

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

**Sexual abuse scandal
widens in U.S. military**

— PAGE 4

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 61 NO. 7 FEBRUARY 17, 1997

40,000 in Ireland: 'Tell truth about massacre'

Marchers demand new Bloody Sunday inquiry



Marchers at massive action in Derry carry banners of the civil rights protesters killed by the British Army in 1972

BY MARCELLA FITZGERALD
AND CELIA PUGH

DERRY, northern Ireland — "You are a heart-warming sight," Martin McGuinness told a crowd of 40,000 marchers at Free Derry corner here on Sunday, February 2.

End British rule in Ireland!

— See editorial, Page 14

"I have never seen such a demonstration in this city in my life!" The march was the culmination of four days of events to mark the 25th anniversary of the massacre by British Paratroopers of 14 unarmed civil rights dem-

onstrators on Jan. 30, 1972. McGuinness, who spoke as a Derryman who was at the 1972 march, is a leader of Sinn Fein, the nationalist party fighting for a united Ireland free of British domination. He and other speakers called for an international inquiry into the events of Bloody Sunday, as the day is known here.

Thousands of people from the working-class Catholic neighborhoods of the Creggan and Bogside joined contingents from throughout the British-occupied northern six counties, several contingents from the south of Ireland, a delegation from London, and others from as far as the United States, Sweden, and the Basque country. Hundreds more

joined as the march — led by the relatives of those killed — passed their houses. Many marchers filed in behind their local pipe band. Though all generations participated, young people predominated.

The mood was one of confidence and determination. The aim was an inquiry that would finally tell the truth about what the British troops did and smash the official report by British judge Lord Widgery that exonerated the killers, who were later decorated by Queen Elizabeth Windsor.

Michael McKinney, brother of William McKinney, one of those killed in 1972, addressed the crowd. He referred to the sad-

Continued on Page 4

Clinton's 'State of the Union' = austerity for workers

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

- Cutting Medicare and other social programs under the pretext of balancing the federal budget.

- Endorsing Republican-sponsored legislation that will undermine overtime pay for workers.

- An "action plan" for education, endorsed by many liberals, that will widen class differentiation and police control of the already overcrowded and understaffed public schools.

That's what seeped through the carefully staged address to a joint session of Congress by U.S. President William Clinton on February 4. The Democratic president gave his annual State of the Union speech two days before unveiling his budget proposal to the House of Representatives and Senate.

"The prospects that President Clinton and Congress will finally clinch a deal this year to balance the federal budget are better than ever," said a front-page article in the February 3 *Wall Street Journal*. Republican leaders — who assigned Rep. J.C. Watts, a 39-year-old congressman from Oklahoma who is Black, to give the traditional rebuttal to Clinton — announced the next day they are ready to forgo drafting their own budget plan and instead work with the

Continued on Page 12

Stalinist regime in Serbia concedes elections in face of unyielding protests

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

Working people in Yugoslavia scored an important victory February 4, after 77 days of daily protests. That day, the Stalinist regime of President Slobodan Milosevic announced its decision to honor the results of

the November 17 municipal elections in Serbia. The state-run news agency Tanjug said Milosevic instructed Premier Mirko Marjanovic to introduce a special law in Serbia's parliament recognizing that the opposition coalition Zajedno (Together)

won a majority in 14 of Serbia's 19 largest cities, including the capital Belgrade.

The announcement came at the start of that day's rally in Belgrade, triggering celebrations among the 50,000 protesters at Republic Square. "It's great to see him weak and backing down," demonstrator Zorica Divcevic, 55, told the press. "It took us weeks, but it is finally happening."

Milosevic made the decision two days after attempting the harshest police crackdown yet against demonstrations, which had been diminishing in size by the end of January. The cop assault ignited a new explosion of marches and other protests, making it clear that the determination of hundreds of thousands of students, workers, and others to not stomach Belgrade's antidemocratic measures had not weakened a bit.

In related developments in the region, Bulgaria's ruling Socialist Party, the former pro-Moscow Communist Party, announced on February 4 it will hold early elections by April 20, months ahead of schedule. The decision came after a month of daily protests and strikes, fueled

Continued on Page 8

Auto parts workers strike for contract

BY JOHN SARGE

PLYMOUTH, Michigan — A cheer went up from dozens of pickets in front of the Johnson Controls Inc. (JCI) plant here January 28 as buses carrying scabs rolled out of the driveway. Just a few hours earlier, strikers and their supporters had gathered, expecting an attempt by the more than 100 cops present to force open picket lines and allow trucks out of this auto seat manufacturer.

More than 300 workers from the plant, members of United Auto Workers (UAW) Local 174, joined by hundreds of other UAW members and striking Detroit newspaper workers, set up picket lines in the early hours of the morning. UAW Region 1A called for the expanded picket lines.

The union set a 6 a.m. strike deadline if negotiations did not produce a contract. But management moved first by ordering the unionists out of the plant around 2:30 a.m. and bringing in replacement workers, a private security force, cots, and trucks equipped with showers. JCI expected to run the plant and ship seats with the help of the cops.

Two hundred other JCI workers, also organized by the UAW, struck the same morn-

Continued on Page 14

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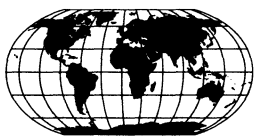
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Bedouins resist Israeli settlement

It took hundreds of Israeli cops and soldiers to remove Bedouin protesters from a West Bank encampment January 27. Police forces were clearing the way for a new Israeli settlement — bulldozing houses, taking belongings from the Bedouin dwellings, seizing sheep, and carting it all away. In all, 30 members of the Jahalin tribe were displaced that day. The cops threw one of the resisters over a five-foot embankment, rendering him unconscious. The man was taken away in an ambulance. For decades, dozens of families lived and grazed their livestock on that land. Now they have been moved to a bare, rocky, hilltop area near a garbage dump. Linda Breyer, the lawyer who represented the Bedouin in court, called the area “a real shanty slum.”

The Israeli Supreme Court ruled last May that the Bedouin must leave the area. Peter Lerner, an Israeli official, said, “We hope that the other families will understand that we are serious. We will continue to evacuate them if they do not pick themselves up and move.”

Wall Street threatens Beijing

Charlene Barshefsky, acting U.S. trade representative, warned the Chinese government January 29 that it would be barred from entering the World Trade Organization if it continues blocking the importation of some U.S. agricultural goods, including pork, poultry, and wheat. Beijing says the products carry diseases that could contaminate the food system in China. U.S. officials call that explanation a government-manufactured story to shield Chinese producers from world market competition.

UK forces maneuver in Cyprus

Some 100 British troops began a military exercise in a forest in northwestern Cyprus January 27, where they fired live ammunition, despite the presence of Cypriot protesters in the woods. Police rounded up 12 of the Mediterranean isle protesters, who argued such military exercises could set off fires that would destroy the environmental balance in the area. Three protesters remained in the forest, including parliamentary deputy Marios Matsakis. The British



On January 27 Israeli soldiers dragged a Bedouin man from land that many families have toiled on for decades.

government claims two regions of the island — both now used as military bases — under a 1960 treaty outlining Cypriot independence from Britain.

Vietnamese farmers defend land

On Dec. 30, 1996, hundreds of Vietnamese cops in riot gear stormed the village of Tho Da, where farmers are refusing to be kicked off their land to allow the construction of a golf course. Private property was eliminated through the Vietnamese revolution, though land rights can be traded. In these trades toilers on the land often get the short end of the compensation stick. In an earlier confrontation between farmers and police at Tho Da, one of the cops drowned in a fish pond. Farmers set fire to a bulldozer and another vehicle there in January.

Malaysian gov't expels 'illegals'

The Malaysian government has initiated a campaign to deport a million undocumented workers from that country. They laid down an end-of-January deadline for immigrants working without permits to “surrender.” Only 800 foreign-born workers had responded as of a few days before the deadline. Government troops, cops and civil defense guards have already been deployed, raiding factories, plantations, shopping malls, restaurants, nightclubs, and construction sites. The immigration authorities will also carry out house-to-house searches. Under new immigration laws, those found working without permits could be caned, imprisoned up to five years, heavily fined, or outright deported.

According to the *Sydney Morning Herald*, many immigrant workers “are subjected to continuing abuse and exploitation” as they are forced to work long hours for low wages, and under unsafe working and living conditions. Workers are smuggled into the country and charged high fees for the trip — many under the false impression that they will acquire legal employment.

Chagas disease grips Honduras

Nearly 6 percent of the Honduran population — 300,000 people — are infected with a parasitic disease called Chagas, a government health official announced in January. Infections mainly occur through insect bites or ingestion of contaminated water. Symptoms include prolonged fever, edema or liquid swelling under the skin, and enlargement of the spleen, liver, and lymph nodes. Herald Wire Services says 65,000 Hondurans are expected to die of the disease the next few years. The risks of catching the Chagas disease are greatly reduced with access to purified water and enclosed living quarters. A World Health Organization survey says that millions in Latin America are infected with this disease.

O'Leary: 'Oops about the nukes'

Energy Secretary Hazel O'Leary recently released information about botched tests and storage of nuclear weapons materials that could be a dangerous health hazard. About 250 tons of plutonium and uranium, two toxic metals used in the nuclear warheads to sustain an explosion, have been inadequately stored at 13 sites — the largest one in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. O'Leary, in a report issued last December, cited storage fa-

cilities built nearly half a century ago with faulty fire protection systems as a danger. The report said that a large blaze could spread radioactive debris outside the facility.

One of thousands of previously classified films of nuclear tests now being made public shows a missile explode carrying a nuclear warhead capable of melting a large city, covering the Johnston Island test site with radioactive debris.

Blacks denied voting rights

According to a recent study by the Sentencing Project, 14 percent of the Black male population — 1.46 million people — are currently or permanently excluded from voting, due to being in prison, on probation or parole, or convicted of a felony. Those convicted of felony crimes are not able to vote in 46 states while imprisoned, and 31 states prohibit parolees from voting. There are 13 states that permanently deprive alleged felons of the right to vote.

The study indicates that the ratio of Blacks incarcerated in relation to whites jumped from 6.88 to 1 in 1988, to 7.66 to 1 in 1994. Those who have served time in prison get 25 percent less hours of work than they did before incarceration. One of every three Black youth are under control of the criminal justice system, and while Blacks make up 14 percent of the U.S. population, they are 51 percent of the 1.1 million inmates in state and federal prisons.

Pregnancy no grounds for firing

The Virginia Supreme Court ruled January 10 that companies, no matter what their size, cannot fire workers because they are pregnant. Companies that employ less than 15 workers have up to now been exempt from federal civil rights laws that contain such protections. The ruling overturned a previous “employment-at-will” court precedent that relinquished a construction company of any need to justify the firing of a pregnant worker, by saying that racially or gender motivated dismissals are prohibited.

Boss convicted of waste pollution

On January 16, Terry Rettig, a former waste treatment plant manager, was found guilty on 23 counts of violating the Clean Water Act — including releasing waste-ridden liquid into the Pagan River — and destroying and falsifying records. A Norfolk, Virginia federal judge sentenced Rettig to 30 months in prison and one year of supervised release.

He could have gotten up to 54 months in prison with a \$5.75 million fine, but this was reduced based on his willingness to cooperate with a federal investigation at Smithfield meatpacking plants — two of the five places where he flaunted environmental regulations. Last month Smithfield, one Virginia's largest pork producers and polluters, was sued by the federal government for releasing waste into the Pagan River.

— BRIAN TAYLOR

THE MILITANT

Struggles in the workers states

Struggles from Albania to Yugoslavia and Russia show that the working class has not been defeated in the countries where capitalism has been overturned, despite the imperialists' dreams of setting up shop in these countries. The 'Militant' follows the developments in these workers states and explains the issues at stake for workers around the world. Don't miss a single issue!



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Peru gov't steps up pressure on rebels

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

Peruvian president Alberto Fujimori has been taking increasingly more aggressive actions towards the members of the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement (MRTA), who have been occupying the Japanese ambassador's residence in Lima for nearly two months. At the center of the group's demands is the release of 400 MRTA political prisoners. Tokyo has urged Fujimori, to no avail, to tone down acts of provocation against the rebels, as it could threaten the lives of the 72 remaining hostages. In the midst of this unresolved crisis, Washington has initiated plans for a military intervention into that country to "combat drugs."

Fujimori, in the first week of this year, took a stance of "business as usual." He filled the positions of Peruvian government officials taken hostage December 17, downplaying the takeover as an "isolated incident," and said the economy would not be affected. The regime thought time was on its side — the media blitz would die down, and the rebels would soften if the government ignored them.

In a December 31 press conference, Nestor Cerpa Cartolini, the leader of the MRTA occupation force, said the group has "no time limit" on how long they will hold hostages until their demands are met. The rebels maintained their demands, including for the release of the political prisoners. On January 4, in response to Fujimori's rejection of their central demand two days earlier, rebels scaled the embassy roof and unfurled three banners. One said that unless MRTA demands are discussed there will be no solution; another read, "Mothers, wives, and children of our prisoners are also waiting for their [MRTA prisoners] freedom."

Prisons like 'medieval dungeons'

The *Washington Post* ran a recent article entitled "Peru's Jails Find Few Defenders: Ex-Prisoners Describe Arbitrary Brutality." It tells the story of two journalists critical of the government, who spent a combined total of five years in prison "on suspicion of being Marxist guerrillas" before being released and told to "get on with" their lives. No formal charges were ever laid against the two. The article explains how the journalists' experiences are common among

those snatched up as part of Fujimori's "antiterrorist campaign." Suspects have been imprisoned for years without being charged. Neither witnesses nor police can be cross-examined by defense lawyers, who often are denied access to their client until the day of the trial.

These undemocratic procedures were imposed after Fujimori suspended the constitution in April 1992, carried out mass arrests, and closed down Congress. While the legislature was eventually restored, many civil liberties were not.

Families of detainees have compared the prisons to "medieval dungeons." Inmates are denied access to music, diaries, and any books that are declared ideological; one prisoner was even denied the *Memoirs of Winston Churchill*. They are inadequately fed, live in six-by-six-foot quarters, and are allowed only a half-hour a month, and a half-hour every three months respectively, to see spouses and children.

After the first week of the standoff, Japanese prime minister Ryutaro Hashimoto stated that both the guerrillas and the Peruvian government had committed errors and he feared an "unexpected accident" might take place if things were not resolved. Tokyo's stance throughout the takeover has been one of minimizing the provocation of the rebels and to negotiate with them. When asked to elaborate on what he meant by "government errors," the Japanese official declined.

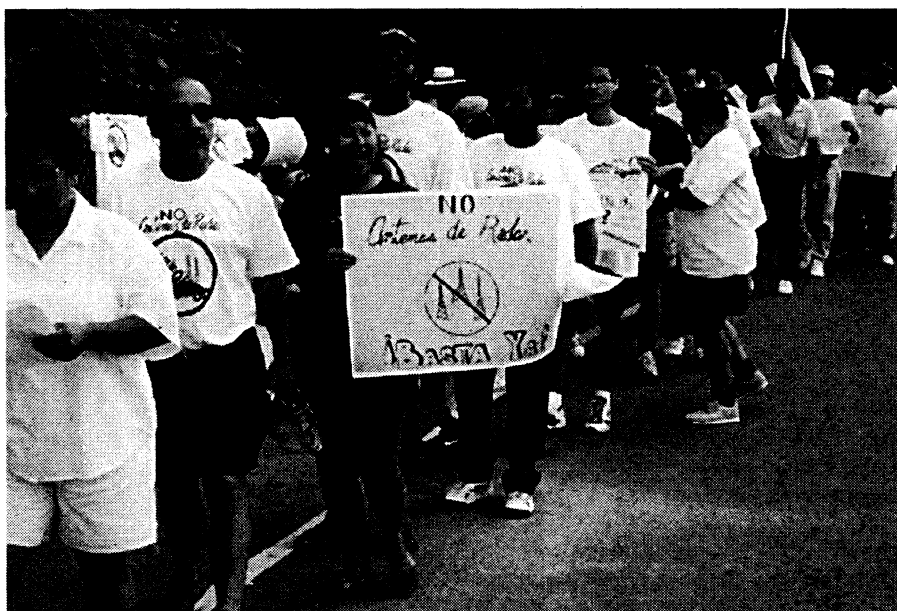
The Fujimori regime's approach of downplaying the MRTA seemed to come to an end January 7 when "counterterrorism police" arrested two Japanese television reporters after they interviewed MRTA spokespeople.

Peruvian officials make a point of referring to Tupac Amaru as "terrorists," not rebels or guerrillas. They blame these "terrorists" for the economic crisis in that country. Fujimori pointed to the hostage seizure as an example of "feverish and destructive violence" that "has increased" poverty.

Hope for 'puma' economy falters

In a recent tour to so-called "Asian tigers" — semicolonial countries that have been praised as a model of rapid growth — Fujimori promised to make Peru an "Andean

Puerto Ricans protest U.S. radar



Militant/Ron Richards

Protests outside U.S. Navy base in Vieques, Puerto Rico, demand end to radar plan. U.S. military uses island for bombing practice and mock invasions.

BY RON RICHARDS

VIEQUES, Puerto Rico— Some 250 people picketed in front of the U.S. Navy base here January 12, to protest proposed construction of a radar transmitter that could monitor aircraft movement over the northern half of South America. A second protest was held in front of Fort Allen in Juana Díaz, where the Navy wants to put the receiver. The proposed installation is a move by the U.S. military to reorganize their presence in the Caribbean and Latin America. The Navy regularly uses Vieques to practice with artillery, bombs, and invasions. The 10,000 residents of Vieques, a municipality of Puerto Rico, have a long history of protests against the U.S. Navy. About 30 protesters came from the main island. Chants included, "The Navy is always abusive, now they have a new excuse."

puma." But at present the economy is at a standstill. Economic growth, which was 13 percent in 1994, fell to 2 percent in 1996. Ivan Sanchez, a 19-year-old who lives in Lima, commented to a reporter that although the economy is more stable, "there are not many jobs, which is what the people want." As many as 500,000 have been laid off from government jobs. Fujimori's popularity has fallen from 75 percent to 45 percent in polls.

The Peruvian president does still have a base of support. When his regime came to power in 1990 promising stability and "honest government," inflation had hit as high as 7,650 percent. He imposed brutal austerity measures to satisfy Peru's imperialist creditors. Inflation came down, but more than half of the country's population now lives below the official poverty line.

On January 12, the Peruvian government

proposed a special commission that would review "all subjects" raised by the MRTA. This commission was to be composed on a mutually agreed upon group of three to five people. Three days later the MRTA agreed to the talks but then pulled out when the government suspended all visits to political prisoners, including by the Red Cross. Government representative Domingo Palermo then told reporters that further talks would be to negotiate the release of hostages and provide an "eventual exit" for those who seized the building, and would "not contemplate the liberation of prisoners."

Japanese prime minister Hashimoto, noting an escalation in activity by Peruvian cops who taunt rebels, throw debris over the walls of the courtyard, sneak around to doors, and boot them open, urged Lima not to "go too far." He warned Fujimori that Tokyo rules out any armed rescue in the Japanese ambassador's residence without their approval. Fujimori, whose police are creating a situation of increased tension, said that he would only respond militarily if a hostage is injured.

U.S. president William Clinton has praised Fujimori for "walking the very fine line ... between resolving this crisis peacefully without giving in to terror." In a recent move, Washington announced plans to allocated forces to engage in an "antidrug-trafficking" operation along the rivers in northern Peru.

Dominican workers paralyze capital

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

On Dec. 20, 1996, Dominican president Leonel Fernández raised gasoline prices by 30 percent, from 20 pesos (US\$1.43) to 26 pesos (US\$1.85), setting off a string of protests actions that have not stopped since. Among the first to take action were transportation workers, who were promised a \$160 monthly subsidy to cover the price hike, but never received it.

On January 15, transit workers paralyzed the eastern part of the Dominican capital,

home to more than 40 percent of Santo Domingo's two million people.

Also as part of the austerity package, the Fernández government devalued the Dominican peso from 12.85 to 14 pesos to the dollar. Many have come out into the streets to oppose these measures. On January 28, in what the Spanish-language newspaper *El Diario/La Prensa* describes as "mobilizations ... against the government's economic measures," thousands of workers and students demonstrated throughout the capital.

Protesters blocked major roads with flaming tires, logs, rocks and bumper jacks. Two people were shot — presumably by cops, the article stated. More than 30 people were injured, and nearly a hundred were arrested. The same day, 43,000 teachers, members of the Dominican Association of Teachers, struck, demanding higher pay and improvements in the educational system.

Unions in south Korea call for solidarity actions

BY CANDACE WAGNER

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The Korean Confederation of Trade Unions (KCTU) has called for international solidarity actions February 18. This is the date set by unions in south Korea to resume strike action against recently adopted antilabor laws if the government has not taken steps to repeal them.

The legislation, which restricts union rights and increases the powers of the political police, sparked a wave of strikes and protests by workers in south Korea in December and January.

Kiyul Chung, executive chair of the Congress for Korean Reunification in North America, is coordinating the solidarity work in the United States and Canada. He spoke at the Militant Labor Forum here January 31. Chung reported that rallies are now being planned in Washington, New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles.

"With the proposal to reopen discussion on the laws, the government is trying to kill the momentum. In response, we call for

continued international solidarity," Chung said.

"The struggle in south Korea is known largely as a labor struggle," he explained. "But it is a political struggle; part of a larger struggle to build a democratic society — hopefully in the near future."

In answer to a question "Why do you refer to south Korea as a semi-colonial country?" Chung gave a brief history of the U.S. occupation of Korea following World War II. "We went from one colonial experience to another. More than 90 percent of the government officials installed in power by the U.S. were those who served the colonial masters under Japanese occupation. We are still struggling today with the colonial legacy in every walk of life."

For more information on the February 18 international day of protest call 301-989-1746, Fax: 301-989-0037.

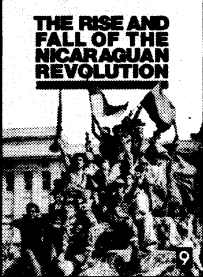
Candace Wagner is a member of United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 27.

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40,000 demand Bloody Sunday inquiry

Continued from front page

ness of the occasion but said that this was outweighed by the fact that "we're here with people who are not afraid and who refuse to forget." Speaking of Patrick Mayhew, the British minister responsible for Northern Ireland, McKinney said, "While he and his government continue to spew the lies of Widgery, he has no right to lecture Irish people about democracy, about justice, and about the creation of a more equal society."

The wife of Damien Sullivan, who was framed up on charges of killing a soldier and sentenced to life in 1996 in the juryless "Diplock" courts, also appealed for support. The only "evidence" presented against Sullivan was a video still that the cops failed to identify at the time.

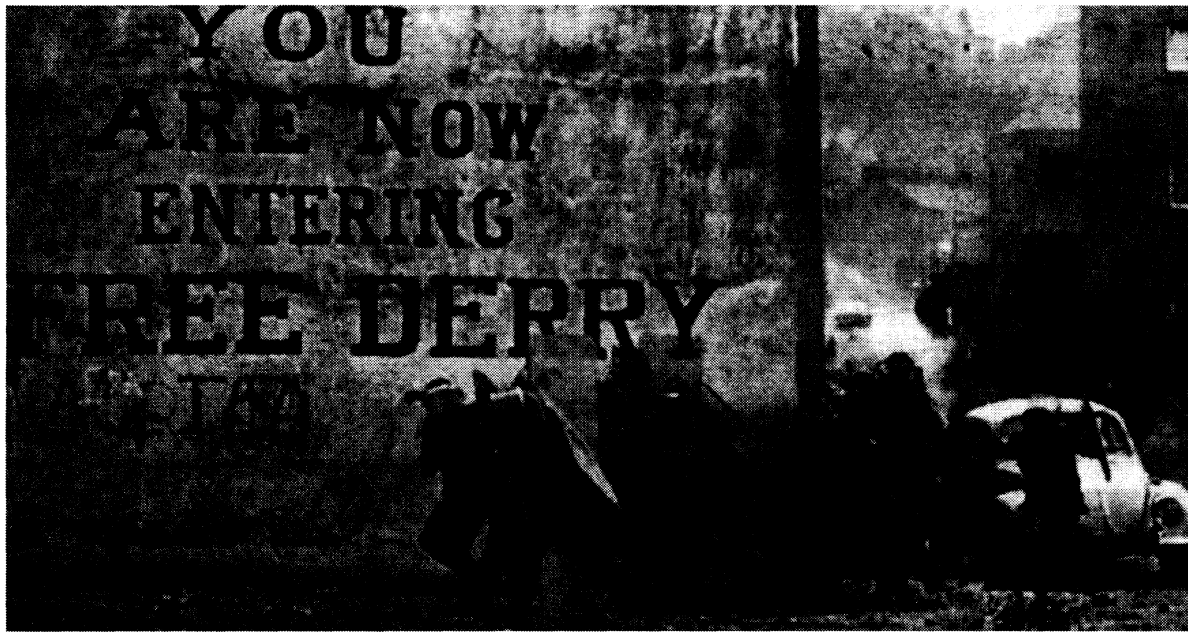
McGuinness described the heroism of the people of Derry as they sought to save those shot, and gave examples of how state murder continued to this day. He also spoke of the suffering of many families, including Protestants and people in London, as a result of British rule in Ireland.

Factory workers commemorate killings

Tommy McLaughlin, who was at the demonstration with several friends, told these reporters about what had gone on in several local factories the preceding week when many Catholic workers wore a black ribbon to commemorate the dead of Bloody Sunday. He reported that management at the Fruit of the Loom plant, where the majority of workers are Catholic, refused to turn off the radio during a two-minute silence to mark the time of the killing, and later sent home without pay those who had participated. McLaughlin thought that many of the Protestant workers did not object to the commemoration but would not come forward to show support for the Catholics.

Similar things happened in other workplaces. At Desmonds, a shirt factory where the majority of workers are Protestant, the local paper reported that a loyalist gang attacked Catholic workers on their way home after they marked the two-minute silence. Some workers said they had abuse screamed at them during their commemoration. Similarly, Catholic workers were locked out by management at Coats Viyella in Trench Road after holding a two-minute silence in the canteen.

At a 400-strong meeting January 31,



British Army forces face off with residents in Bogside neighborhood of Derry in 1971. This city was a center of the movement for Irish civil rights and against the British occupation.

Jimmy Porter presented tapes to the Bloody Sunday Justice Campaign to be used as evidence for a new inquiry. These recordings of army communications were taken secretly with special listening equipment on Bloody Sunday. They were submitted and rejected as evidence at the official Widgery inquiry in 1972. Porter told the meeting "I taped murder only to be told that taping murder was illegal and could not be admitted as evidence."

The tapes' contents appear in a new book, *Eyewitness Bloody Sunday* by Don Mullan, which contains eyewitness and forensic evidence of the British army shootings of the unarmed demonstrators. The tapes confirm that army snipers fired from above the demonstration on the Derry walls.

Speaking at the meeting, Mullan noted that "confidence in the authorities has been shaken by the turnaround at Drumcree and the complicity of the same authorities in the cover up." Last summer at Drumcree, a Catholic neighborhood in Portadown, the Royal Ulster Constabulary (RUC) and British army opened the way for loyalist thugs to attack the Catholic community. This was widely reported and condemned around the world. The event was a reaction to an upturn in the fight against rightist parades through nationalist neighborhoods. Coverage of it exposed British violence in the northern Ireland statelet and dealt a political blow to London.

Pressure on London increases

Accepting the tapes on behalf of the Justice Campaign, John Kelly said, "With these

tapes, Don Mullan's book, and the forensic evidence we've got the British government on the run."

One indication of the growing pressure on London was an editorial on the anniversary of Bloody Sunday in the *Belfast News Letter*, the main unionist (pro-British) paper in the north. The editors described the massacre as "an appalling over-reaction" by the troops and stated, "Those who lost innocent loved ones deserve nothing less than a heartfelt, unambiguous apology from the highest possible source."

Irish prime minister John Bruton said he will call on the British government to investigate recent allegations. Calls for a new inquiry into the Bloody Sunday killings have been made by SDLP leader John Hume, 60 members of the British Parliament, and retired Bishop of Derry Edward Daly.

The British government has so far rejected these calls. The Northern Ireland Office said, "The events of January 1972 were fully investigated by the Widgery tribunal. There are no plans to set up a further inquiry." A spokesperson for Labour Party Shadow Secretary of State, Mo Mowlam also rejected calls for an inquiry, saying "Our main aim is not to relive the past but rather to build for the future."

In another feeble attempt to discredit op-

ponents of British rule in Ireland, London continues to play up the statements of Sean O'Callaghan, who for years served as a cop informer in the Irish Republican Army. This stool-pigeon's latest allegation is that Sinn Fein president Gerry Adams had once considered killing SDLP leader Hume. Adams dismissed the charge, published by London papers the same day as the Derry demonstration, as "total rubbish." Irish government officials have said O'Callaghan's stories are fabrications, as has Irish historian Tim Pat Coogan.

Workshops and eyewitness testimony from Bloody Sunday took place at the Pilot's Row community center February 1, near the site of the massacre. The day concluded with a debate on the question "Who fears peace?" The 500 people attending were encouraged to question a panel that included Hume; Mary Flaherty of the Fine Gael party; Rev. Roy Magee, advertised as "involved in brokering the loyalist cease-fire of 1994;" and Sinn Fein chairperson Mitchel McLaughlin.

One question from the floor challenged Hume to say why he did not endorse having single nationalist candidates in the upcoming general election. This received enthusiastic applause from many in the audience. Hume replied that the SDLP would stand independently and he had to answer constituents who challenged him for "doing deals with those who carry out violence."

He said he would only consider the question "if there is a cease-fire and Sinn Fein starts acting like a normal political party." McLaughlin criticized the exclusive rejection of Sinn Fein from talks with the British government and said that Hume's comments "accept a status quo that discriminates against nationalists." He explained that Sinn Fein is an independent republican party with its own mandate. Sinn Fein will stand its own candidates in the general election.

The Bloody Sunday Justice Campaign can be contacted at Pat Finucane Centre, 1 West End Park, Derry.

Celia Pugh is a member of the Amalgamated Electrical and Engineering Union (AEEU).

Sexual abuse scandal widens for U.S. Army

BY MEGAN ARNEY

With the number of sexual misconduct charges against high-ranking Army personnel mounting in recent months, the Senate Armed Services Committee called a February 4 hearing on the issue. The day before the hearing convened, Sergeant Major Gene McKinney stepped down from a panel reviewing the Army's policies on sexual harassment. McKinney, the Army's top-ranking enlisted soldier and chief advisor to Army Chief of Staff Gen. Dennis Reimer, was accused of sexually assaulting a former female officer directly under his command.

A focus of the debate in the Senate hearing was whether women and men should be segregated by gender during their military training. The Army has had sex-integrated training since 1974.

Sen. Rick Santorum from Pennsylvania said, "I have some fundamental concerns about throwing very young women in a position with a drill sergeant.... That's, you know, [like] sitting there with a match near some gunpowder and expecting a spark not to fly every now and then and cause a problem."

"Sexuality is one of the most basic of all human instincts," declared Sen. Dan Coats, also arguing against co-ed training units.

Gen. Reimer stated, "It's a high stress environment, senator, and we put a lot of pressure on our drill sergeants, and every-

body has their breaking point at a certain point."

The Army has been mired in sexual harassment and violence scandals. The Senate hearing was called following a series of complaints of misconduct, rape, extortion, assault, and threatening military personnel at Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Maryland last November. When a toll-free number was set up by the U.S. Army after the first allegations surfaced, 3,100 calls were logged in the first few days. The Army's Criminal Investigative Division has opened new criminal cases in response to at least 155 of these calls.

A seventh Army drill sergeant at Aberdeen was charged February 4 with rape, extortion, obstruction of justice, and other offenses against three trainees — the most serious charges so far.

On February 4, a judge in El Paso, Texas, awarded Peggy Graham, a civilian employee of Col. Allen Hasbrouck at Fort Bliss, \$300,000 in damages for sexual harassment that lasted six years.

In one 1995 Pentagon survey of 90,000 female soldiers in various branches of the military, 60 percent said they had been subject to sexual harassment, and nearly 10 percent reported being sexually assaulted. Most of the recent misconduct cases involve male supervisors abusing females under their command.

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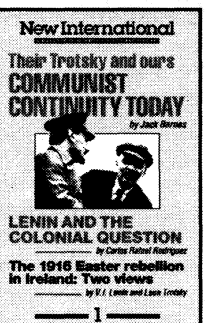
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SELL THE BOOKS WORKERS OF THE WORLD NEED

Join the campaign to sell Pathfinder books and pamphlets

Bound volumes of 'Militant' are now on sale

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Bound volumes of the *Militant* for 1995 and 1996 will be available by the end of February. Between now and March 22, readers can order these and earlier years at a special sale price. The *Militant* is offering a sale price of \$25 each for the 1980-94 bound volumes and \$40 each for 1995-96. That's between half and two-thirds off the regular price of \$75 per volume.

The 1995 *Militant* index was sent to all subscribers and distributors with the last issue, and the 1996 index will follow by mid-February.

Bound volumes of *Perspectiva Mundial*, the *Militant*'s Spanish-language sister magazine, are also available at a special price of \$30 for the 1995 and 1996 issues and \$20 for previous years.

The *Militant* index coupled with the bound volumes are useful tools for politically conscious workers, young fighters, and others. You can use them to look up past coverage on strikes and protest actions, analysis of various political questions facing working people and oppressed nationalities, and other debates and discussions.

A quick glance at the 1995 index, which lists articles both by subject and author, shows the range of coverage, from actions defending affirmative action to the fight for Quebec national sovereignty.

In 1995, the Canadian government was badly shaken by the close vote on a referendum on Quebec sovereignty. The *Militant* reported on the actions of youth demanding, "We want a country," and published a debate over why working people of every nationality should support the Quebecois right to self-determination.

The victory of Black activist Mumia Abu-Jamal's stay of execution on August 7 can also be found in the 1995 bound volume of the *Militant*; the previous issues covered the fight to defend Abu-Jamal and against the death penalty.

Other top stories for that year, include the November-December strike wave that engulfed France, where working people hit the bricks to protest Paris's attempts to impose austerity measures. Some 700,000 workers demonstrated across the country December 5 against the government's planned "reform" of the social security system.

1996 election year

The 1996 election year was marked by the presidential campaign of ultrarightist Patrick Buchanan, who placed first in the New Hampshire Republican primaries and won the February 6 Louisiana caucuses. "This wasn't a victory for a man — this was a victory for a cause," Buchanan declared when the results in Louisiana were announced.

When Buchanan conceded the race, he made it clear he was not ending his attempt to build an incipient fascist cadre out of "the young Buchanan Brigades" attracted to his campaign. A hallmark of Buchanan's efforts was in his speeches scapegoating immigrants.

Defense of immigrant rights, however, was a cornerstone of the presidential campaign

of Socialist Workers Party leader James Harris and SWP vice presidential candidate Laura Garza. They presented a working-class alternative to the Democrats and Republicans — the twin parties of war, racism, and depression. Harris attended the 17th Congress of the Central Organization of Cuban Workers (CTC) — the nationwide trade union federation in Cuba — where he was interviewed by *Trabajadores*, the CTC newspaper.

The *Militant* printed four installments of the theses for the congress and had in-depth coverage of the meeting, which took place April 25-30 in Havana. The document was the product of discussions at thousands of workplace meetings throughout Cuba between January 15 and March 15 in preparation for the convention.

Another highlight in the *Militant* was the series "Pages from Cuba's Revolutionary History." The series promoted a new edition of Ernesto Che Guevara's *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War — 1956-58*, helping fill out the history of the first socialist revolution in the Americas. It included such items as a story about Oniria Gutiérrez, the first woman who joined Guevara's Rebel Army column in the Sierra Maestra.

Washington's economic war against the Cuban revolution and the imperialist war drive against working people of Yugoslavia were nearly weekly features in the *Militant* in 1995-96. Readers of the bound volumes will appreciate the explanation of why the Yugoslav workers state has not been dismembered and the problems the imperialists face in their aim to reestablish capitalist prop-



Militant/top:Argiris Malapanis; right:Eric Simpson Cuban worker speaking at union congress in Havana, April 1996. Below, activists at Oct. 12 immigrant rights march in Washington, D.C. The 'Militant' index and bound volumes are useful tools to research events like these.

erty relations there.

These topics and other crucial political questions facing the working class can be found in the bound volumes. The 1990-94 bound issues of the *Militant* are available now, and orders for the 1995 and 1996 issues can be prepaid as well. A limited number of books from the 1980s are available on a first come-first served basis. Each contain a full year of the *Militant*; issues from 1990-96 also include an index. So place your order now!



Books by Marx, Engels, Lenin are Pathfinder's hot sellers in January

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

Many Pathfinder supporters have written in to describe the great response they received in January to the special sale of books and pamphlets by Karl Marx, Frederick Engels and V.I. Lenin. The *Collected Works* of all three revolutionary leaders, and a broad list of other titles, were available at 50 to 60 percent off the regular price to members of the Pathfinder Readers Club through January 31.

Distributors in Pittsburgh sold four sets of the *Collected Works of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels* and one set of the *Collected Works of V.I. Lenin*. In Montreal, two sets of Lenin's *Collected Works* were sold. As they began more consciously promoting these works, distributors in Montreal sold 20 single titles by the aforementioned authors, as well as books by Leon Trotsky, a central leader of the 1917 Russian revolution. Supporters of Pathfinder books in other cities had similar experiences. Alabama supporters set up a table at Auburn University and sold a full set of works by Marx and Engels to a student there. Another student

bought three volumes of that set. In all, 27 of the 53 titles supporters there sold were by Marx, Engels or Lenin. Books carrying speeches by Malcolm X were the next most popular.

The Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists in New York have sponsored weekly classes on readings by Marx, Engels, and Lenin and, for the first time in at least half a year, sent out a mailing informing all 150 readers club members in the city. This turned out to be fruitful as a worker who lives near the Pathfinder bookstore came to one of the classes and put a down payment on the collected writings of Marx and Engels; and Lenin.

In Minneapolis-St. Paul, Minnesota, communist airline workers sold *The Wages System* by Engels, *Genesis of Capital* by Marx, and *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism* by Lenin to their co-workers. Socialist distributors in Washington, D.C., sold a set of Marx's and Engels' collected works to a 28-year-old supporter of the Irish freedom struggle. Six new members were signed on to the readers club in that city. Some 37 books, or more than half the monthly goal there, were sold by volunteers staffing the local Pathfinder bookstore.

The largest events that brought in gusts of book sales in January were showings of a movie about the guerrilla campaign led by Ernesto Che Guevara in Bolivia in 1967. In at least two cities, socialists were permitted to set up tables inside the theatre. In San Francisco 116 books were sold. In New York, \$500 worth of titles were sold at the movie when it played in Huntington, Long Island — about an hour's drive from New York City. After the movie there was an open discussion in the theatre that socialist workers were able to join. While there they met a young worker at the concession stand who bought Ernesto Che Guevara's *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War*, and *Socialism and Man in Cuba*.

Cindy Jaquith in Detroit, wrote, "The Detroit Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists held an open house to get together with *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* subscribers, as well as readers club members.

They sold 10 books, including *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*."

Ron Richards, in a recent trip to Vieques, an island off the coast of Puerto Rico, wrote, "Most of the Vieques residents have never seen *Perspectiva Mundial* before and many thought that the \$2.50 price was very high." He cited the high unemployment and wages lower than Puerto Rico's. Nonetheless, at a protest there 13 people bought copies of the Spanish-language monthly. One woman at the protest, visiting from Allentown, Pennsylvania, recognized the *Militant*. "I have never been to a protest where they weren't selling the *Militant*," she told Richards as she bought one for herself.

Capital fund closes in on \$280,000 goal

As of February 4, some 111 contributors had given \$1,000 or more to a fund that will help the long-term capital needs of producing Pathfinder books, for a total of \$269,471. That leaves just over \$10,000 to go to meet the goal of raising \$280,000 by February 28. The donations, which have come from industrial bonuses, accident settlements, bequests, and other windfalls, will be applied to the necessary expenditures to maintain the physical plant and equipment used to produce the books by revolutionary and working-class leaders that Pathfinder publishes. Contributions have come in from Canada, France, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. They include year-end bonuses and other such funds pooled by members of the International Association of Machinists; Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers; United Auto Workers; United Mine Workers of America; and United Transportation Union.

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

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YS speaks out on Cuba, immigrant rights

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 55114. Tel: (612) 644-0051. Compuserve: 105162,605

BY JASON WELLING

SEATTLE, Washington — Nineteen students from Shorecrest High School attended a lunchtime presentation on Cuba January 17, hosted by Students for Democracy. Young Socialists leader Jack Willey gave a short presentation on the history of the Cuban revolution and the gains won by the working people there. He also spoke about the example Cuba has to offer all young people fighting against injustices of capitalism — racism, sexism, the exploitation of workers, police brutality — and its role

in the world today. The floor was then opened for questions.

Among the questions students asked were, "Does the United States hold a trade embargo against Cuba because Cuba used to ally with the Soviet Union and pointed nuclear warheads at the U.S.?" "Are people allowed to practice religion?" and "Are the economic difficulties there due to its socialist system or the U.S. embargo?"

The YS set up a literature table at the event and sold a book by Che Guevara. Others wanted to learn more about Cuba and the Young Socialists after the presentation. One student interested in the YS stayed for about an hour after the meeting to continue discussing the nature of capitalism and the fight for socialism. The entire program — lasting roughly a half hour — opened the door for the YS to speak at other events, and drew some fighters toward revolutionary socialism.

BY WALTER LÓPEZ

LOS ANGELES — The Federal government and state government of California continue to attack immigrant rights. On January 18, 125 people rallied at the Los Angeles federal building to protest the new federal immigration bill. Among other things, the law will try to force the deportation of thousands of Salvadorans who received "late amnesty" in 1993. Washington also announced that it will substantially increase the number of Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) agents it has on the California and Mexican border to try to keep immigrants from crossing into this country. News agencies reported that in the first half of January, five people had frozen to death attempting to cross the border into the United States.

One of the latest attacks by governor Pe-

ter Wilson's administration is to attempt to impose further welfare benefit reductions for legal immigrants. Immigrants with documents who arrive in California after Aug. 22, 1996, would not be able to get public assistance. This would affect at least 40,000 people according to Ken August, spokesperson for the Department of Health and Services. In addition about 243,000 elderly and disabled immigrants are expected to lose their Supplemental Security Income (SSI) benefits by this summer. Some 230,000 food stamp recipients who are immigrants will lose their benefits as well.

A diverse coalition made up of the major immigrant rights organizations and several community groups have called a protest for March 9. This is an opportunity for young people and others to get involved in the movement for immigrant rights. An injury to one is an injury to all! For more information call (818) 789-1310.

Alabama prisons told to end 'tortuous' treatment

BY JOHN HAWKINS

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama — Federal Magistrate Judge Vanzetta Penn McPherson ruled January 30 that the Alabama Department of Corrections must cease the practice of handcuffing inmates for hours at a time to chest-high, horizontal bars that prisoners call "hitching posts." McPherson's ruling came in a suit filed by the Southern Poverty Law Center, which had also sought

to outlaw Alabama's revival of chain gangs.

Faced with international outrage over the chain gangs and the prospect of losing on that front in court, the state government announced in June that it would discontinue the practice of chaining prison work crews together. However, state officials refused to agree to eliminate the "hitching posts" and say they will appeal McPherson's ruling.

"Short of death by electrocution," wrote

McPherson in her decision, "the hitching post may be the most painful and tortuous punishment administered by the Alabama prison system. With deliberate indifference for the health, safety, and indeed the lives of the inmates, prison officials have knowingly subjected them to all the hazards of the hitching posts, then observed as they suffered pain, humiliation and injuries as a result."

Over the past six months, in testimony before the court, prisoners have described standing shackled for as long as nine hours to the devices, called "restraining bars" by prison officials and in place at all Alabama prisons since 1993. They consist of two bars, one for shorter and one for taller inmates.

However, inmates testified that prison officials routinely shackle shorter inmates to the taller bar and vice versa, causing them intense discomfort and, in some cases, injury.

Prison officials testified that only those inmates who refused to work were shackled to the posts. But inmates contradicted that testimony, citing case after case of arbitrary infliction of the punishment, including on inmates who asked to be relieved of work details because they were ill.

Prisoners testified that they were subjected to the torturous punishment at all times of the year, whether under a hot summer sun or a driving winter rain. Moreover, inmates testified, they were often deprived of food, water, and the opportunity to use the toilet.

Among the inmates who testified was

Tony Fountain. Fountain, who is six feet tall, described being deliberately hitched by prison officials to the shorter of the two posts for nine hours. Fountain complained of an injured back, which prevented him from keeping up with his farm work crew. Prison officials' response was to chain him to the hitching post, forcing him to stand bent over in 90-degree heat. During the entire nine hour ordeal he received no water.

Fountain, who had also been taking a laxative, was refused permission to use the toilet and soiled his clothing mid-way through the punishment. "For the next four and a half hours that he remained on the hitching post," wrote McPherson, "officers and other inmates laughed and made fun of him."

In court Fountain described the experience as "terrifying" and "horrible." After being examined by medical officials, Fountain was taken off work duty for 30 days due to dehydration and inability to stand straight.

Testifying in October at one of the hearings in the case, Allen Breed, former director of the National Institute of Corrections, a federal agency that advises state prisons, compared the hitching posts to the pillory used in colonial times. "In this case we are perhaps more barbarous," said Breed, "because what we're doing is stretching an inmate out in the hot sun so he's uncomfortable and can't move."

McPherson's ruling now goes to Federal District Court in Montgomery, where Judge Myron Thompson will hear the case.

Protesters demand justice in N.Y. police brutality cases

BY JASON CORLEY

NEW YORK — Hundreds of people have joined in recent actions here protesting incidents of police brutality. About 150 people gathered January 13 at the home of David Munoz and Lilian Flores, in the Williamsburg area of Brooklyn, to protest the police killing of the couple's 15-year-old son Frankie Arzuaga a year earlier.

According to the parents, on Jan. 12, 1996, Arzuaga and two friends were in a car that was approached by three undercover police. The driver had just stopped for a red light. According to witnesses, one of the cops, James Hand, fired in the back windshield of the car, killing Arzuaga. Only after the shooting, did the three identify themselves as police officers, according to the other two occupants and other witnesses.

Recently a grand jury decided not to indict Hand. The family says they will continue to fight for charges against the cop. The rally and march consisted of mostly youth. A number of members of Parents Against Police Brutality spoke, as well as others including David Munoz; Alta Gracia Mayi, mother of Manual Mayi, a 19-year-old student killed by a racist gang in March 1991; and Margarita Rosario, whose son was killed by cops.

On January 20, 100 people participated in a rally and march to commemorate 18-

year-old Anthony Rosario and his 21-year-old cousin Hilton Vega, who were killed by cops in the Bronx on December 12, 1995. Margarita Rosario, Anthony's mother, opened the rally in front of her home, which is painted with portraits of the victims and lists the names of many victims of police brutality. "We founded Parents Against Police Brutality to see that justice is done," said Rosario. "It's been two years since my son was killed and nothing has been done." Several other relatives of people killed by the cops also spoke.

Two days later, 100 people held a march and rally in Brooklyn to protest the murder of Anibal Carrasquillo by New York police officer Marco Calderone. No charges have been brought against Calderone, who shot Carrasquillo in the back while his hands were in the air two years ago.

Your pictures could run in the *Militant*! We encourage our readers to send in pictures of YSers and others in political activity and selling Pathfinder books.

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8,000 workers rally for jobs in Sweden

BY CATHARINA TIRSEN

STOCKHOLM — "Work, work, work" was a slogan that was repeated over and over again by 8,000 construction workers and others as they demonstrated here January 24. The action was organized by the Construction Workers Union. More than 30 percent of the union's membership — 40,000 construction workers — are unemployed nationally.

Construction workers came in buses from all over Sweden for a meeting at Sergels torg in central Stockholm and a march that ended outside the parliament building.

In an interview published in *Newsweek* last October, Swedish prime minister Göran Persson had bragged that his government had been able to accomplish sharp cuts in social services, including funding for health care and education, "without any strikes, without any people on the streets."

Under the previous government, dominated by the conservative Moderate Party headed by Carl Bildt, the social democrats and the unions had organized several joint demonstrations, especially leading up to the elections.

Since the *Newsweek* interview, however,

demonstrations at the end of October and in November, organized by unions and groups of unemployed, attracted several thousand participants. One of the organizers of those protest actions, a young unemployed member of the Transport workers union, Therese Rajaniemis, became known among workers all over Sweden.

The rally by the construction workers was the third sizable national demonstration against growing joblessness.

"We want to see Göran Persson," the demonstrators called at the meeting outside the parliament building. But instead the government sent out Jörgen Andersson, minister of interior affairs, and himself a former member of the Construction Workers Union.

When he talked about the "successful economical policies of the government," Andersson was met with boos and scorn. It did not help that he promised that the new budget would set aside funds for "ecological construction," which was one of the demands in a manifesto issued by the Construction Workers Union. Nor did it help when Andersson referred to a promise by Prime Minister Persson the day before to give 10 billion krona extra that he had



Militant/Catharina Tirsén

Construction workers held third large rally in Stockholm protesting unemployment

"found" in the budget for schools, hospitals, and care for elderly. The promise sent stocks and the value of the krona down, and interest rates up January 24.

A special contingent at the demonstration was made up of several hundreds of participants from Arboga, a small industrial town in central Sweden. The car company Volvo had just decided to move Volvo Aero, a fac-

tory that repairs airplane engines, to another town. This would lay off 550 workers. They marched behind banners such as "Volvo is devastating Arboga," "Stop Volvo from moving from Arboga," and "Never again a Volvo!"

"We call out, work for all," was a slogan raised by the workers from Arboga several times, and repeated by the rest of the crowd.

Lebanese gov't cracks down on democratic rights

BY GEORGES MEHRABIAN

BEIRUT, Lebanon — In the name of stopping terrorism and controlling the right wing, the Lebanese government has taken further steps to limit democratic rights.

On December 18, a group of four armed men opened fire indiscriminately on a bus full of Syrian workers in Tabarja north of Beirut, killing the driver. The same day, a bomb went off in the northern city of Tripoli targeting Syrian soldiers. In the previous two months there were four attacks on immigrant workers from Syria, according to the December 24 *L'Orient Le Jour*, a French-language daily published in Beirut. The same paper reported that a group calling itself the Christian Lebanese Resistance, in its "Communique no. 1," called on people to target Syrian citizens and troops. There are 30,000 Syrian troops currently stationed in Lebanon with the backing of the Lebanese government.

Following the December 18 terrorist attack, the Lebanese government of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri launched a wave of arrests, targeting opposition politicians with ties to the right-wing leaders Michel Aoun, Samir Geagea, Dory Chamoun, and former president Amin Gemayel, who ruled parts of Lebanon during the civil war. According to the public prosecutor, 11 politicians were being held as of December 24. Journalist Pierre Atallah was charged with distributing a leaflet seeking to tarnish Lebanon's relations with a friendly country. No charges had been made for the bombings.

The Christian fascist and right-wing forces face the hatred of many working people, Muslim and Christian, for the massive crimes committed during the Lebanese civil war, which lasted from 1975 to 1990. The government uses the excuse of limiting the ability of these forces to start new troubles in order to carry out restrictions on the democratic rights of the population, in particular of working people.

This was one of the issues in a November 28 general strike called by the General Confederation of Lebanese Workers (CGTL). The slogan was "Against the high cost of living and for democratic freedoms!" The strike was met by a massive display of state repression.

Strike protests new media restrictions

Walid Fakhr-Eddine, a journalist working for the Voice of the People radio station, was one of the 66 arrested that day. He described the day's events in an interview with this reporter. "The central issue in the strike was the question of attempts to restrict democratic rights," Fakhr-Eddine said, "in particular the new law on the audiovisual media, both TV and radio." He explained that the new law "under the guise of regulating and improving broadcasts sought, in fact, to deal a blow to the government's opponents. At the November 17 cabinet meet-

ing they put forth the law that licensed only four TV stations.... This means seven TV stations will have to shut down. As for the radio stations, only three are now permitted to give news broadcasts. Eight others will be licensed for music only. Others are to be forced off the air altogether, among them the Voice of the People."

Almost immediately there was a response to these measures, Fakhr-Eddine said. "On November 25, 26, and 27, sit-ins began in front of the Government Palace, and then at the Parliament building. These involved between 200 and 1,500 protesters. On November 28 the general strike took place.

"The CGTL demanded that the broadcast licensing decision be reconsidered, that benefits for teachers be increased, budget cuts to the education system be reversed, and that the increases in indirect taxes, as well as in the social security taxes, be reconsidered. The budget of the education ministry is now 3 percent of the total whereas before it was 5 percent."

The November 29 issue of *L'Orient Le Jour* stated, "The state has once again resorted to the use of the armed forces to prevent the trade unions from exercising their right to expression, which is guaranteed by the constitution." The article reported that the capital city of Beirut was completely cut off from the rest of the country by the army and thousands of troops poured into the city. "Their orders were clear: insure that the governmental executive order of July 1995 banning demonstrations is applied." This decree has been used three times now against the CGTL.

"The government mobilized 12,000 troops," explained Fakhr-Eddine. "They prevented the mass demonstration from taking place. In one area 1,200 of us were able to gather; other small demonstrations of 200 or 300 people took place in various neighborhoods. We were totally surrounded by troops, attacked, and roughed up. The protesters were mostly youth. Some fled to the street where the headquarters of the Progressive Socialist Party (PSP), the Communist Party of Lebanon (CPL), and the offices of the Organization of Communist Action of Lebanon (OACL) are located. They chased us. I was picked up by three men in civilian clothes and taken to a basketball court, where they held 62 of us. Most were released after a few hours, but six of us were held overnight, including myself. We were ordered released by a judge.

"Despite the atmosphere of repression and the ban on union demonstrations," the journalist continued, "the strike was about 75 percent effective. The media law was postponed and the teachers won some benefits."

Following the CGTL strike, Lebanon's tobacco workers struck on December 10. They demanded they be paid their cost of living allowances, and won a promise of

payment by the end of December.

During the late December bombings and arrests the Ministry of Information outlined new restrictions for the media to observe. Satellite broadcasts that can be picked up outside the country were to be prevented from broadcasting certain news, including, "All news that would harm relations with Arab and foreign countries, such as statements from Lebanese opposition members. All news relating to the detention of suspects and those wanted by the security forces. All news concerning the presence of the Syrian army. All news that instigates sectarian problems." Lebanese TV is available through satellite in Arab countries.

Economic crisis in Lebanon

These developments are occurring in the context of a severe economic crisis resulting from a devastating civil war, the continuing war of liberation led by Hezbollah fighters against the Israeli occupation of South Lebanon, and the overall depression conditions of world capitalism, which Lebanon's capitalist economy operates within.

Industrial and agricultural exports from Lebanon totaled \$980 million in 1996, a figure comparable to the previous year, reported the December 31 issue of *L'Orient Le Jour*. Meanwhile, imports rose to \$7.5 billion, up from \$4.8 billion in 1994. Only 3,200 new industrial jobs were created in the last year, with capital investments of only \$65 million. Close to 43 percent of the state budget goes to pay for interest payments on the national debt, which stands at

\$10.5 billion compared to \$7.5 billion in 1995.

Meanwhile, Israeli bombardment of the country in April 1996, dubbed operation "Grapes of Wrath," cost the economy a crippling \$500 million.

Fakhr-Eddine said, "Agriculture in general is dead, hashish cultivation has also stopped but the peasants have not been provided with alternatives. Unemployment is estimated at 38 percent. The minimum wage is at \$190 [per month], while rent and electricity add up to \$200. It is clear that the reconstruction plan is not working. But people are very afraid of a return to the civil war, and this tempers your demands."

A drive through Beirut provides one with a contrasting view. Hundreds of brand new luxury apartment buildings are going up, along with fancy boutiques, expensive restaurants, and brand new Mercedes, BMWs, and other luxury cars. The war-ravaged downtown commercial district has been leveled now to make way for a brand new office and trade district. Reconstruction of the electricity and phone networks, practically obliterated by war, is almost complete.

Behind the luxury apartments, however, are working-class districts that are still in war ruins, as are the areas where peasants who have fled daily Israeli bombing in the South live. Meanwhile, close to 400,000 Palestinians remain in refugee camps in Lebanon. They have been iced out of any agreements between the Palestine Liberation Organization and the Israeli government. Thus, they are a source of opposition to peace deals with Tel Aviv.

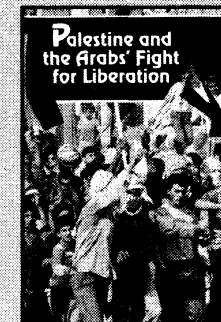
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Opening Guns of World War III

Washington's Assault on Iraq

Jack Barnes

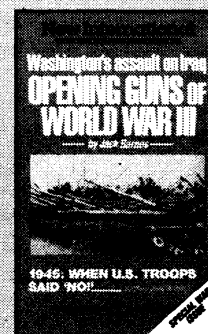
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Yugoslavia protests

Continued from front page

by spiraling inflation, falling wages, and rising unemployment.

The same day, rail workers in the Czech Republic went on strike to protest attempts by the pro-capitalist regime of Prime Minister Vaclav Klaus to sell off shares of the state-owned railway to foreign investors and lay off thousands.

In Albania, demonstrators continued to clash with police, demanding the government cover losses for hundreds of thousands from failed "pyramid schemes." These fraudulent investment funds had been promoted by the pro-imperialist regime of President Sali Berisha.

Defiance of Belgrade crackdown

The Yugoslav protests erupted in Nis, Serbia's second largest city and one of the republic's major industrial areas, on November 18, the day after Zajedno claimed city council victories in many of Serbia's main urban centers. The mobilizations quickly spread to about 30 other cities. In the capital, students at the University of Belgrade began leading their own daily marches, separate from Zajedno rallies. Crowds averaging 100,000 filled the streets daily until early January.

Just before the turn of the year, Serbia's Interior Ministry issued numerous restrictions on street demonstrations after riot police attacked protesters, killing one and injuring many. Faced with unyielding protests, however, the police refrained from enforcing the new rules much of the time in the subsequent four weeks.

After conceding defeat in Nis on January 8 and four other cities in the following days, the ruling Socialist Party appeared to make progress in defusing protests. Serbia's courts began issuing new rulings supporting the government's annulment of election results in nine of the 14 disputed cities, including Belgrade. Daily demonstrations seemed to be losing steam toward the end of January, drawing a few thousand most days. The media began describing the protesters as "tired." Riot police disappeared from the streets the last week of January.

The February 2 crackdown by the police against one of these small marches was a probe by the Milosevic regime to see if it could club the diminishing protests into submission.

On the morning of that Sunday, riot police stopped about 1,000 protesters, led by Vuk Draskovic of the Serbian Renewal Movement, one of the two main parties in Zajedno. The demonstrators were attempting to cross Brankov Bridge over the Sava river to join other small feeder marches for an opposition rally at Republic Square in downtown Belgrade.

After a tense four-hour standoff, hundreds of cops fired water cannons and used truncheons against protesters staging a sit-down on the bridge. About 80 people were injured, including at least eight policemen, as demonstrators threw rocks at club-wielding cops. Many protesters were hospitalized, some with broken ribs or chipped teeth. Clashes with the police spread throughout the city and continued into the early hours of February 3. The Interior Ministry announced arrests of 18 people who face legal charges.

The government repression energized an immediate response. Zajedno rallies swelled to over 50,000 the next two days in

Belgrade.

Between 20,000 and 30,000 Belgrade University students marched in their own action February 3. The students walked across the Brankov Bridge, with barely a traffic officer in sight. Cab drivers went on strike that day, along with employees of the National Theater, joining the students and snarling traffic in downtown Belgrade. The cab drivers augmented earlier walkouts by teachers, who shut down 600 schools — including most of the classrooms in Belgrade — freeing up many of the students to join marches. While the police did not attempt to stop the larger demonstrations, clashes ensued between state security forces and small groups of youth.

Many protesters began calling on the army to come out on their side and stop the violence. Student leaders who met with Gen. Momcilo Perisic of the army command January 6 had told the press the military leader promised the army would not use force to quell the anti-government protests.

So the police crackdown backfired, widening rifts within the state bureaucracy. Information Minister Aleksander Tjadic resigned. "Milosevic is not willing to give the opposition anything," Tjadic told the *Washington Post*. "He's just playing Russian roulette and playing for time."

What led to government concessions

The protest movement was fueled by widespread opposition to the annulment of the election results, but also dissatisfaction with the regime because of a deep economic crisis. Official unemployment in Serbia runs at 26 percent, while other estimates put it at 50 percent. Inflation reached 100 percent annually last year. Per capita income has dropped from \$3,000 per year in 1990 to \$1,600 today.

The crisis, rooted in the decades-long bureaucratic and anti-working-class methods of planning and management by the ruling caste, has been exacerbated by the world capitalist depression and the sanctions against Serbia and Montenegro imposed earlier by Washington and other imperialist powers.

The inability of Belgrade to meet its financial obligations has created negative repercussions for the Milosevic regime even in the rural areas. An article in the January 31 *Financial Times* of London said that Serbia, normally a grain exporter, will have to import at least 300,000 tons of wheat in 1997 to meet the republic's needs. The effects of a disastrous harvest in 1996 have been worsened by excessive exports of grain reserves by the government, desperate to raise hard currency for imports.

Mladjan Dinkic, professor of economics at Belgrade University, said many farmers are producing only enough grain for their needs because the state had failed to pay them adequately for past harvests. "They are unlikely to protest against the government but they will not plant," he stated.

"Some farmers are now so poor they can't even buy a round of drinks in a cafe," said Dragan Veselinov, a leader of the opposition National Farmers party, which has its strongest base in the northern province of Vojvodina, Serbia's grain basket. Small groups of farmers were blockading a few roads in Vojvodina at the end of January, though the protest did not appear to have prospects for widening.

Zajedno leaders have had great difficulty



Striking Bulgarian transport workers (above) shout slogans as they demonstrate in the capital city of Sofia February 3. Riot police in Belgrade (left) attack demonstrators in Serbia's capital February 4. The repression failed to quell the protests and in fact ignited broader actions. Two days later the Milosevic regime announced it would concede municipal elections in 14 cities.



rallying the working class on their side. While cab drivers, lawyers, actors, and teachers have struck in Belgrade recently, no industrial or other wage workers have walked off the job. The composition of the protests in Serbia's capital has been weighed heavily toward professionals, small business people, and other petty-bourgeois layers. But workers in other cities, especially Nis, have joined demonstrations in bigger numbers. And many industrial workers waged strikes for back pay and jobs earlier in 1996.

Washington and other capitalist powers currently have 35,400 NATO troops occupying Bosnia, in an attempt to overturn the workers state throughout Yugoslavia and reestablish capitalism. These imperialists have been trying to take advantage of the protests in Serbia to push for replacing the Milosevic regime with a government more subservient to their interests.

U.S. State Department spokesman Nicholas Burns and German Foreign Minister Klaus Kinkel issued new condemnations of Belgrade after the February 3 crackdown. U.S. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright told the press February 4, "We have to have a process in Dayton that does not depend on having anybody in any particular place" in Yugoslavia. Albright was referring to the so-called Dayton "peace" accords, which Washington pushed through, setting the stage for intervening in Yugoslavia.

The French government invited Zajedno leaders to Paris. "This invitation," said French Foreign Minister Herve de Charette, "amounts to recognition by the French government of the leaders of the Together coalition, which in the past weeks has proved its political maturity."

No replacement for Milosevic

Reports in the U.S. big-business media, however, indicate that Washington has concluded that none of the opposition leaders can replace Milosevic, at least for now. The *Wall Street Journal* assigned one of its staff writers to interview Zoran Djindjic of the Democratic Party along with Draskovic. The article by Neil King appeared on the front page of the February 3 *Journal*. It was headlined "Serbian unrest raises unsettling question: After Milosevic, who?" with the kicker "There is a power vacuum outside the ruling party that could turn messy."

"Neither the mass protests sweeping Serbia nor the daily speeches by Mr. Djindjic and his main partner in the opposition coalition, Vuk Draskovic, have done much to allay people's concerns for what a post-Milosevic Serbia might bring," the article said. It quoted Stevan Jojic, a cab driver

who had joined the protests, saying, "We all know that we don't want Milosevic. But go much beyond that and it's a blur."

Pointing to the earlier support by Djindjic and Draskovic for "ethnic cleansing" in Bosnia by pro-Belgrade Serb forces, the article said that the Zajedno leaders' popularity has not surged recently. Citing "independent polls," the *Journal* said the approval ratings for Draskovic have dropped from 15 percent during the war in Bosnia to below 5 percent now. "Recent polls put [Milosevic's] support at about 25%, down from 40% in November but still greater than all of his opponents combined," it stated.

Milosevic has had some success in portraying the opposition as mere dupes of "foreign powers," by appealing to widespread anti-imperialist sentiments among Yugoslavia's working people, a residue of the gains of the 1945 Yugoslav revolution.

In announcing his decision to relinquish control of city halls in Belgrade and 13 other cities, Milosevic also tried to restore his earlier symbiotic relation with Washington and other imperialist powers.

"The election disputes ... have caused great damage to our country both domestically and internationally and it was high time to solve the problem," stated Milosevic in a letter to Premier Marjanovic released on February 4. "I think the state interest of improving relations of our country with the international community by far exceeds the significance of any number of seats in a handful of cities."

Following this announcement, Draskovic and other Zajedno leaders said their demonstrations will not stop until the government guarantees freedom of the press and prosecutes those responsible for beating protesters and attempting to steal the election.

State television announced February 5 that the independent station BK Television can no longer use the state transmission tower, effectively limiting its range to central Belgrade.

On February 4 and 5, about 20,000 students marched in Belgrade again, demanding the release of colleagues arrested in the earlier police attack and greater democratic freedoms. They were joined by 1,000 striking lawyers who have volunteered their legal services.

But Zajedno continues to lack support among these students. "What we want is a parliament and a diffusion of power, not another dynamic individual who will ruin this country as others have," said Cedimir Antic, a 22-year-old history student.

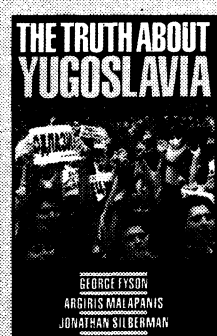
Developments in nearby worker states

The success of the protest movement in Serbia has inspired strikes and demonstrations in neighboring Bulgaria. For 30 days there, tens of thousands have rallied daily in the country's capital, Sofia, demanding early elections.

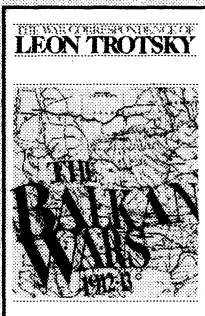
The opposition Union of Democratic Forces (UDF), which won the presidency in elections last November and favors a

Continued on Page 9

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Moscow has trouble over NATO, economy

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

When Russian president Boris Yeltsin met with French president Jacques Chirac February 2 to discuss NATO expansion plans, he maintained Moscow's position of opposition to the eastward expansion of the imperialist alliance. The Kremlin is pressing NATO members to sign a formal treaty not to deploy nuclear missiles, heavy conventional weapons, or station troops, on the territory of the eastern European countries belonging to the alliance.

While Washington and other states in NATO are opposed to a legally binding agreement, Moscow is seeking to "exploit tension" among imperialist regimes "especially between Paris and Washington," the *Financial Times* reported. A NATO summit in Madrid, to be convened this summer, is expected to extend invitations to some eastern European countries to join—most likely Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, and Slovenia.

While Washington appears set on moving ahead with the expansion, some big-business commentators have recently panned the idea. Writing in the January 22 *New York Times*, for example, Thomas Friedman sympathetically cited Sen. Joseph Biden as asking, "If we are really going to alienate the Russians, what are we going to get for it?"

Expressing alarm over the NATO move, Russian prime minister Viktor Chernomyrdin warned that ultrarightists such as Vladimir Zhirinovskiy would blame the Kremlin for acquiescence to a military encirclement by Washington and other imperialist countries. "Developments in Russia could take an ominous turn," he said. "We know that NATO means a powerful nuclear presence, nuclear forces, and all of this is being moved toward Russia."

Differences among the ruling caste in Moscow over NATO expansion plans have also emerged. "Enlargement would be unacceptable to Russia under any conditions," Anatoly Chubais, Yeltsin's chief of staff, told a February press conference at the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. Later that day, Chubais retreated from his stated opposition, saying that if a satis-



Electric power plant workers strike in Moscow last October demanding back pay

factory agreement could be reached before the July NATO summit, it would "open doors for future NATO enlargement." He added, "Russia has never said it was against any kind of enlargement."

Russian administration official, Sergei Shakrai, said it would be "senseless" to observe arms treaties limiting the deployment of conventional forces in Europe if NATO expanded.

At a meeting of senior ministers in Moscow, Shakrai asserted that unification with the former Soviet republic Belarus, would be the regime's most effective response to NATO expansion. "The unification with Belarus would correspond to their strategic interests, consolidate power, and bolster Russia's authority in the international arena," he declared.

Yeltsin floated the unification idea in a letter to the president of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, an outspoken opponent of NATO expansion. The letter proposed the two governments consider holding a referendum on unification, which could involve a single government with a joint currency

and taxation system, and unified energy supply. The two countries signed an agreement last April strengthening economic and military ties. Russian soldiers currently guard Belarus's western border with Poland.

In the past, Moscow has opposed merging with Belarus, trying to avoid absorbing that country's inflation and unemployment problems. Yeltsin's bluster was "intended as a shot across NATO's bows," primarily as a bargaining chip as discussions heat up over NATO expansion, the *Manchester Guardian* noted.

Depression conditions for workers

Depression conditions continue to deepen for the working class in Russia. Some \$8.3 billion in back wages are currently owed to workers in a wide range of industries. Russian gold mining companies, which employ around 500,000 people, have not paid workers since the end of November. Some 400,000 coal miners, who had not been paid for months, went on strike December 3 demanding back wages.

A growing number of factories are pay-

ing workers in goods for barter. At the Armina factory in Volgograd, garment workers walked off their jobs in January to protest getting paid in brassieres. "All our relatives and friends have got them already and we do not know what to do with the rest," one worker explained. "We are paid in bras at 18,000 rubles each. That makes seven to nine bras a month. That's too many for one woman."

A condition of permanent crisis and instability stalks the government. On January 22, the lower house of Russia's parliament voted 229 to 63 to remove Yeltsin from his post because of poor health. While the vote had no legal force, it reflected the initial preparations for a power struggle. Just over three years ago, Yeltsin launched a military assault to resolve a conflict in the Russian legislature.

Before the vote in parliament, the president had not been seen by the public since January 6. Yeltsin developed double pneumonia earlier in January after recovering from quintuple-bypass heart surgery on November 5.

As Yeltsin's health declines, former general Aleksandr Lebed is campaigning to win support from Washington and other imperialist regimes in his bid for the Russian presidency. During a trip to the United States, prominently covered in the *New York Times*, Lebed met with business magnate Donald Trump in New York and executives at the Du Pont company in Delaware.

While Lebed is courting the U.S. rulers, the editors of the *Times* pleaded "not to be so quick to talk of discarding" Yeltsin. Lebed's "approach to politics" was "unnerving" and besides "it will be several months before sound judgment about [Yeltsin's] fitness can be made," they stated.

In a related development, Aslan Maskhadov, the military commander who led the 21-month war to drive up to 60,000 Russian troops out of Chechnya, was declared the victor in the republic's presidential election January 27. Moscow's bloody attempt to crush Chechnya's independence was defeated, but resulted in the deaths of an estimated 80,000 people.

Moscow threatens Estonia sanctions

BY INGE HINNEMO

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—At a press conference in Moscow January 9, Russian foreign minister Yevgeny Primakov declared that Moscow should introduce economic sanctions on states that discriminate against ethnic Russians. He especially singled out Estonia, according to the Russian news agency Itar-Tass. Primakov also said that Moscow will not sign a border treaty with the Estonian government until the situation of the Russian minority there is improved.

Such a treaty has been prepared since the beginning of last December, but the Russian government has postponed signing it. The Estonian government had agreed not to mention its territorial claims against Russia, dating to the Tartu peace in 1920. Moscow sent a delegation to the Estonian capital, Tallin, for discussions on the status of the minority of ethnic Russians living in that country.

Primakov's statement comes as the Kremlin makes clear its continuing opposition to the enlargement of NATO eastward to include Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic in a first round. The day before the press conference, Primakov said that a rewriting of the Conventional Forces in Europe treaty is a condition for Moscow signing any treaty with NATO. Moscow is also advancing its plans to set up a federation with Belarus, a former Soviet republic that borders Poland and the southern Baltic states of Latvia and Lithuania.

Inge Hinnemo is a member of the Metal Workers union in Stockholm.

Protesters make gains in Bulgaria

Continued from Page 8

more rapid introduction of "market reforms," has called the protests.

The ruling Socialist Party, which holds a majority of seats in parliament, had announced a new cabinet. But as demonstrations and strikes by public transportation workers paralyzed the country at the beginning of February, the SP government announced February 4 it conceded to the UDF demand of early elections in April.

The protests were fueled by runaway inflation, which was estimated at 50 percent per month in January, and wages dwindling to an average \$10 per month from \$70 a year ago. The national currency, the lev, fell to about 2,500 to the U.S. dollar, dropping five-fold since January 1. The government has repeatedly defaulted on payments for the country's \$10 billion foreign debt. The International Monetary Fund put its loan program on hold last summer and demanded new austerity measures.

"It's wonderful," said Gergana Doychinova, one of the thousands of students who danced around bonfires in the streets of Sofia after the announcement of new elections. "It means freedom, ... bread, meat, everything."

President Petar Stoyanov of the openly pro-capitalist UDF, however, warned that more austerity is in sight. "Reforms are ahead, and a new social price has to be paid," he said.

That's what the pro-imperialist regime of Vaclav Klaus has been trying to push through in the Czech Republic, but without a great deal of success. Trains stopped throughout that country on February 4, as rail workers struck in the first major labor unrest in this workers state since the crumbling of the former Stalinist regime in 1989. Rail unions called a 48-hour strike and threatened to extend it if their demands are not met. The 100,000 rail workers want guarantees against layoffs and oppose the government's failed attempts to sell off the

state-owned railways to private investors.

In neighboring Poland, train drivers dropped plans for a strike after signing an agreement with the board of the Polish State Railways. The union was seeking reversal of wage cuts and increase in employment.

Poland and the Czech Republic — ruled by pro-capitalist regimes — have been declared success stories of "market reform" by the big-business media, unlike most of the workers states in the Balkans. These two countries and Hungary are being considered for membership in NATO. The latest developments show that imperialism faces growing instability in Eastern Europe, regardless of which layer of the bureaucratic castes dominates the government.

In Albania, where the Berisha regime

enjoys a cozy relationship with Washington, about 4,000 protesters clashed with the police in the city of Vlora February 5. The demonstration, which had grown earlier in the day to 10,000, erupted after another "pyramid scheme," headquartered in that town, declared bankruptcy.

The country's currency, the lek, has lost 20 percent of its value since the beginning of the year. On February 2, Albania's central bank had to sell off massive amounts of dollars to buy leks and avert a catastrophic financial collapse.

"[Currency] dealers believe the foreign investors will be frightened away from Albania because of mounting political instability," stated an article in the February 1 *Financial Times*.

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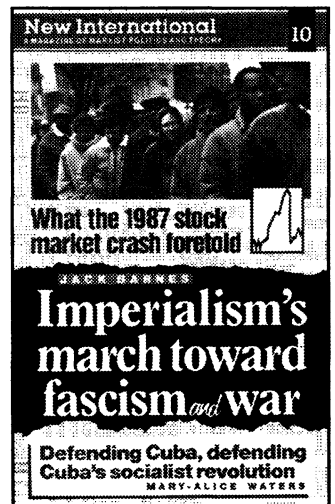
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Should workers oppose genetically engineered crops?

BY BILL KALMAN

DES MOINES, Iowa — What should workers and farmers think about the introduction of genetically engineered crops? Is this a case of technology gone berserk in service to agribusiness? Should the technology itself be opposed, or is the real culprit the social organization of agriculture for profit?

These are some of the questions raised by the explosion of genetically altered crop seeds, particularly corn, soybeans, and cotton, that are being made widely available to U.S. farmers for the first time this winter, in time for the spring planting season. The availability of these seeds has provoked a big discussion among farmers, environmental activists, and others on the safety, marketability, and impact of bioengineered crops. This fall protests against these types of crops, including an instance where

Monsanto Co. has developed soybeans that can tolerate that company's widely-used Roundup herbicide. An estimated 10 million acres of "Roundup Ready Soy" will be planted in the U.S. in 1997. Monsanto, alone and through its subsidiary DeKalb Genetics, owns the biotechnology that produces the genetically altered soy seed. While only two seed companies offered the altered beans in 1996, some 65 companies will sell them for the 1997 growing season. About half of the soybeans grown in the U.S. are for export.

Debate over altered crops in Europe

The European Commission, an executive agency of the European Union (EU), recently decided to allow the sale of Bt corn, which is genetically altered to produce its own pesticide. It approved the importing of altered soybeans earlier last year. The new corn produces the *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) chemical to ward off the European cornborer, a pest responsible for damaging millions of dollars worth of corn every year; traditional and Bt corn will be mixed together in the processing cycle.

The move to import genetically engineered crops has been controversial. In Germany, the food conglomerates Unilever and Nestle have pledged to use only regular soybeans. This may be difficult to carry out as altered beans are routinely mixed with regular beans in silos, barges, railroad cars, and ship holds. Germany is one of the world's top five importers of U.S. soybeans.

EuroCommerce, a major European trade association, has also stated its opposition to using the altered crop. According to Reuters news agency, Switzerland's two largest food retailers are demanding that the beans be separated, but "the US grain industry says it would be costly and impractical." In December the Austrian health minister banned the import of Bt corn for safety reasons.

While the EU's 15 countries imported 108 million bushels of U.S. corn last year, Japan imported some 635 million bushels, making it the largest customer for U.S. corn exporters. The Japanese government has recently decided to allow the importation of Bt corn into that country as livestock feed. Earlier the Japanese Ministry of Health and Welfare allowed the use of Bt corn for human consumption.



Militant/Ruth Nebbia

Corn harvest in Iowa. Genetically altered seed will be widely available this year.

The battle for acceptance of genetically altered crops is the battle for overseas markets. As a recent *Wall Street Journal* article points out, "Time is running short ... as foods made from these new crops begin to reach supermarkets, lawmakers must decide how to label these products; the agro-chemical industry, food processors and retailers must convince Europeans that the new species are safe; and European Union authorities must try to ensure that the effort doesn't produce new fissures in the already fractured single market. If these efforts fail, Western Europe's farm sector could be left trailing the Americans in the global grain trade."

Capitalist competition fuels dispute

Many people around the world have a healthy suspicion of U.S. agribusiness, especially on questions of food safety. In their mad rush to corner the market, the U.S. capitalists do not adequately test these new crops and have no safeguards in place for potential problems, such as the narrowing of the gene pool and the impact on reducing seed diversity. Like all technologies developed under capitalism, the positive effects are often accompanied by unexpected negative consequences. While immediate drawbacks to genetic engineering aren't clearly apparent yet, anticipation of them has made many working people wary about wholesale acceptance of this new technology. This undoubtedly played a role in many of the recent protests in Europe.

But it is hard to ignore the nationalist, protectionist thrust of these actions, which were organized by the big European food monopolies to restrict U.S. imports into the EU.

U.S. government agriculture and trade officials are worried about potential Euro-

pean boycotts. "If we don't do something about it, it's going to be a major problem," maintained Sen. Charles Grassley of Iowa. "It could keep every kernel of (U.S.) corn out of Europe."

U.S. agriculture secretary Dan Glickman told reporters, "We've got to make sure sound science prevails, not what I call historic culture, which is not based on sound science. So, it's just going to mean a tough, consistent position on the part of the United States."

An article in the November issue of *Wallaces Farmer* magazine sums up the fears of the U.S. ruling class: "Will U.S. grain be locked out of export markets? Concern by foreign consumers over genetically modified crops such as Roundup Ready soybeans and Bt corn has quickly grown into one of the biggest ag trade issues of this decade."

The drive to get a piece of the new technology has spawned a flurry of mergers and acquisitions in the multi-million dollar seed industry. Companies need to own or license the appropriate patents to make use of the genetic engineering, which they hope will give them an edge over European and other rivals. This consolidation in the seed industry has "farmers questioning who will have access to future seeds, and how much those seeds will cost," stated an article in the *Farm Journal* magazine.

Monsanto, the St. Louis-based chemical and pharmaceutical giant, is moving out of the chemical business and into agricultural biotechnology. In the process the company expects to throw between 1,500 and 2,500 people out of work. Roundup Ready soybeans are expected to increase sales of Roundup, the company's 25-year-old her-

Continued on Page 11

AS I SEE IT

Greenpeace activists spray-painted soy fields, have made headlines in the Midwest and around the world.

Now that it is possible to alter crops to increase yields, resist disease, and even boost nutritional levels, what stance should workers and farmers take towards these developments? It is important to start with what is involved scientifically.

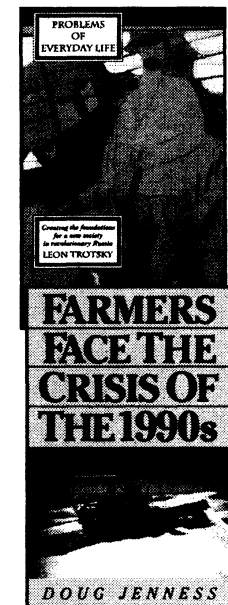
In a sense, the genetic manipulation of crop seed is simply the next step beyond what farmers have been doing for thousands of years, selectively breeding seeds and stock animals for favored characteristics. With advances in both the science of genetics and the development of technology, the speed and efficiency of this process has accelerated greatly in the past 50 years.

The development of hybrid crops through selective cross-pollination results in crops that are harder and more robust. The large-scale use of hybridization of corn that began in the 1930s increased yields immediately by 25 percent.

Genetic engineering speeds up this selection process even more by manipulating a plant's DNA (deoxyribonucleic acid) to change its inherited characteristics — to increase its resistance to disease, chemicals, or insects, or to introduce other characteristics. For example, it is now possible to alter cotton plants to produce fibers containing small amounts of polyester, which retains heat better than natural cotton.

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UK dockers win international solidarity

BY DEBBIE DELANGE,

MANCHESTER, England — Several hundred workers turned out early January 20 at the Liverpool docks to picket Seaforth Container Terminal. This was part of an international day of action, backed by the International Transportworkers Federation. Merseyside Port Shop Stewards, members of the Transport and General Workers Union, have campaigned for global solidarity action since early on in their dispute with Mersey Docks and Harbour Co. (MDHC). The bosses sacked the entire workforce in a bid to smash the union and bring in casual labor conditions in September 1995. Despite daily picketing, the docks are kept open with a replacement labor force.

Dockers' representatives have met workers in 62 ports around the world and their delegates go to international conferences seeking support. They plan to attend the Indian Ocean Trades Union Congress in Calcutta February 17-22, where they hope to meet with Korean workers and leaders of the Congress of South African Trade Unions, according to international coordinator Terry Teague.

At a dockers' mass meeting January 24, Teague summarized action taken by dock workers in 27 countries, ranging from messages of greeting, workplace meetings and demonstrations to work boycotts and port shutdowns.

"We've received 200 fax messages from around the world," Teague told the meeting. He singled out three for special mention: Los Angeles, Montreal and Brazil.

Los Angeles has the world's third largest

port. Over 100 gantry cranes there stood idle on January 20, affecting 48 ships. More than 3,000 dockers met to discuss "Liverpool and the threats to all dockers worldwide." Other actions on the West Coast shut the San Francisco Bay Area, Seattle, and Long Beach, California ports. All Oregon ports stopped for 24 hours.

In Canada, the International Longshoremen's Association struck the port of St. John in New Brunswick for 11 hours. In Montreal, the offices of CAST and CanMar were occupied; dockers took action against the container terminals for two days. On January 19, Liverpool shop steward Mike Carden addressed the first ever joint meeting of Longshoremen, checkers, and railway workers in the Port of Montreal by telephone link.

Mersey dockers were told that the three Brazilian docker organizations representing over 70,000 members are considering boycotting all cargo to or from Liverpool.

Dockers in Rotterdam, Holland, are facing 200 layoffs and short hours for another 300, while the bosses seek to use agency labor. Rotterdam and Van Ommeren Tank Terminal workers held up two vessels in solidarity with Liverpool dockers. There were also solidarity actions in Australia, Belgium, France, Greece, Japan, New Zealand, Russia, Sweden, and elsewhere.

In Liverpool, eight dockers and seven members of Reclaim the Streets, a campaign that takes direct action to halt the building of major roadways, occupied three gantry cranes January 20, as strikers and supporters looked on. As docker Billy Jenkins later

explained, "With all the international action taking place we had to do something ourselves." Workers halted the unloading of the grain carrier Lake Erie for 35 hours.

During the dispute, the Mersey Docks have offered selective employment to the sacked workforce. Harry Hunter said, "I was one of the 200 offered jobs. I wouldn't take it because the people I worked with were on the gate."

Val Bibby and Maureen Dunwoody were among a group of Women of the Waterfront, wives and other family members who organize with the dockers.

Bibby spoke of Ford's recent decision to cut 1,300 jobs in its nearby Halewood car plant. "I'm more determined now," she said, "Liverpool's going to be a graveyard."

"It's about getting jobs back, it's not the money," said Dunwoody.

This view was echoed at a January 24 press conference where shop stewards' chair Jimmy Nolan unveiled a plan to set up a labor supply cooperative. "The real issue is dock workers' jobs," he said. The cooperative would provide the workforce to the docks on permanent contract, in place of union-busting Drake International, which supplies the scab workers. The union would raise money among dockers in the UK and abroad. They insist on a majority holding by the MDHC. "If they don't wish to do that, our campaign will continue for reinstatement," Mike Carden emphasized.

Debbie Delange is a member of the Rail, Maritime and Transport Union in Manchester, United Kingdom.

Facts emerge on oil explosion in California

BY JIM GOTESKY

SAN FRANCISCO — Facts are emerging slowly about the massive January 21 explosion and fire at the Tosco Avon refinery in Martinez, California, that killed one worker and injured 44 others. The explosion occurred about 7:40 p.m. in the hydrocracking unit. The blast incinerated Michael Glanzman, 41. Safety inspectors found Glanzman's charred remains among the rubble the following day. He had worked as a hydrocracking unit operator for four years, and was a member of Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers (OCAW) Local 1-5.

More than 200 friends and co-workers attended Glanzman's funeral January 24. At 10:00 a.m., during the funeral services, workers continuing to operate the refinery observed a moment of silence.

The blast rocked the refinery. The concussion blew office trailers on their sides, and blast reverberations were felt 20 miles away. Nearly 100 refinery workers who volunteer as firefighters fought the blaze into the night.

According to Contra Costa County health officials, the cause of the fire was a ruptured pipeline. The pipeline burst after a series of temperature spikes in the unit. The hydrocracker unit is where gasoline and diesel fuel are produced from heavier fuel oils in a process using hydrogen under pressures as high as 1700 pounds per square inch. These reactors are widely considered to be among the most dangerous oil refinery units because of the high temperatures and pressures used.

Glanzman was killed while checking the



Tosco has become one of the most profitable U.S. oil refiners through offensive against union rights and cuts such as ending fire departments. Above, workers in Pennsylvania protest last year after Tosco bought a British Petroleum plant, then shut it down.

unit during the temperature spikes. Tosco continues to operate other process units at reduced production rates and schedule 12 hour shifts in units undergoing major maintenance turnarounds.

The full details of the accident may not be available for weeks to come. Refinery officials speaking to the television cameras on the night of the fire set the numbers of injured workers at six and one worker missing. By the next day the toll had risen to 24 injured and 1 dead. Within a week Tosco

admitted that a total of 44 workers were hurt.

Tosco spokespeople claimed that the billowing clouds of smoke from the fire would have no toxic effects, but urged area residents to remain in their homes.

Dr. Wendel Brunner, Contra Costa County Director of Public Health told the San Francisco Examiner, "It doesn't take a rocket scientist to show... that during fires and explosions, there can be significant dangerous health effects to the community."

"Smoke in and of itself is toxic. It's also carcinogenic. Smoke inhalation can kill you. It can cause respiratory illness and eye and throat irritation, and exacerbate asthma."

In addition, on January 29, a lawyer representing the Contra Costa building trades unions told county supervisors that asbestos insulation covered piping in the hydrocracker. Tosco officials subsequently confirmed that fact but denied the asbestos posed any health risk to the public.

Contra Costa County health officials are particularly rankled. Tosco officials managed to notify the Sheriff's Departments of the explosion, but they failed to properly alert county hazardous material experts who are responsible for advising residents of potential health threats.

Richard Hallford, a Tosco environmental health and safety manager, said incoming calls overloaded the refinery phone system. It took 15 minutes to switch to a backup phone system. Plant security personnel locked out county inspectors dispatched to the blaze for 2½ hours. One Bay Area air quality district inspector gained access only after threatening legal action. The Avon hydrocracker explosion focused a spotlight on the growing number of refinery accidents

in California. According to the California Public Interest Research Group, Contra Costa County ranked 17th of 3,000 counties nationwide in toxic chemical accidents, listing 169 incidents between 1993 and 1997 — seven accidents per month.

Contra Costa County rates sixth in the nation in accidents that result in injury, evacuation or death. Besides Los Angeles, the counties with the poorest safety records are in Texas and Louisiana, both centers of the chemical and oil industries.

The Avon explosion was a blow to Tosco owners, who have been riding high on a wave of profitable acquisitions. Most recently Tosco bought several Unocal California refineries, the Union 76 brand name, and the Union 76 distribution network of 1,350 service stations. Some analysts value the deal at \$2.1 billion. Tosco stocks have soared as the company positions itself to become one of the largest independent gasoline refiner and retailer in the U.S.

Wall Street loves Tosco. Investment analysts Roger Perkins, Mario Gabelli, and Mike Price commented to the financial weekly *Barron's*, during a January investment roundtable:

"Price: But there's nobody in the industry like [Tosco CEO Thomas D.] O'Malley."

"Gabelli: He's terrific."

"Perkins: A great manager. . ."

Tosco built its reputation according to a *Bloomberg Business News* article, "using a combination of bare-knuckled union negotiations and savvy oil purchasing."

The *Bloomberg Business News* adds, "Tosco has wrung much higher profits from refining than competitors such as Unocal and Diamond Shamrock."

Tosco eliminated one-third of the job positions at its Trainor, Pennsylvania, refinery after locking out members of the OCAW. CEO O'Malley told Unocal refinery workers in a series of "townhall" style meetings that union contracts would be voided at the successful completion of Tosco's purchase of 76 Products. New contracts could be negotiated, but Tosco planned to rehire only the most productive former Unocal workers. Most workers expect significant cuts in both management and the hourly workforce.

Tosco's refinery fire and safety departments have come under the ax as well. A separate fire department at the Avon refinery was eliminated ten years ago. According to the union, Tosco plans to eliminate the fire and safety inspectors department at its 76 Products facilities. These key safety responsibilities will fall on unit operators. In addition, Tosco negotiators plan for operators to do mechanical maintenance in their units as well.

Jim Gotesky is a member of OCAW 1-326 at Unocal in Rodeo, California.

Long list of refinery accidents

SAN FRANCISCO — The following partial list of refinery accidents is taken from lists compiled by staff writers Duke Helfand and Chris Kraul for the *Los Angeles Times* and Steve Kearsley for the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA:

There are 5 San Francisco Bay area refineries: Tosco, Shell, Chevron, Unocal and Exxon.

Tosco, Inc.:

Jan. 21, 1997 — Explosion kills one and injures 25.

June 18, 1993 — Pressure relief valve malfunctions, releasing hydrocarbons and sending several people to the hospital with shortness of breath and eye irritations.

April 7, 1983 — Catalytic unit explodes, killing one worker and injuring two.

Shell Oil Co.:

April 1, 1996 — Spectacular explosion sends up fireball and spews smoke widely, but no one injured.

Feb. 1, 1996 — Hydrogen unit explodes, injuring two workers.

Sept. 5, 1989 — Explosion injures two workers.

Unocal:

June 17, 1995 — Tank fire forces evacuation of hundreds of families from Crockett because of fumes.

Aug. 22, 1994 — Chemical clouds released, covering Crockett and other communities. More than 1,000 seek treatment for vomiting, diarrhea and other afflictions.

Chevron:

March 10, 1994 — Dangerous H2S gas emitted, sickening residents for miles around.

Dec. 5, 1991 — Toxic cloud emitted over Point Richmond area, causing rashes and other afflictions.

April 10, 1989 — Explosion and fire injures nine workers, black clouds drop residue on area for days.

Exxon:

Aug. 10, 1992 — Fire shuts down hydrocracker unit, nobody injured.

Feb. 23, 1985 — Storage tank fire injures four workers.



LOS ANGELES AREA:

Los Angeles is home to 13 refineries: Chevron, Arco, Mobil, Texaco, Ultramar, Fletcher, MacMillan, Huntway, Unocal

at Carson, Unocal at Wilmington, Powerline, Paramount, and World Oil.

Arco:

Jan. 2, 1990 — Fire erupts with no injuries.

Aug. 13, 1990 — Fire erupts with no injuries.

Nov. 21, 1988 — Fire injures one worker.

July 29, 1988 — Fire causes partial shutdown at refinery. No injuries.

Oct. 2, 1986 — Fire causes no injuries.

Aug. 24, 1986 — Fire erupts, causing minor injuries to three workers.

Chevron:

January 1992 — Steam blast injures 10 workers.

Nov. 17, 1989 — Blaze breaks out with no injuries.

Mobil Oil:

Sept. 7, 1996 — Explosion and fire erupts with no injuries or evacuations.

Oct. 19, 1994 — Blast injures 28 workers.

Nov. 5, 1990 — Series of explosions sets off fire severely burning an employee.

Feb. 15, 1989 — Small fire without injuries.

July 15, 1988 — Two unrelated explosions and fires occurred on the same day, one worker dies, 10 seriously injured.

Nov. 24, 1987 — Two-day fire shatters windows in nearby homes, injures 10 workers and causes \$17 million in damage.

Powerline Oil:

Feb. 19, 1990 — Chemical leak injures seven workers.

Shell Oil Co.:

March 15, 1990 — Explosion and fire injures two workers.

Texaco, Inc.:

Nov. 11, 1996 — Explosion and fire with no injuries or evacuations.

Oct. 8, 1992 — Blast injures 16 workers, 500 residents evacuated.

Ultramar Corp.

Oct. 24, 1996 — Explosion injures one worker.

June 23, 1995 — Explosion sparks a fire with no injuries.

Feb. 16, 1989 — Explosion and fire forced evacuation of 750 workers. No injuries.

Unocal:

March 17, 1991 — Blaze breaks out with no injuries.

— J.G.

Should workers oppose biocrops?

Continued from Page 10
bicide.

The political implication of the Greenpeace protests is to lay at least partial blame on working farmers for being "dependent" on the big chemical companies for production. Other groups advocating "sustainable agriculture" in the United States, echo this reactionary notion by maintaining that U.S. farmers should go back to a time when agricultural inputs and outputs were not dominated by capital as they are today. Class-conscious workers have no use for such utopian notions.

Farmers are a vital part of the solution to the capitalist crisis in the countryside, and are not the natural allies of agribusiness. Most small farmers are aware of the impact of their labor and technology — including chemicals — on the land. Farmers interviewed in Iowa have expressed a wide range of opinions on genetically altered crops and the Greenpeace protests.

One common opinion was expressed by farmer Gene Mueller in the *Iowa Farmer Today* newspaper. "My biggest complaint is price. Monsanto has a one-sided contract," he said. "They can come and test your beans any time they want to. You can be charged by them for 10 times the value of the beans for the seeds they give you. You don't have any legal angles in the contract. Everything is dictated to you." Working farmers see quite clearly the predicament they're in.

Rather than protesting the development of technological advances in agriculture, workers and farmers need to put forward a political platform that defends small farmers from the ravages of capitalism and helps mobilize a revolutionary movement to overturn capitalist rule; a movement capable of establishing a workers and farmers government.

The capitalist ruling class uses technology to defend their interests at the expense of urban and rural toilers. A fighting alliance of workers and farmers, which replaces capitalism with a revolutionary government, will use as tools the technology it inherits from the old system. Russian revolutionary Leon Trotsky explained in 1925 that "socialist society accepts with utmost gratitude the heritage of the positive sciences, discarding... everything that is useless in acquiring knowledge of nature but only useful in justifying class inequality and all other kinds of historical untruth. Every new social order appropriates the cultural heritage of the past, not in its totality but only in accordance with its own structure."

A workers and farmers government in the United States would extend all previous advances in agricultural production, including seriously studying the question of genetic engineering, to meet humanity's needs for food and fiber around the world.

Bill Kalman is a member of United Transportation Union Local 867 in Des Moines.

ALABAMA

Birmingham

Revolution and Counterrevolution in the United States. Speaker: Nick Gruenberg, long-time political activist. Fri., Feb. 14, 7:30 p.m. 111 21st St. S. Donation: \$4. Tel: (205) 323-3079.

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

The Geronimo Pratt Frame-up. Speakers: Mohammad Mubarak, spokesperson for Pratt; Harry Ring, contributor to the *Militant*. Fri., Feb. 14, 7:30 p.m. 2546 W. Pico Blvd. Donation: \$4. Tel: (213) 380-9460.

FLORIDA

Miami

The Crisis in Public Education and the "Ebonics" Debate. Speakers: Eugene Fisher, teacher in the Dade County public schools; Ernie Mailhot, Socialist Workers Party and member, Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees. Fri., Feb. 14, 7:30 p.m. 137 N.E. 54th St. Donation: \$4. Translation into Spanish and

English. Tel: (305) 756-1020.

GEORGIA

Atlanta

Haitian People Continue Resistance to Imperialist Domination. Fri., Feb. 14, 7:30 p.m. 803 Peachtree St. N.E. (between 5th and 6th Sts.) Donation: \$4. Translation into Spanish and French. Tel: (404) 724-9759.

ILLINOIS

Chicago

The Battle of Cuito Cuanavale: A Turning Point in African History. Fri., Feb. 14, 7:30 p.m. 1223 N. Milwaukee (Corner of Ashland and Division). Donation: \$4. Tel: (773) 342-1780.

IOWA

Des Moines

Turning Points in the Cuban Revolution. Sat., Feb. 15, 7:30 p.m. 2724 Douglas Avenue. Donation: \$4. Tel: (515) 277-4600.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Black Liberation and Socialism: Prospects for Freedom in the 21st Century. Speaker: Brock Satter, Young Socialists. Fri., Feb. 14, 7:30 p.m. 87A Halsey St. (1 block west of Broad, 2 blocks north of Raymond). Donation: \$4. Tel: (201) 643-3341.

NEW YORK

Brooklyn

New Zealand: New Government Plans to Deepen Attacks on Working People. Speaker: David Hamilton, long-time political activist in New Zealand. Fri., Feb. 14, 7:30 p.m. 59 Fourth Ave. Donation: \$4. Tel: (718) 399-7257.

PENNSYLVANIA

Philadelphia

Racism, Revolution, and Reaction. Fri., Feb. 14, 7:30 p.m.
The Civil Rights Movement: From World War II to Today. Fri., Feb. 21, 7:30 p.m. Both events held at 1906 South St. Donation: \$4. Tel: (215) 546-8218.

UTAH

Salt Lake City

The New South Africa. Susie Beck, associate professor at University of Utah, Fullbright scholar to South Africa in 1996; Buddy Beck, member of Oil, Chemical and Atomic Workers Local 2578. Fri., Feb. 14, 7:30 p.m.
Malcolm X — His Relevancy Today. Video showing and discussion. Fri., Feb. 21, 7:30 p.m. Both events held at 209 E. 300 S. Donation: \$4. Tel: (801) 355-1124.

WASHINGTON

Seattle

Strikes and Protests in South Korea: Slaying the Myth of the Four Tigers. Fri., Feb. 14, 7:30 p.m. 1405 E. Madison. Tel: (206) 323-1755.

NEW ZEALAND

Christchurch

The New Coalition Government: Shift to the Right. Speaker: Ruth Gray, Communist League. Fri., Feb. 14, 7 p.m. 199 High St. (Corner High St. and Tuam). Donation: \$3. Tel: (3) 365-6055.

'State of the Union' means austerity for workers

Continued from front page
president's proposals.

"This time he's [Clinton] starting on our ground," stated Michele Davis, spokeswoman for Rep. Richard Armey, a Republican from Texas and the House majority leader. "So why counter something that's already on our playing field?"

Tactical differences between the two parties of big business over how far and fast to push the assault on the social wage remain, however. The day after the State of the Union speech, the Republican majority in the Senate brought to the floor for debate their constitutional amendment to balance the federal budget, which Clinton opposed in his address the previous night.

At the beginning of his speech, Clinton bragged about the changes to the welfare law he signed last summer. "Over the last four years, we moved a record two and a quarter million people off the welfare rolls. Then last year we enacted landmark welfare reform, demanding that able-bodied recipients assume the responsibility of moving from welfare to work," he said.

In his address, Clinton called for "tax credits and other incentives to businesses that hire people off welfare." Reports in the media said the president will propose more than \$3 billion in such credits to employers, which will simply fatten the profits of those companies.

The welfare law affects most of the 13 million workers and farmers who were receiving cash assistance and the 25 million receiving food stamps. An estimated 1 million immigrants with residence papers will be cut off from food stamps. And hundreds of thousands are excluded from Medicaid, which provides health coverage to low income families, and Supplemental Social Security Income — regardless of the wages they are bringing home from a boss. More than 40 percent of the cuts resulting from "welfare reform" come from restrictions on social services to immigrants with proper documents.

In his address, Clinton said the federal government should "do something both Republican and Democratic governors have asked us to do: restore basic health and disability benefits when misfortune strikes immigrants who came to this country legally."

Clinton was referring to the annual gathering of the National Governors' Association, which concluded its conference in Washington, D.C., February 2. The big-business press had speculated for days that a bipartisan majority among the governors would ask Congress to alter the new federal welfare law and restore relief to documented immigrants.

The governors, however, rejected any idea of reopening the Welfare Reform Act

and adopted a statement simply urging Congress to "meet the needs of aged and disabled legal immigrants who cannot naturalize and whose benefits may be affected," a relatively small group of immigrants.

The U.S. President reiterated his previous proposals for "modernizing" Medicare, under the pretext of saving the federal trust fund for the program from imminent bankruptcy. This is a code word for slashing this social entitlement that provides health coverage for the elderly and disabled. In January, Clinton had announced he will seek \$138 billion in Medicare cuts over six years. He had also stated he is open to introducing a form of means testing the benefits, by raising the monthly premiums for recipients with income over a certain level.

Under the pretext of helping working families have more flexible hours, Clinton urged passage of a "flextime" bill. The proposed legislation would give employers the option of not paying workers time and a half for overtime. Workers would instead accrue points for extra hours, not higher pay, and would be compensated by getting time off after notifying the boss 30 days in advance.

Union officials have objected to the bill. "We don't see where in the bill there is a guarantee that you could keep a 40-hour standard and get overtime pay," said Karen

Nussbaum, director of the AFL-CIO's working women project, in a February 4 interview.

Clinton also presented a 10-point action plan supposedly to improve education. The White House offered just \$5 billion "to finance \$20 billion" in construction of new school facilities, in face of the soaring problem of overcrowded classrooms across the country.

Other proposals included creating 3,000 charter schools by the year 2000, seven times more than today. These schools mostly benefit students in predominantly middle-class or rich areas. They get federal funds but set their own rules and can normally hire teachers without collective bargaining. In some states they are run by private companies.

To address the problem of widespread functional illiteracy, the president did not propose hiring more teachers and cutting class sizes. Instead, he proposed "to build a citizen army of one million volunteer tutors." He said 60 college presidents have pledged that thousands of their work-study students will be asked to serve for one year as reading tutors.

The foreign policy outlined by the president was but an extension of the war against labor at home. Clinton began with a thinly veiled threat against the socialist revolution

in Cuba. "Every nation in our hemisphere but one" lives under democracy, he stated, "and its day too will come."

Clinton pledged to expand the imperialist NATO alliance to Eastern and Central Europe by 1999. He called for trade treaties that would open up new markets for U.S. goods. "America is once again the most competitive nation and the No. 1 exporter in the world.... We can out-compete anyone." And he bragged that Washington pocketed half a billion profit from the recent "bailout" of the Mexican peso.

The U.S. government "must increase funding for weapons modernization," Clinton said and use "new intensity, to combat terrorists."

The day after his speech, the Associated Press published a secret presidential directive Clinton had signed on June 21, 1995. The order says Washington will use force to arrest "terrorists" held in other countries that refuse to cooperate with U.S. extradition requests.

"If we do not receive adequate cooperation from a state that harbors a terrorist whose extradition we are seeking, we shall take appropriate measures to induce cooperation," the directive states. "Return of suspects by force may be effected without the cooperation of the host government."

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—CALENDAR—

NEW ZEALAND

Auckland

Life in Cuba Today. Report back from the 1997 Southern Cross work/study Brigade to Cuba. Participants speak on their experiences in Cuba in January. Sat., Feb. 15, 7 p.m. *Rationalist House, 64 Symonds St.* For further information, call: (9) 525-5412.

Getting subversive — A nationwide poll found that 80 percent of people in the United States think there's something "seriously wrong" with health care and an



Harry Ring

equal percentage point to the profit motive as responsible for the deteriorating quality of care.

'KKK gives racism bad name' — Responding to protest,

Maryland motor vehicle officials are recalling custom license plates sporting the Confederate battle flag. A leader of Sons of Confederate Veterans, which got the plates issued two years ago, said they couldn't help it if the Ku Klux Klan also uses the flag.

The priorities principle — In December, E. coli food bacteria killed 16 people in Scotland. Now Britain's top expert in the field warns that the failure of the government and food industry to take effective measures means new outbreaks are inevitable. Officials have talked of steps to reduce the risk. But, as one news report put it: "The food industry lobby is likely to re-

sist any recommendations with cost implications."

Civilized — Johnson & Johnson and Boehringer Mannheim, rivals in the lucrative marketing of blood-sugar monitors, have settled their corporate spying suits against each other.

And it's not the end yet — "Employee morale in the 1990s has been in free fall. Most employees now feel less proud to work for their companies than at the beginning of the decade." — British survey on the impact of downsizing.

Like, for instance — Ford's Halewood plant in Britain once em-

ployed 14,000 workers. That shrank to 4,500 and, in early January, the ax was whetted for another 1,500.

The jailhouse phone too? — Call the Kingsville, Texas courthouse and expect to be greeted with "heaven-o" instead of the customary "hello."

County commissioners voted for the change after the alert initiator of the measure pointed out, "I see hell in hello. It's disguised by the o, but once you see it, it will slap you in the face."

Couldn't pick a better spot — In Canada, overcrowding in the Chilliwack courthouse forced a judge, prosecution and defense law-

yers, cops and court staff to consider jury selection in a community center's men's toilet. Sniffed the prosecutor: "When you start holding hearings in a bathroom I fear it may diminish the respect of the justice system...."

Sensitive ruling — A federal judge set aside a \$1 million fine he had imposed on Prudential Insurance for destroying documents sought by plaintiffs in a class-action fraud suit.

The judge said the documents hadn't been destroyed as a result of official policy, but conceded it did suggest a lack of sensitivity. He said he couldn't fine folks for being insensitive.

Protests in WWII led to civil rights battles

In mid-January, the U.S. government granted Medals of Honor to several Blacks who fought in its segregated, imperialist army during World War II. Black people, however, organized throughout the war to fight for their rights, waging protest actions on ships and military bases and in the streets. Printed below is an excerpt from the introduction to *Fighting Racism in World War II*, which tells the story of these

BOOK OF THE WEEK

struggles and how they set the stage for the civil rights battles that destroyed the Jim Crow system of segregation. The excerpt is copyright © 1980 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.

BY FRED STANTON

When the Great Depression began in 1929, Blacks were in a poor position to counteract the growing assaults on their jobs and living conditions. In the 1920s millions of Black Americans had responded to one degree or another to the Black nationalist appeals of Marcus Garvey and his Universal Negro Improvement Association. But by the depression, the government had indicted and imprisoned Garvey, and his movement had dwindled into a small sect, incapable of providing leadership. Nor was there any other Black or civil rights organization on the scene that was capable of organizing the Black masses. They lost a disproportionate share of the jobs in the country and suffered even deeper cuts in their living standards than the millions of white unemployed. Blacks now were systematically driven out of what the racists called "nigger work" so that those previously unwanted jobs could be occupied by whites....

In March 1942, a full two years after rearmament began, Blacks were only 2.5 to 3 percent of all workers in war production. But as the wartime boom continued, this began to change. By November 1944, this figure had risen to over 8 percent. Between April 1940 and April 1944, the total number of Black workers increased by one-third, from 4.4 million to 5.9 million. However, four-fifths remained at unskilled jobs, and there was widespread discrimination on the job.

The same pattern was seen in the armed forces. At first, the army and navy were reluctant to accept Black enlistees or draftees even on a segregated basis. In 1940, there were less than 5,000 Blacks and only 2 Black officers in an army of 230,000 — that is, a little more than 2 percent. By September 1944, however, there were 702,000 in the army, 165,000 in the navy, 17,000 in the marines, and 5,000 in the coast guard. All together, around one million Black men and women served in the armed forces during the war, half of them overseas. However, they were segregated into all-Black units, usually under white officers, or were assigned to be cooks, porters, laborers, or servants. They also faced racist harassment by white military police. It was not until 1948 that the armed forces were officially desegregated.

It is not at all surprising, therefore, that Blacks were less enthusiastic about the war than most of the American population. Patriotism was fueled by government rhetoric about democracy and the "four freedoms,"* but among Blacks this rhetoric often had a result unexpected by its proponents — it had a politicizing, even a radicalizing, effect. Blacks began to demand some freedom for themselves....

Many Blacks were aware that America's allies, Britain and France, were the chief oppressors of Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. Moreover, the U.S. itself was supporting repressive regimes throughout Latin America and the rest of the colonial world so as to better economically exploit these countries.

The U.S. had several direct colonies — among them Puerto Rico, the Philippines, the Virgin Islands, and Hawaii — and had intervened militarily dozens of times in other countries to impose its policies.

The true aims of the U.S. and its allies were reflected not only in their fight to continue exploiting colonial peoples, but also in their response to the rise of fascism in Europe. When fascist governments were formed in Italy, Spain, and Germany, rather than opposing these regimes, the rulers of the imperialist democracies made fortunes selling them war materiel. And after the Germany army defeated its French counterpart, the French capitalists collaborated with the occupation and used it to drive down wages and attack the workers' movement.

The rulers of the capitalist democracies knew that German fascism was not simply the product of Hitler the individual; it grew out of methods used to defeat the working class when it rebelled in the face of the capitalist economic crisis. Unable to make concessions to stop a powerful workers' movement, the German capitalists had backed Hitler in order to retain their power and to regiment the country in preparation for a war of colonial conquest. The French, British, and American capitalists would themselves not have been opposed to turning to fascist forces in their own countries if this was needed against a challenge by the working class.

The Allied war effort was accompanied by nationalist and racist calls to kill "Krauts" and "Japs." Deliberately hidden was the fact that the German workers were victims of Nazism and were a force that could overthrow Hitler along with the capitalists who supported him. The Allies would countenance no effort to aid the German workers to rise up against Hitler. On the contrary, they took measures calculated to have the opposite effect. Saturation bombing against German cities by the Allies was directed against the German workers. Above all, the democratic imperialists wanted to ensure the survival of capitalism



In 1942, Blacks continued to demonstrate for broad demands. This New York demonstration is over the execution of Odell Waller, who was sentenced to death for murder.

after the war, even though that meant keeping in power the German capitalists who backed Hitler.

Another aspect of the war was the hostility of all the capitalist powers to the Soviet Union. The U.S. rulers hoped that the war between Germany and the USSR would weaken both countries and make it easier to restore capitalism in the Soviet Union at some point in the future. It was the Soviet Union that absorbed the brunt of the German attack, and the U.S. government did everything it could to keep it that way. Even at the height of the U.S. war ef-

fort in Europe, over 80 percent of the German forces were directed against the Soviets. The USSR lost over 20 million people in the war. The U.S. military effort was focused not in Europe but in the colonial world — especially in Asia, where Japan was blocking U.S. economic expansion.

* Roosevelt proclaimed the "Four Freedoms" as a goal of American foreign policy in an address to Congress in January 1941. They were: freedom of speech and expression, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear.

—25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

THE MILITANT

Published in the Interest of the Working People

February 18, 1972

Price 10¢

President Nixon's trip to Peking "is the key to his bid for reelection as 'a man of peace,'" wrote James Reston, the influential Washington editor of the *New York Times*, Jan. 12. Even before Richard Nixon ran for president in 1968, he made moves to set the stage for the February spectacle.

While Nixon does not make public pronouncements about his real hopes from Mao and Chou [En-lai], they have been spelled out by other high-ranking politicians in Washington. Noteworthy is a speech made by Democratic Party majority leader in the Senate, Mike Mansfield. The speech was published in *War/Peace Report* in May 1968, that is, after Nixon had begun making initiatives toward Peking.

"In recent years," stated Mansfield, "the present Chinese government has not shown any great eagerness to use force to spread its ideology elsewhere in Asia.... To be sure, China has given enthusiastic encouragement and has promised to support wars of national liberation. However, China has not participated directly in these wars, and support, when it is forthcoming, has been limited and circumspect....

"China is a signatory to the settlement

which emerged from the Geneva conferences of 1954 and 1962.... It is not impossible that a similar settlement, with Chinese participation, might be reached in Vietnam."

Thus this Democratic critic of Nixon's policies reveals that on one point the "doves" and the administration stand on common ground: they favor a big-power redivision of Indochina and believe that Peking can play a role in forcing this "settlement" down Hanoi's throat.

THE MILITANT

PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

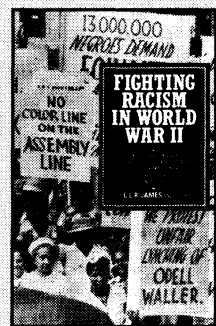
NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

February 15, 1947

While leaders of the Burmese nationalist movement were making a deal with the British government in London, the fight for genuine independence from British domination was reaching new heights inside Burma itself. Playing a leading role in this fight, according to the dispatches from Burma, was an independent communist party which has been described as Trotskyist.

Thirty persons, including four women, were injured when police dispersed 500 communists staging a demonstration at the Burma government secretariat on Jan. 13 (Reuters). The police arrested 22, including two leaders of the demonstration. All those arrested are reported to have gone on a hunger strike. Leader Thakin Soe said it was intended to represent the grievances of the unemployed workers and that "we are determined to carry on the struggle."

FROM PATHFINDER



Fighting Racism in World War II

C.L.R. James, George Breitman, Edgar Keemer, and others

A week-by-week account of the struggle against racism and racial discrimination

in the United States from 1939 to 1945, taken from the pages of the socialist newsweekly, the *Militant*. \$20.95

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

End British rule in Ireland!

The magnificent march held in Derry, February 2, demonstrates the continuing advance of the struggle for national self-determination of the people of Ireland. Despite the campaign by the British government and big-business press to silence and to slander the leaders of this struggle—using the red-herring of demanding an Irish Republican Army cease-fire and quoting paid British snitch Sean O’Callaghan — the struggle continues to make progress.

Two years ago, in March 1995, the *Militant* ran the front page headline “Now another voice can be heard” over an article on the first visit by Gerry Adams to the United States. The censorship and exclusion of the spokespeople for the nationalist fighters in the working-class neighborhoods of the north of Ireland — imposed by the British rulers and supported by Washington — was broken. The genie was out of the bottle, and there’s no going back.

That marked a victory for working people the world over, one that was created by the unbroken resistance of the Irish toilers. The facade that the British rulers were still a great imperial power was ending. It was a historic breakthrough. In this situation, the IRA cease-fire from August 1994 to February 1996 was a move based on the confidence to go toe to toe with London politically.

But because the British rulers are still more scared of talking to Sinn Fein than they are of not talking to Sinn Fein, they have spent 18 months throwing up obstacle after obstacle to including the republican party in negotiations. The objection to Sinn Fein’s elected representatives taking their seats has nothing to do with “violence,” as the continued participation of the right-wing, pro-British parties associated with murder and mayhem at Drumcree last summer demonstrates. London’s policy is to delay, hoping that “something may turn up” to turn back the tide of history. They react to the initiatives of Sinn Fein, having no initiatives of their own to take.

It’s clearer than ever that British rule in the north of Ireland is pinned on brute force alone. That is why the fight to expose the truth of Bloody Sunday is so impor-

tant. It is not only just and necessary, it also focuses on precisely the one policy instrument British rulers have left and threatens to expose its reality.

The television pictures of the supremacy and violence of Unionists at Drumcree — where rightist gangs besieged that working-class, predominantly Catholic neighborhood in Portadown last summer — were beamed into homes throughout Britain as well as the world. Millions saw how the Royal Ulster Constabulary and British troops came to the aid of the rightist “Orange parades.” These triumphalist marches are aimed at terrorizing the Catholic neighborhoods and perpetuating the caste-like privileges of the Protestant population, which have been the cornerstone of British domination in the northern six counties. They also watched the growing resistance by working people who stood up for their dignity. For many it was their first glimpse of the real face of Unionism and they were repelled, as phone-in shows and discussions in the workplaces showed.

The Drumcree showdown was an act of desperation by the pro-British Unionists in face of the organization of the residents’ groups to demand consent for Orange marches through their streets. It was not an act of strength. Neither the British government nor the Unionists can afford more Drumcrees. As the new marching season approaches, all the signs are that it will meet the same reasoned resistance as last summer, drawing in wider layers to be active in the struggle. The Bloody Sunday Justice Campaign is organized by the relatives of those killed, many of whom have not been previously involved.

The cause of the violence in Ireland today is British imperialism, which has partitioned the country for 75 years and directly occupied the north since 1969. The leaders of the fight for Irish self-determination reach out to those in Ireland who are Protestant, those in Britain who have suffered because of the conflict, and show a way forward. Working people around the world, and in Britain especially, should stand with these fighters in demanding an end to British rule in Ireland.

Safety is a union question

The string of oil refinery explosions, plane crashes, train collisions, and other industrial catastrophes over the past few years has been a direct result of the employers’ “cost-cutting” and “downsizing” offensive. These accidents highlight the profit drive by the bosses in their attempts to shore up sagging profit margins, and their utter disregard for the safety of workers, the public, and the environment. It is the other side of the capitalist class’s assault on the social wage of working people — which includes welfare, pension benefits, and Social Security.

In San Francisco and Los Angeles areas alone, there have been dozens oil refinery accidents in the last decade, while plane crashes have killed hundreds in the United States over the past two years.

Vice President Albert Gore’s praise for Boeing’s “voluntary” move to belatedly repair the rudders on their 737 airplanes, and the Federal Aviation Association (FAA)’s decision to put ValuJet back in the air after its failure to meet safety regulations, reveal concurrence of those in Washington with the bosses on the question of safety.

At the same time the rulers attempt to numb workers to the connection between profit and cutting costs in safety. They tell us there is nothing we can do about safety — or it might mean our jobs. They try to convince us that we have nothing to gain by working carefully and safely — even if it takes longer. As conditions of work get worse, as hours increase, as wages go down, some workers begin to say: “It’s not my job. Let somebody else do it.”

The union officialdom encourages this cynicism. It is the other side of the coin of pulling together to help the fortunes of “our” company, and the company-union safety

committees in many workplaces. The union officialdom is complicit with the bosses in encouraging the divisions among workers that weaken and demoralize the class.

Class-conscious workers should reject this and take the question of safety seriously. Labor must convince broad layers of the population as a whole that it is the working-class movement above all that cares about these questions. When activists for the environment, abortion rights, education, affirmative action, and others see labor taking the moral high ground against the exploiting class, we will win allies.

Working conditions and public safety will worsen unless class-conscious fighters struggle against these assaults, and become a tribune of workers’ safety on the job. A stronger union increases safety on the airlines, in the refineries, on the railroads, in the mines, and other work places. Public safety improves when union militants stand up and fight to improve working conditions, shorten the hours of labor, and increase wages.

The labor movement must put itself in the middle of the fight for universal social security protection, real health and safety enforcement, and effective protection of the environment. More unions should emulate the members of the Association of Flight Attendants who protested the government’s decision to permit ValuJet Airlines to resume flights following a deadly crash in May 1996.

The question of safety is a union question. It is a fundamental matter of working-class pride and morale. That’s why working people around the world must take the moral high ground in the battle against the exploiting class and oppose the bosses’ gutting of safety.

No to ‘torturous punishment’

Working people should oppose the increasing use of cruel and unusual punishments by cops, courts, and prisons across the United States. These include such outrages as the “hitching posts” used by prison officials in Alabama to abuse inmates, which even a federal magistrate described as “torturous punishment.” There have also been a flurry of federal and state laws designed to hang a “scarlet A” on the chest of all those convicted of crimes, such as those aimed against accused “sex offenders.” In one case in Illinois, a man was forced to hang a sign reading “Warning: A Violent Felon Lives Here. Travel At Your Own Risk” in front of his driveway. New York papers and radio stations have been allowed to publish the names and addresses of some who have already served out their sentences.

When a prison guard latches some worker caught behind bars to a pole or puts him or her on a chain gang, or when the state forces someone to hang a sign in their yard, it is a dehumanizing experience. It is part of the rulers’ ideological offensive to break workers’ confidence and sense of self-worth, while numbing other workers’ soli-

darity. The rulers want to divide workers by convincing us that those convicted of crimes are guilty now and guilty forever. Creating a climate of eroded solidarity opens the road for cops to brutalize workers, frame them, brand them as criminals, and send them to prison or to death.

This treatment is reserved overwhelmingly for the working class. John E. Du Pont, currently facing murder charges, won’t be facing any “hitching posts.” This member of one of the top ruling families is currently in a psychiatric hospital, where he reportedly continues to conduct his regular business activities.

The right to be “free from cruel and unusual punishment” was an important democratic gain codified in the Bill of Rights, one that the working class has the most stake in defending. When a worker is convicted, sentenced, and completes his or her sentence, it should be put behind them, and they should be able to go on with their lives. Alienation of fellow workers, inhumane torture of prisoners, and holding guilt over someone’s head after they’ve done their time — these are concepts alien to the proletariat that should be thoroughly rejected.

UAW strike

Continued from front page

ing in Oberlin, Ohio. Strikers there report that they were joined on the picket lines by groups of auto workers from two nearby Ford assembly plants and by steelworkers. The Oberlin plant supplies Ford’s Lorain Assembly and the Plymouth plant supplies seats to Ford’s Michigan Truck Plant (MTP). Workers in both assembly plants are also members of the UAW.

About noon Ford officials moved to head off the confrontation by announcing that they would not accept seats built in the struck plants. The auto maker was trying to avoid problems in its own plants. A common remark heard in MTP was “Why did Ford think we would touch those seats?” Most seats used at MTP had been built at the assembly plant by members of Local 900 until last year when Ford outsourced the work. Outsourcing is a common practice used by General Motors, Ford and Chrysler — the Big Three — to shift work from relatively highly paid assembly workers to lower cost, usually nonunion manufacturers.

Rejecting the struck seats was no small decision for the auto giant. With the Big Three’s use of the just-in-time inventory system, assembly plants do not stock pile parts. Within hours of the strike, the auto maker was forced to begin parking all its production of the fast selling Expedition without seats. These trucks are piling up at the rate of 800 a day.

The union announced that the work stoppage was an unfair labor practice strike because Johnson Controls had victimized the workers in the plants for joining a union and refused to negotiate. A Plymouth striker, Keith, reported that just before the company recognized the union last summer, it cut starting wages by 50 cents an hour, cut health care, and ended a 401k savings plan in the plant, and was not even offering to reinstate what had been taken away. In a further insult to the unionists, whose starting rate is \$9 an hour, scabs brought into the plant over the weekend to learn jobs started at \$10.50 an hour.

On the picket line in Oberlin, striker Roberta Hoops explained, “The company gave us an offer that was worse than current wages.” Hoops added, “The jobs we do are hard — they’re stressful. Many of us have developed tendonitis and carpal tunnel problems. Our arms go numb and the company nurse just tells us to wrap warm towels around our arms and hold them above our heads a few minutes.” Other pickets described how many workers suffer from poor ventilation and burns while they weld.

Bob King, Region 1A director, told pickets that the union wanted JCI to meet wage and benefit levels of its major seat competitor, Lear. Many Lear locations are organized by the UAW and pay between \$12 and \$14 an hour, less than workers in the Big Three plants but toward the upper end of pay scales at auto parts suppliers.

Bosses try to keep auto parts industry nonunion

JCI is a major and growing auto parts supplier that builds seats and interior components for the industry. It had \$10 billion in sales last year. The company supplied 34 percent of the North American seat market in 1995 and is expected to control 40 percent by 1998. JCI is also intent on staying union-free. Over the last two decades the company, like many other employers, has closed and moved unionized factories. Only six of the company’s 34 North American plants are unionized, counting the two locations on strike.

Organizing and winning decent contracts for auto parts workers is an enormous challenge facing the UAW, and one the union has not been meeting. As the Big Three outsource ever more and GM, the world’s largest auto maker, sells off parts plants, pressure increases on auto assembly workers to take greater concessions. Last year’s national contract between auto giants and the UAW allowed the auto bosses to set up new parts factories with a permanent wage lower than in assembly plants.

UAW membership also has been shrinking. In 1987 there were about 1 million members of the union; in 1995 the UAW represented less than 800,000 workers.

The U.S. auto parts industry is growing and has near record high levels of employment, but the UAW represents barely 20 percent of the workers in these factories. Wages and conditions continue to erode. At the end of 1995 inflation adjusted hourly wages were still below the levels in the industry before the recession in the early 1990s and under levels that prevailed in 1970s.

Many employers actively oppose union organizing drives. In September Dana Corp., the largest independent parts supplier in the United States, defeated a UAW organizing drive at an axle-parts plant in Cape Girardau, Missouri. The auto bosses hired consultants to paint union organizers as outsiders. They sent a video to every worker’s home during their antiunion drive. Dana pointed out that 24 of the 37 locations that it closed since 1980 were unionized. The parts giant now has dozens of nonunion plants across North America.

At American Axle Manufacturing, the UAW has set a February 14 strike deadline. The company formed when GM sold off its gear and axle manufacturing operation in March 1994, and still supplies the auto giant. Negotiations have been going on since mid-November under a contract that originally expired in September 1996.

John Sarge is a member of UAW Local 900 and works at Ford’s MTP. Holly Harkness, member of UAW Local 235 in Detroit; Brad Downs and Kibwe Diarra, UAW members in the Cleveland area; and Janice Ortega, member of United Steelworkers of America Local 1104 in Loraine, Ohio, contributed to this article.

Boeing has to admit 737 rudder problems

BY EDWIN FRUIT
AND SCOTT BREEN

PITTSBURGH — On January 15, Boeing announced it would modify the rudders on all existing models of the 737 airplane. The announcement was made by Vice President Albert Gore on behalf of Boeing at a White House-sponsored aviation safety and security conference in Washington, D.C.

For several years now, a malfunctioning rudder has been suspected as the main cause of two crashes of Boeing 737 airliners — United Flight 585 in Colorado Springs in 1991 and USAir Flight 427 outside Pittsburgh in September 1994 — which together claimed 157 lives. Boeing maintains that mechanical problems with the rudders were not responsible for these accidents. Michael Denton, Boeing's chief project engineer for the 737, suggested instead that the flight crew was to blame for the USAir accident, telling the Pittsburgh *Post-Gazette* on January 16 that "with appropriate flight crew action, that airplane should have been recoverable."

Gore, however, told the conference that rudder changes emerged from the investigation of those crashes, which "have identified improvements that could help eliminate the chance of rudders playing a role in future accidents."

Boeing has agreed to pay for retrofitting all 2,800 Boeing 737s in service around the world. New power control units and redesigned bolts are to be installed by October 1999, and the revised yaw damper and rudder limiters are to be installed by the fall of 2000. The estimated cost to Boeing of \$140 million for manufacturing replacement parts is a tiny portion of Boeing's cash on hand of \$5.3 billion. The airlines will pay the labor expenses to install the parts, estimated at an additional \$27 million. According to Denton, the upgrades could be done by the airlines overnight during maintenance checks.

Rudder repairs were ordered in 1994

For several years now, the National Transportation Safety Board (NTSB) has recommended that the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) and Boeing redesign the rudder controls on the 737. In March 1994, the FAA ordered the rudder power control be redesigned and that old units be replaced by new ones by 1999. At that time the airlines complained they would need five years to



Wreckage from 1994 crash of USAir flight near Pittsburgh. Boeing and airlines stalled on taking action to correct problems with rudders on 737 aircraft.

make the changes, which would cost about \$1,100 per plane. After the Pittsburgh crash in the fall of 1994, the carriers stepped up their timetables for replacements.

During hearings on the Flight 427 crash, held in 1994-95, NTSB chairman James Hall said Boeing had not told the board everything it knew about "incidents" involving these planes. In fact, Boeing had compiled a list of more than 180 in-flight upsets over the past 25 years — 35 of them in 1993 and 1994 alone — that could have been connected to the rudder control system. In contrast, the FAA database showed just 43 such incidents between 1974 and 1994.

A second round of hearings on the crash of Flight 427 in November 1995 revealed empirical evidence that there was a malfunctioning rudder on the doomed plane. According to the Pittsburgh *Tribune-Review*, witnesses from the FAA and Boeing repeatedly asserted that a rudder hardover was "an extreme improbability" and said safety did not dictate design changes in the plane. The Airline Pilot's Association disputed that claim, pointing out that the FAA's review itself observed rudder hardeners and system jamming at full deflection during testing.

Arthur Wolk, a lawyer representing families of Flight 427 passengers, declared, "The NTSB board is incompetent and the FAA is

in bed with Boeing." According to the attorney, faulty designs in the rudder system make a rudder hardover "not an extreme improbability. It is a likelihood."

The FAA's contradictory aims of promoting the airline industry and promoting airline safety were exposed most recently in the ValuJet crash in Florida last year. Inspectors' warnings about ValuJet's operations were ignored by higher-ups and 62 percent of employees said in an FAA survey last year that they often hesitate before speaking their minds for fear of retaliation.

Boeing explains its decision to make the rudder repairs now as "making a safe plane even safer." The company, however has come under growing pressure to make these changes in the last three months. Flowing from its investigations of the Pittsburgh and Colorado Springs crashes, the NTSB issued 14 recommendations for sweeping improvements in the plane's rudder controls last October.

A few weeks later, the *Seattle Times* ran an in-depth, five-part series on the Boeing 737's rudder problems, entitled "Safety at Issue: the 737." It documented the mechanical and design problems with the 737's rudder control system, the plodding course of the accident investigation, and implied a possible cover-up by both Boeing officials

and the government agencies involved.

Boeing tries to deny safety problems

Unable to persuade the *Times*'s editors to kill the story, Boeing strenuously denied any possibility of the rudder control system ever malfunctioning. Then, on November 1, Boeing publicly admitted that its own testing had shown that the 737's rudder could jam and cause it to dive out of control. It issued a "service bulletin" to the airlines to immediately inspect the 737s for a jammed valve. The FAA then ordered emergency inspections of the rudder system on every U.S.-registered Boeing 737 to take place within 10 days, and to follow them up with regular inspections.

According to John O'Brien, the air safety director for the Air Line Pilots Association, who worked with Boeing investigators, the aerospace giant had a long internal debate over whether to make the changes. Their decision had "a lot to do with public perception," O'Brien stated.

With an enormous back log of orders (\$79.2 billion for commercial airliners at the end of 1996), increasing competition from the European airplane manufacturer Airbus, and a merger with McDonnell-Douglas still to hurdle government hearings, Boeing's decision preempted any possible government action that could further damage its public image.

At the same time, they hoped to recoup some lost public relations ground by professing concern for the public's safety. In this, they received a boost from the White House. Gore publicly thanked Boeing for acting voluntarily. "They [Boeing] are going to begin retrofitting those planes, largely at their own expense and without a government mandate," the vice president beamed.

Others maintained a different view. Michael Hynes, an independent crash investigator, said, "I think somebody finally explained the political facts of life to Boeing. There is nothing we've learned about this airplane in the past 90 days that we didn't know years ago."

Edwin Fruit is a member of IAM Local Lodge 1976 in Coraopolis, Pennsylvania, and works for USAir at the Pittsburgh International Airport. Scott Breen is a member of IAM District 751 and an aerospace mechanic at Boeing's Everett plant.

LETTERS

Women in Algeria

Like last year, the women of "Tighri-n-tmettut" (The Cry of the Woman) openly celebrated the anniversary of the assassination of the president of their association, despite the insecurity and the persecutions of which militant women are victims. It was two years ago that our dear and mourned comrade Nabila fell. "The Woman of Liberty," who made struggle the central task of her life, was assassinated on Feb. 15, 1995, by a group of individuals who hadn't given her any chance. They shot her point blank with the two bullets that killed her, one at the nape of the neck and another at the abdomen. It happened at Tizi-ouzou, a town that had adopted her at the young age of 20 years. A town where she had crisscrossed all the streets and haunted all the conference rooms to transmit the message of equality, liberty, justice, and tolerance. A town that saw her die in silence at the age of 31.

Nabila Djahnine, native of Béjaïa, enrolled in the University of Tizi-ouzou in the 1980s, where she took on the study of architecture. Upon beginning her courses, she joined the town's "Women's Collective" while remaining a member of the City Committee of Young Militant Women of the Socialist Workers Party (PST). She also helped organize the second training center

of the Bérberé Cultural Movement (MCB), who struggle for recognition of their language, culture, and the Bérberé identity.

Being an eternal rebel, she took part in many other struggles, such as the creation of the National Union of Algerian Students - Autonomy and Democracy (SNEAD), of which she was a founding member.

In her final years, Nabila devoted herself to the activities of the "Tighri-n-tmettut" association, of which she was president from its creation in 1989 until her death. The association was a point of attraction for all the women of the area, a framework which permitted them to find themselves, to express themselves, to organize themselves, and

to struggle. The women of the association organized many activities: conferences, debates, expositions, propaganda... and all their activities moved towards the consciousness-raising of women. They also led a campaign for the spacing of births and contraception.

Nabila administered and led all the activities and campaigns of the association with great courage. Her range of action was not only limited to the town but also extended to even the most remote villages of the Kabylie. Furthermore, through these activities Nabila established relations with other national and international women's organizations through meetings and common declarations. The repeal of the "Family Code" was one of the fundamen-

tal demands of the organization. This code reduces the woman to the status of a minor and makes her an eternal dependent ["assistée"].

Nabila lengthened the macabre list of certain unionists, journalists, and artists... those whom by their pens, their militant efforts, their literary works, or art had tried to give breath to a people asphyxiated by political bipolarization-polarization (power/ Islam) — those who paid with their life the price of sacrifice.

The dream of the sweet rebel, of nourishing liberty and hope to see a better, more just and humane world, was diverted on Feb. 15, 1995. Two years after your disappearance, the same sorrow, the same pain are still felt deep in the entrails of all those who knew and loved you.

Nabila, the eternal echo of your laugh reaches us still from the depths of the mountains. Your goodness and generosity nourish our bodies with the energy to continue the winding path that you traced for us toward LIBERTY.

Hmimiche A.M.
Brooklyn, New York

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Accord highlights NATO rivalries

Planned discussions by Bonn, Paris on nukes are aimed against Washington

BY CARL-ERIK ISACSSON

STOCKHOLM, Sweden — Paris and Bonn have agreed to open discussions on a common nuclear military policy. The January 24 issue of the French daily *Le Monde* published a secret accord signed by French president Jacques Chirac and German chancellor Helmut Kohl in Nuremberg December 9. It stated that Paris and Bonn agreed to "open a dialogue on the role of the nuclear deterrence in the context of a European defense policy." This represents another step by the two governments to try to form a counterweight to the economic and military domination in Europe by Washington.

The authenticity of the document was confirmed by French officials, who said it had been submitted to French and German parliaments for discussion before publication. The agreement includes recognition of the "preeminence of NATO [North Atlantic Treaty Organization] in the field of nuclear deterrent." This statement sparked controversy. The Socialist Party and Communist Party immediately denounced it as a blow to the national sovereignty of France. Foreign ministry spokesman Jacques Rummelhardt retorted, "It would be wrong to see in this agreement [as] a bending of the nuclear policy of France."

The publication of the Nuremberg accord coincided with a debate in the French parliament over the reorganization of large parts of the French military from conscription into rapid reaction mobile task forces. The French Communist and Socialist parties, as well as many of Chirac's Gaullist party friends, opposed this move and spoke of it as a treason to French national interests.

Paris had kept distance from NATO

Before last year, Paris had kept itself outside the NATO command structure for 30 years. Since French president Charles De Gaulle withdrew from NATO in 1966, French nuclear weapons have been under the sole control of Paris, while Washington, through NATO, has controlled its own nuclear weapons stationed in different countries in Europe. London has served as a junior partner to Washington, with a nuclear arsenal of its own.

De Gaulle's policy had been followed until French Foreign Minister Hervé de Charette at the NATO meeting in Berlin last June announced that Paris wanted to reenter the NATO command. This reflected the recognition by the French rulers of U.S. domination in Europe through NATO, despite the increasing fractures in the alliance.

Paris and Bonn had probed a military counterweight through the Western European Union (WEU), composed of the NATO members in Europe, but this has so far largely proven a failure. The driving role of Washington in sending NATO troops into Yugoslavia in early 1996 was an indication of the continued relative strength of U.S. imperialism as a military power in Europe after the "Cold War."

Earlier, Bonn had not been willing to discuss the French nuclear weapons as part of the post-cold war military arrangements in Europe. The German government, which has no nuclear arsenal of its own, condemned Chirac's nuclear tests in the Pacific the summer of 1995. There is broad opposition among Germany's population to nuclear weapons, as demonstrations showed when Washington wanted to station midrange nuclear missiles in Germany in the 1980s.

But with Paris retreating into NATO's command structure, the possibilities have increased for Bonn, which has taken a lead over France in politics in Europe, to have a say over the French nuclear weapons and French military forces. Bonn can pressure Paris by blocking with Washington and London to hinder Paris from militarily intervening in Africa, for instance.

At the NATO meeting in Berlin last June,



German troops and armed vehicles joined a 1994 Batille Day parade in Paris. Bonn and Paris had hoped to create a joint French-German military 'Eurocorps' as a counterweight to the U.S.-led NATO troops.

French Foreign minister Charette stated that Paris's return to the NATO command structure was contingent on a European (read French) officer heading up the Southern Command in Naples. The Southern Command is where the U.S. Sixth Fleet is based. This demand was backed by Bonn. By backing Paris on this bid, Bonn challenged Washington within NATO in Europe.

Dispute over Southern Command

Just how important Washington considers the Southern Command, and what role it thinks Paris should play in future military arrangements, was bluntly summed up in an editorial in the Dec. 4, 1996, *New York Times*. "NATO's top officer for Europe, by

tradition an American, has three regional deputies," the editors explained. "A British officer generally commands the Northwest region, a German runs the Central region and an American is in charge of the South. Citing traditional French interests in the Mediterranean area, Mr. Chirac has demanded the Southern Command. That is a job no American President can or should yield. The Southern Command effectively directs the formidable naval and air resources the United States has based in the Mediterranean area. In addition to their NATO responsibilities these units are used to protect American power into the Middle East, where United States and French policy do not always coincide."

New York Times columnist Thomas Friedman wrote in a column a few days earlier, "What France should be doing is offering to come back to NATO as a leader of a rapid deployment force, or something of that nature, that would be able to take on the difficult jobs the U.S. has no stomach for, but which the French have always had the guts to take on—like peacekeeping in Bosnia after the NATO mission expires in 18 months."

At the end of January, French officials suggested a compromise of a divided Southern Command. The Pentagon replied that Washington had not changed its position of retaining full control of the operation.

The fact that Bonn has decided to deploy 3,000 combat-ready soldiers to Bosnia, the first outside Germany's borders since World War II, in the so-called Bosnian-Serb areas where Paris has long had its military units stationed, is also part of the picture. French officials now say their military forces will leave Bosnia when the U.S. troops pull out. The German government also declined a U.S. offer to sell Bonn a spy satellite at a bargain price and without standard U.S. restrictions on its use. Instead, Kohl is going ahead with plans to co-finance with Paris a new generation of European photo reconnaissance satellites.

One of the issues in the rifts between Bonn, Paris, Washington, and London is the plan for enlargement of NATO into Eastern Europe, which is causing tensions with Moscow. The enlargement of NATO into Poland, the Czech Republic, Hungary, and possibly Slovenia is a threat to Bonn, who depends on good relations with Moscow to be able to promote its interests in eastern and central Europe and in the areas of the former Soviet Union.

Bonn has poured more money into these areas in loans, aid, and investments than any of its imperialist competitors. Bonn is maneuvering within NATO to try to dampen the effects of such a move, the details of which are to be worked out at a summit in June.

Hunger strike gains attention for asylum seekers held in UK prisons

BY TIM RIGBY

MANCHESTER, United Kingdom — A month-long hunger strike by 17 imprisoned immigrants seeking asylum in Britain gained wider publicity in recent days. One man, Ejike Emenike, received medical treatment after he and five other hunger strikers at the Rochester jail refused to take liquids as well. The protesters are demanding that they not be treated as criminals.

Emenike, a Nigerian who says he was tortured by that regime's security police, is a Pentecostal pastor. Emenike condemned the Nigerian Government in a sermon following the execution of Ken Saro-Wiwa, a leader of the fight of the Ogoni people against the destruction of their land by the oil baron Shell Oil. Shortly after, Emenike was detained and beaten in a Lagos police station. The torture included having a heavy weight placed on his chest and stood upon. In February 1996 he fled to Britain and has been locked up fighting for the right of asylum ever since.

On January 27 Emenike and five other hunger strikers began to refuse to take liquids. Three days later, persuaded by David Haslam, of the Churches Commission on Racial Justice, Emenike ceased his refusal to take fluids and was transferred to a hospital after being told that legal proceedings would start towards winning him bail and temporary residence in the United Kingdom. Emenike has maintained his hunger strike, though, demanding an end to the treatment

of the asylum seekers as criminals.

A joint appeal issued by the hunger strikers on January 4 stated that many of them had already been held for over two years. The appeal went on to declare that "numerous suicide attempts, hunger strikes and official complaints by individuals have gone unheard.... The response of the authorities is forceful removal to prison conditions without a trial."

Emenike is the only one of the hunger strikers about whom many details have become public. The names and physical condition of the other protesters are unknown. In an emergency question and answer session in Parliament, Minister for Prisons Ann Widdecombe was only willing to reveal a few details of the alleged criminal record of one of the hunger strikers. She also claimed that all the protesters have received their full legal rights. On a separate occasion Widdecombe had asserted, "Quite clearly we cannot arrive at a situation, however distressing it is, that people can get round the law by threatening to harm themselves."

In response to Widdecombe's statements, Nick Hardwick, chief executive of the Refugee Council, declared, "People are starving themselves to death and we are not even being told who they are. It is important that these people's families and friends know their lives are on the line. We need to know the names of all those involved."

The press has reported that the strikers

come from a range of countries, including Russia, Somalia, Algeria, Nigeria, Jamaica, and Yugoslavia. The 17 are among 200 asylum seekers held at Rochester prison. The government had intended to move all 200 to a new prison ship moored off the south coast of England. However, in her parliamentary statement, Widdecombe announced this plan had been abandoned.

In all, 750 of the 44,000 annual asylum applicants are currently in prison or detention centers around the United Kingdom. According to immigration rights organizations, between 6,000 and 10,000 are confined in prison or detention centers at some time in a given 12-month period.

Referring to the increasingly frequent government practice of confining asylum seekers, Claudé Moraes, director of the Joint Council on the Welfare of Immigrants, stated, "The government is making arbitrary decisions, often at the stroke of the pen of an immigration official who does not like the look of somebody."

Since January 31, little has been reported on the hunger strike in the British press. BBC radio news programs have given some coverage to actions taken outside the Rochester jail by asylum rights and antiracist organizations, but the most recent BBC radio coverage has mostly attempted to discredit the story of Ejike Emenike.

Tim Rigby is a member of the Transport and General Workers Union.