

THE MILITANT

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Workers study Marxism at
Atlanta socialist school

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Workers, farmers face brunt of energy crisis

Blackouts hit California as companies defend 'business secrecy'

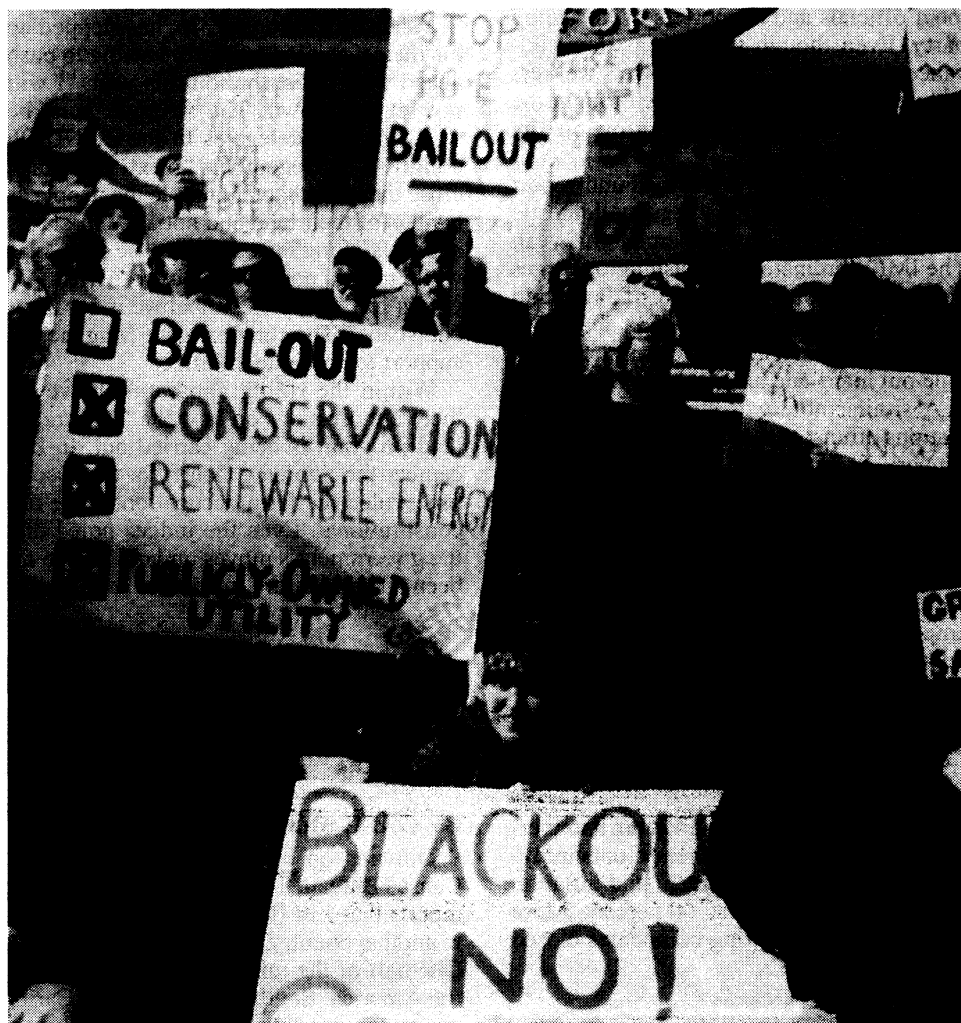
BY BOB KELLER

SAN FRANCISCO—In response to electricity shortages, Pacific Gas and Electric Co. (PG&E) cut off power to hundreds of thousands of households and businesses in California January 17 after state regulatory officials ordered the first rolling blackouts. The cuts left much of the northern half of the state in the dark, including parts of San Francisco, Oakland, Santa Cruz, San Jose, Sacramento, and other parts of Silicon Valley. Neighborhoods were blacked out one by one for an hour or more each. Homes, schools, factories, office buildings, TV stations, and street lights were left without power.

The rotating blackouts were ordered after California officials declared a "stage 3" energy emergency, meaning that power reserves were below 1.5 per cent of available capacity. It was the third such alert in less than a week, as officials scrambled hour by hour to obtain additional supplies of electricity.

The state's two major utilities, PG&E in the north and Southern California Edison in the south, are facing bankruptcy due to the skyrocketing prices of energy they purchase from power wholesalers. The companies have built up a combined debt of at least \$11 billion, which continues to grow despite a 10 percent residential rate hike approved by the California Public Utility Commission January 5. Wholesale electricity prices have soared from 3.5 cents a kilowatt in 1999 to about 30 cents, sometimes

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January 11 protest in San Francisco against profiteering by Pacific Gas and Electric

Unions in France reject rise in age of retirement

BY DEREK JEFFERS

PARIS—In what is shaping up to be a massive display of working-class solidarity, a national day of action in defense of the right to retire at age 60 has been called for January 25 by all five major union federations.

The protest is in response to demands by the employers' organization to increase over a 20-year period the number of working years necessary to obtain full retirement benefits. This assault is a central part of broader probes by the bosses against the social wage won by working people.

The Movement of French Enterprises, or MEDEF, seeks to increase from 40 to 45 the number of years a worker must work to receive full pension benefits. This would effectively eliminate the right to retire at age 60, which was conquered by workers in 1982.

Given the unions' refusal to kow-tow, MEDEF announced January 12 that companies would immediately cease paying into a special fund that finances supplementary retirement benefits at age 60, a move that could slash benefits by 6 percent to 22 percent. This defiant step, unexpected by the unions, increases the importance and scope of the January 25 union mobilization.

Supplementary retirement benefits make up about one-third of overall pensions for most workers. In their call for a mobilization of workers and retirees, the union confederations demanded the right to a full pension at age 60. Today in France only 16 percent of men, and 14 percent of women

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Debate flares up around Bush appointees

BY GREG MCCARTAN

Partisan infighting between Democrats and Republicans has flared up around the nominations by president-elect George W. Bush for several key cabinet posts. They include figures who have outspoken records opposing abortion rights, affirmative action, the death penalty, restrictions on corporate plundering of the environment, and other reactionary positions.

While a number of Bush's nominations have been met with bipartisan support, others have come under fire from liberal wings of the Democratic Party and officials of the AFL-CIO, as well as organizations such as the National Organization for Women, Mexican-American Legal Defense Fund, and NAACP.

Most of the fire so far has focused on former Missouri senator John Ashcroft, nominated to head the Justice Department as attorney general; Linda Chavez, Bush's first nominee for labor secretary; and Gale Norton, proposed as secretary of the interior.

Many working people sense these nominations signal further assaults on hard-won rights—many gained through massive struggles—that have been the focus of a bipartisan offensive under successive Democratic and Republican party administrations.

Other nominations, including Donald Rumsfeld for defense secretary, and New Jersey governor Christine Whitman as the top official at the Environmental Protection Agency, have received broader bipartisan backing in Congress.

Following the December 12 ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court—a decision that ended Democrat Albert Gore's quest to reverse Bush's electoral victory by changing the official vote tally in Florida in his favor—there was a brief interregnum featuring a display of bipartisanship. Key figures in both parties made statements recognizing the legitimacy of Bush as president-elect, encouraged by a low-key and conciliatory statement by Bush following Gore's concession speech. The first appointments Bush made, such as that of Colin Powell as secretary of state, were not controversial among capitalist politicians.

Then Bush proceeded to nominate key cabinet officers, with conservatives in several important posts whose records on a number of social questions have sparked controversy.

Chavez, who has campaigned against affirmative action, the Family and Medical Leave Act, and raising the minimum wage, quickly withdrew her name after opponents of her nomination highlighted the fact that she had failed to disclose to Bush and the FBI that she housed for two years Marta Mercado, an immigrant from Guatemala who did not have papers at the time. Chavez insisted the relationship was one of charitable aid, not employment, although Mercado admittedly did housework and received spending money from Chavez.

Bush then nominated Elaine Chao, a less controversial big-business politician, who won the backing of Morton Bahr, president of the Communications Workers of

America.

Ashcroft opposes a woman's right to abortion and affirmative action, tried to block court-ordered desegregation plans as attorney general in Missouri, and has held up leaders of the Confederacy as examples to emulate. His record of attacks on the rights of oppressed nationalities has earned him strong opposition from civil rights organizations.

During nomination hearings, Democratic senators questioned whether Ashcroft would help precipitate a frontal assault on abortion rights and school desegregation, concerned about the political repercussions of such moves, which would be met with widespread opposition among working people.

Judiciary Committee chairman Patrick Leahy, Democrat from Vermont, asked Ashcroft "whether he would ask the Supreme Court to overturn *Roe v. Wade* or to impose more burdensome restrictions on a woman's ability to secure safe and legal contraceptives." *Roe v. Wade* is the 1973 Supreme Court ruling that decriminalized abortion.

Senator Charles Schumer of New York said Ashcroft "sued nurses who dispensed contraception and continued litigating against them for years despite being told by every court you came before that you were wrong. You sued the National Organization for Women under the antitrust laws to muzzle their attempt to pass the Equal Rights Amendment.... When you have been such a zealous and impassioned advocate

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Ontario nickel mine strikers resist union busting

BY CHRISTIAN CORNEJO

SUDBURY, Ontario—Some 1,250 members of the Mine Mill/Canadian Auto Workers Local 598 here are heading into the sixth month of their strike against Falconbridge Ltd., one of the world's largest producers of nickel. The miners walked off the job August 1 after rejecting by a 97 percent margin the company's demands to gut seniority, health and safety, and union representation on the job, as well as increase the use of nonunion labor. A negotiating session requested by Falconbridge is scheduled for January 15, the first since September 1.

Falconbridge wants to divide its four mines and mill operations off from the smelter, making two independent business units with separate seniority lists for the miners. Albert Goulard, a maintenance worker in the smelters with 10 years' service, said this would allow the company to lay off workers out of seniority. They would also lose the right to bump someone with less seniority in another mine, mill, or smelter.

Goulard said the last proposed contract by the company, if adopted, would force the workers to talk to the foreman prior to approaching the union in any work-related

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U.S. downturn will hit Latin America, Asia hard — page 15

London, Washington pressure Zimbabwe gov't to get into line

BY T. J. FIGUEROA

PRETORIA, South Africa—London and Washington signaled that they would ratchet up the imperialist political and economic campaign against the government of Zimbabwe at the start of the new year.

British foreign minister for Africa Peter Hain told the *Sunday Independent*, published in Johannesburg, "I sometimes wonder whether the leadership of southern Africa understands the gravity of the situation." In a reference to the refusal by South African president Thabo Mbeki and regional governments to publicly denounce Zimbabwean president Robert Mugabe, Hain declared that "constructive engagement seems to have failed."

In the interview, conducted at Hain's holiday home in South Africa's Western Cape province and published as the front-page lead story on January 7, the British official implied that London would like to see Pretoria bring pressure to bear on Harare—and if not, the consequences would be bad for southern Africa, particularly in terms of capital investment. "What you have is a crisis for a subcontinent, not just one country," he said. "The truth is, no matter how frustrated I am that no differentiation is being made between South Africa and Zimbabwe, in boardrooms where they make the decisions they don't distinguish."

Hain said, "What Mugabe has done is turn his back on probably £100 million of donor assistance."

The article said: "While [Hain] told investors that South Africa had taken the tough decisions...investors said: 'yes, yes, but if they grab other people's land in Zimbabwe, will they grab my company across the border?'"

This was a reference to the occupations of about 1,600 commercial farms in Zimbabwe over several months last year. The farm occupations were largely organized by the ruling party, the Zimbabwe African National Union-Patriotic Front (ZANU-PF). Some occupations continue.

The land question remains at the heart of

the crisis in Zimbabwe. While more than 6 million peasants—about half the population—live in rural areas with poor soil and little rainfall, about 4,500 mainly white capitalist farmers dominate agricultural production and as much as 80 percent of the arable land.

The battle for land was key to the liberation struggle that ended British colonial rule and established independence in 1980. However, since then there has been no radical agrarian reform. Over the past year Mugabe has organized a bureaucratic campaign of "land seizures" benefiting government officials and supporters of the ruling party. Even though the actions don't advance the interests of Zimbabwe's workers and peasants, the actions have brought the ire of London and Washington on the Mugabe regime.

An International Monetary Fund report predicts that the country's gross domestic product will shrink by 10 percent this year. The IMF, dominated by Washington, urges Harare to respect the "rule of law" and implement a land reform plan that "donors"—the imperialist governments that dole out loans and aid—can support.

A similar note was struck by a United Nations official. According to a report in the January 5 *Zimbabwe Independent*, "UN Development Program administrator Mark Malloch Brown told Mugabe in a letter dated December 15 that government should stop the haphazard land redistribution exercise, which was already spawning massive unemployment and reducing agricultural production, if it seriously wanted international financial support." The article noted that Washington and London are withholding billions of dollars from Harare.

The combination of the imperialist financial squeeze and the unequal terms of trade it receives on the world market are hammering the Zimbabwean economy: unemployment is more than 50 percent and inflation and interest rates exceed 60 percent. More than 800 manufacturing companies closed last year.



Zimbabwe cops attack man protesting rising food prices last October in Mufakose, suburb of Harare. Inflation exceeds 60 percent and unemployment is over 50 percent.

Meanwhile, Mugabe, 76, has stepped up his rhetoric on land reform, vowing to push ahead with redistribution this year. "I will not let you down. The struggle must be won," he told delegates to the ZANU-PF congress in December. "Next year must close the land chapter and see the people as owners of their land and not as semi-slaves and serfs." Singling out whites, he said, "The white man is not indigenous to Africa. Africa is for Africans. Zimbabwe is for Zimbabweans." The congress gave Mugabe full support to continue in office.

Within the ruling apparatus, however, there are divisions on how the "fast-track" land program is being carried out. In December the Supreme Court, for the second time, ruled the farm occupations to be unconstitutional. Even the judges noted that the government's moves on land had so far been discriminatory in favor of ruling party

supporters. Mugabe vowed to ignore the court.

The ruling party suffered two blows last year. First, it was defeated in a referendum that would have expanded presidential powers and allowed the government to seize white-owned land without compensation, ostensibly for redistribution. The vote reflected growing popular dissatisfaction with the economic crisis and ZANU-PF rule. Then, the opposition Movement for Democratic Change (MDC), led by former trade unionist Morgan Tsvanigari, won 57 of 120 parliamentary seats in a June election.

While many working people see the MDC as an outlet for opposing Mugabe, its leadership has cozier up to capitalist interests in South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States in the hope that workers and peasants will not be allowed to upset existing property relations.

Census Bureau: 10 percent of U.S. residents are immigrants

BY GREG MCCARTAN

Drawing on information from the U.S. Census Bureau, the Commerce Department reports that 1 in 10 U.S. residents was born in another country, up from 1 in 20 in 1970. One half of the immigrants are from Central America, South America, or the Caribbean. One quarter are from Asia.

The January 3 report says 45 percent of immigrants live in the central city of a metropolitan area, compared with 28 percent of the U.S.-born population. Some 40 percent of the population of New York City is from another country. While 8 out of 10 people who arrived before 1970 are now naturalized citizens, that number drops to 1 in 10 for those arriving in the United States since 1990. Because the figures were compiled as part of the March 2000 Current Population Survey, estimates on the total number of immigrants living in the country tend to be understated, since many immigrants go uncounted in such government surveys.

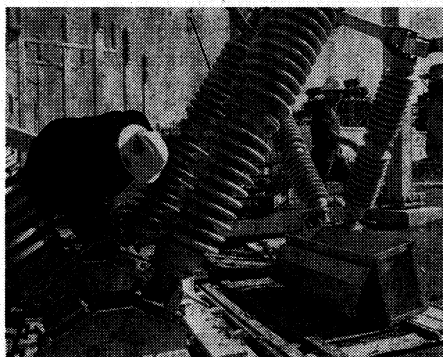
Figures in the report help point out the unequal wages and living conditions that immigrants face, how the employers profit from the second-class status of immigrant workers, and the stratification imposed through racism, prejudice, and denial of citizenship rights. Some 36 percent of all foreign-born people working full-time, year-round jobs earned less than \$20,000 as compared to 21 percent of native-born workers. Among workers from Central America 57 percent fell into that category, as opposed to 16 percent of those from Europe and 22 percent from Asia.

Immigrants without U.S. citizenship were more than twice as likely to live in poverty as naturalized citizens, with Latin Americans having the highest poverty rate compared with immigrants from Europe, at 22 and 9 percent, respectively. Among Latin Americans, those from South America experienced a lower poverty rate, 11.5 percent, compared with 24 percent for those from Central America.

THE MILITANT

Energy crisis: profit-made disaster

The 'Militant' explains how the energy monopolies' profit drive has created a growing disaster for workers and farmers in California and nationwide. In contrast with the most publicized proposals, which aim to protect big-business interests, it offers a course of action in the interests of working people.



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Farmers demand relief from 'mad cow' crisis

BY NAT LONDON

PARIS—Demonstrations of cattle raisers have been spreading across France to protest the burden they are being forced to carry for the spread of "mad cow" disease in the country.

More than 3,000 cattle raisers converged on the city of Nantes January 12 to demand adequate testing material for "mad cow" disease be supplied to slaughterhouses. The farmers were attacked by riot police with tear gas grenades. The same day, 600 farmers drove their tractors to Amiens and burned in effigy Jean Glavany, the agriculture minister. In the Vosges Mountains in eastern France, 40 farmers drove their cattle to the Prefecture, the center of government administration, at Epinal and set up camp for several days. In Guéret, in central France, 300 cattle raisers released their calves in the local headquarters of the agriculture ministry. In Brittany, 100 farmers with their tractors blocked the entrance to one of France's largest slaughterhouses in the town of Vitré. And in Bourges, 80 angry farmers dumped a tractor load of manure at the entrance to the Prefecture.

Sales of beef in Europe have dropped by 27 percent since October but the drop has been more than 40 percent in France and Germany. European beef prices have dropped by 26 percent as cases of bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE), otherwise known as mad cow disease, have shown up across the continent.

In an interview, cattle raiser Romain Blanchet explained that the 180 hectares he farms in partnership with a couple in Lower

Normandy is seriously threatened. If even one of his 300 head of cattle gets BSE the entire herd will be destroyed. The local slaughterhouse has been partially closed by the BSE crisis and will not take the 120 young bull calves Blanchet has ready for market. The Italian government has banned French cattle imports, thus cutting off 45 percent of the market for bull calves raised in the nearby Loire River valley.

"I can't be sure what was in the animal feed I purchased after 1996," he said, noting the year imports from Britain of meat and bone meal often infected with BSE were banned by the French government. It has subsequently been revealed that the tainted feed was sold to farmers in France and Germany anyway. "The feed companies lied," Blanchet said. "There was massive fraud and infected meal was mixed in with the rest. The government did nothing because the meal was cheap."

A European Union ruling allows only cows tested for BSE to be accepted at slaughterhouses. But there are not enough test kits available so the companies are running the slaughterhouses at half capacity, laying off 10 percent of meatpacking workers. This has forced farmers such as Blanchet to continue to feed their cattle at a loss. In Brittany alone, 42,000 head of cattle are awaiting slaughter at a cost to the farmers of some 100 million francs (1 franc=US 14 cents).

As the new tests become available, Blanchet thinks the government should revise its policy of slaughtering whole herds if only one case of BSE is detected. He said some of his friends have switched to "bio farming" where farmers grow their own feed. Such farms can only raise

one-third the number of cows per hectare, something only larger farmers can afford to do. "If 'intensive farming' is abandoned for 'bio farming', what will be the consequences for society?" Blanchet asked. "Will the average person still be able to afford to eat meat?"

Unless tested for BSE, an estimated 2 million head of cattle will be slaughtered and their carcasses destroyed. Several countries have lifted their ban on French beef, including Italy. However, new embargoes on European beef have been announced by Japan, New Zealand, and Australia.

Crisis in Germany

The most serious political repercussions of the current "mad cow" crisis have been in Germany. After denying for years that there were any risks of BSE in the country, the government finally admitted to a first case on November 24. Since then there have been about two cases a week. As the crisis deepened Agriculture Minister Karl-Heinz Funke, a member of the Social Democratic Party, and Andrea Fischer, the health minister and member of the Green Party, resigned January 10.

David Byrne, the European Commissioner of Health and Consumer Protection, has warned the German government in a confidential letter made public by the German weekly *Bild am Sonntag* that the BSE epidemic just starting in the country "may be comparable in size to the epidemic in Great Britain," where

almost 180,000 cases of BSE have already been diagnosed.

"We will strike hard," announced Josef Miller, the Bavarian Agricultural Minister, at a shutdown animal feed factory. Tests had shown that the factory's feed had traces of meat and bone meal banned by the European Union since December.

The German government has also announced a voluntary program to purchase and slaughter 400,000 cows more than 30 months old and destroy the carcasses. The European Union will finance 70 percent of the operation. Farmers will receive 520 euros per cow, about 30 euros less than the current market value (1 euro=US 94 cents). The president of the German Agricultural Federation, Gerd Sonnleitner, welcomed the program as a necessary measure to protect the consumer and to support the price of beef on the market.

Farmers in Germany have been sharply critical, however, of the government's policy, as in France, of destroying an entire herd where even one cow has been infected by BSE. One thousand farmers demonstrated in Celle in northern Germany against the slaughter of cows on a farm in Lower Saxony. Hundreds more demonstrated in Westerheim when 143 cows were slaughtered on a farm in Bavaria. Five hundred more demonstrated against the new policy in Nabburg in Bavaria with coffins and signs saying, German chancellor Gerhard Schröder is "a peasant killer."

Wilhelm Niemeyer, vice president of the German Agricultural Federation, threatened the government with nationwide demonstrations. "If nothing is done quickly," he said on national television, "we will soon see cows, calves, and bulls roaming freely on the roads and highways. Chancellor [Schröder] has nailed farmers to the wall as if the farmers were responsible for BSE."

Schröder, in defense of his policies, has called for "an alliance between consumers and sincere farmers," implying that most farmers were not "sincere." "We want to have safe food thanks to agriculture which is more natural and respectful of the environment. Farmers should produce what consumers want and not what they think they can dump on the market," he said. "It is in the interests of the farmers themselves if they want to survive." Schröder named Green Party vice president Renate Künast to replace the former agriculture minister. The ministry was renamed the Ministry of Consumer Protection, Food and Agriculture.

Künast immediately proclaimed that the BSE crisis was the "Chernobyl of agriculture" and said that "people are willing to pay more for safe food." Her fellow Green Party member, Andrea Fischer, the former health minister, has repeatedly blamed "the industrialized farming economy" for BSE, lumping together working farmers and capitalist agricultural enterprises.

Unions in France oppose raising retirement age

Continued from front page

between ages 60 and 65 work, compared with 60 percent of men and 30 percent in the mid-1970s.

The government and employers say changes in the pension system are needed because of growth in the number of people over retirement age, and the high levels of unemployment that have lowered the amount of retirement taxes paid by workers and employers to finance pensions.

Over the past decade the bosses have been chipping away at the retirement age. In order to retire at age 60 in 1982 workers needed to have worked 37 and a half years. Otherwise they had to continue until they reached age 65. In 1993 the government of Prime Minister Edouard Balladur began raising over a 10-year period the number of years necessary to work to qualify for a full pension. By 2003 retirees will have had to work 40 years if they are under 65. Some 14.5 million "private sector" workers were affected by this attack. Pensions were also effectively lowered in this reform by changing the number of years on which benefits were determined from the workers' best 10 years to 25 years.

In 1995 Prime Minister Alain Juppé failed in his attempt to extend the 40-year requirement to the 4.5 million "public sector" workers. These include rail, hospital, and postal workers, as well as teachers. Over a four-week period in November and December 1995, rail and local transportation workers effectively shut down mass transit throughout France. Hundreds of thousands repeatedly participated in demonstrations demanding that Juppé withdraw his demand. As a result, public sector workers continue to be able to take retirement at age 60 after having worked 37 and a half years.

A 1999 report, commissioned by Socialist Party prime minister Lionel Jospin, recommended increasing the number of years required for retirement to 42 and a half for all workers—in both public and private sector. But this was contradicted by a report adopted by the Economic and Social Council a year later that rejected raising the number of years a future retiree must work "for the moment," estimating that economic growth and the lowering of unemployment could provide the necessary resources to pay retirement pensions. The Economic and Social Council consists primarily of representatives of the unions' and bosses' organizations. MEDEF vice president Denis Kessler denounced the report as "irresponsible."

Meanwhile, an agreement was signed last year allowing tens of thousands of industrial workers to benefit from pre-retirement,



Militant/Nat London

Workers in France are resisting government assaults on social wage. Hospital workers, above, demonstrated in Paris in 1999 against government cuts in health care.

generally at age 57, but in some cases at age 55 over the next five years, provided an agreement is signed by the employer and the unions. This is mainly being used by the auto bosses to get rid of older workers deemed less productive by the bosses.

In this context the government is still hesitating on a position to adopt on retirement reform, which it says is necessary. The harsh stance of MEDEF is widely seen as an attempt to force it to act.

The MEDEF's radical position on the age for retirement is the latest part of a campaign it launched a year ago that it calls "social refoundation." French bosses are trying to regain their competitive edge against their international rivals by attacking workers' rights.

In January 2000 MEDEF's general assembly, hoping to scare and impress the unions, voted to withdraw its representatives by the end of the year from the organizations that manage public health insurance, unemployment insurance, and retirement pensions if the unions refused to renegotiate workers' social benefits. These organizations are managed jointly in France by the unions and the employers.

A year ago MEDEF summoned the unions to a meeting where MEDEF president Ernest-Antoine Seillière declared, "The current situation relative to work relations and social protection cannot continue" and that "time is limited." He cited four priority questions that he wanted negotiated: unemployment insurance, retirement pensions, health care in the workplace, and collective bargaining.

A year later, MEDEF has made only modest

progress on its agenda. After months of negotiations, renegotiations, and union resistance, an agreement on unemployment insurance was signed in December 2000 by three of the five union confederations and the bosses organizations, and was agreed to by the government. Both the General Confederation of Labor (CGT) and Workers Force (LO) labor organizations opposed it. The new agreement requires an unemployed worker to sign a plan outlining his or her obligation to find a new job. However, the final version of the agreement no longer sanctions a worker who does not carry out steps outlined in this plan. The agreement also provides for lowering unemployment taxes paid by employers and workers. Another agreement modifies in certain cases the requirement for an annual health checkup for workers. Negotiations on collective bargaining procedures are continuing. MEDEF did not, as previously threatened, withdraw from managing the social protection organizations at the end of 2000.

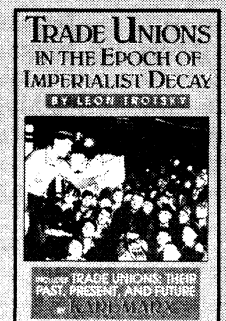
Union leaders have announced that the January 25 action to defend the retirement system is only "a first step" and according to official statements they do not exclude the possibility of later organizing a national demonstration.

Derek Jeffers is an auto assembly worker and member of the CGT at the Peugeot auto plant in Poissy.

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Debate grows in Europe over uranium shells

BY CARL-ERIK ISACSSON

STOCKHOLM, Sweden—The government of Italy, backed by Germany and several other NATO members in Europe, demanded a halt to the use of depleted uranium munitions until medical tests could determine if they are linked to cancer and other ailments affecting soldiers sent to the region.

The United States and Britain immediately rejected the call, citing World Health Organization statements that there is no medical evidence showing a clear link between depleted uranium and health problems. Both Washington and London insist that given the important role the ammunition has it must remain in NATO's military arsenal.

At least 15 soldiers who were part of military deployments by the imperialist powers in Bosnia and Kosovo have died of leukemia, including 6 in Italy, 5 in Belgium, 2 in the Netherlands, and 1 each in Portugal and Spain. Little interest has been shown in the big business media around the effects of the uranium weapons used in NATO's bombing campaigns in Bosnia and Kosovo. The nationalist approach was best sounded by German chancellor Gerhard Schröder, who stated he has "a healthy skepticism about the use of munitions that could lead to dangers for our own soldiers."

The United States is the biggest user of depleted uranium ammunition. Because it is 65 percent heavier than lead it can penetrate steel better than other ammunition. It ignites on impact, vaporizing steel or other materials.

The Swedish government, which took over the rotating presidency of the European Union January 1, has come under pressure to act on the dispute. Belgian defense minister André Flahaut wrote a letter to his Swedish counterpart that this "sensitive and important topic should be on the agenda" of the next European Union meeting. The Greek minister of defense, Akis Tsohatzopoulos, also asked for the topic to be on the agenda for the next meeting of the EU council of ministers.

Greek opposition leader Kostas Karamanlis stated that if the risks with depleted uranium are confirmed "we have to withdraw the troops from the area." Greece and Italy were the NATO countries most resistant to the alliance's military assault in the Balkans in 1999. The intervention increased interimperialist competition and rivalry in the Balkans to the disadvantage of these imperialist governments.

The Finnish government has decided to let the soldiers who have been in Yugoslavia go through a health test and in Denmark the authorities have established a telephone hot line to medical personnel for soldiers who served in the Balkans. Initially the Swedish government took a wait-and-see

attitude but soon followed other EU governments in scheduling health tests for up to 1,000 of the 11,300 who have served in the Balkans since 1993. The defense department reports that three military personnel who served in the Balkans have cancer, one has leukemia.

Romano Prodi, president of the European Commission and former Italian prime minister, said the Kosovo conflict had created "a horrible environmental problem that is for us to take care of." He continued that if it could be determined that the depleted uranium was hazardous to health then, "we have to abolish it."

Stockholm is taking part in the rapid reaction force of 60,000 troops that the European Union is creating for deployment in military operations where NATO decides not to act. Sweden has offered 1,900 troops to the force, nine fighter aircraft, four transport planes, two

and its allies in Europe, who are at the same time its rivals.

There are several looming transatlantic conflicts that could exacerbate tensions. This includes Washington's plans for a national missile defense, a reassessment of military operations in the Balkans, to what degree the military role of the European

less it starts to peel and then children or others ingest it." He admitted that when the shells burns on impact they produce a fine, powdery dust. "If that's inhaled, that can pose health problems. But once an operation is complete, usually rain washes the oxide away and there are no health hazards."

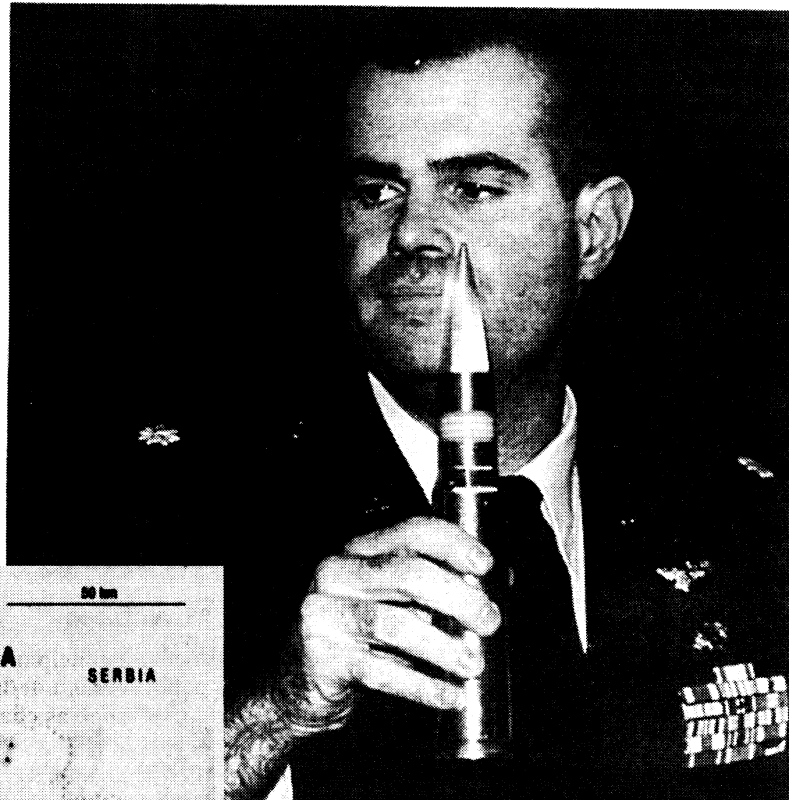
The *Washington Post* featured an article that said, "Physicists and medical experts say it is biologically impossible for depleted uranium to have caused the leukemia and they doubt that the metal caused any illnesses in Europe." The piece cites Dr. Frank von Hippel, from Princeton University, who said that although the metal is radioactive, "its half-life is 4.5 billion years, which is, by coincidence, the age of the solar system." Dr. Charles Phelps, from the University of Rochester in Minnesota, said that studies there indicate uranium 238 was leaching into the kidneys of soldiers who inhaled it. "They had very high levels of uranium salts in their urine," he said. "But there is no evidence of kidney disease."

Several NATO ambassadors have asked why if the threat was so slight did NATO military commanders send a warning before the peace-keeping mission in July 1999 citing a "possible toxic threat" and urging member states to take their own "preventive measures" in dealing with contamination risks. The U.S. government report warned that "inhaled insoluble oxides stay in the lungs longer and pose a potential cancer risk due to radiation. Ingested DU dust can also pose both a radioactive and toxicity risk."

"The time has come for us no longer to have complete confidence in anyone," said Portugal's prime minister Antonio Guterres, after sending three cabinet ministers to Kosovo to conduct their own inquiry after a Portuguese soldier died of a mysterious brain disease and another contracted leukemia.

London announced January 9 that it would provide voluntary medical checks for all Balkans veterans. The dispute has brought to the surface use of the munitions at two firing ranges in Britain, one in northern England and the other in Scotland. The British defense minister acknowledged that more than 6,000 rounds of the shells had been fired into the Solway Firth.

Carl-Erik Isacson is a member of the metal workers union in Södertälje Sweden.



U.S. military official holds depleted uranium shell claiming there is no evidence showing clear link between DU munitions and health problems among NATO troops deployed in the Balkans. At least 15 NATO soldiers who were stationed in Bosnia and Kosovo have died of leukemia. The furor over the radioactive shells has increased tensions between Washington and European NATO powers. Map on left shows sites hit with DU shells during imperialist assault on Yugoslavia.



coastal corvettes, two minesweepers, and a submarine.

In Stockholm, as in most of the other European capitals, the topic of depleted uranium has become a hot one in connection with this rapid reaction force and its relation to NATO and Washington. Sweden has sided with Britain on foreign policy within the European Union. They both place priority on enlargement of the EU into eastern Europe and have not adopted the euro. Stockholm's policy is to Washington's liking. Although not yet itself opting for NATO membership, Stockholm is giving the green light for NATO's further enlargement into eastern and central Europe, including to the Baltic states that border Russia.

The furor over depleted uranium puts a strain on the relations between Washington

Union should be independent of Washington, and NATO's future enlargement toward Russia's borders.

As a senior European diplomat quoted in the January 10 *International Herald Tribune* put it, "It was already going to be very hard to maintain unity within NATO in dealing with all these matters that go to the core of the alliance's future. The depleted uranium problem could not have come at a worse time because it damages the sense of trust that has kept the alliance strong."

Top Pentagon and NATO officials have gone on the offensive with claims that depleted uranium has little or no health threats associated with it. U.S. defense secretary William Cohen said there is "no scientific study that shows any connection between depleted uranium and leukemia or other types of cancer." He likened the radioactive and highly toxic material to lead paint, which "does not pose a problem to you un-

Vieques activists: U.S. shells contaminate island

Reprinted below is a January 12 statement by the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques (CRDV), titled "Grave concerns about uranium weapons in Europe and Vieques." The committee has been helping lead the fight to get the U.S. military out of the Puerto Rican island of Vieques, which the Navy has used for bombing practice and military maneuvers since World War II. The translation from Spanish is by the CRDV, with minor changes by the *Militant*.

The Italian government is protesting the serious health problems among its soldiers caused by the use of uranium 238 weapons by the U.S. military in the recent conflict in the Balkans. The issue of depleted uranium weapons captured the front pages of the press of several European countries, members of NATO, when soldiers from the region began to die of cancer and leukemia after their return from Kosovo, Yugoslavia, and Bosnia, where large quantities of uranium 238 shells were fired.

Since 1994, the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques (CRDV) has denounced the use of uranium weapons upon learning of such arms at an Environ-

mental Justice Conference in Washington, D.C.

"We listened in horror as scientists and community activists from the United States told about this new type of weaponry that had been used extensively in the Gulf War. We had recently heard retired admiral Diego Hernández say that the 'success' of the U.S. forces in Iraq was due in great measure to their practicing in Vieques," said Ismael Guadalupe, spokesman for the CRDV.

Members of the Vieques organization mentioned also that 80 percent of the ships and jets that participated in the attacks against Yugoslavia—where large amounts of uranium shells were used—practiced first in Vieques before leaving for the Mediterranean.

"For years we have denounced the relationship between the military contamination and the excessive levels of cancer on Vieques. The heavy metals and other chemical components from explosives, which are dangerous to human health, combined with the radioactive uranium 238 shells, jeopardize the life of Vieques residents today as well as the future generations," said Nilda Medina, another spokesperson for the

CRDV.

In May 1999, Navy representatives admitted that their jets had fired hundreds of uranium shells on Vieques during maneuvers in February of that year, while practicing for the war in Yugoslavia. The uranium oxide (dust) that results from the impact of the shells can travel more than 20 miles and cause a long list of illnesses, including cancer.

Among people who have recently died of cancer in Vieques, high levels of uranium and heavy metals have been detected.

The Navy admits they could not recover all the uranium-tipped shells fired on the eastern part of Vieques. Military officials plan more bombing here in January and February.

"There is no way to guarantee that the next bomb or shell that is fired will not hit one of these uranium shells, throwing radioactive particles into the air that could be carried by the wind to the civilian sector [of the island], to our children, to our old folks, to any one of us. We urge the authorities that are responsible for our health and security to block any future bombing that endangers the entire Vieques community," Medina stated.

From Pathfinder

Puerto Rico: Independence Is a Necessity

Rafael Cancel Miranda

In two interviews, Cancel Miranda — one of five Puerto Rican Nationalists imprisoned by Washington for more than 25 years until 1979 — speaks out on the brutal reality of U.S. colonial domination, the campaign needed to free the Puerto Rican political prisoners, the example of Cuba's socialist revolution, and the resurgence of the independence movement today. In English and Spanish. Booklet \$3

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Workers study Marxism at Atlanta socialist school

BY CINDY JAQUITH
AND PATRICK O'NEILL

ATLANTA—"This is a unique gathering. Workers, farmers, and youth at this conference are stepping back from our day-to-day political activity to take time out to read, study, and discuss Marxist theory and strategy," said Arlene Rubinstein in welcoming around 80 participants to the southern region Socialist School, held here January 13-15.

Rubinstein, who works at a meatpacking plant in this city and is a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers, spoke on behalf of the event's organizers, the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialists in Georgia, Alabama, North Carolina, Texas, Florida, and Washington, D.C. The majority of participants came from those states. Others attended from Ohio, New York, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Nine were attending their first regional gathering of the communist movement, and seven were below the age of 26.

Well over half of those present had taken part in preparatory classes organized by the SWP branches leading up to the school, drawing on the same reading material used there.

Most participants were factory workers, and their political discussions with co-workers, and involvement in labor and farm struggles and other political activity, informed a number of the contributions to the discussion.

The school ended at midday on Monday, January 15, so that participants could join the march and rally commemorating Martin Luther King Day in Atlanta—an action that attracted around 3,000 people.

The gathering was organized around talks, discussions, and reading and study sessions on "The Historic Change in the Family Structure and Coming Social Battles," which was introduced by Norton Sandler; "Factionalism and Polarization in U.S. Politics: the Changing Struggle for a Proletarian Party," introduced by James Harris; and "The Jewish Question," introduced by Dave Prince. All three speakers are members of the SWP National Committee.

The discussion during the school continued throughout the two and a half days with few pauses. Participants clearly relished the opportunity to engage in study and discussion of the theory and program of the communist movement.

The to and fro on political ideas spilled over into the meal breaks and into a lively party on Saturday evening.

A wide range of Pathfinder literature was available for purchase at the school, and some \$450 worth of titles were sold. Sales of secondhand books and pamphlets donated by partisans of the communist movement throughout the region raised around \$300 towards the cost of staging the event. Several participants walked away with armloads and boxfuls of Marxist titles purchased for \$1 each or less.

Character of political period

"This is the first of what we hope will be four regional socialist schools," said Norton Sandler at the opening of the weekend. "Why hold such events now?" he asked. "It's because we are coming out of a retreat of the labor movement—and, while making no prediction on the pace of events, the direction of motion is toward revolution. Our communist theory and our understanding of it become more important as revolutionary possibilities stop receding and start coming closer."

Sandler's remarks on the nature of the school prefaced his introduction to the discussion on "The Historic Change in the Family Structure and Coming Social Battles," which drew extensively on material from *Communist Continuity and the Fight for Women's Liberation: Documents of the Socialist Workers Party 1971-86*, a three-part publication by Pathfinder Press; the *Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx and Frederick Engels; and *Capital* by Marx, particularly the chapter entitled "Machinery and Large-Scale Industry."

"Marx and Engels explained that the bourgeoisie 'has torn away from the family its sentimental veil, and has reduced the fam-

ily relation to a mere money relation,'" said Sandler, quoting from the *Manifesto*, published in 1848. "A decade and a half later," he continued, "Marx finished *Capital*. There he laid bare the contradictions and brutality of capitalism, which comes into being dripping blood from every pore."

"In the period of the industrial revolution," said Sandler, "capitalism hurled women and children into the labor force. Marx explained the revolutionary ramifications of this violent process."

In *Capital*, Marx wrote, "However terrible and disgusting the dissolution of the old family ties within the capitalist system may appear, large-scale industry, by assigning an important part in socially organized processes of production, outside the sphere of the domestic economy, to women, young persons and children of both sexes, does nevertheless create a new economic foundation for a higher form of the family and of relations between the sexes."

Sandler pointed out, "What Marx explained is being played out in the world today."

"The unpaid labor that women perform within the family is essential to the raising of each generation of workers," he said. "At the same time, the capitalists continually draw women out of the home and into industry. The process that began in large numbers with women working in shipyards and factories during World War II was never reversed."

Women gain in confidence as they enter the working class and the labor movement. They begin to demand equality at the same time as they take their place in labor struggles and other political issues."

Capitalism continues to function in just the same way, with the same brutality, as described by Marx, said Sandler. The consequence of these contradictory processes is a further disintegration of the family structure.

Households headed by single women

Not only is the two-parent family with one breadwinner less prevalent today but families are increasingly headed by one parent—the mother. "The most radical change in the last 15 years," he said, "is the fact that 32 percent of households are today headed by single women. And we can see the same trends in all the imperialist countries but Japan."

"Meanwhile, the Clinton administration's 'welfare reform,' called the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act, has taken away the state-provided safety net from millions of such families. Many working-class women are left exposed to the layoffs and other attacks that will come with an economic downturn. The more farsighted capitalist mouthpieces like outgoing New York senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan are apprehensive about what this can mean—the social explosions that can be posed."

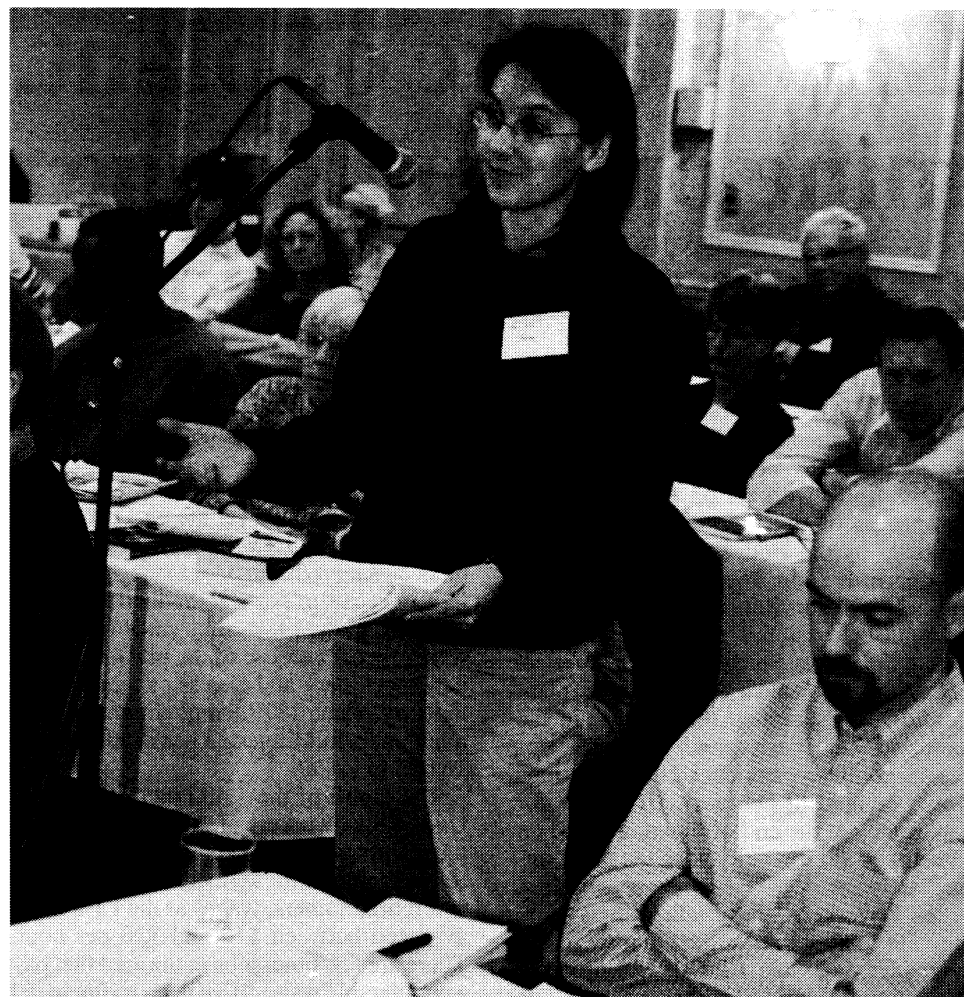
"What we want to address today," said Sandler, "are the implications of these developments for the working class and the communist movement, including the culture war against the so-called unmarried woman."

Rightist forces and others have markedly increased their warnings about the "harmful effects" of divorce, and about other changes in attitudes and behavior that accompany women's greater economic and social independence, said Sandler.

"For many years abortion has been the cutting edge of the clash between partisans and opponents of the fight for women's equality. But the campaign aimed at the right to divorce and other progressive changes could outstrip the abortion debate in the next few years," he said. He cited material from both liberal and reactionary sources.

Many said in the discussion that they were struck by Sandler's remarks on divorce and the culture war that is brewing around it.

"Statistically, every other marriage in Sweden ends in divorce," said Mats from Stockholm. One Christian Democratic politician has called for legislation to provide government funds for marriage counseling and a one-year cooling-off period, an increase of six months on the present require-



Militant/Eric Simpson

Participant at southern region Socialist School speaks during discussion. Factory workers, students, and others attended the three-day event, which took up political issues such as changes in the family structure and the fight against anti-Semitism.

ment, before a divorce is final.

A number of participants in the school contributed to an exchange of views on child support. Several expressed unease at remarks during the discussion that fathers have an obligation to help support their children. "Some of my male co-workers have half their paychecks garnished for child support," said one rail worker.

Cindy Jaquith, a factory worker from Miami, said that "the woman has a right to demand child support; it's part of labor solidarity to support her in doing so. We take that stance without taking responsibility for the current laws and the way they are implemented."

When discussion started up again on the second morning of the school, Sandler utilized some questions on the nature of the family under capitalism that had been raised earlier to recommend a close reading of the introduction to the Pathfinder title *Cosmetics, Fashions, and the Exploitation of Women*.

That article explains clearly that it is the capitalist mode of production today, centered on large-scale production of commodities and the exploitation of wage labor, and not the family structure that gives rise to and profits from women's oppression, he said. "The family structure under capitalism is determined by those relations."

"On this point, it's an advance on the 1979 report in *Communist Continuity and the Fight for Women's Liberation*, titled 'The Struggle by Women against Their Oppression as a Sex Is a Form of the Class Struggle,' as useful as that report is."

Factionalism in U.S. politics

James Harris introduced the discussion on "Factionalism and Polarization in U.S. Politics: The Changing Struggle for a Proletar-

ian Party," by sketching the evolution of factional clashes among capitalist politicians in the United States since the close of the November election. He used sections of *Capitalism's World Disorder* and *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*, both by Jack Barnes, and *State and Revolution* by Bolshevik leader V.I. Lenin.

The new Bush administration will carry out the bipartisan antilabor course of Clinton and the Republican Party-led Congress, of the last near decade, he said. This is an example of the continuing shift of capitalist politics to the right, said the SWP leader. At the same time, more factional disputes are brewing, dramatized by Clinton's celebration of Gore's "victory" a few weeks after Bush's election had been confirmed (see article on front page.)

Irrationality of capitalism

The power crisis in California is an example of the irrationality of the profit-driven capitalist system, said Harris. "What is their solution?" he asked. "It's to have us—'consumers' and working people—pay more!" The crisis will also be used to promote nuclear power, he said. The dangers of that alternative were illustrated when the Indian Point plant in New York was recently restarted. It immediately sprang radioactive leaks, blamed by the company on the operators who carried out the startup.

"What we have to do," said Harris, "is use the accumulated experience of the communist movement contained in the books and pamphlets distributed by Pathfinder Press to deal with the political events breaking today from a Marxist orientation. If we don't do that, then inevitably we begin to adapt to this or that voice in bourgeois politics, which can only be directed back into the mainte-

Continued on Page 7

Maggie Trowe joins 'Militant' staff

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

With this issue Maggie Trowe joins the *Militant* staff. Trowe, 52, was the Socialist Workers candidate for vice president in the 2000 elections. Through the course of the campaign she was able to meet and discuss a revolutionary political perspective with thousands of workers, farmers, and youth around the country.

Last May Trowe was part of a delegation of fighting farmers and workers from the United States that attended the convention of the National Association of Small Farmers of Cuba. In November Trowe participated in the Second World Conference of Friendship and Solidarity with Cuba, held in Havana.

Prior to becoming the SWP's vice-presidential candidate, Trowe was a meat packer and a member of Local 9 of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) at Quality Pork Processors in Austin, Minnesota.

Trowe moved to Austin from Des Moines,

Iowa, where she worked in a meatpacking plant in nearby Marshalltown. In 1999, along with other members of UFCW Local 1149 and community activists, she helped found the Ad Hoc Committee for Human Rights, which organized protests that year against attacks on the rights of immigrants.

Trowe joined the communist movement in 1975 in Bloomington, Indiana. She has been a longtime fighter for women's rights, participating in numerous protest actions defending the right of women to choose abortion. In 1995, as a reporter for the *Militant*, she took part in the United Nations-sponsored Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing, attended by more than 26,000 people. Over the years she has regularly contributed to the *Militant* as a worker-correspondent.

Trowe also served two stints as a volunteer in Pathfinder's printshop, in 1981-85 and 1991-96.

LTV closure of plant, mine on Iron Range angers Steelworkers

BY TOM FISKE

HOYT LAKES, Minnesota—The LTV Corporation announced it will close its taconite pellet mine and processing plant here, putting 1,400 workers on the street. The abruptness of the plant closing, broken promises by the company, and the impact of the move on the communities in Minnesota's Iron Range have caused considerable discussion. The workers are members of the United Steelworkers of America.

Last fall, LTV said it would close the plant in mid-2001, claiming the taconite in the mine was almost exhausted. But in December the company announced the operations would be shut in February. LTV filed for bankruptcy at the end of the month and on January 3 said it would close the plant immediately.

"LTV workers I have talked to say that they are mad about the lies that the company gave out," said T.J. Sabie, an iron ore miner at the Inland Steel Mine here. "The drill operators and other LTV miners knew that there was still good taconite left in the mine."

"They lied to everybody," said a laid-off LTV worker, an auto mechanic with 12 years service who asked that his name not be used. "They have been lying for a long time. The company got the union to drop two grievances with the understanding the mine would continue operation until later this year." The first grievance claimed the company violated its contract with the union by purchasing taconite pellets from other suppliers. The other said that the layoff of 100 hourly workers and the decision to close the taconite plant violated basic labor agreements between the company and the union.

The company and capitalist politicians blame steel imports and competition from other countries as the reason for the closing. According to the Minneapolis *Star Tribune*, "LTV officials have blamed the closing on an influx of cheap foreign steel, lower steel prices, and lower demand for its products." At a meeting with high school students at East Mesabi High School, U.S. Senator Paul Wellstone "spoke of fair trade policies and his desire to halt cheap imports that have flooded American markets. 'I'm opposed to trade policies that hurt American workers,' he said. 'I'd like to see politicians who keep talking about free trade start talking about fair trade,'" the *Mesabi Daily News* reported.

The steel industry worldwide is in the midst of fierce competition due to the fact that companies are producing 60 million tons more steel each year than is being purchased. Companies that have relatively older or less profitable plants as compared with rivals at home or abroad, such as LTV, are likely to close or cut back production as

price competition intensifies. For example, an article in the *Star Tribune* estimates LTV will save \$2 to \$3 million a week by shutting down its operations here. LTV is the ninth steel company in the United States to file for bankruptcy over the past two years.

A number of LTV workers here say the plant closing is due to poor management and lack of repair of parts at the facility.

In the early 1980s thousands of miners were laid off because of the introduction of new machinery and excess capacity in the industry. Since 1979, employment of taconite miners in Minnesota has dropped from 16,000 to 6,000.

The layoff of the 1,400 members of the United Steelworkers of America will have a big impact on their families and on Iron Range communities. According to laid-off and retired miners, wages at the LTV mine averaged between \$15 and \$20 per hour. There are few other jobs in the area that pay a comparable wage. "I've been trying to get hired by LTV for years," said Jason Velacich, 28. "When the company filed for bankruptcy in 1986 they messed over my father on his pension. My family went through two years of hell. Many of the laid-off miners will stay here because their families are here."

Pressure on capitalist politicians to deal with this crisis was manifest at a Mesabi East High School meeting with Senator Wellstone. A student, Gus Hakala, spoke up. "Your answers to a lot of these questions is, 'I'll do what I can,'" he said. "That's pretty vague. I want to know exactly what you are doing to help." According to the *Mesabi Daily News*, "Hakala's pointed question

Striking coal miners in Australia resist attacks by bosses and cops



Coal miners, members of Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) at North Moranbah mine in Central Queensland, Australia, went on strike against Anglo Coal in November to demand a contract. Anglo Coal bosses say collective bargaining with the workers goes against their "employment philosophy." Last July 20,000 CFMEU coal miners in Queensland and New South Wales carried out a one-day strike against a government decision allowing bosses to impose a 10-hour workday and a 10-year wage freeze.

spawned a wave of similar queries from frustrated students."

There is a move to introduce legislation to extend unemployment benefits to one year and for iron miners to two years. Iron Range miners are skeptical that much will be done. "The government always comes up short," said one retired miner. "We are worried that the government will permit the

company to get out of its responsibilities to pay for pensions," said another.

However, there is no legislation drafted to defend the livelihood of those on the Mesabi Iron Range and in Minnesota who are affected by the mine closing and other layoffs in the state. And there is no sign of legislation that answers the question of government action to replace the lost jobs.

Waterfront workers in New Zealand defend union jobs and conditions

BY ANNALUCIA VERMUNT

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand—The city of Nelson was the latest scene in the struggle by waterfront workers in New Zealand to defend their union and working conditions. A hundred people picketed the Nelson wharf January 8-9 to protest a union-busting outfit, Mainland Stevedoring, which was loading a ship with logs. The picket ended with the ship's departure, but the union is vowing to continue the fight.

The logs were being shipped for export by Carter Holt Harvey (CHH), a subsidiary of International Paper. Mainland Stevedoring was contracted by CHH last November to handle log loading at Bluff and has since then expanded its operations into Port Chalmers, Timaru, and Nelson. Logs were

previously loaded by local companies employing members of the Waterfront Workers Union. The union has organized pickets at each of these South Island ports, facing police harassment at each. On the Nelson picket line up to 60 police confronted the pickets, making several arrests.

Nelson Waterfront Workers Union secretary Jock Bruce said he and his members were convinced that the company's goal was nothing less than the bust-up of union awards. Trevor Hanson, the national secretary of the union, explained to TV3 news, "These people we are talking about were nonunion for some six years, and when the new [Employment Relations] Act came in they registered themselves as a union. We believe it is a company union and nothing more."

The Waterfront Workers Union in Timaru had tried to negotiate with Mainland, offering a cross hiring agreement with existing companies, all using the available pool of workers. But negotiations stalled over terms and conditions on which Mainland refused to budge. Mainland wanted 12-hour shifts with just two breaks, instead of the union's minimum of three. It also wanted a flat rate of pay, which would drive down the existing wage rate. There were also safety concerns, with Mainland using only one

hatchman to ensure the load is secure, and fewer workers on each crew.

Mainland Stevedoring is owned by Tauranga-based International Stevedoring Operations, which was involved in a union-busting assault on the Onehunga wharf in Auckland in 1999. While they were unable to remove the union there, members who put up a 10-week fight lost their jobs. Paul Harper, CHH general manager of fiber logistics, told the *Southland Times* that the company exports through a number of ports in the South Island. They are preparing for an increase to some 15 million tons of logs to come "on stream" in the next couple of years. Contracting Mainland Stevedoring, Harper said, was a commercial decision aimed at cutting costs.

Solidarity pickets supporting the waterfront workers have been held in Auckland, Christchurch, and other centers outside Carter Holt Harvey offices and shops. Workers in south Korea expressed their solidarity with the waterfront workers in New Zealand by unloading the Eastern Forest, the first ship loaded by Mainland to arrive there, one log at a time for the first 15 minutes, before taking a three hour stoppage.

Annalucia Vermunt is a member of the Meat Workers Union in Christchurch.

From Pathfinder

On Trade Unions A Collection of Articles and Speeches

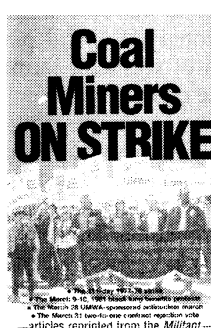
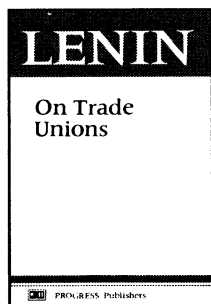
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Sears warehouse workers gain union

BY CANDACE WAGNER

WILKES-BARRE, Pennsylvania—Following a union organizing victory in November, workers at the Sears Logistics Services warehouse in Wilkes-Barre Township are organizing to get their first contract for the nearly 700 new members of Teamsters Local 401.

This was the fourth attempt by the workers to organize into the Teamsters. The first came in 1993 soon after the company closed up its unionized operations in Philadelphia and opened up here with significantly lower wages.

Management campaigned aggressively

for a "no" vote against the union, distributing numerous flyers. The vote was 318 in favor of the union and 267 against.

A number of workers coming off first shift at the warehouse were excited about the union victory. Several mentioned low wages and excessive overtime as motivations for gaining union organization.

The warehouse is a separate company from the retail giant that it services, Sears and Roebuck. The Wilkes-Barre facility handles 25 percent of all Sears merchandise, according to George Vitanovec, president of Teamsters Local 401. It is one of seven such facilities. The other six are nonunion.

Workers study Marxism at socialist school

Continued from Page 5

nance of the bourgeois system."

Contributions to the discussion covered a wide range of topics. Addressing the infringements of voting rights confronted by Blacks and Haitian immigrant workers, Sam Manuel, a meat packer from Washington, D.C., emphasized that "this is the normal functioning of capitalist politics in this country. There was no conspiracy. It was exposed in Florida because there was a disputed election. And it also came to light because there were more Blacks turning out to vote.

"The increased registration and turnout of Blacks and immigrant workers in the election was a striking thing," said Harris. "It showed their confidence and their refusal to be sidelined.

"But there is a difference between what happened this year and the voter registration and education drives in the south that were a key part of the mass civil rights movement," he said. "Democratic Party forces who spearheaded the increased turnout to vote for Gore did not prepare workers and farmers for what they'd face on the way to and at the polling stations. They weren't prepared for the delaying tactics, the obstruction, and the harassment they faced from officials and cops.

"Many weren't trained in the use of voting machines, or aware of the various kind of ballots they could expect to see. And so many were denied their right to vote.

"The turnout of Haitian immigrants and others was one more confirmation of the progressive impact of immigration on the working class here," he added. "Ten percent of the respondents in the latest census said they were foreign-born. You know that understates the real situation. The government drives against immigrants, but capitalism continues to draw them in. This won't change."

Karl Butts from Plant City, Florida, reported on the "cost-price squeeze" facing farmers like him, including the exorbitant cost of seed, and the impact of the rising price of oil and other products of the energy industry. Many farm inputs, from fertilizer to plastics, use petroleum-based ingredients, he pointed out.

Participants from the United Kingdom and Sweden reported debates among capitalist politicians in Europe over the stance to take towards Washington's pursuit of a "missile defense" system; others noted the likely catastrophic impact of a downturn in the United States on Mexico and other semicolonial countries heavily dependent on the U.S. market for their exports.

Discussion on 'The Jewish Question'

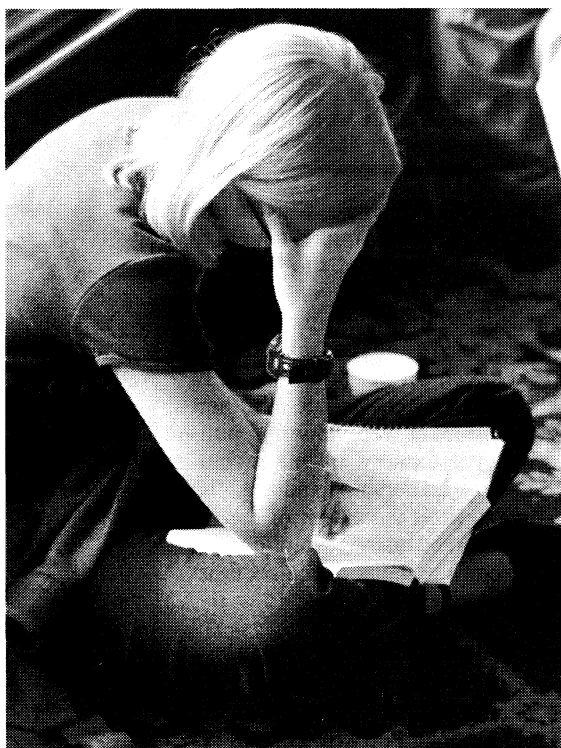
The pace of discussion kept up through the last day of the school, which began with Dave Prince's introduction on "The Jewish Question."

The contributions on this theme clearly benefited from the preparatory classes many had gone through. In particular, a number of contributors quoted passages from the Pathfinder title, *The Jewish Question: a Marxist Interpretation*, by Abram Leon. Prince also referred to a 1938 document entitled, "Theses on the Jewish Question," which is published in Pathfinder's *The Founding of the Socialist Workers Party: Minutes and resolutions 1938-39*, and to writings on this that can be found in the *Collected Works* of Bolshevik Party leader V.I. Lenin.

"In a period of retreat by the labor movement, and of capitalist 'prosperity,' assimilationist illusions grow," he said. "Even communists have been known to answer the question 'Are You Jewish?' with something like, 'I'm not Jewish, but my mother and father are,' as if being Jewish is simply a matter of religion or tradition."

Such illusions, said Prince, go hand in hand with denying the coming violent social conflicts, as well as the revolutionary opportunities, that capitalist crises always engender.

Capitalism itself "makes a Jew a Jew," said Prince. "Anti-Semitism is used by the capitalist rulers to misdirect the frustrations of the lower middle classes, who are ruined by the workings of capitalism. Jew-hatred is inscribed on the banner of fascist movements, which rise in a period of crisis. It took on a gigantically virulent form in Germany in the 1930s and '40s," said Prince.

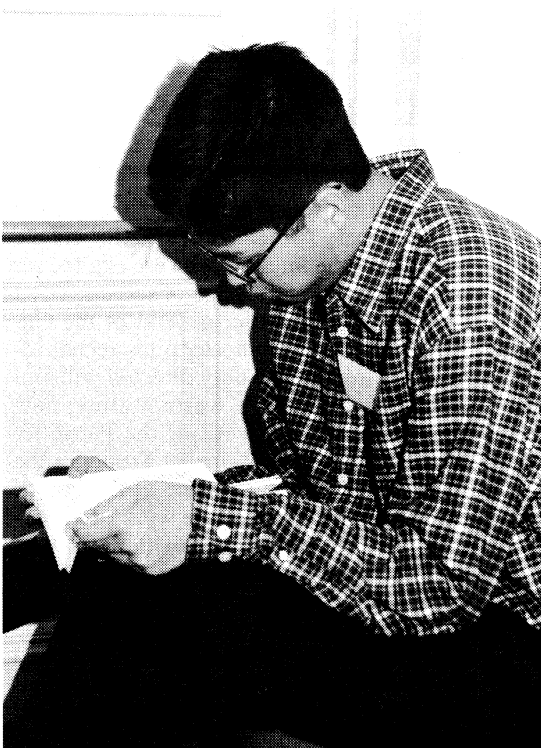


Participants in Atlanta socialist school study during break. Some \$450 worth of Pathfinder books and pamphlets were sold during the three-day regional event.

He also emphasized that the key to the Nazi victory and the holocaust that followed was the misleadership of Stalinism and the defeat of the working class.

Early warning signs of such trends can be seen in the United States today, Prince noted, pointing to ultrarightist Patrick Buchanan, who uses coded anti-Semitic allusions as he works to pull together a fascist cadre.

The importance of Leon's book, he said, is that it explains the history and special character of the Jewish nationality, which provide the grist to the mill of fascist forces and other rightists to try to turn Jews into a scapegoat for the evils of capitalism, especially in periods of crisis and open class



Militant/Eric Simpson

conflict.

"Leon explains that Jews were defined by their economic role as traders and representatives of a money economy in the period of the Roman empire and then the feudal Middle Ages," he said. The ruling classes of these precapitalist epochs deflected class resentments of the masses in town and country by organizing pogroms, or anti-Jewish riots.

Rightists exploit fears, resentments

"With the coming of capitalism, Jews ceased to play any special economic role. But rightists, using violent methods to salvage capitalist rule, exploit fears and resentments surviving from the past to mobilize their forces."

Debate flares up around Bush appointees

Continued from front page

for so long," he asked Ashcroft, "how do you just turn it off?"

The nominee for attorney general acknowledged his opposition to the right to abortion but said he accepted the Supreme Court ruling "as the settled law of the land." Court rulings on abortion rights "have been multiple, they have been recent, and they have been emphatic," he said.

Some questions, around which there has been substantial bipartisan agreement, such as the death penalty, attacks on the rights of working people who are immigrants, the gutting of welfare, the erosion of access to abortion for working women around the country, and the growing resegregation of housing and schools, were not raised at the hearing.

Senate Republican leader Trent Lott of Mississippi, referring to Robert Bork, a Reagan nominee turned down for the U.S. Supreme Court because of his staunch opposition to abortion rights and his racist record, told reporters that a "concerted effort to 'bork' John Ashcroft would not be well received. And I do not believe his Democratic Senate colleagues would be inclined to do that. It would really sour a major opportunity that we have here now to work together for a positive agenda."

Gale Norton is currently affiliated with groups that have three lawsuits against the Interior Department, which she is to head. She first started working with James Watt, Interior Secretary under Ronald Reagan, at the Mountain States Legal Foundation. The foundation is funded by the Coors brewing family, a notoriously antiunion operation. Norton opposes the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act and the Endangered Species Act, and supports a "self-audit" law in Colorado that allows companies to monitor themselves on environmental regulations.

As Colorado's attorney general she refused to defend the state against a lawsuit challenging affirmative action preferences in awarding highway contracts.

The Interior Secretary nominee is also a lobbyist for NL Industries, formerly known as the National Lead Company, a major producer of lead-based paints. The company is

a defendant in numerous suits regarding toxic waste sites and by people with severe health problems resulting from ingesting paint chips in homes, schools, hospitals, and other public areas.

The NAACP came out against Norton in light of her comments that she regretted the diminishing of "states' rights" because of the defeat of the Confederacy in the Civil War, and her opposition to affirmative action measures in Colorado.

Clinton as 'partisan provocateur'

The factional heat between liberal wings of the Democrats and more conservative sections of Republicans continued in another form as well, with outgoing president William Clinton breaking decades of tradition by announcing he will continue to have a residence in the nation's capital, along with Hillary Rodham Clinton, who was elected to the U.S. Senate from New York. The *Washington Post* wrote January 12 that "President Bill Clinton gave a glimpse this week of one of the roles he is likely to play once he cedes the White House to his successor: that of partisan provocateur."

The article reported on a Democratic Party fund-raiser where Clinton praised Gore's campaign chairman William Daley for "leading Vice President Gore to victory." The president added, "By the time it was over, our candidate had won the popular vote, and the only way they could win the election was to stop the voting in Florida." White House chief of staff John Podesta later told reporters that Clinton was not questioning Bush's legitimacy. "We accept the rule of law," he said. "He was just expressing what a lot of people in that room felt."

Bush angrily responded that Clinton "can say what he wants to say, but January the 20th I'll be honored to be sworn in as president." His press secretary, Ari Fleischer, added that there is a tradition "of presidents leaving office with respect for their successors. I'm certain that President Clinton will want to follow that."

Responding to the attacks on the Ashcroft nomination, Fleischer said his opponents were "escalating ideological division." Referring to material prepared by Ashcroft's opponent in the Senate race, Fleischer com-

A number of speakers noted that this is an issue today among their co-workers. Arlene Rubinstein said this is a frequent discussion on her job. "One co-worker blamed one injustice on the fact that 'the plant manager is a Jew.' It's an idea that's out there," she said, "and we have to take it on as part of fighting for the unity of the class."

Rubinstein and others reported being asked "are you Jewish," by co-workers. "When you're asked that, it's best to say 'yes' and see what the next question is," said Sandler in the discussion.

"There's less anti-Semitism today in the United States than there's ever been, I believe, but that doesn't mean this won't explode onto the scene as polarization deepens. There were a lot of assimilationist illusions in Germany in the 1930s, but this did not prevent people from being sent to the gas chambers. But we should always remind ourselves that communists and other vanguard workers were the first targets of the Nazis.

"Our analysis of this question is an important part of our theory and our program," he said.

A successful gathering

After addressing some of the points in the discussion, Prince brought the conference to a close on behalf of the organizers.

"This has been a tremendous success," he said, "and not just the three days we've spent here. The classes, the reading, the Militant Labor Forums that were organized in the weeks leading up to this—they were all part of it."

"We want to continue the study and conquering of communist politics coming out of the conference," he said. "When difficult questions come up we can go to the books and the communist program and talk it out to the end."

plained, "Items like that represent a further coarsening of the dialogue and the tone in Washington."

Testimony by proposed defense secretary Rumsfeld centered on what steps Washington should take to build an antimissile system, U.S. policy toward China and north Korea, and support for a substantial increase in military spending by the world's dominant imperialist power.

Rumsfeld chaired a committee that issued a report in 1998 on supposed ballistic missile threats from nations such as north Korea and Iraq. The "findings" were used by the Clinton administration to gear up funding and deployment of a missile "defense" system for the United States and its armed forces.

Portrayed as a defensive weapon, the antimissile system could give Washington a nuclear first-strike capacity against workers states such as China. Such a system, Rumsfeld said, would "work without being fired. They alter behavior" of other governments and "persuade people that they're not going to be able to blackmail and intimidate the United States and its friends and allies." He called the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, which prohibits such weapons, "ancient history."

On China, Rumsfeld said the U.S. government "can't engage in self-delusion. They are not strategic partners in my view." He warned that the Chinese government is, as the *New York Times* put it, "bent on challenging American influence in Asia." The *Times* said he described the government of north Korea "as a dictatorship more interested in selling missiles than feeding its people."

Rumsfeld called for a significant increase in U.S. military spending over the coming years "for dissuading the threats of the new century and for maintaining stability in our new national security environment."

Bush called for a \$45 billion increase over 10 years during the election campaign; Gore advocated twice that amount. The same day that Rumsfeld addressed the Senate confirmation hearing, outgoing defense secretary William Cohen was promoting the Clinton administration's budget for the Pentagon, which includes increases of \$50 billion over six years. Rumsfeld said even more funds are needed.

'We try to be a catalyst'

Interview in Havana with leaders of the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution

BY LUIS MADRID
AND MARY-ALICE WATERS

HAVANA—"The Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution (ACRC) was created during the most difficult moment Cuba has yet seen," Brig. Gen. Harry Villegas pointed out. Since its founding in 1993, he explained, the association has been part of helping to lead the efforts by Cuba's toilers to confront the challenges they have faced throughout the last decade as the weight of the world capitalist crisis has been sharply registered on the island.

The ACRC brings together in a single mass organization more than 330,000 Cubans of all ages who have been on the front lines of revolutionary battles from the 1930s to today.

Several generations of combatants

Included among its members are veterans of the volunteer brigades who fought against the fascist forces during the 1936-39 Spanish Civil War; combatants in Cuba's 1956-58 underground struggle and revolu-

duty and retired members of the Cuban Revolutionary Armed Forces (FAR) and the Ministry of the Interior, who are eligible for membership after 15 years of service.

Villegas, a brigadier general of the Cuban armed forces, who until his recent retirement from active duty directed political education for Cuba's western army, now heads the political work of the Patriotic-Military and Internationalist Front in the ACRC. In an interview here at the end of November, he spoke of the work of the association, and especially of the efforts it leads in winning a new generation in Cuba to the defense of Cuba's socialist revolution. Brigadier general Delsa Esther Puebla, the highest ranking woman in Cuba's armed forces, and brigadier general Gustavo Chui Beltrán, the association's national finances secretary, also joined the discussion with the *Militant*'s reporters.

Villegas is known around the world as *Pombo*, the nom-de-guerre given him during the 1965 campaign led by Ernesto Che Guevara in the Congo to support the national

liberation struggle there. He also fought alongside Che during the 1966-67 revolutionary campaign seeking to overthrow the dictatorship in Bolivia and forge a revolutionary movement in the Southern Cone of Latin America, and served in numerous internationalist missions in Angola between 1975 and 1990. He is now a deputy to the National

Assembly, a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, and has been named a Hero of the Republic of Cuba. The ACRC was founded during the most difficult days of what in Cuba is known as the Special Period. That is when the protagonists of more than five decades of revolutionary battles, inside and outside Cuba, organized themselves into the ACRC to help confront the challenges "by setting an example through our comportment," as Villegas said.

In 1993 the Cuban economy was still spiraling downward under the combined blows of intensified economic aggression by the United States government, and the sudden loss of 85 percent of Cuba's international trade due to the disintegration of the Soviet-

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In 1993 the Cuban economy was still spiraling downward under the combined blows of intensified economic aggression by the United States government, and the sudden loss of 85 percent of Cuba's international trade due to the disintegration of the Soviet-

led economic bloc of which Cuba was a part. Washington sought to take advantage of the fact that Cuba was no longer partially sheltered from the exploitation of the world capitalist market as it had been for nearly 30 years. In Cuba, working people and their government were adopting policies put forward by the revolutionary leadership to address the crisis, limit the extent of the retreat forced on the revolution, and defend the gains of the socialist revolution.

Political work

About 50 percent of the members of the ACRC belong to the Communist Party of Cuba or the Union of Young Communists, Villegas explained, "and we don't duplicate the work of any other mass organization or institution. Our job is not to help them carry out their tasks. Instead, we join their activities to complement them, to 'inject' a historical, a political ingredient. Cuba has a wealth of revolutionary history."

One of the ACRC's central tasks is to pass that legacy of struggle on to new generations. In doing so "we link together the youngest and the not-so-young," Pombo pointed out. Work in Cuba's schools is one of their primary activities. In fact, every school in Cuba is linked to a neighborhood group of the association, and each day ACRC members participate in the activities of the country's 12,300 schools.

As young people study the weight and character of Cuba's participation in the 1980s victory over the military forces of the South African apartheid regime trying to overthrow the government of Angola, for example, "members of the association can give them firsthand accounts of that military feat," Pombo noted.

Along similar lines, Villegas added, April 2001 will mark the 40th anniversary of the victory over the U.S.-organized invasion of Cuba at the Bay of Pigs. In neigh-



Militant/Luis Madrid

Brig. Gen. Harry Villegas (Pombo), an organizer of the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution, speaking to *Militant* reporters in Havana at the end of November.



Militant/Luis Madrid

Mary-Alice Waters, left, interviews Cuban brigadier general Delsa Esther Puebla, the highest ranking woman in the Revolutionary Armed Forces. Puebla joined the Rebel Army in 1957, and was one of the members of the Rebel Army's first women's platoon, created in 1958.

tionary war against the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship; members of the militias and armed forces who defeated the mercenary invasion at the Bay of Pigs in 1961 and wiped out the counterrevolutionary bands organized by Washington in the Escambray mountains and elsewhere; and hundreds of thousands of Cubans who have participated in internationalist missions as teachers, doctors, and military personnel in countries from Nicaragua and Bolivia, to the Congo, Ethiopia and Angola, to Vietnam. In the last years such internationalist efforts have been reinforced by thousands of doctors and other medical volunteers who have offered their services in countries from Honduras and Haiti to South Africa.

The association also includes many active-

Books for Cuba: a special appeal

Militant readers have for many years been contributing regularly to our "Books for Cuba" Fund. The fund makes it possible for Pathfinder Press to fill the frequent requests it receives from libraries, schools, political organizations, and others in Cuba for complimentary copies of a broad range of Pathfinder titles. The fund also makes it possible for Pathfinder to send a large selection of titles to Cuba for the Havana International Book Fair, which will take place this coming February 2-10, and to sell them in pesos at prices most Cubans can afford.

This year the Books for Cuba Fund aims to make possible an additional special donation.

Making History, a Spanish edition of which, entitled *Haciendo historia*, will be published by Pathfinder this month, is a much-sought-after book among members of the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution. A collection of interviews with four generals of Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces

published last year by Pathfinder Press and Editora Política in Cuba, the book tells the story of the ordinary working people, most still in their teens when they began, who transformed Cuba—and, in the process, transformed themselves into disciplined revolutionary soldiers—as they opened the door to the first socialist revolution in the Americas.

Three of the generals interviewed were commanders of the victorious Cuban forces that 40 years ago this April inflicted on Washington its first military defeat in the Americas at the Bay of Pigs.

A donation of 300 copies of *Haciendo historia* would enable the combatants association to make a copy available to each one of its municipal groups. As part of this year's Havana International Book Fair, the Books for Cuba Fund is making a special appeal for contributions to make this possible.

Checks can be made payable to the *Militant*, earmarked "Books for Cuba Fund," and mailed to the *Militant*, 410 West Street, New York, NY 10014.

Levantamiento popular de CIENFUEGOS

Por: Luis Madrid
El 15 de septiembre de 1957, en Cienfuegos, se inició el levantamiento popular que derrocó al régimen de Fulgencio Batista.

Este día se celebró el inicio del levantamiento popular que derrocó al régimen de Fulgencio Batista.

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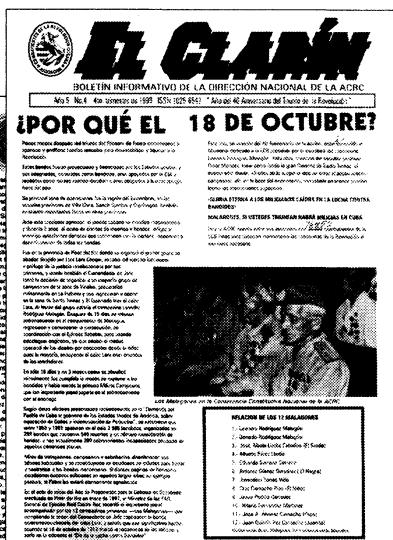
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***El Clarin*, journal of the ACRC, aims to bring alive the revolutionary legacy of the Cuban working people. Right, article explains that founding of the revolutionary militias is celebrated October 18 in honor of 12 peasants who captured a counter-revolutionary unit on that day in 1959. Above, account of 1957 military rebellion in Cienfuegos against Batista dictatorship.**

borhoods and schools across the country, those who fought in the historic battle of Playa Girón, as it is known here, will make that triumph over U.S. imperialism come alive.

General Chui Beltrán joined the revolutionary struggle to overthrow the Batista dictatorship as a teenager; he was part of the underground in the eastern city of Santiago de Cuba, and joined the Rebel Army forces in the Sierra Maestra mountains in 1958. He served twice on internationalist missions to Angola, where he was wounded by an anti-tank mine and lost a leg.

"The great events and most outstanding

figures" in our history are familiar to most Cubans, Chui said in an earlier interview. "But there are actions and martyrs on the local level that are virtually unknown." One of the tasks taken on by members of the association is to recapture that history and make it known to those living in each neighborhood today.

"Take the events in Cienfuegos," said Pombo, referring to the Sept. 5, 1957 military conspiracy against the Batista dictatorship. In collaboration with the July 26 Movement, naval officers "led their forces in revolt," explained Villegas. Originally planned as part of a nationally-coordinated action, the uprising was quickly crushed, however, and 39 revolutionary fighters were killed by Batista's forces. Workers in the city had also joined the battle in the streets. "What we are doing is part of rescuing that legacy," said Pombo.

Defense readiness

Known to everyone as Teté, brigadier general Delsa Esther Puebla was 17 when

in June 1957 she joined the Rebel Army. She was one of the first members of the Rebel Army's first women's unit, the "Mariana Grajales Platoon," created by Fidel Castro in September 1958. By the end of the revolutionary war she had earned the rank of captain. Currently a deputy to the National Assembly, Puebla is responsible for the Combatants' Aid Group of the FAR, which oversees assistance to veterans of Cuba's decades of struggles and their

relatives, and is a member of the national executive board of the ACRC. (A more extensive interview with Puebla will appear in an upcoming issue of the *Militant*.)

"Every single person—every man, woman and child—knows what they will have to do in case of war," Puebla underscored, as she discussed the importance the ACRC places on strengthening Cuba's military preparedness as a deterrent to Washington's ever present determination to overturn the revolution. "And every single one of them prepares for that possibility, everybody knows where they will have to be in such an event."

Villegas also noted that while the ACRC is not a military organization, some 97 percent of its members are linked in one way or another to the country's military defense: in active duty, in the reserves, as members of the militias, or as part of the People's Defense Brigades. Only those whose health precludes it are not organized into one or another military unit, active or in reserve,

Continued on page 12

Working people bear brunt of energy crisis

Continued from front page
higher.

The day before the blackouts in northern California, SoCal Edison announced it had temporarily suspended payment of almost \$600 million due its creditors, including some of its power suppliers, saying it was about to run out of cash.

A major power supplier, Dynegy Inc., has threatened to force the utility into bankruptcy if it did not make payments due this week. Similarly, several natural gas suppliers have threatened to stop shipments to PG&E unless it can pay in advance.

The companies that sell power to California claim they are charging high prices on the spot market—the market for power that will be used in less than 24 hours—because of electricity shortages in that state and because of fears that the utilities might collapse without paying their debts.

On January 11, PG&E chief executive officer Gordon Smith outlined a plan to slash 1,000 jobs and cut back services in order to save the company \$180 million. This is in addition to \$120 million in previous cuts. In an internal memo to its workforce, Smith announced that PG&E will lay off “contractors and hiring hall employees”—full-time workers who receive no company benefits. About 325 workers were laid off immediately, and the remaining 675 will be let go over in the coming months.

In addition the PG&E chief warned that “some customer services will necessarily degrade,” including a suspension in replacing power poles and transmission lines, a reduction in the number of employees fielding calls from customers who call about billing or service problems, and an extension of the average wait for new businesses to get power to 24 weeks.

Meanwhile, higher energy rates are already leading businesses to pass on higher costs to their customers. The Jack in the Box burger chain has already raised prices, and big egg and dairy producers are expected to follow soon.

California orange growers are worried that blackouts will lead to their delicate crops being ruined. They rely on electricity to power fans and water pumps that warm groves when it freezes. For many small farmers, the brutally high utility rates and the threat of further blackouts jeopardize their very livelihood.

Profits shielded by business secrecy

While the demand for energy has risen in California in recent years, the utilities have refused to invest in new power plants, refineries, or pipelines over the past decade, deciding instead to downsize to maximize short-term profits. In addition, several power plants in the state have been kept off-line

for maintenance. The “deregulation” legislation adopted in 1996 has not led to the promised competition between utilities—which are monopolies—or to what was supposed to be lower rates resulting from such competition.

With public anger over the energy disaster growing, media attention has focused on the process of how energy is bought and sold in secrecy, with energy companies raking in billions and various schemes used to jack up prices.

An article in the January 7 issue of the *San Francisco Chronicle*, titled “Energy brokered in secret—Stymied: No public scrutiny of bid process,” provides a few facts about how this works.

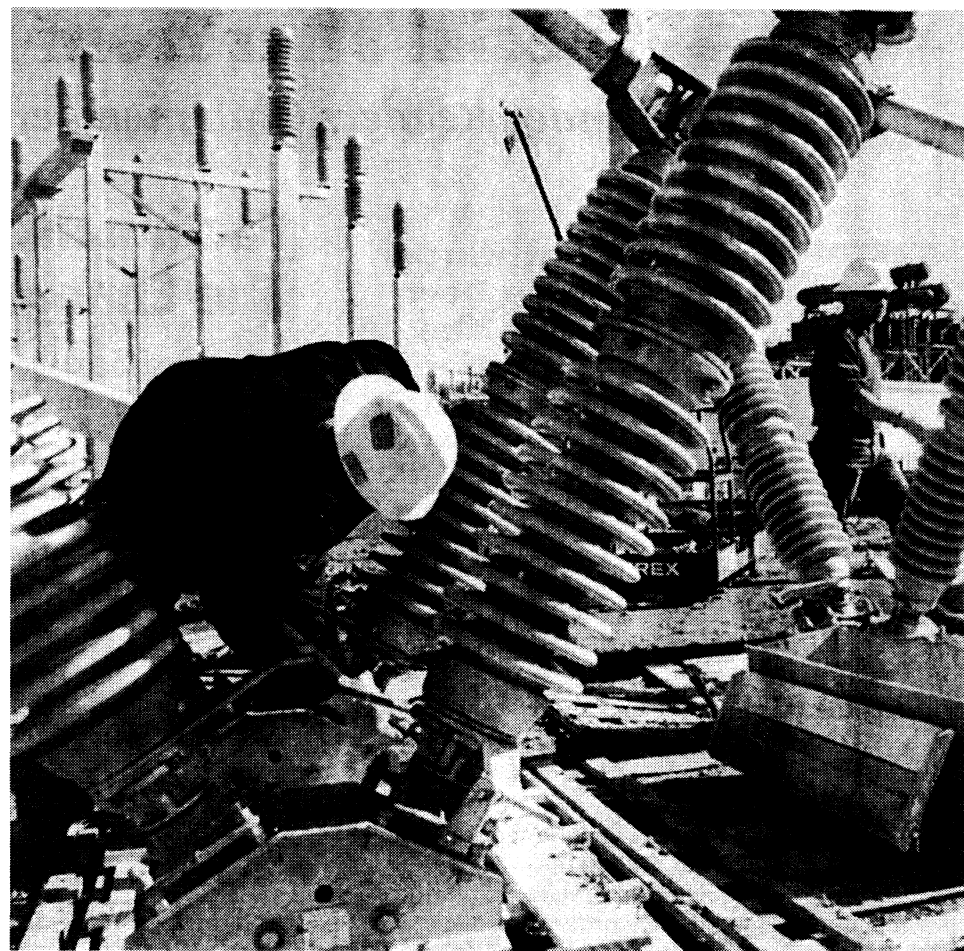
California’s Independent System Operator (ISO) and the Power Exchange (PX) are the two boards that oversee the buying of power in the state. Critics point out, however, that the members of the “public” boards are mostly representatives of the power industry.

These two bodies match the buyers of power—the utilities—with energy wholesalers for electricity that is needed on an hourly basis. They then hold auctions to determine the selling price of power by secret bidding. This auction system, set up under the 1996 deregulation law, uses a mechanism called the market clearing price, which “allows every seller to enjoy the same price as the highest bidder,” the *Chronicle* article explains.

The companies “call the secrecy pacts legal, fair, well-established as a practice in federal trade-secrets law and, most important, essential for the protection of proprietary information,” the *Chronicle* reported.”

Last fall the state Public Utilities Commission (PUC) issued a subpoena for bidding information from the electricity suppliers, including balance sheets, profit-and-loss statements, organization charts, bidding histories, and records of generator operations. After the energy companies refused to turn over this information, the PUC appealed to the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) to have the subpoenas enforced. The FERC has not yet acted on this request. The *Chronicle* stated, “Only a handful of regulators today can say whether the energy wholesalers are engaged in brazenly illegal price-fixing, merely unethical market manipulation, or just good business.”

Another practice of the power companies is called “bumping.” Conventional power plants use fossil fuel—natural gas, oil, or coal—to heat water and create steam, which in turn powers a turbine. The turbine is hooked up to a generator, which produces electricity. California state regulators are now investigating whether power produc-



Calpine Corp. power plant under construction in Baytown, Texas. This and other companies are raking in billions from sale of power to California, where Calpine is based.

ers have been shutting down their power stations and simply selling the natural gas outright instead of using it to create electricity. In this way the company gets top price for the natural gas, plus an increase in power prices for electricity because of the contrived shortage.

Under California law, bumping is not illegal. A spokesman for California-based Calpine Co. admitted that bumping was done “where it would be uneconomical to run because the price of gas was so high.”

John Sharp of the Natural Gas Supply Association in Washington D.C., stated, “Selling gas in the secondary market is clearly legitimate. They’re [energy generators] doing exactly what they should be doing. They’re selling to whoever is paying the most for it.” Sharp added, “Because people derive profits doesn’t mean they did something wrong.... I don’t think these guys are the bad guys.”

California governor Gray Davis has sought to deflect criticism of the role of the state government in working closely with the power companies to maximize their profits. He has attempted to blame companies based in other states for the crisis. “Never again can we allow out-of-state profiteers to hold Californians hostage,” he declared in a recent speech.

This ignores the fact that energy wholesaler Calpine Corp., which is based in San Jose, had an earnings increase for the third quarter of last year of 150 percent from one year earlier. Calpine operates power plants in northern California.

Additionally, one-third of the electricity

sold in California is from companies that were controlled by the two parent companies of PG&E and Edison before deregulation. PG&E Corp. and Edison International made \$3 billion from the sale of these power plants, and have made an additional \$3 billion selling power from plants they were allowed to keep.

Gov’t seeks to keep utilities solvent

Capitalist politicians are now working out plans, promoted by Governor Davis, for the state of California to become the main buyer of electricity, which it would turn over to the utilities for distribution. They claim the state can negotiate better prices than the utilities, whose credit ratings have plunged. The aim of this plan is to keep the utilities solvent—the government’s main priority—while long-term energy contracts are arranged.

There has been some discussion among big-business politicians of weakening some of the state’s environmental regulations, which the energy bosses blame for the lack of investment in energy infrastructure here.

Seeking to take the attention off the energy giants’ responsibility for the crisis, Davis has announced an “education” program to campaign for people to cut back energy use.

The federal government, in the meantime, is trying to wash its hands of the crisis erupting in California. White House spokesman Jake Siewert declared January 16 that it was up to the state government, local utilities, and power suppliers to find a solution. “The federal government has a limited role,” he stated.

Bob Keller works at a meat-processing plant in the East Bay.

Hearings held on Florida voting rights abuses

BY RACHELE FRUIT

TAMPA, Florida—The U.S. Commission on Civil Rights held hearings in Tallahassee January 11-12 to hear testimony from people who experienced violations of their voting rights in Florida during the presidential election on November 7. The majority of complaints came from working people, particularly, Blacks, who said, for example, that outdated voting equipment was concentrated in Black working-class communities, that police checkpoints were set up on roads leading to some polling places, and that some people were wrongly purged from the voter rolls.

The day before the hearing began the NAACP filed a class action lawsuit to eliminate discriminatory and unequal voting policies and practices from Florida’s electoral system. Kweisi Mfume, NAACP president and CEO, said the lawsuit is part of an effort to “restore justice to the thousands of Black and other voters who were denied the right to have their vote counted on November 7, 2000.” Mfume said, “There was evidence of massive voter disenfranchisement of people of color during the presidential election. The election in Florida was conducted in a manner which was unfair, ille-

gal, immoral and undemocratic.”

The lawsuit cites numerous examples of voting rights violations compiled by the NAACP during a public hearing it conducted in Miami four days after the election. Hundreds of people attended, most of whom were Black, including many Haitians who had attempted to vote for the first time.

Others joining the lawsuit include The Advancement Project, American Civil Liberties Union Foundation, Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, and People for the American Way Foundation.

At the start of the Civil Rights Commission hearings January 11, Willie D. Whiting, Jr., a Black pastor from Tallahassee, said that when he went to vote with his family, he was told that his name had been purged from the rolls because he was a convicted felon. “I have never spent a night in jail anywhere,” Mr. Whiting said.

Roberta Tucker, a Black woman who works as a clerk in the state labor department, testified that she had been intimidated by a Florida Highway Patrol roadblock near her polling place. She said she was stopped and ordered to produce a driver’s license before being permitted to proceed. “It was

just suspicious to me,” she said.

State officials such as Governor John Ellis Bush, Secretary of State Katherine Harris, Attorney General Robert A. Butterworth, and L. Clayton Roberts, director of the state division of elections, were also questioned by the commission to find out how they viewed their responsibilities to uphold the voting rights laws.

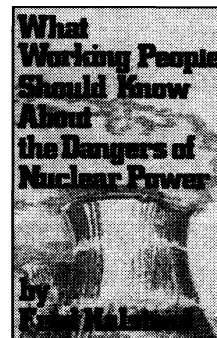
Commission chairwoman Mary Frances Berry said that she was surprised that Bob Crawford, a member of the state canvassing board, and Phylliss Hampton, general counsel for the state Elections Commission, testified that they had not heard any complaints following the election. “The public officials in the state apparently don’t read the papers, they don’t watch television, they don’t know anything about what’s going on in the state,” she said.

The Tallahassee hearings were the first of a series to be held in the state. The next public testimony will take place in Miami on February 16. The commission is also considering broadening the probe into other states. The Civil Rights Commission has no ability to enforce the federal voting laws. They are expected to issue an initial report within 60 days.

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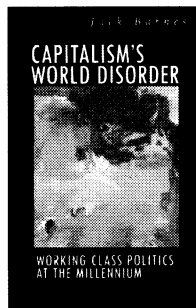
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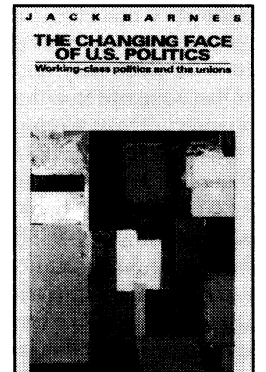
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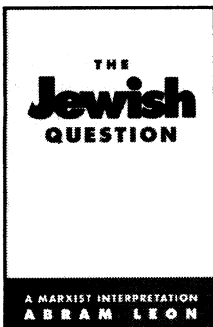
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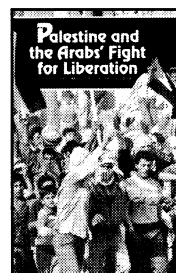
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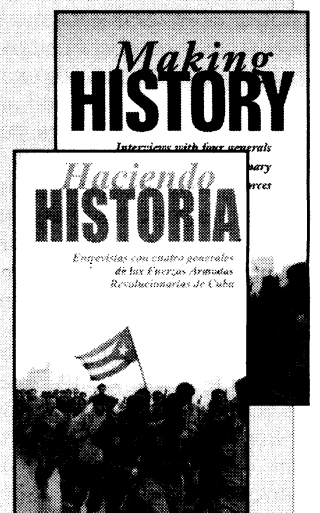
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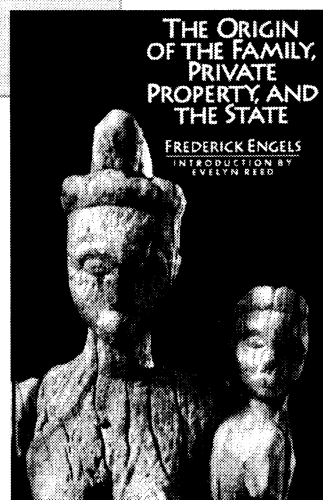
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1938 SWP theses on fight against Jew-hatred

Reprinted below are major excerpts from "Theses on the Jewish Question," adopted by the Socialist Workers Party Political Committee in August 1938. The SWP held its founding convention in Chicago from Dec. 31, 1937 to Jan. 3, 1938. Four months later, at its first meeting, the party's National Committee decided to establish a commission to draw up a document summarizing the SWP's position on the Jewish question with the aim of helping party units deepen their revolutionary work among working people who were Jewish. As part of this effort, in November 1938 the National Committee issued a statement titled "Open the Doors to Victims of Hitler's Nazi Terror!" Both documents appear in *The Founding of the Socialist Workers Party: Minutes and resolutions 1938-39* (see pp. 251-60).

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1. Our Approach That of Class Struggle

Our approach to the Jewish question can be none other than that of the international class struggle. In its death agony the capitalist class maintains itself in power by resorting to unmitigated brutality and violence aimed at the working class, particularly at its vanguard. It utilizes every element of hatred and prejudice which it can fan into flame to bring about division among the masses and to establish a social basis for its fascist, gangster rule.

The Jews, by virtue of the fact that everywhere they form only a small minority of the population, and because anti-Semitism has always been fostered, sometimes openly, sometimes in masked form, constitute an easy scapegoat upon whom the big bourgeoisie can divert the pent-up, dangerous wrath of the backward elements among the masses, and particularly of the desperate middle classes.

The fascist hirelings of the big bourgeoisie use the most vicious, lying propaganda to inflame to pogrom temperature the dormant antagonism to the Jews. Precisely because the fomenting of anti-Semitism has become an inseparable part of the technique of fascist reaction, the revolutionary party has a double duty to perform in combating it. It has the duty of exposing the real aims of the capitalists, hidden behind the smokescreen of anti-Semitism and thereby inoculating the masses against the poison; it has also the special task of mobilizing the real defense of the persecuted Jews, a defense of necessity based on the might of the organized working class. If these tasks are properly carried out, then we can at the same time hope to attract to our firm support the Jewish masses.

2. Democracy, Assimilation, and the Jews

The speed of political and social democracy during the progressive period of capitalism in the advanced countries, seemed to hold out the hope that the Jews would in time become indistinguishable from the rest of the population—that, in short, they would be assimilated. This process went furthest in Germany and in the United States.

The present decay of capitalism on a world scale and in each and every country, has, on the contrary, not merely arrested the movement towards assimilation but has brought its speedy reversal. To defend its hold on property and its exploitation of the toiling masses, national capitalism makes use of the ideology of national chauvinism. This is made the foundation of the totalitarian state. In the name of national chauvinism democratic rights are completely stripped from the working class. In exchange for these rights the masses are permitted the unrestricted play of anti-Semitism.

The reactionary measures taken against the Jews in Germany and Austria, driving so many to suicide, are a yardstick by which to measure the strides taken by rotting capitalism back to the Middle Ages. At one stroke the Jews are deprived not only of their democratic rights, as citizens, but of the elementary possibility of earning a livelihood. In this hideous fashion does capitalist democracy reach its end, not having lasted long enough to permit assimilation.

Many Jews—and not only Jews—delude themselves with the soothing thought that



Picket line at German consulate in New York, November 1938. Socialist Workers Party along with other groups held action to demand Washington "Open the Doors to Victims of Hitler's Nazi Terror." SWP theses, written shortly after its founding convention in January 1938, stated, "The solution of the Jewish question and that of the working class is a common one: the overthrow of capitalism. The Jews have reached an utter impasse because capitalism has reached an impasse. Only through the class struggle will the Jews find a road to the future."

America is different, that these same phenomena cannot happen here. They continue to picture the United States as a great melting pot with a democracy far more securely founded than was European democracy. But the Jews and the entire working class must be forewarned—the same causes leading to decay are visibly at work here, and the same results are not merely possible but absolutely inevitable unless the working class learns, and learns quickly, to defend its hard-earned rights and to take the road to power.

The second crisis piled on top of the first one leaves the capitalist ruling class in a serious predicament and in a quandary concerning the way out. That it is fearful of its continued domination and considers the advisability of strong measures—fascist measures—cannot be doubted. The symptoms of increased discrimination against the Jews, of anti-Semitism, are already present. We must immediately sound the alarm to put the working class on guard against all the reactionary conspiracies of the big bourgeoisie; more particularly we must awaken the Jewish masses to a sense of realization of the danger and above all we must propose the proper measures to be taken against the growing danger.

3. Bridge from Jewish Nationalism to the Class Struggle

The blows dealt to the Jews in one country after the other have tended to give new vitality to the Zionist movement¹ the national solution proposed for the Jews by many. What is our attitude on Palestine as a homeland for the Jews? The Fourth International has inscribed on its banner the giving of aid by the proletariat to the struggle for the self-determination of oppressed nationalities. But the international dispersion of the Jews creates a special problem not present in this form for any other nationality. Palestine is a land already occupied by a hostile people, the Arabs. Palestine, considered as part of the capitalist world, can be nothing but the catspaw of imperialism, particularly of British imperialism at the present time. The history of Palestine in the generation since the war has been the self-same history of class exploitation as for all capitalist countries. The workers in Palestine have suffered all the ills of capitalism.

We do not yield at all to Jewish nationalism and hence we point out all these facts. But it must be our attempt to create a bridge between the oppressed Jewish masses who are inclined to Jewish nationalism and the proletariat, particularly the vanguard in the Fourth International. We must make clear to the Jewish nationalists that even to carry out their ideal, their solution, it is necessary first of all to rid the world of capitalism.

The solution of the Jewish question and that of the working class is a common one: the overthrow of capitalism. The Jews have reached an utter impasse because capitalism has reached an impasse. Only through the class struggle will the Jews find a road to the future. By building such a bridge we can achieve the goal of Lenin, whose acceptance of the formula of self-determination meant, among other things, one more means for mobilizing all the oppressed side by side with the workers against the capitalist system. National oppression is not the least of the forms of capitalist oppression.

4. The Fight for Unrestricted Immigration

In view of the awful plight of the Jews, it must be made a special point in the program of the various sections of the Fourth International to fight against restrictions on immigration, particularly Jewish immigration. In the U.S. we must fight against the imposing of barriers such as the necessity to prove by showing money or through affidavits that the immigrant will not become a public charge. Part of our combating of anti-Semitism must take the form of a fight for unrestricted immigration for refugees, especially Jews.

5. The Jewish Bourgeoisie

It is an elementary principle of Marxism that the class lines cut across the national lines. The Jewish bourgeoisie, fearful as they may be of the advent of fascism, remain first of all capitalist exploiters. It is their aim—as their assignment by their class for the preservation of the capitalist system—to seize hold of the Jewish movement so as to subordinate the Jewish masses to the capitalist class, so as to keep the Jews separate from the general masses and thus apart from the class struggle....

7. The Jews, Other National Minorities, and the Workers

The Jews form a small minority of the American population—some 4.5 million out of 130 million. If the defense of the Jews depended on themselves alone, then their case would indeed be hopeless. But here again the Jewish masses must be shown the bridge to our movement, that of the Fourth International. For it is primarily upon the American workers that the Jews must lean for support in their struggle to maintain their joint rights.

Our propaganda against anti-Semitism is directed not to Jews but first of all to the American working class. It draws at every point the lesson that the attack against the Jews is merely the spearhead of the attack against the American working class for the purpose of lowering their standards of living and rendering them powerless to resist this economic blow by depriving them of their democratic rights.

The workers and the Jewish masses are natural allies in the antifascist struggle. Our propaganda among both is to convince them to defeat fascism the workers must establish socialism. Not only the general working class is the natural ally of the Jews, but all the other national minorities—Mexicans, Chinese, Japanese, Greeks, Poles, Russians—who are assigned a lower status by the American ruling class, can be enlisted in the struggle for the rights of national minorities including the Jews. Above all the Negroes must be linked up with the struggle against reaction, for the Negroes are the worst victims of capitalist exploitation. Their struggle for equal rights is of the utmost importance for the workers' cause.

National chauvinism is the cover for social patriotism. The struggle of the workers aided by the oppressed nationalities against chauvinism must inevitably take account of social patriotism and the propaganda for support of the capitalist class and its government in imperialist war. The fostering of social patriotism in the ranks of the working class means the weakening of the struggle against fascism. The Stalinists pursue precisely this course of betrayal, which plays into the hands of reaction and weakens the workers' movement.

8. Transition Program and the Jews

The transition program includes the necessity for building workers' defense groups. This idea can find especially fertile soil for implanting and for growth into reality among the Jewish masses. It goes without saying that such defense groups constituted under our influence must not consist of Jews alone. Nevertheless, we must take full advantage of the great concentration of the Jews in New York City to enlist as many as possible in such defense organizations. In this respect the situation in Jersey City² and its implications for the Jews need hardly be emphasized. Jewish organizations must be encouraged to set up defense groups, of which groups should be offered for aid to the workers' organizations. Similarly we must exert our influence wherever possible to have workers' defense groups come to the aid of the Jews when necessary.

9. Jewish Youth

The Jewish youth are the first to bear the brunt of anti-Semitic discrimination. They feel this immediately in seeking jobs, and in the schools and colleges. Thus an especially intensive campaign must be carried on among the youth, who can be rapidly won to our cause. The intellectual Jewish youth in particular are placed in a position which makes them receptive to revolutionary propaganda. Among the youth it is particularly necessary to combat the Stalinist poison of fatalism—that fascism is inevitable. Only the Fourth International can dispel this discouragement and can inspire the youth to fight for victory....

¹ The Zionist movement in this country was at this time a relatively small minority in the Jewish community and remained so until after the war.

² The Jersey City government's assaults on the CIO at this time represented an incipient fascist danger, according to the SWP, which tried to enlist not only unions but also the unemployed and oppressed minorities in campaigns against the Frank Hague regime and its extralegal bands.

Quebec premier's resignation deepens crisis

Continued from Page 16

said, "When Tamils serve us in English in corner grocery stores...it is a call to direct violence."

According to *La Presse*, these remarks were met with sustained applause by many of the 100 people present, an indication that rightist forces had organized to intervene at that session of the commission, the last in Montreal, and had given it a very different tone.

Sharp polarization in the PQ

The reactions to Michaud's remarks were on the front pages for several days. Newspapers printed articles and letters, both for and mostly, against. "I found it just revolt-

ing," Sylvie Vézina was reported saying about Michaud's anti-Semitic comments. "This is completely racist. I had the impression of going back 20 years."

"For us," said Daniel Baril, an ex-president of the Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec (University Student Federation of Québec) "the multi-ethnicity of Québec is a fact." Baril was a signatory of a letter denouncing Michaud's anti-immigrant remarks signed by a group of young people of various political stripes. Bouchard immediately distanced himself from Michaud. "I am in total disagreement with Mr. Michaud's remarks," he said. "I deplore them, I condemn them and I totally dissociate myself from them." On December 14,

the provincial Québec National Assembly unanimously adopted a resolution condemning Michaud's remarks.

But Michaud stuck by his statements and his announced intention to run as PQ candidate in a coming by-election in the provincial electoral riding of Mercier in Montreal.

A full page ad, "Statement of solidarity regarding Yves Michaud: The National Assembly and Liberty of Expression," was published December 19 in the Montreal daily *Le Devoir*. It was signed by more than 30 figures in the broad sovereignist milieu, including former premier Parizeau; Fernand Daoust, former president of the Québec Federation of Labor (FTQ), Québec's largest union federation; Denis Lazure, a former PQ cabinet minister; well-known Québécois artists; and other PQ officials, including former candidates.

Several of these figures are associated with the so-called "radical wing" of the PQ, whose trade mark over the years has been calling for a rapid third referendum, the banning of other languages than French on public billboards, and coercive measures aimed at imposing French on immigrants.

While the ad claimed to denounce the National Assembly's motion because it was an attack on free speech, it also said that Michaud is "one of the most eminent and most respected citizens of Québec...who only regretted the relative stalemate in the integration of certain groups of immigrants and repeated the character of the vote in the 1995 referendum."

Two days later a statement by Marc Lavoie, president of the Confederation of National Trade Unions (CSN), the second largest trade union federation in Québec, denounced "all those who believe that it is by crawling on our knees that we will gain the sympathy and the esteem of these new arrivals." The statement added that the "problem isn't what Yves Michaud said. It is what the Liberals and the PQ members did...if Lucien Bouchard is ashamed of his [people] he should know that the CSN is proud of them."

The federalist politicians and media were also quick in using the Michaud affair to smear the Québec national movement as intolerant, anti-immigrant, and anti-Semitic. Thomas Walkom, National Affairs Writer for the *Toronto Star*, wrote January 13, "This isn't to say that Québec in the 1930s was more anti-Semitic than, say, Ontario. But Québec nationalism probably was."

In his statement of resignation, Bouchard said he had been "surprised by the protests following the unanimous adoption of the resolution by this [National] Assembly on the unacceptable character of the remarks which launched this strange and dangerous debate" but that he had no interest whatsoever in continuing the debate.

Michel Prairie is the Communist League candidate in the Montreal riding of Mercier for the coming by-election. Grant Hargrave is a member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees in Montreal.

Interview with Cuban revolutionary combatants

Continued from Page 8

Villegas added. And even they join in the country's system of revolutionary vigilance, which means that no institution or neighborhood is without volunteers taking part in organized guard duty every night.

"There are a lot of comrades retired from active duty," said Puebla. "However, each one of them knows how to operate a tank, a cannon, or an anti-aircraft gun. When it comes to the defense of the homeland, everyone is on active duty."

Defense readiness, moreover, is seen as another vehicle through which ACRC members strengthen ties with youth and members of the mass women's, trade union, and other organizations.

Last October, for example, commemorating the month in which Camilo Cienfuegos and Che Guevara, two of the best known leaders of the revolution, died, the province of Cienfuegos celebrated its second People's Recreational Target Practice festival. During these events, students and teachers from elementary and high schools joined association members in target practice contests. In a similar fashion, but in collaboration with the mass organizations, ACRC members help organize what they call "mass target practice." These types of activities, the leaders of the association emphasized, strengthen their links to more than 2 million students, as well as fellow workers and farmers across the country. Festivals include collective birthday celebrations and academic competitions on knowledge of the particular historic date being commemorated. The first festival in Cienfuegos was held last April, around the celebration of the victory at Playa Girón.

A self-financed organization

Organized through 12,224 locals that cover all of the country's 169 municipalities, the combatants' association is fully self-financed. "Annually, on the day of the Territorial Troop Militias, every member donates the equivalent of one day's wages. And everyone pays 10 pesos a year in membership dues," explained Pombo.

There is a national directorate made up of 46 members, he added, presided over by Commander of the Revolution Juan Almeida, whose revolutionary activity goes back to the struggle against the dictatorship from 1952 on. He took part in the 1953 assault on the Moncada barracks, was one of the expeditionaries on the *Granma* in 1956, and led the Rebel Army's Third Front in the revolutionary war. He has been a member of the Political Bureau of the Central Committee of the Cuban Communist Party since its foundation in 1975, and of the National Assembly since 1976.

"But above all, we function guided by the principle that every member is an activist. In each municipality there is only one full-timer!"

"Many of our members who are retired were complaining about having little to do," Pombo commented. "That's not natural after a lifetime of intense work." The responsibilities of the association are one of the ways they can continue to make an important contribution to the revolution.

"We are combatants, not veterans," Chui stressed. "We're not like those who sit around talking, holding social events and living from their memories of history. We're engaged in the day-to-day struggle for the unconditional defense of our socialist revolution."

"We show we are combatants by always striving to be the best in everything," Villegas remarked. "We try to be a catalyst" to help bring out the best in everyone.

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CALENDAR

CALIFORNIA

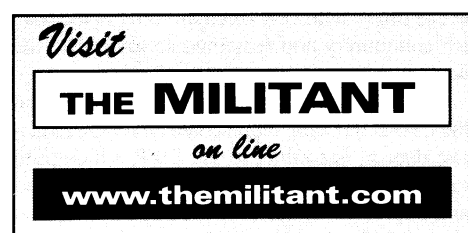
Oakland

March and Rally for Amnesty and Immigrant Rights. Sat., Jan. 27, 11:00 a.m. March from St. Elizabeth's Church, 1500-34th Ave. (near Fruitvale BART station). 12:30 p.m. rally at Carmen Flores Park, Fruitvale Ave. (between International and Foothill Blvds.). For more information, contact Chloe Osmer at (510) 643-2355.

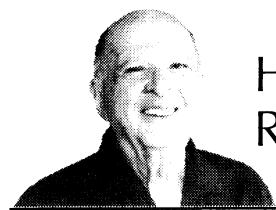
OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma City

American Agriculture Movement Convention. Thurs., Jan. 25, to Sun., Jan. 28. Biltmore Hotel. For more information contact: Joyce Jobgen, AAM national treasurer, (605) 993-6201, e-mail parity79@hotmail.com or parity@gwtc.net



A preview?—Data from the United Kingdom's Office of National Statistics was cited as showing that last winter an estimated



Harry Ring

6,030 people in Greater London died as a result of living in cold homes. The elderly were pointed to as most vulnerable in coping with fuel rates.

Sounds sensible to us—Missouri State auditors criticized the expenditure of \$6,500 for a bullet-resistant bench for the Public Service Commission members. The bench is intended as a shield for the utility regulators.

Farm crisis simply a U.S. thing?—“Nearly 24,000 farmers and farm workers in England were forced out of their livelihood last year because of the continuing agricultural crisis.”—The Times, London.

Strip searches included?—In a weekly column on the rights of workers, and bosses, the Los Angeles

Times said that on company property employers have the legal right to search employees' vehicles, lunch boxes, brief cases, etc., and even require them to empty their pockets.

You wanted wall-to-wall flooring?—Figures for 1999 indicate that home improvement companies have nosed out car dealers as the number one source of consumer complaints.

Medical finding—University of Minnesota researchers are studying a drug which is used to block the “high” experienced by alcoholics. They want to see if it will also block

the pleasure kleptomaniacs are said to derive from compulsive stealing.

They note that kleptomania is now regarded as an illness rather than criminal behavior. Our question: In the case of the capitalist class, couldn't it be both?

Law of capitalist jungle—We've been musing over the disclosure about defective Firestone tires used on the Ford Explorer, resulting in 148 U.S. deaths and 500 injuries. Now it's charged that Ford has been buying tires lighter than needed for Explorer safety. The virtue? Advertising claims of more miles per gallon. Not to mention

that it pads profits and helps curb excess population.

Next, ‘baggage thrift’ fares?—“‘Economy class syndrome’ cited in 25 deaths—Immobility and cramped seating on long flights are believed to cause blood clots in passengers at a Tokyo airport”—News headline.

Profits first—First reports suggested the feds and Delaware officials acted promptly to shut down a cluster of artesian wells when they found the water was contaminated with a carcinogenic chemical. But further disclosures established they knew about it a year earlier.

Nationalization as a response to energy crisis

Reprinted below are excerpts from *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics: Working-class Politics and the Unions* by Jack Barnes. The excerpt can be found in the chapter titled “A new stage of revolutionary working-class politics,” a report approved by the Socialist Workers Party National Committee in April 1979. The section of the report that is excerpted takes up the 1938 programmatic document by communist leader Leon Trotsky known as the Transitional Program for Socialist Revolution, also available from Pathfinder Press. Copyright © 1981 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY JACK BARNES

In a nutshell, these were some of the main ideas Trotsky laid out for the labor movement and its revolutionary leadership.

First, the defense of the workers against the twin scourges of unemployment and inflation, which are endemic to capitalism. The heart of Trotsky's solution is a sliding

from the pages of *Changing Face of U.S. Politics*

scale of wages and hours—what we would call a full cost-of-living escalator and a shorter workweek with no loss of pay. The capitalists, not workers, are responsible for unemployment and inflation, Trotsky pointed out. So they, not the workers, should pay the price. Workers should be guaranteed full protection of their living standards and job security.

Secondly, Trotsky dealt with the trade unions—the class institutions that are central to the fight for such things as the sliding scale of wages and hours. Workers have to strengthen their unions. The illusion exists that the unions are strong, he explained, but they're not strong so long as their strength goes unused.

Socialists have to chart a course to turn them into revolutionary unions, Trotsky said. That's what we're after in projecting our program for a class-struggle left wing in the labor movement. The unions must not be tied to the capitalist class, its government, or its parties, Trotsky said. The class independence of the unions must be fought for and preserved. There must be democracy in the unions, so that the workers themselves can use the unions to fight for their interests. Trotsky talked about the need for solidarity, both within the class and with all the struggles of the masses.

It's clear from Trotsky's discussions about the Transitional Program with American comrades that the slogan of an independent labor party would have come in here. But it was omitted on request of the American comrades so that they could discuss it more fully. There were disagreements on this question among American Trotskyists at that time. We finally adopted the labor party slogan shortly after the Transitional Program was issued by the founding conference of the Fourth International.

Above everything, Trotsky wrote, look to the youth and bring an entire new layer of militant workers into the union leadership. Prepare in this way to sweep aside the old, conservative, class-collaborationist leaders.

The Transitional Program, Trotsky said, is such an invaluable weapon for the working class because of both the “confusion and disappointment of the older generation, and the inexperience of the younger generation.”

Educate and train the younger generation of workers in class-struggle methods, Trotsky explained. Only along that road can the power of the unions be unleashed. Only along that road will more and more workers begin to say no to the restraints the trade union bureaucracy imposes on their struggles....

Opening the capitalists' books

Then Trotsky dealt with workers control. There were two sides to this. One was opening the capitalists' books—gaining knowledge for the working class and public at large about everything that big business and the capitalist government hide from us. The workers should shine a spotlight on all the so-called business secrets, the preparations for war, the connections among the war industries, the connections between big business and government regulatory agencies, and so on. The labor movement must be mobilized to expose contrived shortages and hidden stockpiles, to get at the truth behind the disastrous breakdowns inflicted on the population under capitalism.

Connected to this is the fight for actual control on the job—control over the pace of the line, control over safety, control over how the job is organized. This becomes a school for the working class in preparing to manage and plan the entire economy under a workers government. Lenin banged away at this lesson after the October revolution: You can't simply leap into workers management even when the workers hold political power. It takes time and experience. Workers control is a school for the entire reorganization of production, for real planning.

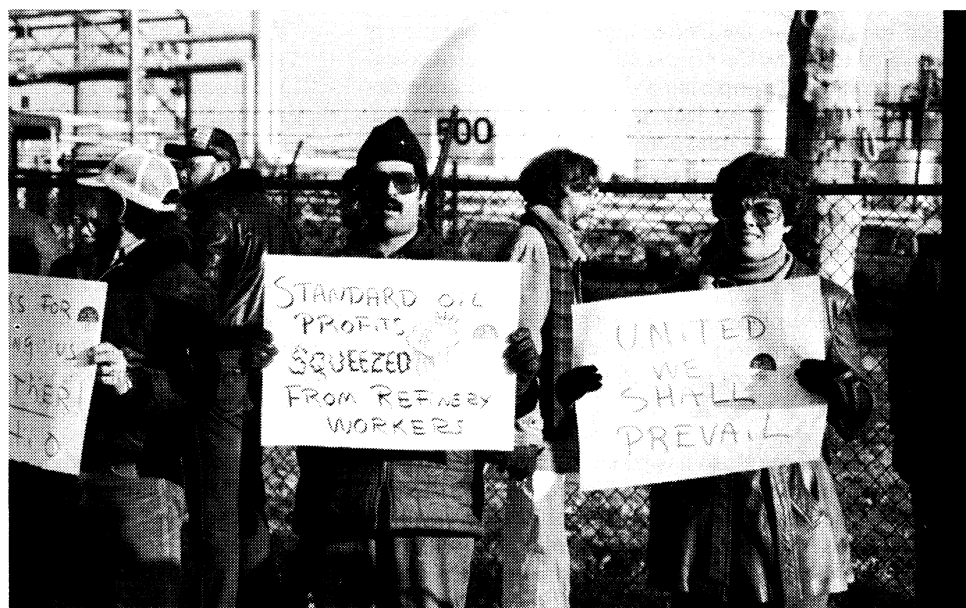
Then Trotsky turned to the expropriation of selected industries; in his discussion with some American comrades he agreed that the term “nationalization” can have the same content if properly explained. The goal of the workers government is to expropriate the entire capitalist class and establish a planned economy, Trotsky said.

But sometimes all hell will break loose under capitalism, posing the need to take a vital industry out of the hands of the capitalist profiteers. A particular industry will become crucially important in meeting people's needs, but criminally incapable of doing so. It may undergo a total breakdown. Something won't work. It will greatly endanger workers and their environment.

Demand to nationalize energy industry

We've seen this best around the energy crisis, but it comes up around other particular industries as well. In cases such as these, Trotsky said, we make a demand on the capitalist government that it take over these industries, that it nationalize them and that they should become public utilities rather than remaining privately owned and operated.

There should be full public knowledge about all aspects of the operation of these publicly owned industries; there should be no secret files, secret meetings, or hand-picked boards. The whole thing should be out in the open. Tied to this is the fight by the workers in these industries to control all the conditions under which they work and to use their special knowledge and position to make sure that everything is out on the table. These demands point in the direction of expropriating all basic industry and the banks.



Militant/Halket Allen

Oil workers on strike at refinery in Marcus Hook, Pennsylvania, in 1986. In *The Changing Face of U.S. Politics*, Jack Barnes writes, “The labor movement must be mobilized to expose contrived shortages and hidden stockpiles, to get at the truth behind the disastrous breakdowns inflicted on the population under capitalism.” Workers control of industry is key to forcing open the capitalists' books to public scrutiny and nationalizing a vital industry such as the energy companies.

Trotsky then turned to the need of the workers to defend themselves and their unions against the bosses' hired goons and fascist gangs. This begins on the most basic level with the strike picket lines and encompasses the entire system of measures that the workers will have to take as the class polarization deepens and the fight for political power is posed more and more sharply. A proper understanding of strategy and tactics here is a life-or-death matter for the workers movement.

From here, the Transitional Program

moves on to a broad range of issues facing the labor movement; the need for an alliance with the farmers; war, which is an especially important question for the youth who have to fight and die in imperialist wars; racism and national chauvinism, particularly in countries with large oppressed nationality populations; the fight for democratic rights.

All of this leads up to the fight for a workers government and the organization of councils or soviets—that is, the workers' struggle for political power to reorganize society on a new basis.

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —

25 CENTS
THE MILITANT
A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

January 30, 1976

Members of the Milwaukee Amalgamated Meat Cutters union Local 248 have been on strike for one year now.

Last January 750 packinghouse workers were forced to strike when the Milwaukee Independent Meatpackers Association, the employers organization, tried to impose a wage-cutting contract on the union. The city's nine major packinghouses were shut down immediately by mass picketing that came to involve many hundreds of Milwaukee trade unionists.

Despite the determination of the strikers and the breadth of labor and community support for the strike, the Meatpackers Association has refused to give in on a single union demand. They broke off negotiation talks for a five-month period and recruited hundreds of local and out-of-state strike-breakers to reopen the struck plants.

The employers have also enlisted the services of a notorious union-busting law firm in the area—the Patrick Brigden firm. In the last two years this outfit has been employed to break strikes at Harley-Davidson, Masterlock, Everbrite, Hein-Werner, and other Milwaukee-area plants. Though unsuccessful in its efforts to break the unions in any of these shops, the Brigden firm has pulled out all stops in its effort to crush the Meat Cutters union.

THE MILITANT
PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE
NEW YORK, N.Y. FIVE (5) CENTS

January 29, 1951

The President of the United States, members of the Congress and the State Department are violating the will of the American people by refusing to stop the Korean war now.

In a letter to the President and Members of the Congress printed in *The Militant* July 31, 1950, shortly after the beginning of U.S. intervention in the Korean civil war, James P. Cannon, National Secretary of the Socialist Workers Party, stated that the American people would remember the War of Independence that brought this nation its freedom, and would react in our revolutionary and democratic traditions against the assault upon the Korean people. That is exactly how the American people have reacted.

On Dec. 4, 1950, James P. Cannon again addressed the responsible government officials stating that the heartfelt sentiment of the American people demanded that the President and the Congress stop the criminal aggression against the Asian people.

Today it is clear that he was speaking for the overwhelming majority of Americans.

The Gallup poll of Jan. 23 reports that two-thirds of the American people want to “pull our troops out of Korea as fast as possible.” Almost one half are sure it was a mistake to send troops to Korea in the first place.

Cancel the debt, jobs for all!

The slowdown in the U.S. economy, which will lead to increased layoffs and plant closures for working people in the United States, means even greater devastation for workers and farmers in Latin America and Asia.

Mexico in particular, which depends on the United States for 80 percent of its exports and 75 percent of its imports, is directly impacted by the fate of the U.S. economy. Countries where the U.S. dollar has been imposed as the official currency such as Ecuador, El Salvador, and—in practice—Argentina, will be especially hard hit.

El Salvador is a glaring example of what imperialist domination means for millions of working people today. For the vast majority of people in that Central American nation, replacement of the national currency with the U.S. dollar means higher prices for basic necessities and reduced buying power for their wages. With many farmers driven off the land, while the country's natural wealth is plundered and its labor superexploited by U.S. and other foreign capitalists, more than 2 million people have been forced to migrate to the United States. This devastation is aggravated today by the effects of the earthquake, a social disaster created by imperialist domination and underdevelopment—marked by lack of adequate medical care, shelter, nutrition, and transportation.

Apart from meager material aid, the most “generous” help from the White House has been to temporarily suspend deportations of undocumented Salvadorans living in the United States. Those detained will be held in immigration jails, to be deported later. Instead of this brutal arro-

gance, Washington should immediately end all deportations of Salvadoran and other Central Americans, period.

One of the primary ways in which the semicolonial nations are exploited by U.S., European, and Japanese finance capital is through the foreign debt squeeze. This debt bondage is a social relation, through which the imperialists siphon wealth out of these countries and extend their tentacles throughout their economies, seeking privatization and control of their state-owned industries, accompanied by austerity demands on the working class.

The Third World debt to imperialist creditors stands at a staggering \$2.4 trillion—four times what it was in 1982, despite the fact that semicolonial nations forked out more than \$3.4 trillion in interest payments between 1982 and 1998.

Working people in the United States need to join with our sisters and brothers in Latin America, Asia, and Africa to demand cancellation of the Third World debt. We should join with workers in Ecuador, who have taken to the streets to protest the dollarization measures and debt squeeze, as well as unionists in Argentina marching against the dismantling of the pension system and other austerity measures demanded by the International Monetary Fund.

To address the prospect of growing unemployment in this country, labor needs to fight for a shorter workweek with no cut in pay to create jobs. A massive public works program should be launched to build and repair roads, bridges, schools, hospitals, and housing that would create hundreds of thousands of additional jobs.

Workers' gains decided in struggle

President George Bush has taken the first steps to continue the bipartisan anti-working-class course pursued by the Clinton administration and Republican-controlled Congress. His nomination of several politicians with particularly reactionary records for important posts is a sign of what the incoming president would like to accomplish. The proposals advocated by Bush, as well as his nominees for secretary of state and Pentagon chief, for rapid deployment of an antimissile system and increased military spending—policies whose basis was laid by Clinton—are aimed against workers and farmers around the world.

While most Bush nominees are receiving a bipartisan welcome in Congress, several have become the target of factional attack, mainly by the liberal wing of the Democratic Party. The debate revolves around crucial questions for working people—issues at the heart of the “cultural wars” in bourgeois politics—such as a woman's right to abortion, affirmative action, and school desegregation.

As with every instance where the two parties that represent the superwealthy minority in this country begin to debate rights working people have won in struggle—with one side or another posing as defenders of workers, farmers, women, or Blacks—it is important to step back and put the framework of the debate on a working-class foundation.

In attempting to further the assault on the social wage, democratic rights, and other hard-won gains of working people, the new administration will build on inroads made by the outgoing one. Under the Clinton administration blows have been dealt to affirmative action, access by working women to abortion across the country, and school desegregation. The extension of the death penalty, blows dealt to working women with the abolition of Aid to Families with Dependent Children, and assaults on the rights of immigrants are just a few of the “accomplishments” of the previous White House and Congress.

The main line of questioning by Democratic senators of

Ashcroft has been whether he will uphold the “law of the land.” But there is no law on the books that transcends the class struggle. Whether or not they are “sworn” to uphold the law, capitalist politicians, Democrats and Republicans alike, use their elected or appointed posts to probe to see where they can turn back gains of working people. Employers routinely ignore or seek to circumvent any law impinging on their profits, including by flouting workers' right to organize unions, job safety, environmental protections, and minimum wage and overtime pay regulations. All these are decided in the class struggle and later codified into law, reflecting the relationship of forces. What the Bush administration is able to carry out will depend not primarily on his cabinet appointments or declarations but on the unfolding class struggle at home and abroad.

Tens of thousands of working people have begun to resist the rulers' assault through strikes, street protests, and other actions against the employers and their government over the past several years. These have included mass actions to defend affirmative action and immigrant rights; rallies to oppose the death penalty and to protest racist assaults, including by police in many cities; and mobilizations to defend unions under attack. These struggles point to relying on the collective strength and capacities of working people and our organizations, such as the unions, to defend past gains.

Solidarity—seeing every question as a social question where action by the working class is needed to defend the interests of the majority—will become increasingly important with an economic slowdown and the pressures it brings to bear on the toiling majority. While the capitalist rulers offer increased racism, brutality, war, and assaults on the unions, working people can chart a road toward social solidarity and revolutionary struggle to replace the government of the wealthy minority with one of workers and farmers and to abolish the dog-eat-dog system of capitalism.

Socialist candidate: Open the books!

The Socialist Workers Party in Los Angeles announced garment worker Wendy Lyons as its candidate for mayor of Los Angeles on January 16. Lyons and her supporters plan to collect signatures to place her on the ballot for the April election. The following statement was issued by Lyons's campaign on January 17.

In face of the growing impact of the energy crisis on working people, the socialist campaign demands immediate government action to open the books of the energy monopolies to inspection by workers and farmers. Only such a step can bring before public view the contrived shortages, price-gouging, and true financial situation of these corporations.

The labor movement can take the lead in this by fighting to allow workers and their unions in the oil and electrical generation industries to find out and let the world know the truth about what is going on in the industry. We demand: end the secrets!

Workers and farmers in the state face power blackouts, demands by the utilities to “conserve” power, rate hikes, and layoffs due to the profit drive by the energy companies. The power companies even refuse to tell people when a blackout will occur, even though they plan in advance where and when they will turn off the power. Rising prices for gas, electricity, and heating oil are eating up a larger

part of budgets of working people across the country.

Moves under discussion in the California legislature, such as the proposal by Gov. Gray Davis for the state to buy the electricity and sell it to the power utilities, all head in one direction: workers and farmers in the state paying for a massive bailout of Pacific Gas and Electric Co. and Southern California Edison. The move would also guarantee massive profits to companies that supply natural gas, coal, and other fuels used to generate electricity.

Instead of bailouts and schemes to guarantee continued corporate profits at the expense of the basic needs of working people, our campaign urges the labor movement to demand the government expropriate the energy monopolies and run the industry as a public utility in the interests of the majority. The nationalized utility should be overseen by a publicly elected board, independent of the government, with workers having control over job conditions and production. I am convinced that working people here and elsewhere would respond massively to calls by the labor movement for such a campaign.

The socialist campaign also demands that immediate relief be provided to all who need it, so that not a single person will go without heat, electricity, or fuel. Small farmers and businesses must also be protected from ruination by price-gouging and energy shortages caused by the criminal actions of the energy trusts.

Ontario nickel miners resist union busting

Continued from front page

dispute. “They are trying to take back all we won in 47 years: rights and conditions of work,” commented Goulard as he stood along with other strikers by a bonfire outside a union trailer. A number of miners see the concessions demanded by the company as a direct attack on the union and the current strike as a way to defend it. “It's the kind of management that we have at Falconbridge that creates a need for unions. Hell, they don't break them, they create them,” said a January 1 picket line newsletter.

Local 598 was certified at Falconbridge in 1944 as part of the International Union of Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers—known before 1916 under the name of Western Federation of Miners (WFM). In contrast to most of the Mine Mill locals in Canada that became part of the United Steelworkers of America during the McCarthy-Cold War period, Local 598 merged with the Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) in 1993.

Since the beginning of the strike Falconbridge has hired 200 additional security cops from Toronto-based Accufax to escort trucks delivering ore to the smelter and buses carrying scabs into work. “They are here to provoke confrontation. They intimidate. They are here to break our strike,” a notice on the union web site said. The company claims the smelter is running at 60 percent capacity. The union says it is being run at around 30 percent.

The ongoing labor conflict is reportedly costing the company CAN\$10 million a month (CAN\$1=US 67 cents.) Falconbridge, which produces 35,000 tons of nickel a year—4 percent of world production—made \$235 million in profits the first half of last year. Noranda, Falconbridge's parent company, is taking advantage of the lower price of Falconbridge's shares as a way to deepen its takeover of the mine complex. Prior to the strike, Noranda announced it had increased its holdings of Falconbridge to 50.1 percent of outstanding shares. By the end of the year Noranda held 55 percent.

At the end of December, members of Local 40 of the Norwegian Chemical Workers Union (NKIF) were informed that workers at Falconbridge Nikkelverk refinery would be laid off for 16 days because of a shortage of materials. “This is all due to the strike in Sudbury. We just don't have enough work for these people,” said Craig Crosby, spokesperson of Falconbridge, after the announcement of the layoffs.

A union membership meeting in Norway adopted a resolution rejecting the idea that the workers in Sudbury are responsible for layoffs. “The reason for the conflict in Canada is the management behavior from the first day of negotiations,” the resolution states. “NKIF Local 40 repeats its full support for our fellow workers in CAW 598. The fact that we are now laid off will not change this. Their struggle is our struggle.” In November, more than 500 union members working at the Falconbridge refinery in Norway declared a five-day strike in solidarity with the struggle in Sudbury.

This kind of strong solidarity and support can also be found across Ontario. For example, on December 11 a group of close to 50 strikers went to Toronto to visit Queen's Park and the Falconbridge corporate offices where they requested a meeting with President Oyvind Hushovd. They were joined by Steelworkers and other union supporters. Plant gate collections have raised \$25,000 in front of Steelworker-organized Inco's nickel mines, also in Sudbury.

Two tractor trailers loaded with toys and presents for the strikers' children rolled into Sudbury before Christmas, donated by CAW members in southern Ontario. A number of stores in the region have extended special discounts to the strikers.

In December, the mine workers union submitted unfair labor practice charges to the Ontario Labour Relation Board around the company's campaign to bargain directly with the workers in order to avoid the union. A hearing before the board, scheduled for December 28, was postponed until January 22 at the company's request.

“I have to admit I was pretty complacent,” said Doug Barney, a miner for 28 years at Falconbridge. The strike “has shaken me up. I remember when [Ontario Premier] Mike Harris and his henchmen were after people on welfare. Now they're after us. Most of us are just a paycheck away from being on welfare ourselves. It's just like Hitler did with the Jews; they went after the most vulnerable first.”

Christian Cornejo is a meat packer and member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 175/633 in Toronto.

U.S. downturn will hit Latin America, Asia hard

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

From increased layoffs to plant closings, the signs are mounting of a slowdown of the U.S. economy that will not only deeply affect working people in this country, but will also have a devastating impact on workers and farmers around the world. Those living in countries dependent on exports to the United States, particularly in Latin America and Asia, will be particularly hard hit.

Reflecting the concerns of the U.S. rulers, a January 12 *Los Angeles Times* article entitled "Around the World, a Slowdown in the U.S. Blows a Chilling Wind," pointed out, "Even a brief contraction in the U.S. economy, which consumes 30 percent of the world's total output, will have worrisome repercussions thousands of miles away thanks to the increasing interdependence linking Mexican assembly-line workers to Detroit automakers and Taiwanese chip manufacturers to Silicon Valley computer companies."

Commenting on the same subject, David Sanger, writing in the January 7 *New York Times*, stated, "For nearly seven years, the United States has so dominated the world economy that other nations have come to depend, more than ever, on constantly rising demand from the United States for products of all kinds."

Most affected will be the countries in Latin America, which, as a result of trade relations and imperialist investments, are more closely tied in with the U.S. economy than any other region.

Of Mexico's total exports, for example, more than 80 percent go to the United States. This accounts for 21 percent of Mexico's gross domestic product. Some 75 percent of goods imported into the country come from the United States.

Signs of a downturn in the U.S. economy are beginning to have an effect in this semicolonial country of 100 million people. The cutback in auto production in the United States has already resulted in the elimination of some 5,000 auto jobs in Mexico by Delphi, a major U.S. auto parts firm, which has dozens of plants and employs 80,000 workers in Mexico. The U.S. investment firm Goldman Sachs is now predicting a sharp economic slowdown in Mexico this year.

Many of the workers are employed in *maquiladoras* or U.S.-owned plants just on the Mexican side of the border where pay is low, working conditions poor, and the profits made by the giant U.S. companies high. Even prior to the latest slowdown Mexico has at least 27 percent of its population living below the poverty line and a foreign debt owed to banks in the imperialist centers of \$155 billion.

In response to growing fears by capitalist investors, Mexico's currency in mid-January dropped to its lowest point since June 2000—9.85 pesos to the U.S. dollar.

According to the *New York Times*, "The slowing American economy seems likely to reduce oil demand, and with it prices." This will in particular affect Mexico and Venezuela, two of the largest exporters of oil to the United States. From 1990 to 1997 oil imports from both Venezuela and Mexico nearly doubled to close to 500 million barrels a year from each country.

Other countries with a significant percentage of their exports going to the United States include South Korea at 22.1 percent, Brazil at 21.2 percent, Thailand at 20.6 percent, Chile at 17.2 percent, and Indonesia at 15 percent. Argentina, which has pegged the value of its peso at one for one to the dollar, exports 11 percent of its goods to the United

States. The imperialist giant is also the source of 22 percent of Argentina's imports.

One factor that will aggravate the extent of the crisis should a prolonged slowdown hit the United States is the underlying weakness of the economies in Latin America. The recent IMF intervention into Argentina to avoid default on payments of its foreign debt

report says, "could be an important liability for these countries."

The looming economic slowdown stems from the crisis in the rate of profit reaped by the leading capitalist companies. The increased competition, particularly among the imperialist powers, for markets for their products and raw materials is accompanied

Japan, which has the world's second largest economy, would also be adversely affected by a declining U.S. economy. Its economic growth rate has already been stagnating for more than a decade. Some 40 percent of Japan's exports go to the United States, and an additional 40 percent, much of it high-tech related, goes to other Asian countries.

"When the U.S. slows down, Japan will be jolted," stated Kenji Yumoto, senior economist at the Japan Research Institute in Tokyo.

Sounding a similar note, the *New York Times* quoted Kazuo Mizuno, a senior economist for Kokusai Securities, also in Tokyo. A quick decline by the United States "will be a double whammy for Japan," he stated, and the *Times* added, "a double whammy for the world's two largest economies could easily be a double whammy for the new administration."

As the banks in the imperialist centers insist that declining revenues available to Third World countries must go towards paying the exorbitant foreign debts they are burdened with, and as the bosses and the capitalist rulers in these countries attempt to implement deeper austerity measures in an effort to make working people and farmers pay for the brunt of this crisis, resistance by the toilers will continue to mount.

The protest actions organized in December by tens of thousands of unionists in Argentina against government plans to dismantle the social security system, and their plans for a March 1-2 national strike, provide one such example. The week-long strike in south Korea by 23,000 unionized employees at two major banks in opposition to their

plans to merge and then carry out massive layoffs is another of the type of actions that working people will conduct to defend their rights and living standards as the economic crisis deepens.



Demonstration in Guayaquil, Ecuador, March 22, 1999, after closing of Banco del Progreso. Working people in Latin America and Asia, especially in nations heavily dependent on exports to the United States, will face worsening living conditions as the U.S. economy weakens.

is one response by the imperialists. The IMF announced a new package of \$40 billion in loan guarantees to stanch the crisis, after holding Argentina's austerity package up as an example for the rest of the continent to follow. This was the largest such "rescue" package by the IMF since the imperialist agency propped up the Brazilian economy with a \$41 billion loan in 1998.

Foreign remittances

Another growing source of revenue for countries in Latin America that will be deeply affected by a severe economic downturn in the United States are remittances sent by workers with jobs in the United States to their relatives back home. For Mexico, for example, remittances represent the second largest source of revenues in foreign currency after tourism.

Also particularly vulnerable are the regimes in the countries of Southeast Asia, including Thailand, Indonesia, South Korea, Taiwan, Malaysia, Singapore, and the Philippines, whose economies experienced a financial and economic collapse in 1997-98. The United States absorbs about 20 percent of all of Asia's exports, and, according to the *Times*, "Its insatiable demand for more was the key to the quick recovery in Southeast Asia and South Korea."

The last time the U.S. economy sank into a recession in 1990-91, exports from and the flow of capital to these countries was not significantly affected, because the electronics sector continued to expand. "No such luck this time round," commented a feature article in the January 8 *Time* magazine. "Far from escaping the downturn, America's paltry electronics purchases are leading it."

According to a report by Deutsche Bank Global Markets Research, electronics account for 75 percent of exports in Singapore, 60 percent in the Philippines, 58 percent in Malaysia, and 37 percent each in Taiwan and South Korea. This heavy dependence, the

by calls by a wing of the ruling class for protectionist measures. This would exact stiff tariffs and possible quotas on imports, such as steel, coming into the United States. Such steps further exacerbate trade conflicts.

N.Y. strip-search victims get damages

BY MAGGIE TROWE

NEW YORK—Registering a setback to the anti-worker policies of the administration of New York mayor Rudolph Giuliani, the city government has provisionally agreed to pay \$50 million in damages to tens of thousands of victims of strip-searches.

As many as 65,000 people, some arrested on misdemeanor charges, were strip-searched during a 10-month period from 1996-1997.

In mid-1996 the Corrections Department adopted a policy of strip-searching every person arrested on any charges "for security purposes." The city administration initiated this policy in spite of a ruling by a federal appeals court in 1986 barring police from strip-searching people arrested on minor charges unless there was "reasonable suspicion" that they were hiding weapons or contraband. The policy was dropped soon after the class-action lawsuit was filed in 1997.

The illegal searches were carried out by jail guards in two boroughs of New York—Manhattan and Queens. Many of those searched were arrested for the first time in their lives and charged with minor infractions such as loitering, disorderly conduct, or subway offenses.

During the strip-searches police compelled both males and females to disrobe, then in many cases required them to lift their breasts or genitals for visual inspection, and to squat and cough.

The provisional settlement includes a for-

mula by which each strip-search victim will receive a minimum of \$250, and those who can prove emotional or physical trauma may be awarded up to \$22,500. Attorneys for the plaintiffs told the press that this settlement would be the largest in a civil rights suit against New York City, and one of the largest civil rights settlements against a city government anywhere.

Over recent years a series of marches and rallies here have put the spotlight on the brutality and killings carried out by the cops. Thousands have marched to protest the killing of Amadou Diallo, an unarmed African immigrant shot 41 times in his apartment building by police in February 1999; the brutal assault and sodomization by cops in August 1997 that severely injured Abner Louima; or the killing of 26-year-old Patrick Dorismond by plainclothes police in March 2000.

The news of the potential settlement came on the heels of another settlement in which the city government agreed to pay \$548,000 to three people injured when mounted police rode horses over them during a march to protest the murder of Matthew Shephard, a gay man brutally attacked and left to die by antigay bigots in Wyoming in 1998.

Also during the previous week, three Long Island, New York, women filed a suit against Suffolk County police officer Frank Wright for allegedly forcing each of them to remove their clothes after stopping them for drunk driving. The women are all Latina or Native American.

LETTERS

Detained by Canadian cops

In light of his recent experiences at the hands of Canadian immigration officials and police, Daljit Singh, a co-worker of mine in a textile plant here, was interested to read the article in the January 15 *Militant* headlined "Canadian government unleashes cops against immigrant workers."

Daljit, originally an immigrant from the Sikh region of India, is a New Zealand citizen. Just before Christmas he flew to Canada for a

two-week holiday to visit family and friends. He was detained at the Vancouver airport and questioned by immigration officials and two members of the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service.

"They asked me if I was involved with terrorism," Daljit said. "I explained to them that I have no record of criminal activity anywhere, and have visited Canada before with no problems." Despite having no information of any kind against him, he was told he was "a

danger to the Canadian public," and held in custody for seven days in degrading conditions. He was strip-searched. "It was cold in that detention center," he said, "but they only gave me back my underwear. They wouldn't give me a blanket, or let me wear my turban. I didn't eat for three days because they only offered me meals with meat." (Like most Sikhs, Daljit is a vegetarian.)

He was able to contact a lawyer he knew in Canada, and New

Zealand government representatives who supplied references. Canadian immigration authorities still refused to let him enter the country, and at a hearing before a judge they applied to keep him in detention while they "gathered more information."

But with most of his holidays already gone, Daljit chose to return to New Zealand. Together with his lawyer he is now seeking to establish that the Canadian government has no evidence against him, with

the intention of preparing a claim for compensation.

Terry Coggan
Auckland, New Zealand.

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people.

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

Quebec premier's exit deepens crisis in bourgeois nationalist movement

BY MICHEL PRAIRIE
AND GRANT HARGRAVE

MONTREAL—In a surprise move, Quebec premier Lucien Bouchard resigned January 11 at a press conference in Quebec City, the capital. Bouchard, along with other capitalist politicians and the big-business press, cast his move in relation to the struggle for independence of Quebec. Each sidestepped the issue of the declining popularity of the Parti Quebecois in the wake of the austerity drive and antiunion assaults it has carried out against working people.

While citing family reasons, Bouchard's statement to the media said he was stepping aside because he had failed "to increase the sovereignist fervor" of the population and that Quebecois had "remained astonishingly impassive in face of federal attacks" over the last years.

Bouchard added that he wasn't interested in continuing to fight a wing of the Parti Quebecois (PQ) over a major controversy sparked by statements of a PQ figure who blamed immigrants and Jews for the defeat of a 1995 referendum on Quebec sovereignty. The PQ is a bourgeois nationalist party that defends sovereignty of the French-speaking province.

Federalist media and politicians across Canada jumped at the opening to sound the death knell for the Quebec independence movement. "My efforts were in vain," "Separatism in retreat," "A victory for federalists," were the front page and editorial headlines in the next day's *Globe and Mail* and *National Post*, the two English-language national dailies in Canada.

Many of these articles fail to note that for more than a decade all opinion polls and votes in the province indicate at least 40 percent of Quebecois support sovereignty. And Quebecois continue to face national oppression as a result of systematic discrimination based on the fact that they speak French and are denied their democratic right to self-determination.

There is a crisis among the bourgeois and petty bourgeois forces that have dominated the leadership of the Quebecois national liberation struggle since the 1960s and '70s. This partly flows from the fact that they have been unable to extract any significant new concessions from Canada's rulers or to stop Ottawa's unceasing attacks on the Quebecois.

Austerity drive

The PQ was formed in 1968 out of a split in the Quebec Liberal Party under the impact of growing mass struggles against the national oppression of the Quebecois. The Liberal Party is the most important party of the Canadian ruling class in Quebec. The PQ governed Quebec from 1976 to 1985, and since its reelection in 1994.

Bouchard, a lawyer by profession, was Canada's ambassador to France during the 1980s, before becoming a senior cabinet minister in Ottawa in the Conservative Party government of Brian Mulroney.

In 1990, he slammed the door on the Mulroney government over his opposition to the so-called Lake Meech Accord. This accord was aimed at getting the Quebec government to accept the 1982 Canadian constitution, which stripped Quebec of powers it had historically enjoyed. Later the same year he formed the Bloc Quebecois (BQ) with other federal politicians from Quebec, former members of the Liberal and Conservative parties. In the 1993 federal election the BQ won a big majority of the electoral seats in Quebec and became the official opposition in Ottawa.

Bouchard was elected leader of the PQ and Quebec premier in 1996, replacing Jacques Parizeau.

Parizeau resigned amidst controversy two days after the 1995 sovereignty referendum over statements where he blamed the electoral loss on "money and the ethnic vote."

That referendum lost by a small margin, plunging the Canadian ruling class into a crisis on the question of Quebec from which it has not yet emerged.

"My efforts to rapidly relaunch the debate on the national question remained in vain," Bouchard said as he resigned. If there was discontent in face of federal government attacks, he added, "it was hardly reflected in the results of the last federal vote"—a reference to the BQ's loss of six seats in last November's federal election.

The "winning conditions" of the Bouchard government were centered on what he and other capitalist politicians called "fiscal responsibility" including the elimination of the governmental spending deficit over the last four years. The PQ claimed this was the way to demonstrate the credibility of a sovereignist government to international financial circles.

To achieve this the PQ government carried out an austerity drive that hit working people in Quebec the hardest. This included cuts in social services such as public health and education, which were at the center of the gains of the mass struggles of the 1960s and 1970s against the national oppression of the Quebecois. These moves undercut popular support for the PQ and the BQ in the province.

The 'Michaud affair'

A sharp debate over anti-Semitic and anti-immigrant remarks made by Yves Michaud, a well known PQ figure, had been at the center of politics in Quebec since mid-December. Bouchard's resignation came against the backdrop of the so-called "Michaud affair."

Bouchard denied that the Michaud controversy was a factor in his resignation, but this was unconvincing given the importance he himself had accorded it in his text.

On December 13 in comments before a Quebec government commission studying the state of the French language, Michaud singled out Jews and immigrants for their "ethnic votes" against the independence of Quebec in the 1995 referendum—essentially repeating Parizeau's infamous charges.

London actions will mark Bloody Sunday killing of Irish marchers by British troops

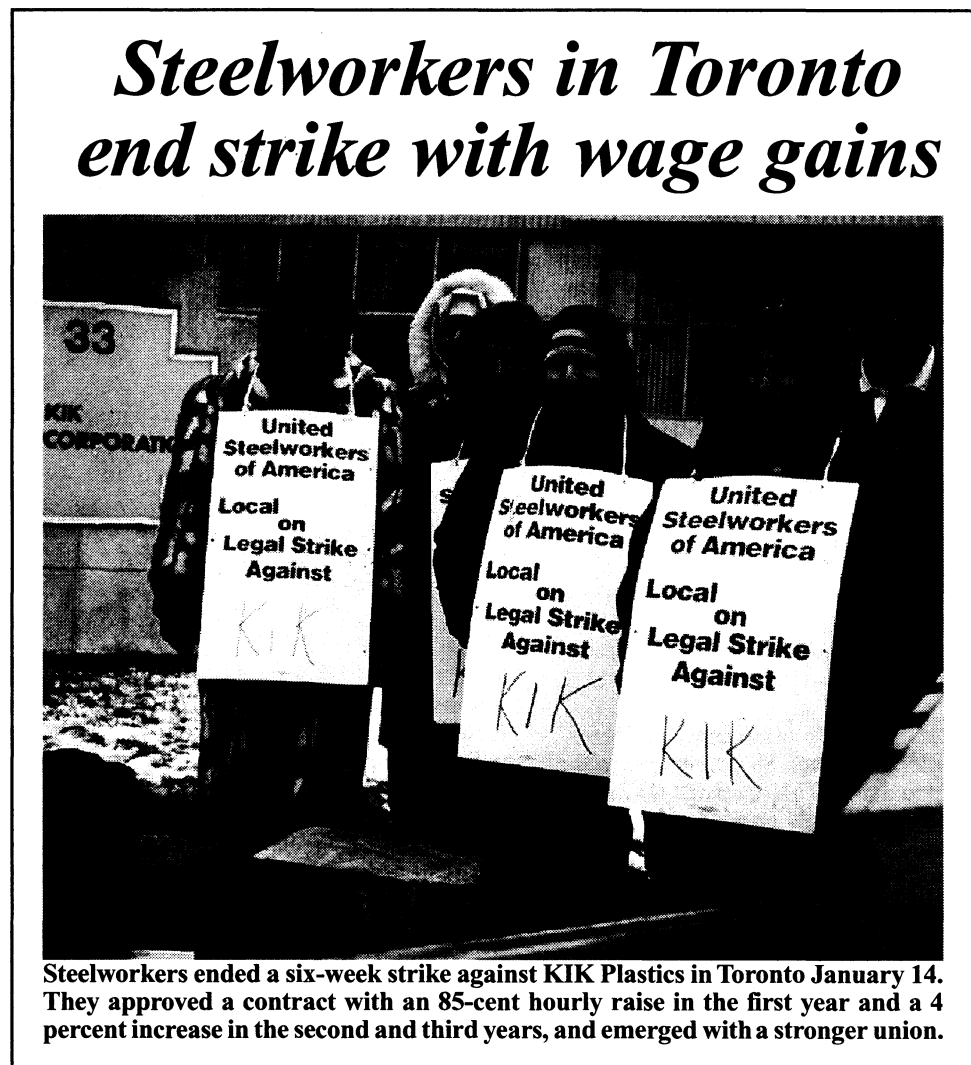
BY PETE CLIFFORD

LONDON—"The same lies, slander, and deception tactics that the British government used in 1972 to justify the military action and then the subsequent cover-up of Bloody Sunday, are still being used today," the Bloody Sunday Organising Committee said in a statement calling a protest rally and picket here January 20–21. The actions mark the anniversary of the killing of 14 Irish civil rights marchers in Derry, northern Ireland, by British troops in 1972.

Relatives of those killed also plan a weekend of activity in Derry January 27–28, including retracing the route of the Jan. 30, 1972, march. The events this year in Derry are titled "Protecting the guilty?" referring to how, despite the British government conceding a new inquiry in 1998, London has continued to cover up the truth.

The government made the concession to grant a new investigation days after a massive march of 40,000 in Derry, the culmination of a years-long campaign throughout Ireland, the United Kingdom, and elsewhere against the exoneration of the British Army by the previous 'Widgery' Inquiry.

The first of some 700 civilian witnesses who have come forward started to give testimony to the commission of inquiry in November. Each recounted the terror during the military assault that day as march-



Steelworkers ended a six-week strike against KIK Plastics in Toronto January 14. They approved a contract with an 85-cent hourly raise in the first year and a 4 percent increase in the second and third years, and emerged with a stronger union.

Michaud and others who echo his views advance their reactionary views by playing on the violation of self-determination that occurred when people other than Quebecois who live in the province were allowed to vote in the referendum.

Michaud said that in some predominately Jewish and immigrant polls not a single voter supported independence. He called this voting pattern an "ethnic vote against the sovereignty of the Quebec people.... They should excuse themselves for being

so anti-Quebec." He also defended Canon Lionel Groulx, a leading Quebec intellectual from the 1930s until his death in 1967, known for his anti-Semitic and pro-fascist actions and writings.

A news article in the Montreal daily *La Presse* reported quotes from other presentations the day Michaud spoke, including a speaker who suggested that those "who don't want to say hello in French should be" subject to verbal abuse and another who

Continued on Page 12

ers realized the army was firing live bullets. Evidence continues to come out about the deliberate and conscious political judgments that set the framework for the attack.

For example, one of the documents presented before the inquiry by relatives is a memorandum written just before Bloody Sunday by General Robert Ford, the commanding officer of the British Army in the six occupied counties of the North of Ireland at the time. In the memo Ford states that he is, "coming to the conclusion that the only way to deal with the situation is to shoot selected ringleaders" of the DYH [Derry Young Hooligans]." Derry at the time was at the center of a mounting civil rights movement protesting the internment without trial of hundreds of nationalists who opposed the British occupation.

A recording made during the shootings on Bloody Sunday by the Irish Republican Army of telephone lines it had tapped in the British Army's barracks has also been made available to the inquiry. One soldier is heard saying, "General Ford is lapping it up," while others caution about "things going badly" and "the wrong people" are being shot.

Against this background, London has sought to shift attention away from its responsibility for the events. Opening his remarks to the inquiry in November, the law-

yer representing 450 former soldiers focused his comments on an attack on Sinn Féin leader Martin McGuinness, claiming he wasn't prepared to testify before the inquiry.

London has alleged that two of its informers say that McGuinness fired the first shot on Bloody Sunday. London says it will reveal only partial information from these informers and has requested a Public Interest Immunity Certificate in order to conceal the rest. Earlier last year London's Defense Secretary said a "bureaucratic bungle" had led to destruction of rifles fired by British soldiers on Bloody Sunday.

McGuinness said the allegations "are an obvious attempt to deflect the spotlight away from the weight of evidence that continues to be presented and which indicts not only the British soldiers who fired the shots on Bloody Sunday but also their political and military masters." McGuinness confirmed that he has "no problem giving evidence to the inquiry, although I have concern about the lack of equivalence in the presentation of evidence, that is the anonymity of British military witnesses and the willful destruction of weapons used on Bloody Sunday by the British Ministry of Defence."

Antonis Partasis also contributed to this article.