all the peoples of the world, at least those who have not done so. This was the Agrarian Reform Law. Naturally, everybody agrees with agrarian reform in theory. Nobody would dare to deny it; nobody except an ignoramus would dare to deny that agrarian reform in the underdeveloped countries of the world is one of the essential conditions for economic development. In Cuba, even the owners of the vast estates agreed with agrarian reform — only they wanted an agrarian reform that suited them, like the

type defended by many theorists. Above all, they wanted the type of agrarian reform that is not carried out, as long as it can be avoided. Agrarian reform is something that is recognized by the economic bodies of the United Nations. It is something over which nobody argues.

In our country it was indispensable. More than 200,000 peasant families lived in the countryside without land with which to plant essential foodstuffs. Without agrarian reform our country could not have taken the first step toward development. And we took that step. We instituted an agrarian reform. Was it radical? Yes, it was a radical agrarian reform. Was it very radical? No, it was not a very radical agrarian reform. We carried out an agrarian reform adjusted to the needs of our development, to the possibilities of agricultural development. In other words, we carried out an agrarian reform that would solve the problem of peasants without land, that would solve the problem of essential foodstuffs, that would solve the great unemployment problem on the land, and that would end the frightful poverty that existed in the rural areas of our country. That was when the first major difficulty arose....

Then the question of payments and indemnities came up. Notes from the U.S. State Department began to rain down on Cuba. They never asked us about our problems, not even to express sympathy or because of their responsibility in creating the problems. They never asked us how many died of starvation in our country, how many were suffering from tuberculosis, how many were unemployed. No. Did they ever express solidarity regarding our needs? Never. Every conversation we had with the representatives of the U.S. government centered around the telephone company, the electricity company, and the problem of the land owned by U.S. companies. The question they asked was how we were going to pay. Naturally, the first thing they should have asked was not "How?" but "With what?"

This was a poor, underdeveloped country with 600,000 unemployed, with an extremely high rate of disease and illiteracy, whose reserves had been sapped, that had contributed to the economy of a powerful country to the tune of \$1 billion in ten years. Where were we to find the means to pay for the land affected by the agrarian reform, at the prices they wanted?

What were the wishes raised by the U.S. State Department concerning U.S. interests being affected? They demanded three things: "speedy, efficient, and just payment." Do you understand that language? "Speedy, efficient, and just payment." That means, "Pay this instant, in dollars, and whatever we ask." [Applause]

We were not 150 percent communists at that time, [Laughter] we just appeared slightly pink. We were not confiscating land. We simply proposed to pay for it in twenty years, and in the only way we could — by bonds that would mature in twenty years, at 4.5 percent interest amortized annually. How could we have paid for this land in dollars? How could we have paid on the spot, and how could we have paid whatever they asked? It was ludicrous....

But in our country the land was not the only thing in the hands of the U.S. monopolies. The principal mines were also in the hands of the monopolies. For example, Cuba pro-

duces large amounts of nickel, and all the nickel was controlled by U.S. interests. Under the Batista dictatorship, a U.S. company called Moa Bay had obtained such a juicy concession that in a mere five years — mark my words, in a mere five years — it sought to amortize an investment of \$120 million. A \$120 million investment amortized in five years!...

So the revolutionary government passed a mining law that obliged these monopolies to pay a 25 percent tax on the export of minerals....

Then a new stage of harassing our revolution began. I will pose a question to anyone who objectively analyzes the facts, who is ready to think honestly and not parrot the UPI and the AP, who is ready to think with their own head and draw their own conclusions, who is ready to look at things without prejudice, sincerely, and honestly: Are the things done by the revolutionary government grounds to decree the destruction of the Cuban revolution? No, they are not.

But the interests that were adversely af-



Bohemia

In 1960, the Cuban workers nationalized the electric company, above, formerly owned by U.S. monopolies. Sign says, "This building is the property of and is occupied by the workers, who are prepared to give their lives for national sovereignty. We support nationalization."

ected by the Cuban revolution were not concerned about Cuba; they were not being ruined by the measures of the Cuban revolutionary government. That was not the problem. The problem was that these same interests own the wealth and natural resources of the majority of the peoples of the world.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

THE MILITANT

Published in the Interest of the Working People

January 28, 1972

Political turmoil in Yugoslavia has continued in the wake of the reactionary nationalist strike of Zagreb University students in the Yugoslav republic of Croatia. On January 11, 11 prominent intellectuals active in Croatian nationalist organizations were arrested on charges of preparing to overthrow the present Yugoslav economic system and plotting the secession of Croatia.

[President Josip] Tito is compelled to suppress such reactionary nationalist outbreaks and the growth of capitalist relations when these tendencies get out of hand in order to preserve the nationalized property system, which is the very base of his own power. But these problems of chauvinism and capitalist methods have in fact been encouraged by the policies of the Tito regime itself — namely, the policies of decentralization, "profitability" of factories, and a foreign policy that is not based on international working-class solidarity but on narrow national interests.

In December of 1967 a wave of student demonstrations swept Yugoslavia protesting U.S. aggression in Vietnam. Ten thousand students demonstration in Zagreb, and similar protests under student leadership took place throughout the country. Authori-

ties ordered police to disperse the crowds with tear gas.

THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

February 1, 1947

BRUSSELS, Belgium, January 17 — The stubborn, four-week strike waged by the dock workers of Antwerp against great odds, has ended in the greatest strike victory in this country since the "liberation."

The strike began on December 13, when 14,000 dockworkers walked off their jobs despite their reformist union leaders' efforts to stop them. The dispute began over the unloading of particularly heavy goods, but the actual cause was how wages in the face of rising prices.

After the union bureaucrats had proved helpless to end the strike, the government, led by the "socialist" Huysmans, sent 2,000 troops to the Antwerp docks to unload perishable goods. This was intended to intimidate the strikers as well as to check the paralyzing of the most important port on the continent.

All financial support was denied to the strikers. Trade union funds were barred to them and under an act introduced by the Stalinist minister Marteaux last year, the government refused them unemployment relief for taking part in an unauthorized strike. The government, bosses, and union bureaucrats were trying to break the strike through hunger.

Free all political prisoners in Peru now!

As the international media focuses on the hostages taken by the Túpac Amaru group in Peru, working people around the world should demand the release of all trade union and other political prisoners in that country, the lifting of all undemocratic measures, and an end to Washington's backing of the capitalist regime of Alberto Fujimori.

The U.S. rulers support Fujimori because his government is dutifully protecting the interests of Wall Street and other capitalist investors. This means opening the country to freer imperialist plunder, imposing draconian austerity measures on Peru's population, and keeping working people in line through repressive means.

Fujimori enacted "antiterrorism" laws during his 1992 "self-coup," when he dissolved Congress and put the courts under his thumb. Anyone accused of "terrorism" is dragged into "faceless" courts, where neither prosecutors nor the judges can be seen. The trials often last 10 minutes. No witnesses or police can be cross-examined, and lawyers can only see their clients on the day of the trial. Many of these victims of capitalist justice are locked up at the Castro Castro prison in Lima or at the harsher Yanamayo penitentiary in Puno, high in the Andes.

The Fujimori government is a classic Bonapartist regime. Originating in a period of social crisis, such a regime tends to concentrate power in a strong executive branch that balances between two contending class forces, neither of which is secure from challenge by the other. This centralization of executive power is presided over by a "strong man" — in this case Fujimori — who presents himself as standing above the conflicting classes and exerts a certain independence of action, in order to maintain the power of the dominant social layer.

The Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA), which continues to occupy the Japanese ambassador residence in Lima, is demanding the release of some 400 of their comrades. While the MRTA has weakened their just demand through an ultraleft political course — carrying out dramatic military actions that relegate working people to the role of spectators — the Fujimori government, with the blood of working people on its hands, has no right to talk about terrorism. It should immediately release all these prisoners.

The purpose of the antidemocratic measures of the Peruvian regime is to solve the country's economic catastrophe on the backs of working people and in favor of the profit-hungry local capitalists and their imperialist masters, especially in Washington and Tokyo.

Toilers throughout Latin America today are subject to attacks on democratic rights, brutal exploitation, and the sucking of the wealth they create into the coffers of imperialist banks and other financial institutions. Today almost 191 million people in Latin America — 45 percent of the population — live below the official poverty line. In Peru, 9 out of 10 people are unemployed or underemployed.

Peru's current foreign debt has soared to \$30 billion, 22 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product, up from 16 percent in 1990. Last year, Fujimori signed a new "letter of intent" with the International Monetary Fund in which he promised to impose even more drastic cuts in public services, unemployment compensation, and retirement benefits. These measures also aim to complete the sell-off to private investors of state-owned enterprises, with the accompanying lay-offs of thousands of workers.

To continue paying the foreign debt, the regime in Lima has opened up the country's natural resources and labor power to wider imperialist exploitation. The main natural resources that have been targeted for sale to imperialist investors are minerals, natural gas, and oil. Peru is a major producer of copper, silver, gold, zinc and lead. In early 1996, Mobil Corporation and Royal Dutch/Shell acquired the gas deposits, one of the largest in the world. Canadian and U.S. monopolies have been granted exploitation rights in some of the mining projects in northern Peru. The selling of shares in the state-run oil enterprise is set to be completed in the next two years, with 1,500 oil workers slated to lose their jobs. These and other austerity measures have met resistance from workers and farmers.

The labor movement in the United States and around the world should respond by offering solidarity to fellow working people in Peru.

Free all political prisoners now!
Cancel the foreign debt of Peru and of the entire Third World!

Protest clinic bombing

As we went to press, two bombs went off outside an abortion clinic in Atlanta, injuring six.

The first explosion took place at 9:30 a.m., January 16, outside the Atlanta Northside Family Planning Services. The upper floors of the building houses offices for lawyers, dentists, and others. A second blast occurred an hour later from a trash bin, injuring six people.

Half an hour after the second explosion, a second abortion facility in the area, the Piedmont Clinic, was evacuated after re-

ceiving a bomb threat.

The Georgia Abortion and Reproductive Rights Action League has called a vigil for Wednesday, January 22, to protest the attack and mark the 24th anniversary of the *Roe v. Wade* court ruling that legalized abortion in the United States.

For more information, call GARRAL at (404) 875-6338. Other pro-choice actions are planned the same day across the country. The *Militant* urges our readers to turn out to defend abortion rights and protest this attack.

What is 'coarsening of bourgeois politics'?

Reader Stan Smith raised a number of questions in a letter published in the January 20 *Militant* (issue no. 3) about the use of the term "coarsening of [bourgeois] politics."

Smith referred to an article in the Dec. 23, 1996, *Militant* titled "Hundreds at socialist conferences discuss struggle for a proletarian party today." The paragraph in question read, "Widespread allegations of corruption and sexual misconduct by public officials have also become a permanent feature of bourgeois politics, the SWP leader [Dennis Richter] pointed out. This coarsening of politics, which reached 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."

Smith said he did not understand how the scandal-mongering by public officials can

DISCUSSION WITH OUR READERS

undercut working-class solidarity, and stated that the corrupt nature of U.S. capitalism goes back a century, and asked what's new about this today. He also said, "I do not think crudity in bourgeois politics has reached new heights." Smith pointed to the "crude attacks of the McCarthy era," former U.S. president Lyndon Johnson's campaign ads attacking his Republican opponent Barry Goldwater in the 1964 presidential race, and George Bush's "use of Willie Horton in the 1988 campaign against [Democrat Michael] Dukakis" as worse than the current allegations of corruption and sexual misconduct by Clinton, Gingrich, and company.

I admit that the paragraph under discussion in the article I authored was written in short hand, did not go into an explanation of the issues at any length, and could be subject to misunderstanding. But let's take up the questions Smith raises.

Capitalist class is always corrupt, but more vulnerable to scandals during decline

I agree with Smith that the ruling class is corrupt under capitalism in all periods. They cheat and lie to each other all the time. They use the government to enrich themselves and their friends, and workers are aware of all this.

But during capitalism's decay — as declining rates of profit and of economic growth, ballooning speculation on the stock and bond markets, slowdown in the accumulation of capital, rising unemployment, and falling real wages become the norm — the ruling class can appear to be much more corrupt and scandal-ridden than usual. That's because it's harder for big business and their spokespeople to constantly hide everything about what they do.

When capitalist politicians say they are for "less government," for example, that's not what they really mean. Even when the capitalist class was on the rise historically, the executive branch of the government was always careful about what it said publicly, including in front of parliaments and congresses. They lied continually. During capitalism's decline the rulers concentrate more power in the executive branch, as they need to hide more and more of what they must do to defend imperialist interests against working people at home and around the world.

The recent accusations of lying and being soft on "Soviet spies" against Anthony Lake, Clinton's nominee to head the CIA, are a case in point. According to Republican opponents, the former national security adviser aided the administration's policy of turning a blind eye to Iranian arms sales to the government in Bosnia during a U.S.-imposed embargo on such sales to that Yugoslav republic, and kept the CIA in the dark about this. Lake who was touted earlier as a liberal academic with disdain for "covert action" has in fact supported Clinton's secret operation to help foment dissent in northern Iraq. The Lake controversy, however, is mainly about Washington's loss of a client regime in Iran — that of the Shah, overthrown in the 1979 revolution — and its failure to accomplish some of U.S. imperialism's main goals in the war against the Iraqi people in 1990-91, and ever since.

Scandals involving top government officials reflect deeper political problems

All major scandals involving top government officials reflect deeper political problems for the rulers. The Watergate crisis, for example, had little to do with the incident after which it was named — the break-in at the Democratic 1972 national campaign committee office at the Watergate building organized by the campaign committee of Republican Richard Nixon. Watergate simply registered the implications for the U.S. bourgeoisie of American imperialism's defeat in Vietnam.

The difference between the McCarthy era, the 1960s, or even the end of the Vietnam war, and today is that during those periods capitalism was still in the post-war boom, unlike the depression conditions the wages system is mired in now.

While capitalists politicians are not more corrupt today, they are more vulnerable to scandal-mongering because of the deepening and irresolvable problems of their system. Behind the "ethics" investigation of House Speaker Newton Gingrich, or "Indogate" and Paula Jones's accusations of sexual misconduct against President William Clinton, are real tactical differences between and within the two big-business parties over how to orchestrate the rulers' assault on the social wage and other aspects of their war on labor.

This scandal-mongering has become more of a permanent feature of bourgeois politics since world capitalism plunged into depression conditions in the early 1990s. It is the stock-in-trade of ultrarightists, and does not serve the interests of those who toil for a living. While it did reach some new heights in the course of the 1996 election campaign, especially at its finale, it continues at a historically high pitch right now.

The Gingrich controversy, the counterattacks by Republicans against Democratic congressman James McDermott for supposedly illegal leaks of a pirate audio tape of a phone call by Gingrich, and the Supreme Court hearings on whether Clinton should be brought to trial to face charges by Paula Jones are only a few of the front-page, headline-grabbing "news" since the dawn of 1997.

I think readers will find it refreshing to go back to or read for the first time a portion of the main political resolution adopted by the 1994 national convention of the Socialist Workers Party, "Imperialism's march toward fascism and war," which deals precisely with these questions. For this reason we are reprinting a pertinent section of that report on page 11.



Why uppercase 'B'lack?

Reader Patricia Maynard asked in a letter, also published in last week's issue, why does the *Militant* use uppercase Black when referring to African-Americans. The reason for this long-standing policy of the paper is that Blacks in the United States are an oppressed nationality, unlike residents of this country who are white. It's in recognition of the historic inequality and discrimination against Blacks perpetrated by capitalism, and the vanguard role of the Black nationality in the fight to eliminate racism and class exploitation, that the *Militant* uses upper case Black. The only exception is when we quote other publications that use lower case b for Blacks. The *Militant* also applies the same policy for Latinos or Native Americans for similar reasons.

— ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

Fight for justice in Aborigine's death heats up

BY BOB AIKEN

SYDNEY, Australia — On July 5, 1985, Letty Scott's husband, Doug, was found hanging in a cell in Berrimah Prison, near Darwin, Australia. Doug Scott, an Aborigine, was 26 at the time.

The Northern Territory authorities ruled that a suicide had taken place. But Letty Scott believes that four prison officers — seen by other Aboriginal prisoners entering the cell on the night of Doug's death, armed with long batons — were responsible for his murder.

"My main aim is to get these perpetrators behind bars for what they've done," Letty Scott said in an interview conducted in here late last year. Scott was visiting Sydney to build support for her fight. "If we allow killers in uniform, be it police or prison officers, to continuously get away with murders of Aboriginal people, or any other Australian regardless of color or creed, the murders aren't going to stop," Scott said. "People have to stand up to put a stop to this sort of thing."

In the 11 years since her husband's death Scott has refused to give up her fight for justice, despite intimidation by the Northern Territory police, and advice from successive lawyers to accept "a lot of money and get on with your life," as she put it.

In October 1996 Scott filed the case with the United Nations Human Rights Commission in Geneva, and she has instructed her lawyers to proceed with a civil case for murder against the four prison officers.

Brutality against Aborigines

Doug Scott's death was one of 99 cases investigated by the 1987-1990 Royal Commission Into Aboriginal Deaths in Custody. The commission, which looked at Aboriginal deaths in custody from Jan. 1, 1980, through May 31, 1989, found no foul play in any of the cases, but came up with 339 recommendations on how such deaths could be prevented in the future.

A report issued by the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission November 25, however, outlined that in the seven years since the Royal Commission's hearings 96 more Aborigines had died in custody or in police pursuits — an increase in the rate of deaths.

The incarceration of Aborigines had increased by 61 percent between 1988 and 1995 the report found, compared to an 38 percent rise for the general population. Aborigines, who make up about 1.5 percent of Australia's population, accounted for 16.4 percent of inmates in 1993, and one third of the people held in police lock-ups in 1992.

They are also 17.3 times more likely than non-Aborigines to be arrested, and 19 times more likely to die in custody.

The Royal Commission hadn't "filed charges on any single person whatsoever," Scott said. "It was nothing but a lawyer's picnic and a cover-up."

Suppressing damning evidence

When the Royal Commission looked at her husband's case "they suppressed a lot of evidence," she said, and "put it down to self-inflicted hanging, death avoidable — negligence on the part of the prison officers."

Scott's legal team has put together an 83-page brief outlining why the case should be reopened.

Their evidence has been ignored by both the Federal and Northern Territory governments.

The evidence of other prisoners, who witnessed the beating and were ordered to clean up the blood in the cell the following day, was not dealt with by



Aborigines have fought for years against racist police brutality, deaths in custody, and land rights. Above, a 1988 protest against deaths of Aborigines in police custody.

the Royal Commission. Nor were the many contradictions in the statements of police and prison officers dealt with by the Royal Commission.

Photographs of the hanging body shown to Scott at the time of the Royal Commission's inquiry in March 1989 were completely different from photographs — the official record of evidence in the case — furnished to her lawyers in August 1993, leading her to believe that her husband's body had been "hung twice" for a second set of photos.

The pictures Scott saw in 1989 and that "I can still see in my mind's eye" showed a very tight noose that had "about six slip-knots," Scott explained. "I looked at that and knew straight away that they had murdered Doug because he wouldn't have made that noose."

The photographs given to her in 1993 showed a different noose, and the body and cell furnishings in different positions. Even these photographs show markings on the throat that warrant further investigation, Scott said.

"The man had not committed any serious crimes," Robert Dow, who is also fighting the case, explained. At the time of his death Scott was being held unlawfully in prison on remand awaiting trial on an assault charge.

Northern Territory law gave magistrates the power to remand a prisoner in custody

for up to 15 days without the inmate's consent. But Doug Scott had been remanded in custody for a period of 55 days, "which he did not survive," Dow said.

"Doug worked all his life as a knifemaker at the meatworks around the country," especially in Townsville, Queensland, where he came from, Scott said. At the time of his arrest he was working as a construction laborer in Darwin. His cousin, Kelvin Condren, was "locked up for seven years" in Queensland "for a murder he never committed," Scott said, before being pardoned in 1990.

'This case will not go away'

Letty Scott's family has come under ongoing harassment as a result of her fight against the cover-up. In one instance, prison officers stood "straight across from my house, standing" with their arms folded "for about two hours," she said.

In another, her son, then three-years-old, was kidnapped by unknown persons in the middle of the night. He was then dumped outside her house the following morning, with minor cuts to his hands and feet.

Scott hopes that taking her case to the Human Rights Commission in Geneva "will put pressure to bear on Australia to deal justly with this case. And not only with my case, but other cases regardless of color or creed."

"This case is gaining momentum and it's not going to go away," she concluded.

COINTELPRO



From Pathfinder

Cointelpro: The FBI's Secret War on Political Freedom by Nelson Blackstock \$15.95

FBI on Trial: The Victory in the Socialist Workers Party Suit against Government Spying edited by Margaret Jayko \$17.95

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LETTERS

Danish workers strike

The inspiration of the French transport workers strike had an impact on the workers in Scandinavia and affected industrial production.

On the seventh day of the French transport workers strike, truckers in Denmark embarked on a strike leading to the blockade of ports by drivers with their trucks at ports in Denmark, Sweden, Germany and Norway. The workers demand was compensation or allowance of work done outside of Denmark in line with other workers, e.g. handicraft and sales people. That is an increase from 150 D.Kronor to 500 D.Kronor.

On November 25 the workers met at a mass meeting to decide to continue the strike, if an agreement of their demand was not met. They voted overwhelmingly for the continuation of the strike.

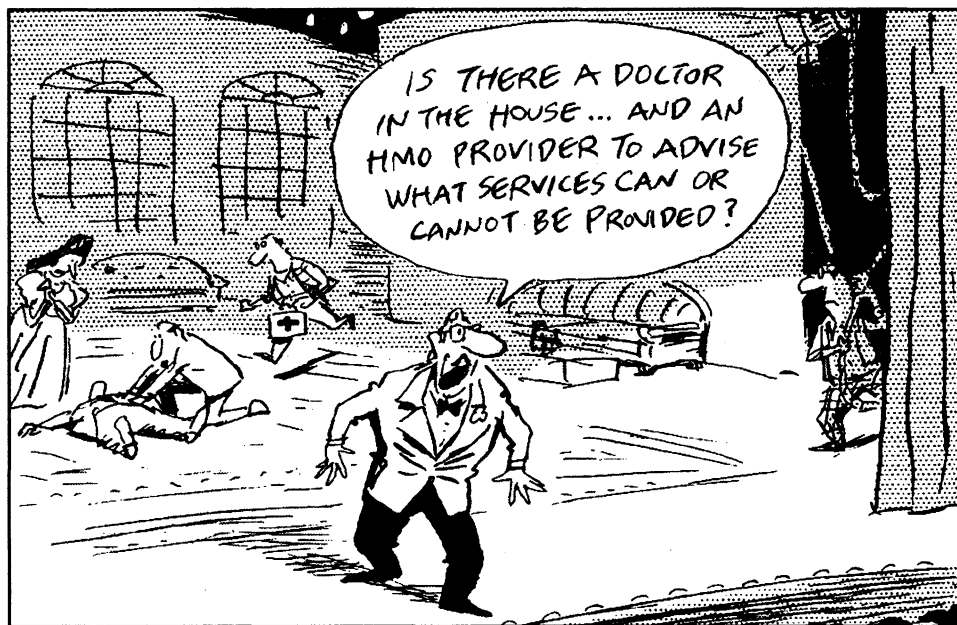
The effect of the strike, however, were many in Scandinavia and the Nordic countries. In Sweden because of both the strike in Denmark and in France, and also because the just-in-time system of industrial production. Industries and businesses are vulnerable to any major industrial action by workers. The strike in Denmark involved about 600 trucks around the northern coast of Denmark bordering Sweden and Norway. On top of that Swedish truck owners had some 70 trucks stranded in southern Europe.

The strikes did cause great concern to the owners of the two main

auto manufacturers Volvo and Saab Scandia. They felt the heat. Scandia was forced to shut down one of its plants in France. And both Saab and Volvo plants in Sweden were beginning to have shortages in parts and material supplies from the European continent. The bosses started discussing the plans to send workers home if need be. In Norway, the fish industry was affected the hardest. Abba Seafood experienced rotten salmon.

Truck drivers to and fro in Denmark re-routed to avoid the blockade, but this became a new problem because it made the routes and working hours longer for the drivers involved.

Finish truck drivers, unhappy with their new situation, protested against bureaucratic authorities imposing new regulations and higher duties on trucks from Finland. The protest was a blockade against loading and unloading trucks from Russia. The strike was termed by the Danish bourgeois politicians as high



treason, according to the conservative Svenska Dagbladet daily paper on November 27. The union officialdom gave in for a 250 D.Kronor increase.

Dechor Hien
Stockholm, Sweden

'Economic development'

The Presidential candidates this year talked a lot about the 21st century, but here in New York State, our government has failed to provide leadership in creating the kind of regional economic development

strategy we need to make us competitive in this new era. Instead, we have cities competing against suburbs heeding outmoded boundaries and creating obstacles that impede our growth.

This approach creates a downward spiral for affluent areas and inner cities alike. We must recognize that we are all inextricably linked together, and act in ways that benefit the entire region.

Companies leave New York — and countless others decide not to locate here — for many reason including lack of affordable housing, a failing educational system and in-

adequate transportation and infrastructure. That loss of jobs doesn't merely effect the city. A large percentage of those jobs would be filled by people who live in suburbs. On the other hand, working together we can become a potent economic force that will attract new industry and create jobs.

In the future, businesses will look for "metropolitan regions" that make economic sense, without regard to lines on maps. Our leaders in Albany must develop a comprehensive regional strategy that recognizes that reality and improves our infrastructure, our educational system and our economic position on a regional basis.

Working at odds with each other results in gridlock, inefficient government, higher taxes and lost jobs. Ultimately, it will cost the entire region dearly as we compete with other countries that better understand the demands of global economies.

Richard Kahan
New York, New York

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of general interest to our readers.

Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

UK rulers face growing divisions

BY IAN GRANT

LONDON — Growing divisions and tensions among the rulers of the United Kingdom have become more apparent in the run-up to the general election, which must be held by May 1997. Since losing a December by-election in Barnsley East, the ruling Conservative Party administration of Prime Minister John Major has lost control of the majority of seats in the House of Commons, and the party is deeply divided. Meanwhile, Labour Party chief Anthony Blair is continuing his drive to distance the party from trade unions, and make it as acceptable as possible to the rulers as an alternative government.

The British capitalist rulers are today faced with a three-pronged challenge. They are pushing to lower the value of labor power, including through inflicting direct cuts in the social wage, with a still undefeated working class. At the same time they seek to use their membership of NATO and special relationship with Washington to offset their economic decline. And they are forced to overhaul the institutions of the state, which were built up in the period of British imperialism's ascendancy but today are racked with crisis generated by Britain's decline: the monarchy, the dis-United Kingdom, the crisis-ridden Conservative Party — none of these are in shape for the choppy waters of the class struggle at the turn of the new century. How far and how fast to move on these questions has sharply divided the Conservative Party, also called the Tories, the chief political party of the imperialist rulers.

The Conservative government began this term of Parliament with an overall majority of 21. This has been eroded by a series of by-election defeats and defections to other parties. It can continue to rule as a minority administration as long as other parties vote for the major parts of its policy, and providing it survives a vote of confidence should one be moved by an opponent party. Major is today dependent on the support of the Unionist members of parliament (MPs), who favor continued British rule over northern Ireland. The prime minister must call an election by May 1997, and currently trails badly in public opinion polls.

Debate on European Monetary Union

Open warfare has broken out among the Tories on policy toward the European Union, which focused on the question of Britain's entry into the proposed European Monetary Union (EMU) in its first phase, scheduled for 1999. Many in the British ruling class oppose the prospect of subordinating the pound to the stronger German D-mark within the new "Euro" currency. Others argue that London cannot afford to be left out of the European bloc as they compete with capitalists in other parts of the world. Major has defended a "wait and see" policy, refusing to commit for or against the EMU, reflecting the prevailing view within the ruling class on this issue that, whatever the final outcome, London must be in on the negotiations.

Major is publicly opposed on this issue by a substantial number of "Euro-sceptic" Tory MPs, however. These elements within the Conservative Party believe an election victory is possible only on the basis of a sharp shift to the right, and a more aggressively nationalistic campaign waged around defense of British sovereignty. Such a campaign would, they argue, allow them to present a clear difference with Labour Party policy.

Labour Party leader Anthony Blair's speech to his Party Conference in October placed Labour firmly within the wait-and-see framework defended by the Tory leadership. "Leading Britain into an age of achievement means Britain leading in Europe," Blair said. He would, however, refuse to scrap Britain's power of veto over proposals made in the governing bodies of the European Union, the European Commission, council of ministers and intergovernmental conferences. Blair also pledged to



Protest actions like the May 1996 march and rally in support of fired Liverpool dockers shown above and Feb. 24, 1996, demonstration against anti-immigrant legislation (inset), remind the British ruling class that they will increasingly meet resistance as they deepen their attacks on wages and working conditions.

keep all options open on whether to join the single currency or not, "determined according to our national interest."

Gordon Brown, the Labour Party shadow chancellor, has committed a future Labour Government to hold a referendum on the single currency question before any move to join was made.

Noting that little difference existed between Conservative and Labour policy on European Union, former Conservative Party Chairman Norman Tebbit warned that moves to join a single European currency would lead to a split in the Tories. "All those Conservatives who believe freedom, independence, and democracy matter above all other political programs would leave to join with those... who shared that view," he said in a speech last November.

In a move which threatens Conservative majorities in several constituencies, rightist billionaire John Goldsmith has announced plans to field candidates in 600 constituencies where MPs fail to call for a referendum on greater European integration. Goldsmith's Referendum Party attracted 4,000 supporters to a conference in October. Alluding to the Referendum Party, Tebbit qualified his remarks. "Such an alliance need not be a single issue party. It could be a potential party of government," he said.

Goldsmith is currently a member of the European parliament (MEP), where he represents a constituency in France and heads up a rightist group of MEPs dubbed "Europe of Nations." A former head of the Institute of Directors, the smaller of the two main bosses' organizations in the United Kingdom, Goldsmith is sharply anti-immigrant. In his book *The Trap*, Goldsmith appeals to the real fears of middle class and working people — especially unemployment and job security — using populist demagoguery for his reactionary appeals. He has adopted the description "rabble army" for the Referendum Party's membership. So far he has limited his election campaigning to the single issue of a referendum on Europe, hoping that in so doing he will make the best progress in winning Eurosceptic Tory MPs. He has also made overtures to the rightist Ulster Unionists, on whose support John Major must rely to keep his government in office. Press reports that Goldsmith and the Unionists had secured an agreement provoked some public debate among Unionist MPs.

Blair promotes 'New Labour'

Under the pressure of economic depression, bourgeois politics has been moving steadily to the right. In the Labour Party this course has been forcefully pursued by Blair, who has championed the remodeling of the party's traditional pro-capitalist stance as "New Labour" in order to better convince

the British ruling class that it can be a useful tool in government. Blair also hopes to capture the votes of better paid workers and the middle class. At the heart of this effort lie attempts to weaken its links with the trade unions. Blair has reduced Labour Party reliance on union funding to 54 percent, down from 77 percent 10 years ago. He has promised to reduce the trade unions' vote at party conference to 50 percent; it was 70 percent until this year.

In early October the Labour Party held its annual conference under the slogan "New Labour, New Life For Britain." Some 4.1 million trade unionists pay a political levy as part of their union dues and are counted as Labour Party members by this means. They have the right to vote in elections for the party leader. Union officials by dint of this affiliated membership currently carry 50 percent of votes at the Labour Party conference, and control 12 out of 26 National Executive Committee seats. Individual paper membership of the Labour Party has nearly doubled in the period since Blair became leader in 1994.

The unions themselves have seen a steep decline in their membership, organizing around one-third of workers today compared to two-thirds in 1979. Pressure from this declining dues base drives the union tops in turn to look for concessions from a "New Labour" government with which to consolidate their privileged position. In what the media billed as a big upset for Anthony Blair, and a resurgence of "Old Labour," the union delegates at the Trade Union Congress voted to set a figure for a minimum wage. The Labour Party manifesto pledges support for a minimum wage, but puts off policy decisions to a future "low pay commission" comprised of employee and employer representatives. No policy was adopted on a figure at the Labour Party Conference. There is no statutory minimum wage in the United Kingdom today. There used to be Wages Councils that set a statutory minimum in selected industries but these were abolished by the Tory government.

One spin-off from the tensions within the trade union and Labour Party bureaucracies has been the formation of the Socialist Labour Party (SLP). The new formation is headed by National Union of Mineworkers president Arthur Scargill, and aims to draw support from the left wing of the Labour Party and trade union officialdom. The SLP candidate in the Barnsley by-election polled 949 votes, just over 5 percent of those cast. Many workers abstained from the poll.

The principal left-wing grouping inside the Parliamentary Labour Party, known as the Socialist Campaign Group, which includes Tony Benn and a few dozen other members, has been critical of the formation of the SLP. At the same time the Socialist

Campaign Group has remained silent in the face of the shift to the right led by Blair, explicitly in the interests of winning the general election.

'No more bosses vs. workers'

Blair's keynote speech to the Labour Party Conference highlighted his intent to defend the changes in industrial law already carried out by the Conservative government. These measures restrict workers' democratic rights in combating the employers' attacks on wages and conditions of work.

"The Labour Party is not the political arm of anybody today other than the British people," Blair said, referring to claims that Labour is in the pocket of the trade unions. "Let us settle these arguments about industrial laws once and for good. There will be no return to the 70's.... Forget the past. No more bosses versus workers. You are on the same side. The same team. Britain united. And we will win."

In a foreword to Labour's industrial strategy document, titled "Vision for Growth," shadow Secretary of State for Trade and Industry Margaret Becket spells out the Labour Party's approach to the bosses crisis. "Our economy once led the world yet, for some years now we have been falling behind as our economy slips ever further down the prosperity league," she states. "Labour rejects the view that this is something inevitable. We reject the view that our living standards must be driven to the lowest international level if we are to compete globally...."

"Labour in government will seek to revitalize Britain's industries... in a spirit of partnership with industry and commerce, by building consensus on industrial policy."

Labour's unity of purpose in pursuing the foreign policy interests of Britain's ruling class has been a consistent aspect of the bipartisan policy of the British parliament in opposing the unity and independence of Ireland. Britain still rules by force and violence in the northern part of that island. A Labour government sent troops to occupy the north in 1969; more than 19,000 remain today, despite the so-called peace process. The British government still excludes Sinn Fein from all-party talks on the future of the country.

In his Labour Party Conference speech, Blair reassured Britain's rulers that a Labour Government would continue to pursue this policy. The peace process "will be every bit as much of a priority for me as for John Major," Blair said. "We have been responsible in our actions over the peace process from the outset. We will continue to be so now."

Labour pledged support for the British government's moves to place ground forces in Central Africa as part of an international force in November. A small "reconnaissance" unit of 20 soldiers left the United Kingdom November 15 to assess the precise situation on the ground in Zaire.

Michael Portillo, Defense Secretary, told the British parliament November 14, "If people stand in our way then they must be prepared to pay the consequences of their action." Portillo claimed Britain had a moral obligation to act, supposedly to prevent a million refugees from starving. British troops would be given "robust" rules of engagement allowing them to fire on forces threatening them, he said.

As events in Zaire began to blow away the humanitarian smoke screen for military intervention, Claire Short MP, the Labour Party's Overseas Aid Spokesman, stated, "We should not rule out the use of troops to help, especially in the south of the country where the situation is unclear."

UK rulers nervous about Labour gov't

Britain's rulers traditionally prefer that their party, the Tories, form the government. They could live with a Labour administration headed by Anthony Blair, but most remain nervous about this prospect. If Labour

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