

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

W. Sahara struggle marks gains in independence fight

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Afghanistan: imperialism is showing its face more

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The imperialist character of Washington's occupation of Afghanistan was highlighted this week by the growing civilian casualties from bombardment of towns along the border with Pakistan, threats against Iran to not meddle in Afghan affairs, the inhumane treatment of prisoners of war, and U.S. senator Joseph Biden's statement after a recent visit to Kabul that U.S. forces should be granted broad authority "to shoot to kill."

After touring Kabul, Biden, chairman of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, called for Washington to send troops to be part of this military occupation force. "I'm not talking about blue helmets," stated Biden, referring to the symbol for UN-sanctioned "peace-keeping" troops. "I'm talking about a multilateral force with orders to shoot to kill. Absent that, I don't see any hope for this country."

For his part, interim Afghan president Hamid Karzai has called for the imperialist nations to send even larger numbers of troops and to extend their deployment to other provinces throughout Afghanistan. Karzai has announced plans to create a national army while attempting to disarm the hundreds of thousands of Afghans who carry guns and other weapons.

Washington is turning Kandahar into a major military base, with some 3,100 U.S. troops now stationed there.

After more than a week of heavy bombardment centered around the town of Zawar in the mountainous region near the border

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Enron debacle: big firms don't shield workers from crisis

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

The unfolding debacle of the collapse of the Enron corporation has dealt a devastating blow to the livelihoods and retirement plans of thousands of working people. Although the U.S. ruling class tried to convince workers and middle-class layers during the 1990s "boom" that they were secure with large, seemingly invincible corporations, a string of bad news from Ford, Boeing, and other top companies is showing a different reality.

The Enron bankruptcy also led to massive losses for wealthy investors and stockholders. Among the many corporate investors are Citigroup and J.P. Morgan banks, which are expected to write off hundreds of millions of dollars in loans and other funds, and Massey Energy, the coal mining company.

Enron, once ranked seventh on the Fortune 500 list of largest companies with a stock valuation of \$90 a share, declared bankruptcy in December. On January 15 the New York Stock Exchange suspended trading in the shares, noting that they had fetched less than \$1 over the previous consecutive 30-day trading period. Moves have begun to delist the company.

The Justice Department has launched an investigation into possible criminal activity

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Argentine workers resist impact of capitalist crisis

Unionists, unemployed protests spread across provinces

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL AND ROMINA GREEN

CÓRDOBA, Argentina—"We're demanding they pay us our wages for December and January and our end-of-year bonus," said city worker Cecilia Reyes at a January 11 demonstration here. "And we want to be paid in pesos, not in bonds. It's bad enough that our paychecks are worth less since the devaluation."

Reyes was one of 1,200 members of the municipal workers union, students, and others who rallied downtown against the government of Mayor Germán Kammerath. Earlier that day, the mayor asserted categorically that there was no money in the budget to pay the workers. He gave no indication of when or whether they would receive their back wages. One of the demands of the rally aimed at the resignation of Kammerath, a leader of the Peronist party in Córdoba province.

The demonstration captured the situation facing millions of working people in Argentina today, especially in the hard-hit provinces outside Buenos Aires, the capital. The same day, jobless workers and unpaid workers demonstrated across the country in the cities of Salta, San Juan, Catamarca, Neuquén, Mendoza, Santiago del Estero, San Rafael, and Jujuy.

"Argentina pays billions every year in interest payments on the foreign debt, yet the debt keeps growing," said Oscar Mengarelli, general secretary of the Association of State Workers (ATE) in Córdoba province, in an interview at the union head-

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Irma Montiel

State employees, including militant Light and Power union members, pour into the streets of Córdoba, Argentina, December 20 to protest state of siege and demand the resignation of then-president Fernando de la Rúa, who stepped down that day in face of a nationwide explosion of popular protests. Depression conditions and attacks on workers' living standards are deeper in provinces outside Buenos Aires, the capital, and have sparked ongoing resistance.

Garment worker, fired for political views, speaks in south Florida on workers' rights

BY JOHN BENSON AND KARL BUTTS

TAMPA, Florida—Michael Italie, kicking off a national tour to defend workers' rights, spoke to 100 people here during his visit January 12–15. Italie, a garment worker from Miami, was fired from his job at Good-

will Industries October 22 for statements he made as the Socialist Workers candidate for mayor during a televised debate, opposing the U.S. war against Afghanistan and in defense of the Cuban Revolution.

Italie's Tampa visit coincided with a national press conference to show support for

Dr. Sami Al-Arian. A Palestinian and a tenured professor at University of South Florida (USF), Al-Arian was recently suspended and notified of his impending firing by university officials. He has been a strong advocate of the Palestinian cause and has defended his brother-in-law, Mazzen Al-Najjar, who was rearrested recently on visa violations after spending three and a half years in jail without ever being charged with a crime.

Al-Arian has won the support of faculty and student organizations on campus. Italie attended the press conference as part of his

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Lessons of garment workers' four-week strike in Quebec

BY SYLVIE CHARBIN

MONTREAL—More than 3,000 workers on strike against the major garment companies here returned to work over the course of a week after approving a new four-year

Rally backs laundry workers' fight for a union in New York

BY JOHN HAWKINS AND ELVIDIO MEJIA

NEWYORK—More than 50 members of the garment and textile workers union and their supporters held an expanded picket line outside the Flex-O-Tex Laundry in the Bronx January 10 as the strike against

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contract on a plant-by-plant basis. A significant minority vote against the contract at several plants reflected opposition by a vanguard of workers to the lack of significant gains from the employers and to the union settling with individual firms, which undercut the strength of the rank and file and a past pattern of industry-wide bargaining.

Last to vote on the offer were members of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) at Golden Brand, who approved the pact by a margin of 77 percent. Outside Montreal, workers at plants in St-Hyacinthe, Ste-Thérèse, and St-Césaire had also been on strike.

Approval rates among the bigger plants ranged from 67 percent to 87 percent. Picket lines at the different shops went down and workers returned to work as each local union

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Increased resistance in W. Sahara hits Moroccan regime

BY ANNALUCIA VERMUNT
AND JACK WILLEY

More than 90 Sahrawi prisoners entered their fourth week on hunger strike at the Lakhel prison in El Aaiun, the administrative capital of Western Sahara, which is militarily occupied by Morocco. The hunger strike takes place in the midst of an upturn in resistance in the Moroccan-occupied nation. It also builds on the victory scored by Sahrawi independence forces on November 7, when 56 prisoners, including the longest held Sahrawi political prisoner, Mohamed Daddach, were released from prison.

The people of Western Sahara have fought against foreign domination of their land for decades. The country, located in northwestern Africa, was a direct colony of Spain from 1884 to 1975. In 1975, as the independence struggle led by the Polisario Front picked up steam, the Spanish government handed Western Sahara over to the semicolonial regimes of Mauritania and Morocco.

Today Morocco, with the support of French and U.S. imperialism, continues to occupy two-thirds of Western Sahara. Mauritania withdrew and recognized the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic (SADR) after the Polisario Front militarily defeated it in 1979. Close to 200,000 Sahrawis, the majority of the population, have been driven off their land since 1975 and live in refugee camps in Algeria, near the border, and in the liberated zone in the eastern part of the country.

Hunger strike: focal point of resistance

The Lakhel hunger strike began December 25 with 131 prisoners. Twenty-three are political prisoners who are demanding their immediate release and an end to Moroccan repression. Most had participated in street protests that included calls for independence in El Aaiun and Smara last November. Other hunger strikers have demanded a reduction of their sentences, pointing to unequal treatment that Sahrawis receive from the Moroccan authorities, including significantly harsher punishment for crimes. All the hun-

ger strikers have also denounced prison conditions. The prison, built to hold up to 250 people, was housing 700.

Mothers of the detainees have demonstrated in front of the Court of Appeal and the prison since December 26, in spite of intimidation and police violence. The *Western Sahara Weekly News* reports 70 mothers were attacked by riot police as they wound up their march January 2.

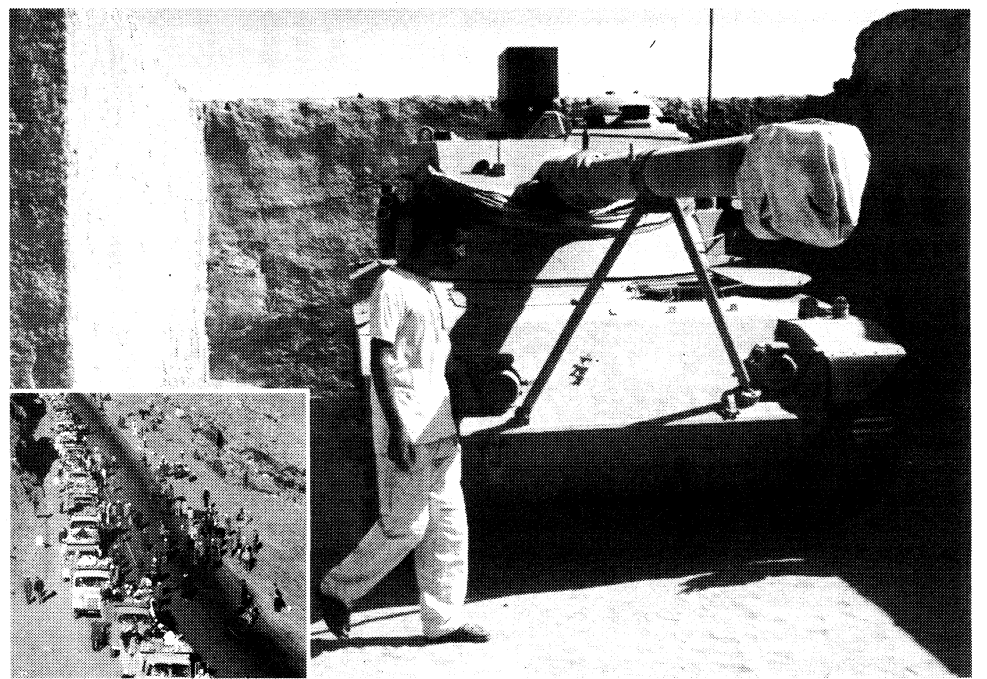
Under pressure from the prison protest, ongoing street demonstrations, and an international campaign condemning the monarchy's treatment of the prisoners, the prison administration took some measures to improve the conditions of overcrowding and unsanitary conditions.

Three prisoners, who authorities considered leaders of the hunger strike, were transferred to prisons in Morocco. About 40 people have ended the fast because of deteriorating health or fear of retribution.

Actions call for jobs, independence

Many of the political prisoners were part of a wave of ongoing protests in Smara against the Moroccan regime. King Mohamed VI was due to visit Smara as part of a tour of Western Sahara marking the 26th anniversary of the Moroccan invasion, which took place Oct. 31, 1975. The Smara stop was canceled, royal sources said, due to sirocco winds, but the Polisario Front pointed to the unbroken resistance in the city center as the main factor. The Spanish daily *El Pais*, reporting from Smara November 5, said that the day before the king's planned visit police tried to forcefully disperse a sit-in—going on its third day—opposing the monarch.

"Sahrawis have disguised their views for independence under the mantle of social demands to avoid police repression," *El Pais* reported. "In protests, men carry posters with slogans written in the colors of Polisario's flag. Usually they hoist symbols of Arab countries who have nothing to do with the Western Sahara conflict, in an attempt to demonstrate that they do not accept the Cherifian [Morocco's monarchy]



Militant

Above, one of the tanks used by Moroccan military forces to try to crush the Polisario Front, which carried out a nearly 20-year armed struggle for independence of Western Sahara. The U.S. and French imperialist powers, the main backers of the Moroccan king, provide much of the weaponry used against Sahrawis. Inset, the "Green March" invasion on Western Sahara in 1975-76 when tens of thousands of troops and settlers moved into the country.

symbols.... Since October 31, about 100 Sahrawis, in their majority youth and women, have protested in front of the wilaya [provincial seat of government] demanding houses, jobs, university scholarships, and news on the fate of disappeared relatives at the hands of Moroccan police."

Sixty people were arrested during a November 17 sit-in demonstration in front of the wilaya in Smara, according to the *Weekly News*. Sixteen were transferred to the prison in El Aaiun—the scene of the ongoing hunger strike—facing charges of destruction of public property, attacking agents of authority, and theft.

Longest-held political prisoner released

In a major victory for the independence struggle, Mohamed Daddach, the longest-held Sahrawi political prisoner, who served 23 years, was pardoned by King Mohamed VI November 7. Fifty-five others were also released. Mass organizations in Western Sahara, led by the Association of Family Members of Sahrawi Prisoners and Disappeared, waged a concerted campaign both in the occupied territory and internationally to demand the release of Daddach and all political prisoners. Leading up to their release, Daddach and others had also carried out hunger strikes to bring attention to their case.

The *Weekly News* reported that after their release the prisoners were welcomed by Sahrawi students in Marrakech. On November 10, a motorcade of some 50 cars welcomed them to El Aaiun where independence fighters held a rally. Daddach called on the UN to hold the referendum vote on independence.

Daddach was referring to a UN-brokered agreement in which the Moroccan government pledged to hold a referendum by Sahrawis to decide on independence or integration with Morocco. The agreement, signed in 1991, came after a cease-fire was signed following a nearly two-decade-long independence war led by the Polisario Front.

The Moroccan rulers and their imperialist backers in Paris and Washington have stalled the referendum vote because of the mass support for independence. A similar rally took place in Smara three days later.

Motor rally organizers recognize SADR

A representative of Thierry Sabine Organization (TSO), which holds the annual Paris-Dakar motor rally, visited the liberated territories of Western Sahara and met with the Sahrawi minister of defense Mohamed Lamine Bouhali. The TSO sought permission for the rally to pass through the occupied country on January 4, which was granted by Bouhali.

Last year the TSO only consulted the Moroccan government, a move that was widely seen by partisans of Sahrawi independence struggle as another move to legitimize Morocco's occupation internationally. This led the Polisario Front to suspend the cease-fire and escalated tensions between the liberation fighters and the monarchy.

The main sponsor of the rally is TotalFinaElf, a French oil giant that recently signed a contract with Morocco for oil exploration off the Western Sahara coast, the first such agreement since the opening years of the guerrilla war. Kerr McGee, a U.S.-based energy company, signed a similar agreement. Both ignored the SADR government-in-exile.

Meanwhile, the Polisario Front released 115 Moroccan prisoners of war January 2 after discussions with the president of Spain, José Maria Anzar. There are still some 1,300 Moroccan prisoners of war held in the liberated zone and refugee camps of Western Sahara. The Moroccan regime continues to deny the Polisario Front any information about freedom fighters who have been "disappeared" since 1975.

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

THE MILITANT

Oppose U.S. military buildup in Central Asia

Washington continues to expand its military buildup in Central Asia and prosecute a war against the Afghani people. The U.S. rulers seek to gain more stability for capitalist profit-making and edge out their imperialist competitors in exploiting the natural resources of the region. Read the 'Militant' for ongoing coverage.



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Workers in Fiji strike for higher wages

BY BRENDAN GLEESON

SUVA, Fiji—A strike by 1,300 workers for Telecom Fiji in early December demanding a pay increase is the latest in a series of walkouts by unionists here. The workers are members of the Fiji Post and Telecommunications Employees Association (FPTEA).

Many among the 150 workers sitting close together to block the entrance to the company offices said that they were resolved to stay out "as long as necessary." A majority of the strikers were indigenous Fijians and they were seated together with many Indo-Fijians. Divisions between the two nationalities are exploited by the rulers of this country to keep working people divided.

FPTEA general secretary Lasarus Tuimani told the *Fiji Times* that last year the company "gave a 7 percent increase and now we just want another 1 percent." He explained to the *Sun* newspaper that workers want only a "minute share" of the FJD\$25.4 million profit made by Telecom last year. (Fiji \$1 = U.S. 44 cents.)

Minister for Labor and Productivity Kenneth Zinck declared the strike illegal, the *Sun* reported. "I'll be ordering all those workers to go back to work," he said. "But I have been taken by surprise by the whole thing, so I can't say whether they will go back to work." Workers did return to work December 3 for the issue to be submitted to arbitration and negotiation.

Various unions have been campaigning for workers to receive a 3 percent cost-of-living allowance (COLA) previously promised by the government, as well as a further "merit" increase. The government had only budgeted for a 2 percent cost of living increase.

Among actions last year demanding cost of living allowances were the June walkout of 200 workers employed by the Suva city council, a strike of 100 workers at Colonial Life and Insurance in May, and a walkout of 200 union members at the Fiji Institute of Technology in December.

In the latter case, a number of students decided to boycott their exams due to the union action. The strike was declared illegal by Labor Minister Zinck, but to no avail.

Strike warnings by union members demanding cost of living allowances have been issued by workers at the Fiji Electricity Authority, where 350 out of the 400 workers voted for a walkout, and by 1,000 members of the Confederation of Public Sector Unions.

Timber workers on the northern island of Venua Levu, members of the Venua Levu Union of Timber Workers, have been demanding the reinstatement of their former wage levels and back pay, after the bosses used a coup in May 2000 as justification for a pay cut. Before the coup the workers had won a 12 percent increase, but the bosses turned around and cut wages by 15 percent.

The coup was led by former businessman George Speight. Together with a group of armed men, he stormed Parliament and held Labor Prime Minister Mahendra Chaudhry and other members of parliament hostage. The coup was timed to coincide with the

first anniversary of the election of a Labor Party-led coalition government.

Speight and his backers posed as defenders of indigenous Fijian rights against the policies of Chaudhry, who is Indo-Fijian. They targeted Indo-Fijian tenant farmers as they sought to reinforce divisions between indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians. While defending the domination of political and economic life by hereditary chiefs, who rule in collaboration with local and foreign capitalists, Speight's followers appealed to resentment among Fijian working people and others at the privileges of the ruling political establishment.

The Fijian military command used the crisis to impose an interim military government. Later a caretaker civilian government was set up, led by capitalist politician and former banker Laisenia Qarase, who was subsequently elected prime minister. Despite being currently under arrest and charged with treason, Speight was also elected to Parliament in these elections.

An estimated 25,000 workers have lost their jobs or have faced reduced hours in the period since the coup. Heavy layoffs have been imposed in the garment industry, particularly in factories supplying the Australian and New Zealand markets. For example, the remaining 160 employees out of an original workforce of 700 were laid off from Consolidated Textiles Ltd. in December. The bosses said their buyers had "lost confidence" following the political upheavals of the last two years. South Pacific Textiles Ltd. closed in late November, putting 700 on the street.

A *Fiji Times* editorial gave a picture of the crisis in garment, which remains an im-



Some 1,300 members of Fiji Post and Telecommunications Employees Association struck in December for higher pay. More than 150 of these unionists participated in a sit-in, blocking the entrance to the company offices to press forward their demands.

portant industry. "As the global economy slows in the wake of highly uncertain business conditions in the United States, our garment industry has taken a severe battering. Factories have closed, thousands have lost their jobs and industry experts predict worse to come. Add the uncertainties and punitive trade measures that followed last

year's follies and we discover a very bleak picture. The once rich river of orders has dried up for many of the factories which relied on sales to, for example, Australia."

Brendan Gleeson is a member of the Australasian Meat Industry Employees Union.

Court backs farm workers right to unionize

BY JOHN STEELE

TORONTO—Two hundred mushroom farm workers who became members of the United Food and Commercial Workers union (UFCW) at the Highline Produce mushroom farm in Leamington, Ontario, in 1994 have won a Supreme Court victory recognizing their constitutional right to join a union.

In an 8-1 ruling December 20, the federal Supreme Court declared that agricultural workers have the right to unionize without fear of reprisals. The ruling stated that at an absolute minimum farm workers must be permitted to assemble, organize, and take political positions "free from interference, coercion, and discrimination in the exercise of these freedoms."

Steven Barrett, a lawyer who acted for the Canadian Labor Congress in the case, responded, "For the first time the court is recognizing that trade union activities are in and of themselves entitled to constitutional protection. The court has shown a willingness to expand freedom of association to include trade union activity."

The court ruling struck down an Ontario provincial law enacted in 1995 by the newly elected Conservative government. The law stripped Ontario's 100,000 farm workers of the right to join unions.

The previous New Democratic Party (NDP) government—a social democratic government supported by the union officialdom—passed a law for the first time in Ontario codifying the right of farm workers to organize into unions, although the law did not recognize their right to strike. During the election campaign in which the NDP was ousted, one of the planks of the Conservative Party was to junk the law, demagogically claiming it would destroy the "family farm."

In the 18 months that the old 1994 NDP law was in effect, the Leamington mushroom farm workers joined the UFCW and began contract negotiations. The UFCW also moved to become certified as the bargaining agent for workers at Kingsville Mushroom Farm Inc., and Fleming Chicks, a factory poultry production operation. The UFCW launched the court challenge after the Conservative government outlawed union organizing for farm workers. Two lower courts rejected the UFCW challenge before it went to the Supreme Court.

"The Ontario government's feeble justification for its demeaning treatment of agricultural workers—that giving them the right to organize would somehow endanger the family farm—was rightfully discarded by the court," stated Michael Fraser, direc-

tor of the UFCW in Canada. "There is simply no credible evidence from any jurisdiction in Canada or elsewhere, that giving agricultural workers this fundamental right harms family farms," Fraser continued.

"Moreover," he said, "it was an abuse of language to call a 200-worker industrial-style operation like Highland Mushrooms, the subject of this case, a 'family farm'.... UFCW Canada agricultural organizing will pick up after where it left off in 1995.... We expect a surge of interest from workers who have been freed from modern-day serfdom by this enlightened decision."

The December 20 legal victory may yet be challenged by the Ontario government. Ontario premier Michael Harris stated that his government "is extremely disappointed" with the Supreme Court decision and that the "timely harvesting of crops should not be compromised by disruptions such as strikes and lockouts." Harris said the government will review the court's ruling and work with "farmers, farm groups, and other stakeholders" to find a solution.

Any "solution" for the "stakeholders" worked out by the Harris government will

be in the interests of the wealthy families that own the agribusiness and food distribution corporations and the big capitalist farmers that hire farm workers—and not in the interests of workers, farm workers, or working farmers.

The denial of union rights for farm workers was only the first in a series of antiunion amendments to Ontario Labor laws by the Harris government. The measures made it harder for all workers to unionize and fight against the slashing of wages and the worsening of working conditions, such as the imposition of the legal 60-hour workweek.

Today, 1.5 million or 26 percent of Ontario's workers are unionized, down from 30 percent a decade ago. In the private sector 19 percent are unionized. In 2000 19,763 workers joined unions, well below the 30,000 level needed to keep pace with the growth of the workforce.

John Steele is a meat packer and a member of the UFCW in Toronto. Al Cappe and Gabriel Charbin, also meat packers in Montreal and Vancouver respectively, contributed to this article.

Colombian military mobilizes against rebels

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region, the Bush administration announced January 14 that it is considering expanding its already large military presence in Colombia with the training of an additional rapid-reaction battalion for the protection of pipelines used by U.S. oil companies and other facilities.

Meanwhile, a delegation of U.S. congressmen visited the Paraguayan city of Ciudad del Este January 14. The city is located right where the borders of Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil come together. Washington has called this a "sensitive" area because of the alleged links of the Arab community there to Muslim organizations abroad. The congressional delegation was preceded by a visit from the State Department Coordinator for Counterterrorism, Francis Taylor.

"Security in the area has been the main issue for the United States and for many years it has demonstrated its concern," said Mark Davidson, a spokesperson for the U.S. Embassy in Paraguay. "The visit by the congressional delegation is an example of the interest with which the United States follows the events at the Triple Border, and a demonstration of the satisfaction of the efforts that the government of Paraguay is making," Davidson added.

Meat packers in Omaha win ruling for new election at Nebraska Beef

BY DON REED

OMAHA, Nebraska—Meat packers at Nebraska Beef here may win a new union representation election as a result of union complaints to the labor board about company violations committed leading up to and during elections held last August.

The United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) lost the election by a vote of 452 to 375 and subsequently charged the company with 41 violations of federal labor law in its antiunion campaign. The vote was part of an effort by the UFCW to organize the 4,000 meat packers in the area who labor in mostly nonunion plants.

National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) hearing officer Francis Molenda agreed with seven of the union's complaints. These include charges that the company interrogated workers concerning their support for the union, threatened job losses, stricter enforcement of work rules, and changes in working conditions if the union won the election.

Fourteen workers from the plant testified at a six-day hearing on the charges held at the federal courthouse in Omaha in October. Molenda recommended that a new elec-

tion be organized.

Soon after the decision was made public, supporters of the union in the plant held a meeting to begin mapping out their plan to win the next election. On January 10 they handed out leaflets in the locker rooms and lunch room, announcing "Good news from the Nebraska Beef organizing committee!" The leaflets provoked a widespread discussion among workers in the plant about the need for a union.

Many workers also began wearing pro-union stickers on their hard hats. One of the union complaints that was upheld by the hearing officer, Molenda, was that the company forced workers in the kill department to remove pro-union stickers on the day before the election.

The company has filed "exceptions" to the hearing officer's findings with the regional NLRB office in Kansas City, asking the labor board to overturn the opinion.

Workers at several other meatpacking plants in the area are following these developments closely. Union representation cards are being circulated at most plants in the area, in a lead-up to representation elections later this year.

U.S. gov't presses to use drivers licenses as national ID cards

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

SAN FRANCISCO—The federal government is taking additional steps to turn the state driver's license into a national identification card. Washington is working with state governments to develop a uniform license that electronically stores identification information on an individual.

More than 200 million people and 90 percent of adults in the United States carry a driver's license.

Under instructions from Congress, the Transportation Department is developing a new national standard that would allow a license from one state to be verified and recorded anywhere in the country.

The American Association of Motor Vehicle Administrators proposes to establish a system that would use bar codes and biometrics to allow states to share information through linked databases. Biometrics use facial recognition, fingerprints, or retinal scans to identify individuals. Already 37 states store information on licenses electronically—often using bar codes or a magnetic stripe—and a few include fingerprints or imprints of retinal or facial scans.

The association represents all the state motor vehicle agencies in the United States and Canada and counts as associate members the U.S. and Mexican governments.

The new requirements would also dictate minimum standards for proving residency, legal status, and identity. The organization also proposes that state motor vehicle departments share some information with the Social Security Administration, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, and other police agencies.

"What you're seeing here is sort of a hardening of the driver's license that could lead to development of a national ID system without creating a national ID card," said Marc Rotenberg, head of the Electronic Privacy Information Center in Washington.

Though the government cites increased security needs in the wake of the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon to justify these moves, the U.S. rulers have been attempting to set up a national ID card system to more easily monitor people's movements for more than two decades.

Initial steps in 1981 and 1986 to set up a federal ID card were shelved due to widespread opposition among working people and others. In 1994 President William Clinton signed off on a national ID card recommended by a commission on immigration reform.

Workers protest attacks

The attempts to establish a national ID card have met with opposition from many immigrant workers after state officials be-

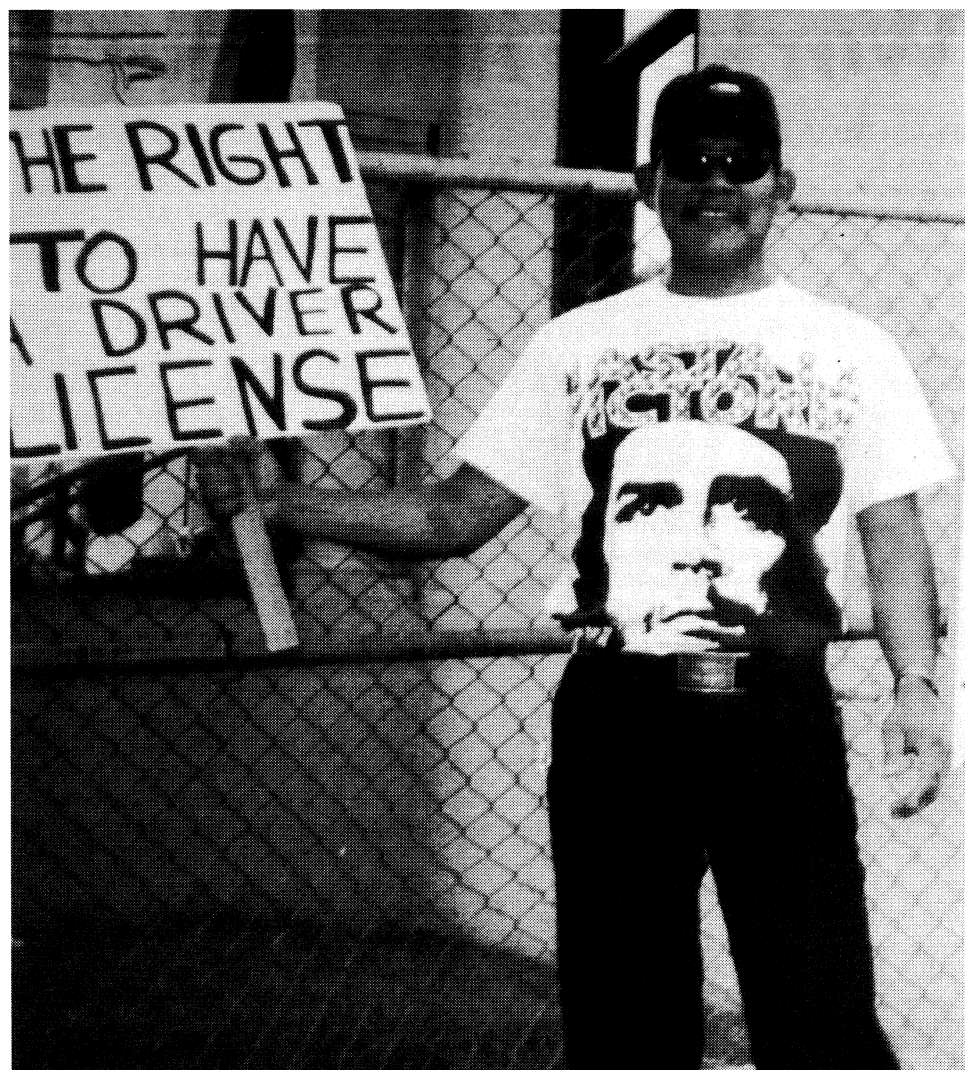
gan verifying Social Security numbers through a linkup with the Social Security Administration. The Department of Motor Vehicles is also verifying all existing licenses with the Social Security Administration.

The requirement to show a Social Security number effectively prevents undocumented workers from Mexico and other countries from having a driver's license, a crucial form of identification not only to drive legally but for all kinds of other activities as well. In many parts of the United States not driving severely limits job opportunities.

These measures began to be implemented to comply with the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act passed by Congress under the Clinton administration, which required a Social Security number to be included on drivers' licenses by the year 2000. This measure was later set aside, but many states continue to move ahead with the proposal.

As workers in northern California were refused the right to a driver's license they began taking to the streets in rolling demonstrations and marches in cities throughout the Bay Area. These protests, which began over a year ago, have taken place every few weeks. Usually hundreds of people and sometimes more than 1,000 participate. The actions, called by Centro Azteca de Información in San Jose and other organizations, are organized around the theme, "We produce the wealth, we demand our rights!" Demands include the right to a driver's license and a Social Security card, legal status, and an end to police brutality and the imprisonment of immigrants.

Jose Sandoval, a central organizer of the demonstrations, told the *Militant* that the protests continue because the situation facing Latino workers has become even more difficult. "Many people come from Mexico thinking it will be better. But in some ways it is worse here because if you don't pay



Militant/Bill Kalman

More than a year ago, workers in northern California began rolling demonstrations and marches in cities throughout the Bay Area demanding their right to a driver's license and a social security card, as well as legal status and an end to police brutality and imprisonment of immigrants. Above, protester in San Jose, California, July 2001.

rent they kick you out," he said. "Many workers work for minimum wage and sometimes less than that. Others have to look for work on a day-by-day basis. Now it is worse because workers without a Social Security number can't get a driver's license, which many employers also ask for."

The city of San Francisco announced last month it will accept the *matricula consular*—the Mexican consular photo ID cards—as legal identification. The cards are issued to any Mexican who can produce a birth certificate and proof of local residence. Immigrants want the cards because police are stopping people and asking for identi-

cation more often and because they reduce the complications of traveling to and from Mexico.

Bernardo Mendez from the Mexican Consulate here estimates that the consulate is now processing 300 applicants a day, triple the rate of a year ago.

Another demonstration to demand the right to a driver's license took place in San Jose January 13.

Deborah Liatos is a meat packer and member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 120. Rollande Girard, a garment worker, contributed to this article.

Striking glass workers combat union busting

BY JERRY ULMAN

DUNKIRK, Indiana—A march of more than 200 strikers and their supporters January 4 followed three days later by union members voting down the latest contract proposal from the Indiana Glass Company demonstrated the resolve of workers entering the fourth month of their walkout here.

The company had notified members of the American Flint Glass Worker Union (AFGWU) by mail just before Christmas that if a settlement was not reached, the bosses would have permanent replacement

workers start up production January 7. The company, Jay County's largest employer, delayed taking that action after negotiations resumed January 3.

When the vote of 172-147 was announced, the *Dunkirk News and Sun* reported that enthusiastic cheers filled the union hall. On January 10 the strikers voted 181-133 against even voting again on the company's next offer. "There will be no vote on the offer itself," the union's national representative Andrew Slipp said. Although optimistic as the latest round of negotiations commenced, Slipp said following the second vote he was "overjoyed that our members have stood by their comrades and rejected an offer that was otherwise unsatisfactory." Local 501 president Sonny Poor said, "It was a terrible contract to begin with."

According to the strikers, the key issues have never been pay or benefits, but contract language concerning work rules and expanded prerogatives for the bosses, including mandatory overtime and combining departments.

Union members said that a major reason for rejecting the latest offers was to hold out until the company agreed to rehire three members it had fired and four who were forced by court order to resign. The company used trumped-up criminal charges of violence and vandalism against the seven union members after the strike began October 8.

As striker Charles Ferguson put it, "We went out together and we'll go back together." Union members voted 267-63 in early October to strike the company.

This is a widespread sentiment among strikers. The January 11 *Star Press* quotes Max Weaver, a 28-year employee of Indiana Glass: "We stuck together 100 percent.... Until those seven go in as union members, we aren't going back. This time they picked seven; next time it could be 15 or whatever."

Weaver said work status for the seven union members wasn't the only issue keeping the strikers out of work, "but it's the biggest."

If Indiana Glass doesn't get this message, they'll get the next one," said Coy Phillips, one of the four who, after 36 years at Indiana Glass, was forced by the December court ruling to resign.

The company persists in maintaining a climate of intimidation in Dunkirk. Hired security thugs from Huffmaster Security, a notorious strike-busting outfit, continue to attempt to provoke the strikers, calling them derogatory names and nudging pickets at the plant gate.

On one recent morning the company bused in 25-30 guards. Picket Brett Robertson observed, "They were marching Hitler-style in full-fledged riot gear, with shields and face guards, just like SWAT teams." According to Bill Parson, a 27-year employee of Indiana Glass, the strikers refused to be provoked. "They were bumping one of our pickets, just flexing their muscles, trying to intimidate us," Parson added. "We just laughed and walked away. Kind of made them mad."

Poor reported that company guards were seen scattering nails on the driveway leading into the plant. They then videotaped the scene, in order "to blame us for the nails," he said. Guards were later observed picking up the nails.

An employee of the city government reported that the mayor's office has asked city workers to volunteer for riot duty. Strikers report a recent increase of cops patrolling the streets of Dunkirk, including from the sheriff's department from adjacent counties, state police, and plain clothes cops in unidentified cars. Looking out the union hall window on the main street, a longtime AFGWU member and current union officer said, "This union has never been stronger." The other five members in the hall strongly agreed.

Supporters of SWP set \$300,000 annual goal for contributions

BY DAVE PRINCE

Building on more than two years of outstanding accomplishments, supporters of the Socialist Workers Party have launched a campaign to raise the level of regular monthly contributions to the party to \$300,000 a year by next August.

Party supporters, since they took on organizing these contributions in August of 1999, have steadily raised their sights and made a sizable difference in the funds the party relies on for its work. Sara Gates, who is responsible for organizing the committee that leads the effort nationwide, reports supporters have steadily increased the number of contributors from 180 in August of 1999

to 290 as of today; and the contributions from \$175,000 a year at that time to \$278,000 in 2001.

These contributions arrive each month, as promised, and can be counted on in planning the party's work. This makes it more possible for the Socialist Workers Party to respond to the historic opportunities to build the communist movement today, which inspired supporters to launch the new campaign to increase the contributions.

Supporters will meet in January and February to discuss and map out plans to win new contributors to the fund and to seek increases from those already contributing. Currently \$22,500 is contributed each month. To make the goal of \$300,000 a year supporters are organizing to increase the monthly contributions by \$2,500 to a level of \$25,000.

Anyone who would like to participate in this effort can contact supporters of the Socialist Workers Party organizing the campaign in the city nearest you listed in the directory on page 12. The *Militant* will regularly report on progress in the campaign.

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Garment worker speaks on workers' rights

Continued from front page

visit here and issued a statement in support of the fight to reverse the professor's pending dismissal.

The Campus Greens and the Coalition of Progressive Student Organizations sponsored two public meetings at the University of South Florida for Itale to explain his battle for reinstatement. Forty people attended the two events, which included a screening of the television news coverage in Miami of press conferences and other news around Itale's firing.

Katie Templin, former president of the Campus Greens, welcomed participants to the meeting. "Goodwill claimed you were disruptive in justifying your firing," she noted, "the same reason [USF president] Genshaft gave for firing Al-Arian. We are happy to have you come to our campus." Patty Hernandez, the current student Greens president, said, "we oppose this firing based on Mike's opposition to the war in Afghanistan. We believe in peaceful solutions and support his reinstatement."

In his talk, Itale said the reasons given by USF president Judy Genshaft for moving to fire Al-Arian "are pretexts. They are trying to shut him up because he is an outspoken defender of the Palestinian people in their struggle for self-determination. At a time when the Israeli government is again bulldozing the homes of Palestinians in a policy of guilt by association, the USF administration is attempting to bulldoze the rights of Sami Al-Arian and his supporters."

"The actions of Genshaft and the Board of Trustees," he said, "like the decision of Goodwill Industries to fire me from my job as a sewing machine operator for the ideas I advocated as a candidate for mayor of Miami, come in the context of nationwide government and employer attacks on freedom of speech and workers' rights. By reaching out for broad support in his fight,



Michael Itale (left) joins picket line at Forever 21 clothing company in Los Angeles during a speaking tour in the city in December.

Sami Al-Arian is setting an example for others targeted for firings and prosecution. By speaking out in defense of Mazzen Al-Najjar, he is standing with all defenders of the Bill of Rights. I am proud to add my name to a growing list of supporters of Sami Al-Arian in his fight for justice."

Maura Barrios, a leader of Cuba Vive Tampa Bay, said during the discussion that she appreciated Itale's "making the global connection of U.S. policy in Afghanistan" in his talk. "It is a continuation of U.S. poli-

cies around the world. I noticed that one of the reasons [Goodwill CEO] Pastrana cited for your firing was because of your support for the Cuban revolution. What is it like defending Cuba in Miami?" she asked.

In response, Itale described discussions with a woman he met who recently left Cuba resentful and blaming the Cuban government for her brother's death due to lack of availability of needed medicines. But as they talked, the woman agreed that Cuba's educational and health care systems were exceptional. "When I suggested that Washington's 40-year embargo against Cuba may have played a role in the lack of medicines, she agreed it was possible."

A Palestinian student who attended the meeting with a group of friends asked, "How can we get involved? The administration is trying to intimidate us so we do not speak up to defend Palestinians. We need to find a way to present the Palestinian cause on this campus."

"The way to defend our rights is to use them," Itale said. "We need to follow Al-Arian's example."

George Boone, another participant in the meeting, asked if Itale thought that co-workers wanted him fired because they knew he was a socialist and defended the Cuban revolution.

"My experience since my firing has shown the opposite," Itale said, relating how during one of his weekly visits to the plant to distribute fact sheets, "two supervisors stood between me and the gate telling workers not to take the material. This of course was intimidating. But when workers got out

of view of the supervisors, many took the fact sheet we were handing out. The Cuban woman I told you about took the leaflet and said, 'I want to read what you have to say. Keep up the fight.'"

Itale also addressed a meeting of 40 people at New College in Sarasota. The event was organized to discuss the conditions facing farm workers in the region. The garment worker was also interviewed on a popular local public affairs program at a community radio station. Many participants in these meetings volunteered to continue working to publicize Itale's fight. Among the new endorsers of his campaign is Dr. Sami Al-Arian.

Itale will continue his tour next week with a trip to St. Petersburg for a Southern Leadership Conference banquet followed by visits to Charlotte, North Carolina, and Valdosta, Georgia.

To schedule speaking engagements for Michael Itale in your area, please send the proposed dates and events planned to the Committee to Defend Freedom of Speech and the Bill of Rights, P.O. Box 510127, Miami, FL, 33151-0127. Tel: (305) 724-5965 or E-mail: DefendFreeSpeech@yahoo.com

The committee is urgently in need of funds to produce literature, pay for phone calls, and plan travel. Financial contributions, large and small, can be sent to the above address. Please make checks out to the Free Speech Defense Fund.

John Benson is a meat packer and Karl Butts is a farmer.

Political affiliation should not be used to attack workers' rights

The following is a December 14 statement from Pablo Tapia, vice president of Isaiah, an immigrant rights organization in Minnesota. The letter is addressed to Miami mayor Joseph Carollo and the City Commissioners.

Now that I have been given the facts on the Michael Itale firing, I could think of nothing but the shame that has been brought to Florida by the actions of Goodwill Industries. We all should be outraged when a worker expresses his or her opinion about U.S. war on Afghanistan, or anything else, and just because the bosses may not agree with such opinions they then fire the person. I view this as nothing less than an attack on the rights of workers, and their right to freedom of speech.

Goodwill's firing of Michael Itale has to be condemned by all who support democratic rights, the right for one to express themselves which falls under the Constitution of the United States. Please note, that when a worker is unjustly fired all other workers are hurt. Political affiliation, religious denomination, race or ethnic group, and language should not and cannot be used by a company to carry out an attack against a worker.

I, with others, as we all should do, demand that the mayor and governmental institutions in Florida force Goodwill Industries to reinstate Mr. Michael Itale back on the job now.

Mike Itale National Tour Schedule

January 12-15	Tampa, Florida (813) 866-5564
January 18-21	AFL-CIO Civil Rights Conference in Miami- Martin Luther King Day Parade, (305) 724-5965
January 19	SCLC Awards Banquet-(305) 724-5965, (305) 724-5965, St. Petersburg, Florida
January 23-24	Charlotte, North Carolina (704) 938-8036
January 26	Peoples Tribunal-Valdosta, Georgia (404) 753-5484
January 27-30	San Francisco, California (678) 521-1055
Jan. 31-Feb. 2	Seattle, Washington (206) 729-5419
February 3-4	Vancouver, British Columbia

Letter to mayor urges 'justice in this matter'

David Campbell, secretary-treasurer of PACE Local 8-675 in Carson, California, sent the following letter to the mayor and commissioners of the city of Miami. PACE is the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical and Energy Workers International Union.

It is our understanding that on or about October 22, 2001, Mr. Michael Itale was fired by Goodwill Industries at its Miami plant and that this firing was not for Mr. Itale's work performance but rather it was for his expression of political views not shared by his employer during a campaign for public office.

Mr. Itale was at that time the Socialist Workers Party candidate for the office of Mayor of Miami.

During that campaign, Mr. Itale voiced his opposition to the war in Afghanistan and his support for union organizing campaigns in debates with other candidates for that office.

It is our further understanding that Goodwill CEO Dennis Pastrana told the *Miami Herald* in an interview published October 30, "We cannot have anyone who is attempting to subvert the United States of America." We also understand that Mr. Pastrana made a similar statement on a local FOX affiliate to the effect that U.S. flags produced at

Goodwill would be "stained" by Itale's presence.

The U.S. Constitution's provisions under the Bill of Rights apply only to the government not infringing on those rights and do not apply in the context of private property rights and, therefore, technically the U.S. Constitution has not been violated in the instant case. Nevertheless, this case vividly

points to the need to amend the Constitution.

We have also been long-time supporters of such charitable organizations as Goodwill. We are appalled that the actions of CEO, Mr. Pastrana, are reminiscent of the Third Reich with respect to tolerating unpopular political views.

We urge you to do whatever is in your power to provide justice in this matter.

New York minister supports free speech fight

Below is the text of a letter from the Rev. Earl Kooperkamp, Rector of St. Mary's Episcopal Church in New York City. The December 10 letter was sent to Miami mayor Joseph Carollo.

I write to you in support of Mr. Michael Itale. I was given a packet of information by a friend concerning Mr. Itale's case. After a careful reading of the newspaper articles and other materials, I was moved to write you. My purpose is to urge you in the name of justice to do all in your power to uphold the laws of Miami and the United States by ensuring that Mr. Itale's rights are upheld.

No matter how we might feel about his beliefs and opinions, the most sacred right we hold as citizens of the United States is the

precious freedom to express our views. Quite obviously, Goodwill Industries has violated these rights in Mr. Itale's case. In as much as Goodwill falls under the jurisdiction of the City of Miami, through contracts and other means, please use the power of your office to get the message across to Goodwill and all other employers that discrimination against workers on the basis of their political views has no place in the United States.

Thank you very much for your time in considering the case of Mr. Itale. Your support of workers' right is very important, and I appreciate your positive response to this request. May God bless you with wisdom in discharging your duties on behalf of the residents of your city.

Further reading from Pathfinder on the fight for workers' rights

Washington's 50-year Domestic Contra Operation

By Larry Seigle in *New International No. 6*

FBI ON TRIAL

The Victory in the Socialist Workers Party Suit against Government Spying.

Edited by Margaret Jayko. \$17.95



Available from bookstores, including those listed on Page 12.

Argentine workers confront capitalist crisis

Continued from front page

quarters. The country's debt to imperialist creditors now stands at \$141 billion, about half of Argentina's gross national product.

To meet the international creditors' demand for continued debt payments, the national and provincial governments "have slashed the number of public employees from 850,000 to 300,000 in the past decade," Mengarelli said. Virtually all state-owned industries and utilities, from oil to telecommunications, were sold off to capitalist investors, while large companies were legally exempted from income tax and even awarded generous government subsidies. In many provinces, where the state is a major employer, the result has been massive layoffs and cutbacks in health care and other services. Unemployment has soared above the national average of 18.3 percent.

"The devaluation will mean another huge transfer of wealth from workers to the rich," Mengarelli said. Businessmen will expand their profits through increased exports, but workers' wages have been cut by 30 or 40 percent through this measure, he noted.

Just days after the Argentine legislature appointed him president January 2, Eduardo Duhalde officially devalued the peso, ending a decade-long policy of pegging the national currency to the U.S. dollar. The government has established two exchange rates. The official rate, mainly for foreign trade, is 1.40 pesos to the dollar. For most Argentines, the peso on the open market floats freely, at present hovering at 1.70 to the dollar.

Duhalde was appointed after mass protests led to the resignation of President Fernando de la Rúa and three other presidents within less than two weeks.

Over the past decade, the administrations of presidents Saúl Menem and Fernando de la Rúa, of the Peronist and Radical parties respectively, carried out a brutal offensive against the social gains of working people in order to meet the demands of the imperialist creditors. In face of skyrocketing unemployment, plummeting wages, and worsening job conditions, working-class resistance had been building in recent years, beginning with road blockades by jobless workers throughout the provinces, combined with scattered struggles by unionists.

In mid-December, following protests by unemployed workers and a nationwide strike by the unions, crowds of pauperized workers demanding food stormed supermarkets across the country. Middle-class protesters clamored against government-im-



Militant/Romina Green

Left, Teresa Valdez, 18, an apple picker in Neuquén province, Argentina. Many farm workers like Valdez migrated from the depressed northern provinces to Neuquén's fruit farms in search of work. Some workers at this orchard are members of the Argentine Workers Federation. Right, Contingent of unionists who are occupying Zanón tile factory march in a January 7 labor demonstration to oppose peso devaluation and other measures by President Eduardo Duhalde in response to Argentina's economic collapse.

posed limits on bank withdrawals. Thousands poured into the streets of Buenos Aires, the capital, demanding de la Rúa's resignation. The popular outpouring of anger widened after the government declared a state of siege, and de la Rúa stepped down.

Duhalde prepares austerity budget

Duhalde, a Peronist who was appointed to fill the last two years of de la Rúa's four-year term, has moved to try to put together a stable coalition government with the Radicals, the other major capitalist party. While using rhetoric about his concern for the plight of working people—a trademark of the Peronist party—he is pursuing big-business policies in continuity with his two predecessors.

The priority of the Duhalde regime is to draw up an economic program that will meet the approval of Washington and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). It hopes to negotiate another \$15 billion in loans to keep paying on the existing debt, on which Buenos Aires has already defaulted. No proposals have been aired other than promises of an "austere" budget—meaning further assaults on the wages, social benefits, and

jobs of working people.

The Argentine government is seeking some maneuvering room with Washington by cultivating closer ties with European imperialist powers. It is also pursuing better relations with Brazil, its South American neighbor. The government in Brasilia has responded positively to this rapprochement, in the hope that Buenos Aires will drop demands for protectionist barriers to imports from Brazil.

On his visit to that country, Argentine foreign minister Carlos Ruckauf pledged to strengthen Mercosur, the South American trade bloc. Washington, on the other hand, has been pushing to draw all Latin American countries except Cuba into its proposed Free Trade Area of the Americas, which would be a regional trade bloc dominated by U.S. imperialism.

Acute crisis in Neuquén

Meanwhile, in face of the continuing economic collapse, Argentina remains convulsed by social turmoil and class polarization. One province where this crisis is among the sharpest is Neuquén, in northern Patagonia. This important oil- and gas-producing region, southwest of Buenos Aires, developed rapidly in recent decades but was devastated after the sell-off of the state oil company, YPF (Yacimientos Petrolíferos Fiscales) to capitalist investors in 1993.

In an interview at the headquarters of ATE in Neuquén, union researcher Horacio Fernández explained that in 1999 YPF was bought by the Spanish company Repsol. "The company cut the workforce from 10,000 to 5,000, and tens of thousands of related jobs were lost as well," he said. Especially hard hit were the twin towns of Cutral-Có and Plaza Huincul, which in 1997 exploded in a revolt by thousands of unemployed workers, who blocked roads and bridges to demand jobs. The example of these *piqueteros*, as the pickets were called, quickly spread to other provinces.

"Repsol-YPF is based on high profitability, few jobs, and no development of the local economy," Fernández said. It has accelerated oil production for export without investing much in exploration, allowing oil deposits to shrink to seven or eight years' worth, while polluting the surrounding rivers and land. The Mapuche Indians in the area of Loma de la Lata are fighting Repsol's takeover of their lands and pollution of the soil.

While the Spanish oil company pays royalties to the government that are among the lowest in Latin America, the provincial authorities are pleading poverty and cutting social spending.

At a January 7 rally in downtown Neuquén, several hundred unionists and other workers demonstrated against the antilabor policies of Gov. Jorge Sobisch. "The government plans to cut health-care funding by another 13 percent this year," said an outraged Norma Mendoza, a member of the health workers union, which is affiliated to ATE. "In the hospitals here there is a shortage of medicines, supplies, and personnel."

The workers were also protesting the Duhalde government's devaluation of the

peso and the resulting cut in wages. In addition, Mendoza noted, pharmaceutical companies were withholding insulin and other vital medicines, waiting for higher prices.

The demonstration was called by the Argentine Workers Federation (CTA) and its largest affiliate, ATE. Also participating was a group of 30 workers from the Zanón ceramic tile factory, who are fighting a company attempt to shut down the plant and lay off all the workers, as well as contingents from several left-wing organizations such as the Workers Party (PO), the Workers Party for Socialism (PTS), and Left Unity (IU), an electoral coalition between the Argentine Communist Party and the Socialist Workers Movement (MST).

Two days later, the CTA and ATE organized a march by more than 1,000 unionists to the Social Security Institute of Neuquén (ISSN) to protest the government's failure to fund the social security program, which covers 140,000 state employees and their families. The ISSN has been the focus of a sharp conflict between the government and the labor movement.

The authorities responded by trying to frame up several CTA and ATE officials on charges of having physically assaulted ISSN administrator Gerardo Hettinger. On January 11 the police raided the union headquarters and arrested four union officials, including Julio Fuentes, general provincial secretary of the CTA and ATE.

Not only thousands of public employees but workers at many privately owned companies are owed several weeks' worth of back wages. The best-known union battle in Neuquén is the fight by the nearly 330 workers at the Zanón ceramic tile factory to prevent the boss from closing the plant (An article on this fight will appear in the next issue).

Workers at the Centenario Slaughterhouse went on strike January 8 because they hadn't been paid in a month. They blocked the entrance to prevent bosses from removing meat from the plant. "They laid us off twice for 55 days, and now they're not paying us our wages," said Juan Pablo Kunz, 23, who has been working six months in this largely youthful workforce.

Farm workers turn to union

Members of ATE also took *Militant* reporters to the countryside to meet farm workers organized by the CTA. In the town of San Patricio del Chañar, in the heart of the fruit-producing region in Neuquén province, many of the workers at the former Gasparri farms, now owned by Expofrut, have not been paid. Some 300 are members of the CTA, while an equal number are affiliated to the General Workers Confederation (CGT). The farms grow pears, apples, peaches, plums, and other fruit.

Segundo Melipil, a worker at the Collalongo farm who was picking apples, said, "We were on strike for a month because the bosses owed us four months pay, from July through September." Melipil, a union stalwart who is a Mapuche Indian, noted that many workers are immigrants from Chile or

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Police in Neuquén arrest unionists

In a serious attack on the labor movement, police in Neuquén, Argentina, have arrested Julio Fuentes, general secretary in Neuquén province of the Argentine Workers Federation (CTA) and of the Association of State Workers (ATE) along with three other unionists, Horacio Fernández, Hilda Locatti, and Miguel Peralta.

In a phone interview from Neuquén, Ariel Aguilera, a member of the provincial CTA leadership commission, reported that the four were arrested January 11 during a police raid of the two union headquarters and the homes of several unionists. They have been denied bail.

The arrests followed a demonstration in Neuquén two days earlier of more than 1,000 unionists protesting the provincial government's failure to fund the Social Security Institute of Neuquén (ISSN), which is in charge of pensions and other social security programs for state employees. The struggle around the ISSN is at the center of the ongoing wave of protests by working people in this province in face of attacks on their living standards and union rights.

The authorities are seeking to frame up the four unionists on charges including "aggravated coercion," which carry sentences of up to 10 years in prison. They claim the four physically assaulted ISSN chief Gerardo Hettinger. A charge of attempted homicide was rejected by the judge in the case.

Aguilera said that on January 12, "a Molotov cocktail was thrown at the CTA headquarters as the union officials were

in court seeking the release of the detainees. Neighbors say they saw it being thrown from a gray car with three men inside—a car of the kind used by undercover federal police." Luckily, several unemployed workers, who have been demonstrating for jobs nearby, were at the union headquarters and were able to call the fire department and the CTA leaders, preventing a fire.

Aguilera himself, a leader of the CTAlled Federation of Land and Housing, was arrested January 13, but was released after the police were unable to get any incriminating information from him. The police have announced that they are seeking several other union officials, and a number of unionists remain in hiding.

In response to this repression, the CTA called a national work stoppage January 14 along with demonstrations in Neuquén and Buenos Aires. The CTA unions remain on strike in Neuquén. The unions held a protest march in Neuquén January 16, gathering 10,000 signatures on protest petitions in a single day, according to ATE spokesperson Hugo Carballo. Further demonstrations are planned over the coming days.

The CTA and ATE are asking for protest letters demanding the immediate release of Fuentes and the other three unionists. The messages should be sent to Gov. Jorge Sobisch, Casa de Gobierno, Calle Rioja y Roca, 8300 Neuquén, Argentina; fax: 011-54-299-449-5555. Copies of these letters should be sent to the ATE, Yrigoyen 554, 8300 Neuquén, Argentina; fax: 011-54-299-448-7320, extension 212.

—M.K.

U.S. imperialism is showing its face in Afghanistan

Continued from front page

with Pakistan, the Pentagon announced January 14 that they had totally destroyed the area and were now looking for new targets. "We have leveled the remaining structures," which had encompassed some 60 buildings and 50 caves, gloated Navy Rear Adm. John Stufflebeem. "It is now time to go look [for bombing targets] elsewhere," he added.

According to an Associated Press report, the virtually nonstop bombing of the area sent civilians fleeing. Many others were killed and wounded by falling bombs. Noorz Ali, who was trying to get out of the area in a rickety truck told AP that most of the 35 homes in his village were destroyed. "No one is left but the dead," he said. "There were so many bombs and rockets I couldn't count.

As the beginnings of a 5,000-strong occupation force centered around Kabul is being put in place, British defense secretary Geoffrey Hoon said the force is "not a peacekeeping operation." Instead, its aim is to "assist the Afghan interim administration."

The British government recently announced that they will lead this force only for the first three months, during which it will supply 1,800 troops in addition to the 300 already operating out of the Kabul airport. Germany is sending 800, France 550, Italy 300, Spain 300, Greece 100, and the Netherlands 100. Others sending troops include Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, New Zealand, Norway, Portugal, Romania, Sweden, and Turkey, which has offered to lead the force by the end of April. Canada had offered to send a 900-member infantry battlegroup, which has been rejected for the time being.

As of mid-January only 1,100 troops comprising this force have arrived in Afghanistan. According to British Army spokesman, Maj. Guy Richardson, the force would not reach full strength until mid-February.

As the U.S. rulers extend their military bases around the perimeter of Afghanistan, Washington sent a warning to the Iranian government. "If they in any way, shape, or form try to destabilize the government [in Afghanistan] the coalition will deal with them, in diplomatic ways initially," U.S. president George Bush said. The White House charged the Iranian government had been "shipping arms to its allies among the Afghan factions that pushed the Taliban regime from power," reported the January 11 *New York Times*. The Pentagon is also now accusing Tehran of giving refuge to some Al Qaeda fighters fleeing Afghanistan.

The Iranian regime has been a longtime supporter of the Northern Alliance forces, well before Washington adopted the group as its proxy force as part of its drive to oust the Taliban from power.

"Iran must be a contributor in the war against terror," proclaimed Bush. "Our nation in our fight against terrorism, will uphold the doctrine of either you're with us or against us." A spokesman for Iran's Foreign Ministry responded with a statement denouncing Bush's remarks as "unfounded comments that rely on undocumented information."

Meanwhile, as the threat of war grows between India and Pakistan and both nations continue their massive troop buildup along their common border, Pakistani officials requested of Washington that it be allowed to have at least partial access to two of the four military bases in that country that U.S. forces now control. The Pentagon has deployed Special Operations forces, Marine combat units, support aircraft, and units of the 101st Airborne Division to the Jacobabad, Pasni, Dalbandin, and Shamsi air bases. Pakistani military officials have said they plan to share use of the Jacobabad and Pasni bases.

In the nearby Central Asian republic of Kyrgyzstan, President Askar Akayev expressed his eagerness to extend the one-year



Top, Shackled and with head covered with burlap bag, Taliban prisoner is taken by U.S. soldier to U.S. military base in Kandahar for further interrogation. Left, residents view destruction of their village after U.S. bombing attack.

agreement recently signed with Washington that gives the Pentagon full use of a military base located at the Manas airport outside the Kyrgyz capital. Some 3,000 U.S. troops and some 40 warplanes are set to be deployed there in February.

Brutal treatment of POWs

U.S. military forces in Afghanistan have incarcerated and are interrogating more than 400 Taliban and al Qaeda prisoners of war being held on Kandahar base. Some 50 others—soon to be hundreds—have been sent to the U.S. naval base on occupied Cuban land at Guantanamo Bay for more intensive interrogation. They're being imprisoned in cages—six-by-eight foot concrete slabs with open-air chain-linked fences. The Pentagon is setting up enough cages to detain as many as 2,000 prisoners captured in Afghanistan. No charges have been filed against any of these captives, some of whom could be hauled before U.S. military tribunals.

Washington has denied press access to the

prisoners. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld has described these individuals as "unlawful combatants" rather than prisoners of war, who under international conventions on war would be guaranteed certain basic rights while held in detention.

"Unlawful combatants do not have any rights under the Geneva Convention," stated Rumsfeld. "We have indicated that we do plan to, for the most part, treat them in a manner that is reasonably consistent with the Geneva Conventions, to the extent they are appropriate." Amnesty International has said that all prisoners in U.S. hands should be considered POWs until proven otherwise.

As they were herded onto U.S. military planes for the trip to the U.S. prison camp at Guantanamo, the prisoners had their hands and feet shackled and their heads covered by hoods. The detainees, wearing taped-over ski goggles to block out their sight, were to be chained to their seats for the entire flight with heavily armed military police outnumbering the prisoners by two to one. They also wore surgical masks because some had tested positive for tuberculosis, and have had their beards forcibly shaved off.

U.S. boosts military force in Philippines

Washington this week also boosted its military operations in the Philippines with the arrival of some 650 U.S. troops. The deployment includes 150 members of special forces units. The units are on their way to join 1,200 Philippine soldiers in the southern port city of Zamboanga in what is described as training exercises, dubbed "Balikatan," or "shouldering the load together." The exercises, which run for six months and can be extended to the end of the year, will utilize modern U.S. weaponry recently shipped to the country, including various aircraft and helicopters capable of night flights. Washington supplied more than \$70 million in military aid to Manila last year, more than triple the figure for the previous year, in a drive against the Abu Sayyaf Muslim group, which Washington has labeled a terrorist organization.

U.S. forces also began a joint naval exercise with Algerian troops off the coast of Algiers January 13, the fourth joint maneuver between the two countries in recent months. The Algerian defense ministry described the latest exercises as part of the "ongoing development of military cooperation ties."

In another development, the government of Russia strongly objected to an announcement by the Bush administration that it plans to store rather than destroy decommissioned nuclear warheads. Washington had earlier said after discussions with Russian president Vladimir Putin that it would reduce the U.S. nuclear arsenal from 7,000 to 1,700 to 2,200 warheads over the next decade. Moscow is also cutting its missile arsenal to a similar level.

"What reduction can we talk about if the United States can go back to the Start I level in just a couple of hours?" asked Aleksei Pikayev, director of an arms control institute at the Russian Academy of Sciences. "It looks more like swindling," he added.

Argentine workers confront capitalist crisis

Continued from Page 6

migrants from northern Argentina who are superexploited by the companies.

Rubén Fernando Roldán, originally from Tucumán province in the north, is a tractor driver at the Cervi farm. He was paid \$13 a day for spraying pesticide. "We worked eight or nine hours a day, six days a week," Roldán reported. "I was fired for not working a Sunday as the boss demanded!"

Roldán went to get support from the ATE, since the firing was illegal. The company also owes him 3,000 pesos in back wages.

Similar struggles have been taking place in Córdoba, the third-largest city, located in the center of the country. Córdoba, historically an auto and aerospace center, has been hit by layoffs in those industries.

Unlike many other cities, the union movement in Córdoba has successfully resisted efforts to sell off several state-run facilities. These include the provincial bank, the water company, and the electrical company, EPEC.

Pablo Alvarez, 37, a worker at the electrical plant and shop steward of Light and Power, the electrical workers union, explained that since the early 1990s the provincial government has been trying to sell off EPEC. "In 1990 we organized a 64-day work-to-rule action. Under the government of Ramón Mestre, the authorities waged a fierce effort to sell the company. Mestre would unleash the cops against demonstrations of unionists. In 1995-96, young workers in the union prepared themselves to resist police repression with shields and slingshots. The union mobilized and we won that battle."

Under the current administration of José Manuel de la Sota, of the Peronist party, Alvarez said, "they tried to pass a privatization law. We put up a big fight. The law was approved by buying off a lawmaker. The union leadership at the time waged a legal offensive against the law, and this sparked a debate among some workers about

the need to continue street mobilizations. We've marched together with other unions and organizations.

"Last year we took part in a march of 20,000 against cuts in university funding. Light and Power also organized a large march against the privatization of the electric company. In this way we pushed back attempts by Enron—which just went bankrupt—and by Belgian and Spanish capitalists to buy the plant," Alvarez said.

In August the government raided the plant and arrested 200 union members, accusing them of breaking transformers. Later it ordered the arrest of union leaders under the pretext of "financial mismanagement." Then in late October the authorities ordered the arrest of the union leadership, two days before a major protest march. But the march of 30,000 took place, under the slogan, "No to the privatization of EPEC, no to layoffs, no to the privatization of the schools."

By the end of the year, the efforts by the government to sell off the electrical company had been beaten back.

Alvarez commented that the mass protests against the de la Rúa regime that swept the country December 19-20 were "very positive. It was a popular victory." In Córdoba the municipal workers demonstrated December 19 and stormed city hall, protesting the fact that they had not been paid. They were attacked by the cops. That night, middle-class and young demonstrators held a *cacerolazo*, a pot-banging protest, and march of 6,000 to demand the resignation of de la Rúa.

The next day, the state workers carried out a protest march in defiance of the state of siege. Later that day, as demonstrations erupted in Buenos Aires and across the country, de la Rúa was forced to resign. "Since then, there have been greater expectations that the economy will improve," Alvarez said.

Because of the continuing economic crisis, demonstrations and protests take place

virtually every day in Córdoba, Neuquén, Buenos Aires, and other cities. They have involved different class forces and are not all of the same political character, however.

The continuing bank restrictions have been a focal point of street protests by small merchants and professionals. On January 9, the Federation of Professional University Entities of Santiago del Estero (FEPUSE) held a *cacerolazo* to denounce "political corruption and the national economic policies." In Santa Rosa, La Pampa province, 700 small businessmen tried to storm the Bank of La Pampa. In Buenos Aires, 2,000 banged pots in the Plaza de Mayo on January 11 to demand the resignation of the Supreme Court, accusing it of "corruption." In Córdoba, demonstrators in a well-off neighborhood protested price hikes in front of a small Chinese-owned store, letting off the hook the wealthy owners of the large supermarket chains.

In some actions, working people have been pitted against each other. In Córdoba, hundreds of taxi drivers went on strike January 9 to demand that the government enforce a law requiring livery drivers to buy a new car if they don't meet certain requirements. They stoned a passing livery driver and then waged a fierce street battle with riot cops who assaulted them. The taxi drivers, who consider themselves in competition with the livery drivers, are seeking to reduce the number of livery cars on the street—something that only benefits the taxi companies and dispatching agencies at the expense of the drivers' ability to organize themselves collectively.

Actions by working people that advance their interests continue as well. In mid-January, bus drivers in Rosario and Salta and sanitation workers in Buenos Aires carried out strikes over back pay. On January 14, unemployed workers blocked highways in Jujuy province demanding jobs, as did 2,000 jobless workers who marched in Buenos Aires.

1951 lockout and the record of syndicalism

New Zealand rulers targeted unions in drive to war at home and abroad

This is the second of two articles in a *Militant* series marking the 50th anniversary of the 1951 waterfront lockout in New Zealand. The first, "151 days—the 1951 waterfront struggle in New Zealand," appeared in the January 7 issue.

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

In resolving that they had no choice but to accept the government and shipowners' conditions for a return to work, the National Council of the Waterside Workers Union (WWU) paid tribute to "our comrades of the Australian Watersiders' and Seamen's Unions, and bona-fide unionists everywhere." On July 16, 1951, 151 days after the lockout had been imposed, the first WWU members returned to the wharves. Those members of the seafarers, freezing workers (meat packers), miners, and drivers unions who had stayed on strike throughout the lockout organized to return to work on the same day.

The government proceeded to carve up the national WWU into a number of local port unions. A blacklist was implemented to keep militant unionists off the docks. Drivers, freezing workers, and others also saw their unions broken up.

In celebrating the capitalists' victory, National Party prime minister Sidney Holland was forced to acknowledge the resistance they had faced. "We faced up to a bigger fight than we imagined...it has cost us many millions," he said.

For working people, the struggle mounted by the industrial unions provided a glimpse of the power of these big battalions of the working class and their ability to draw others behind them into a struggle against the capitalists and their government. At the same time, the lockout, viewed in its historical and international context, helps to illustrate the dead end of syndicalism, a weighty influence on the militant unionists who led the rearguard fight.

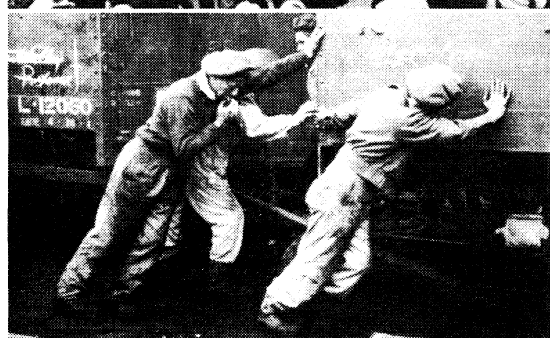
Unions get stronger

Coming out of World War II, the New Zealand capitalist rulers were intent on dealing a lasting blow to a layer of industrial unions that, through the latter years of the war and the second half of the 1940s, was growing in strength and influence.

Strikes were infrequent immediately following the government's entry into World War II. Workers who took such action during the war risked a stiff jail term under 1939 regulations, which received the support of the Federation of Labour (FOL) leadership. In 1940 FOL official Fintan Patrick Walsh declared that "the workers don't want to gain as a result of the war. They are prepared to make equal sacrifices."

Such statements notwithstanding, railway workers, seamen, miners, watersiders, and others organized industrial action over wages and other issues from 1941 on. The 11,000 workers involved in strike action in 1943 rose to 40,000 by 1945. In his memoirs, *Never a White Flag*, WWU leader Jock Barnes noted that near the close of the war industrial unrest forced the government to establish a minimum wage and guaranteed holidays.

There were other signs that working people's readiness to go on delaying their



Above: cops attack watersiders during meeting outside Auckland town hall, May 4, 1951. Left: Soldiers were called out to handle coal trucks. As they deepened offensive at home and prepared for imperialist wars abroad, capitalists in New Zealand mobilized state forces to defeat the watersiders unions and other industrial workers.

demands for wage increases and other measures for the sake of the capitalists' profits and the imperialist war was reaching its limit. In one dramatic incident, thousands of New Zealand soldiers staged a mutiny during their 1943 leave from the fighting in the Middle East and demanded that they be discharged.

During the war Washington stationed tens of thousands of soldiers in New Zealand, a country of fewer than 2 million people. Racism, rife throughout the U.S. military, organized by the brass, led to attempts to exclude Maori people from bars in Wellington and Auckland. This provoked large-scale street fights in which a number of U.S. servicemen were killed. The WWU was involved in conflicts over the same issue on the wharves, where special work was done for the U.S. forces.

Working people bear brunt of sacrifice

Working people's war sacrifices included a heavy toll on the battlefield. New Zealand's capitalist rulers sent some 11,500 troops—young workers and farmers in uniform, many of them conscripts—to their death, and by 1942 around 157,000 men were in the armed forces. They were sent to battle in North Africa and Europe to back London's war effort against Germany and Italy. New Zealand soldiers also fought in the Pacific war against Japan.

Despite the depletion of the labor force, the capitalists boosted their profits by stepping up exploitation of workers and working farmers. Speedup, sharp increases in working hours, and the employment of women in jobs that were previously out of bounds to them were all used to fill the gaps. Conscription of troops was accompanied by conscription of labor for industries that were deemed "essential." Women from 18 to 40 without dependent children, and men from 18 to 59, were eligible. The Minister of Labour employed wartime powers to override legally prescribed working hours and wage rates.

Consequently, the war years saw a substantial rise in the productivity of New Zealand capitalism, then, as now, based on the production and processing of meat, wool, dairy, and other products of the land.

Workers also faced restrictions on their union rights and civil liberties. In addition to its strike ban, the government decreed that the attorney general could fire any worker and deny individuals the right to union membership—including on the grounds of their political opinions. Newspapers that espoused socialist and other views contrary to the government's course

faced banning or police harassment. Hundreds of conscientious objectors were subjected to harsh conditions in prison camps.

Postwar expectations

Emerging from the war, working people hoped for a sharp break from these policies. Many anticipated that the Labour Party would pick up the banner of social reforms that it had demonstratively dropped during preparations for entry into World War II. First elected in 1935 at the end of the Great Depression, Labour—under intense working-class pressure—established a largely free national health service, expanded free public education, legislated to reduce the workweek to 40 hours, undertook a large-scale program to construct low-cost public housing, and carried out other reforms.

The pace of strikes and union action continued to quicken through the decade, with industrial unions like the miners and the watersiders in the front lines of resistance. On the Auckland docks, wrote Jock Barnes, "the loss of man-hours due to industrial conflict increased nearly tenfold."

But the postwar government underlined the wealthy rulers' intentions by declaring that it would seek to maintain the austerity framework of the war years. Prime Minister Peter Fraser said repeatedly that "wage increases were no good to anyone." A stabilization commission was set up in 1948 to continue the wartime wage-fixing policies.

Labour demonstrated its commitment to such priorities by spearheading a frontal attack on the Carpenters Union, which it deregistered in 1949, and by its support for the employers on other fronts. These moves deepened opposition among the workers who had backed the party, drastically undercutting its electoral base. But the leaders of the militant wing of the unions did not chart a course to build a political vanguard of working people independent of the Labour Party and its pro-capitalist leadership. The National government elected in late 1949 swung the antiunion cudgel handed it by Labour with even more single-mindedness of purpose, and stepped up the red baiting of those who dissented; for their part, workers went toward the looming confrontation without a political party of their own, and with a labor movement weakened by deep divisions.

The profit drive of the capitalists and the interests of working people were on a collision course. The point of impact came on the wharves in 1951, when the government set out to smash the watersiders and all who rallied to them.

Rulers prepare for war abroad

This approaching confrontation in New Zealand was also fueled by the imperialist powers' drive toward new military aggression. In each of the allied imperialist coun-

tries that had emerged victorious from the war, the class struggle at home and their preparations for war were joined together in potentially explosive combinations.

In Australia, the other "Anzac" power, workers came out of the war with a similar desire for improvements in their conditions of life and work, and organized to defend their interests through their unions and on the streets. In the United States, a massive strike wave broke out, and the unions won many new members. The U.S. armed forces were infected by the same mood of class resistance. U.S. troops stationed in the Pacific, Asia, and Europe mounted a "bring us home" movement that blocked Washington's immediate plans to intervene against the Indochinese and Chinese revolutions.

Elsewhere, revolutionary struggles were on the rise. Colonial powers like Britain and France faced growing nationalist rebellions in Asia, Africa, and elsewhere. Massive anti-imperialist mobilizations in India and China—one the "jewel in the British crown"—and the other the victim of 100 years of imperialist incursions and exploitation—stood at the forefront of this revolutionary wave. By the end of the 1940s the Chinese workers had defeated the pro-imperialist Kuomintang forces and established a workers and farmers government.

Even Europe presented a mixed picture from the standpoint of Washington and its allies. Although, thanks to Stalinist betrayals, revolutionary openings in Greece and Italy had been drowned in blood, the Red Army occupied much of Eastern Europe. As Washington, backed by London and other imperialist allies, increased pressure on the Soviet Union, the Stalin regime gave the green light to working-class mobilizations that enabled the overturn of capitalist property relations in a number of countries. In Yugoslavia, the working-class partisan movement led a socialist revolution.

"U.S. imperialism came out of [World War II] fully intending to use whatever military might was necessary to maintain and consolidate what it had won," wrote Jack Barnes in *Capitalism's World Disorder: Working-Class Politics at the Millennium*. "Having successfully completed the 'trial run' of the atomic bomb against the peoples of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the U.S. rulers planned to keep their armed forces strong in Asia. They intended to block the Chinese revolution and establish U.S. dominance in the Pacific region over the weaker and retreating British, French, and Dutch colonial powers. The U.S. government was also preparing to finish the job German imperialism had failed to achieve—the big task of overturning the gains of the Bolshevik revolution, initially by at least preventing the spread of Soviet property forms anywhere else in the world. Washington and its allies were marching toward a third world war."

New Zealand rulers shift alignment

The New Zealand rulers participated in these war preparations, and simultaneously sped up their shift in alignment from London to Washington. New Zealand had entered the world scene as a junior imperialist power after the consolidation of a nation-state at the end of the nineteenth century. The government of the day had successfully petitioned London to allot them some Pacific Island territories as colonies.

Britain's decline as a world power, and the post-World War II supremacy of the United States in the imperialist pecking order were behind the shift. It was codified in the ANZUS military alliance with the United States and Australia, signed two months after the end of the waterfront lockout.

The New Zealand rulers prepared to contribute cannon fodder to a confrontation with Soviet forces in the Middle East that was at one point anticipated by both Washington and London. In 1948 the New Zealand Labour government promised to send an army division and five air force squadrons to the region in the event of war. The next year they rammed through a "yes" vote in a referendum on "peacetime" conscription. The WWU's monthly paper, the *Transport Worker*, campaigned against the proposal. Sidney Holland, the prime minister

Continued on Page 11



Militant/Malcolm McAllister

Workers picket timber company Carter Holt Harvey in August. With working-class resistance to capitalist offensive today, opportunity to prepare for the coming showdown battles with the capitalists and their government by building a proletarian party is open once again.

'The murder of peasants had to be stopped'

Reprinted below is the second installment from the chapter "Lucha Contra Bandidos" in the Escambray" of the new Pathfinder book *From the Escambray to the Congo: In the Whirlwind of the Cuban Revolution*, an interview with Cuban revolutionary Víctor Dreke.

Dreke fought in the Cuban revolutionary war, led by the Rebel Army, that overthrew the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship in January 1959. In the early 1960s, he was a commander of the volunteer battalions that fought the U.S.-organized counterrevolutionary bands in the Escambray mountains of central Cuba. In 1965 he was second in command of the column of Cuban internationalist volunteers, headed by Ernesto Che Guevara, that joined with national liberation fighters in the Congo. He subsequently carried out numerous internationalist missions in Africa.

Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press, and Luis Madrid, a Pathfinder editor, conducted the first session of the interview with Dreke in Havana on Oct. 26, 1999. Pathfinder editor Michael Taber and *Perspectiva Mundial* editor Martin Koppel joined Waters in a second interview session on Dec. 2, 2001.

This book is scheduled to be released February 1, with simultaneous editions in English and Spanish. Copyright © 2002 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

The *Militant* will be reprinting the rest of the chapter in upcoming issues.



Madrid: In October 1963 the Second Agrarian Reform was decreed and implemented, eliminating one of the key social bases of the counterrevolutionary bands, that of the remaining capitalist farmers.

What impact did this law have on the struggle against the bandits?

Dreke: The Second Agrarian Reform helped. The wealthy landowners bought off those people. Many gave them support. But that's jumping ahead.

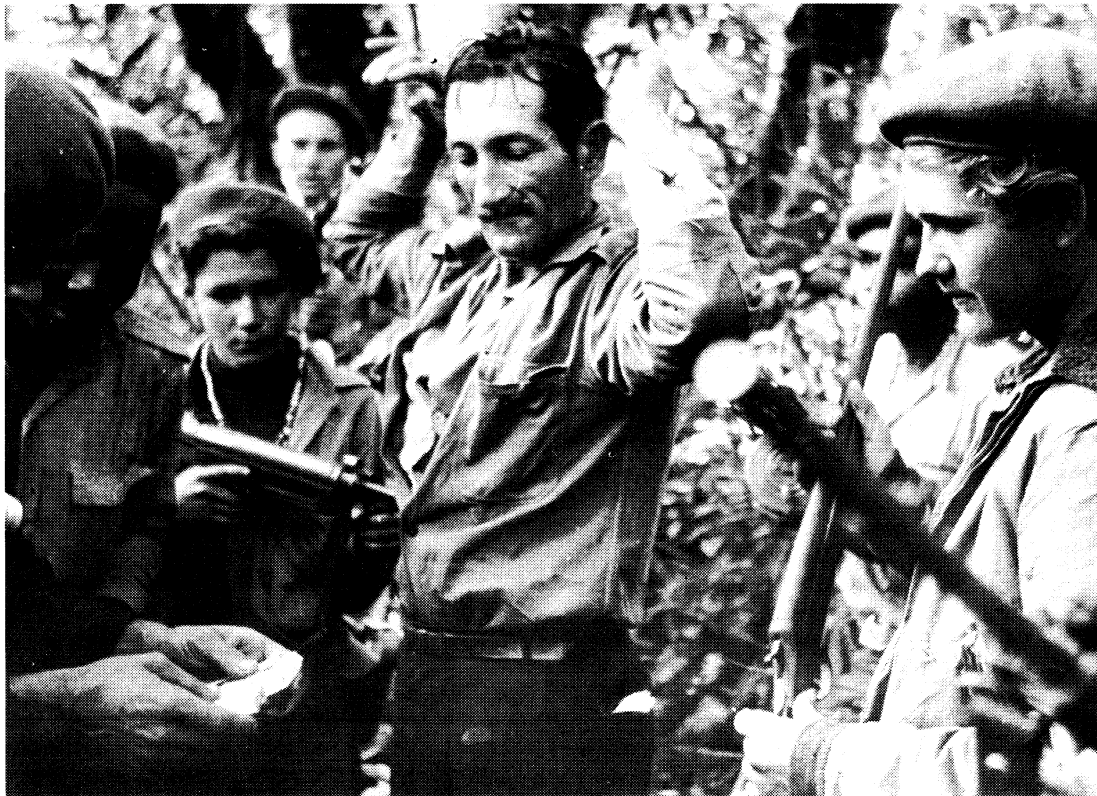
We did a number of things in the Escambray. At one point we had to seize a lot of property. I participated in this, together with people from the Escambray. We confiscated all the cars belonging to the counterrevolutionaries, all the timbiriches—

¹ Conrado Benítez, a nineteen-year-old literacy volunteer, was murdered by a counterrevolutionary band in the Escambray January 5, 1961, along with a peasant, Eliodoro Rodríguez Linares. Manuel Ascunce, a sixteen-year-old literacy volunteer, was murdered by counterrevolutionaries in the Escambray November 26, 1961, together with Pedro Lantigua, a peasant he was teaching to read and write.

Prior to the revolution, 23.6 percent of the Cuban population was illiterate. In the countryside illiteracy reached 41 percent, and if those who were semiliterate are included, the figure was over 80 percent. From late 1960 through the end of 1961 the revolutionary government organized a national campaign to teach one million Cubans to read and write. Central to this effort was the mobilization of 100,000 young people to go to the countryside, where they lived with peasants they were teaching. As a result of this drive, Cuba eliminated illiteracy. The residual illiteracy rate—those with learning disabilities and mental or physical impairments that prevented them from being taught—was 3.9 percent at the end of the successful campaign.

² This mission was described in a presidential briefing paper from August 1960, quoted by then CIA Inspector General Lyman Kirkpatrick in a balance sheet of the defeated Bay of Pigs invasion written in October 1961, but released only in 1998. The August 1960 Eisenhower administration memo said: "The initial phase of paramilitary operations envisages the development, support and guidance of dissident groups in three areas of Cuba: Pinar del Rio, Escambray and Sierra Maestra. These groups will be organized for concerted guerrilla action against the regime."

Kirkpatrick also cites a secret White House memo from March 11, 1961—four days prior to the Kennedy administration's decision to switch the proposed invasion from the Escambray region to Playa Girón. The memo reported that the revolutionary government "is making good use of the militia against guerrilla activities and the infiltration of people and hardware."



Militias capture bandit in the Escambray in 1961. Tens of thousands of militia members in Cuba were mobilized "because of acts like the murder of literacy volunteers," said Víctor Dreke. "As well as all the other crimes the bandits had committed: burning down schools, rapes, robberies."

that's what we call the tiny bodegas, or stores—that belonged to those who consciously assisted the bandits. Those who helped the bandits, protecting them, hiding them, and providing them with supplies, food, and other items. Some did so because they were forced to by the bandits. It was a little of both.

One night the army went in—and when I say "army," I mean the people's militias, the armed people, made up of the peasants themselves—and we confiscated all those things. It was a lightning operation. And by daybreak the bandits had nothing. They were left without supplies. They were left without a rear guard. Later they put one back together, but we put them in that situation for several months.

It was necessary to deepen the revolution's political work in the Escambray. That required making changes there in the leadership of the party, of the armed forces, of everything. The commander in chief; the minister of defense, Raúl; and Almeida, who had been named head of the Central Army—all of them were part of this. So the political and ideological work was turned around.

Waters: The troops, the militia who were decisive in defeating the bands—were they all volunteers? I'm thinking of Nicaragua, where there were differences among the Sandinistas over whether to fight the U.S.-organized contra forces with volunteers or draftees. The Sandinista leadership eventually decided on a draft, and the revolution's enemies used that to gain support.

Dreke: In our case they were volunteers. In the first clean-up operation 50,000 combatants participated, most of them from Havana province. The militias executed a

massive encirclement of the Escambray.

Waters: When was this?

Dreke: The first cleanup operation in the Escambray ran from the end of 1960 through the first months of 1961. But we had to withdraw our troops with a few bands still remaining. And then in April came Playa Girón.

We withdrew our troops early on in 1961 because they had already been mobilized for months. They were workers and peasants who had voluntarily left their workplaces and were absent from their jobs. Since they were taking part in the cleanup operation, they weren't producing.

It's important to remember that the enemy used the counterrevolutionary bands in the Escambray to try to drain the resources of the fledgling revolution, which was fighting to resolve the country's economic problems.

Most militia volunteers weren't getting paid anything. For those who had jobs, their factories and workplaces continued to pay their wages to their families. But most were youth in their teens who had never been part of the workforce. Only some years later, as an "incentive," to use the language of today, did we start giving 25 pesos a month to young *milicianos* who didn't hold regular jobs.

All of them were there by their own choice. They were the volunteer forces of the people.

Tens of thousands of militiamen took part. How were we able to mobilize them? Because of acts like the murder of literacy volunteers, among them Conrado Benítez and Manuel Ascunce,¹ as well as innocent peasant women and children—and all the other crimes the bandits had committed: burning

down schools, rapes, robberies. The people rose up in indignation over these savage deeds.

Madrid: How important was the first cleanup operation in the Escambray to ensuring the defeat of the invasion at Girón?

Dreke: It was very important. Let me explain why.

These bandits were dependent on imperialism. We can't look at the bandits in isolation, on their own, as just some group of crazies who took up arms. No, no, no. This was organized. They were being organized as a fifth column to back an invasion by the United States. An important mission was assigned to these bandits by Washington.²

At the time of the first cleanup, the mission for which the bandits were being prepared was to attack and seize the main towns when the invasion came—Trinidad and all those little towns there—and to take the highways. In addition, within the cities it was expected that organized counterrevolutionaries would take up arms when the moment came.

In other words, all this was being directed by imperialism.

What happened?

Fidel led the process of eliminating the bands prior to Girón. The murder and harassment of peasants had to be stopped. What's more, we knew an attack was coming. There had already been various types of sabotage actions by the bandits in different regions. For example, near Trinidad they blew up fuel tanks.

We made the effort to rapidly clean up the Escambray, so we wouldn't face a fifth column already armed and trained.

When the landing came at Girón, very few of the bandits remained. They were in flight. They were in hiding. They controlled nothing. This was part of defeating the U.S. invasion plan. The invaders were left without a rear guard.

In the cities State Security immediately grabbed them all. This included some people we thought were counterrevolutionaries but weren't. Because at that time, you couldn't say anything against the revolution. You couldn't say, "Damn it's cold and we don't have shelter." You couldn't say that because it would be interpreted as counterrevolutionary. That's the way it was. The question was one of "*Patria o muerte!*" [Homeland or death]. Because that was the only way forward.

So there were people we considered counterrevolutionaries because of reports and opinions expressed by their neighbors or coworkers. But when the invasion came, they went out into the streets requesting arms to fight.

But the real counterrevolutionaries were neutralized. We tied their feet. They couldn't do anything. The invaders were left with no reserve forces. They believed they had an army awaiting them. But when they arrived they found they had nothing. Their "army" had been crushed.

NEW FROM *Pathfinder*

From the Escambray to the Congo

IN THE WHIRLWIND OF THE CUBAN REVOLUTION

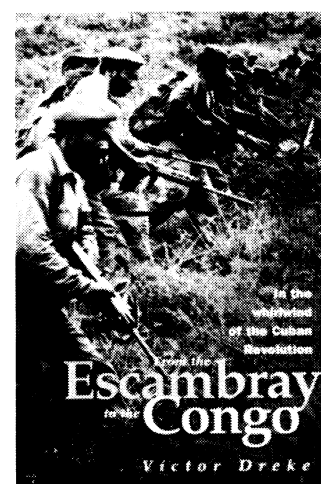
"We were ready to die to bring down the Batista dictatorship," says Cuban revolutionary Víctor Dreke, "but we didn't know the first thing about revolution."

In his account of how easy it became after the 1959 victory of the Cuban Revolution to "take down the rope" that for decades had segregated blacks from whites at dances in town squares, yet how enormous was the battle to transform the social relations underlying this and all

the other "ropes" inherited from colonialism, capitalism, and Yankee domination, Víctor Dreke captures the historical challenge of our epoch.

At the heart of this book lies the willingness, determination, and creative joy with which Cuba's working people have, for more than forty years, defended their revolutionary course against the imperialist bastion to the north.

Víctor Dreke has been a leading participant in Cuba's revolutionary movement for half a century: as high school student activist, cadre of the July 26 Movement and then the March 13 Revolutionary Direc-



torate, Rebel Army fighter, a commander of the volunteer battalions that defeated the counterrevolutionary bands in the Escambray mountains of central Cuba, internationalist combatant at the side of Che Guevara in the Congo, political leader and educator, and representative of the Cuban Revolution throughout Africa.

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Pakistan arrests 2,000 under U.S. pressure

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Under growing pressure from Washington, Pakistan's military ruler Gen. Pervez Musharraf has broadened a crackdown on organizations deemed involved in "terrorist activity" in the country. Since a public speech January 12, Musharraf has accelerated the repression, arresting 1,957 people, banning five organizations, and shutting down 390 offices. The government has announced that 3,000 people, including some in the area of Kashmir that it controls, are targeted for arrest.

Pakistani cops are authorized to detain people for 30 days by declaring them a "threat to public order," the *New York Times* reported January 15. According to CNN, most of those arrested are held under a British colonial-era "maintenance of public order" law that permits jailing for up to three months.

Pervez, who dissolved Parliament and suspended the country's constitution when he took power in a military coup in 1999, had already prohibited normal functioning of political parties during his three-year reign.

Pakistan's military standoff with India and the regime's subsequent crackdown was sparked by a suicidal armed attack on the Indian parliament December 13. The five attackers were killed, as well as nine others, mainly guards. New Delhi claims the assault was organized by Kashmiri groups backed by the Pakistani government. India demanded Islamabad hand over 20 men in Pakistan who it accused of terrorist attacks.

At the heart of the conflict between the two countries is the creation of Pakistan in 1947 by British imperialism as a bulwark against the revolutionary battle by workers and peasants on the entire Indian subcontinent to address the unfulfilled tasks of national unification.

After the division of India and Pakistan and the granting of independence in face of a massive anticolonial struggle, the seeds



Members of militant Muslim group detained at police station January 13 in Hyderabad, Pakistan. Regime in Islamabad has accelerated repression, announcing that 3,000 people are targeted for arrest.

planted by Britain bore their first fruits as the governments of both countries waged war against each other over Kashmir. The region is mostly Muslim, but it was controlled by a Hindu aristocracy that backed India. In the war, India gained control over two-thirds of the region and Pakistan took control over the rest.

India had agreed to hold a plebiscite under international monitoring to allow Kashmiris to choose which nation they wanted to join, but later reneged and prevented a vote from being organized.

The two countries went to war again in 1965 and since the mid-1990s the Pakistani regime has backed several groups fighting against Indian control of the area. Some of these groups have carried out attacks inside India. Over the past 12 years, Muslim forces have waged a guerrilla war against Indian security forces in Kashmir, taking the lives of more than 35,000 people, according to Indian government estimates.

New Delhi has seized on Washington's war in Afghanistan and the December 13

attack to cast the military confrontation with Pakistan as its "final battle" against terrorism. "There is no way that India can accept such acts of terrorism any more," said India's defense minister George Fernandes. "India has had enough and shall have no more of it."

The current military mobilization is the largest in the two countries' 54-year history. New Delhi has asserted that it will not reduce its military presence until attacks across the border of Indian-controlled Kashmir cease.

In addition to amassing hundreds of thousands of troops on the border with Pakistan, India's military announced it had fully mobilized its navy for combat. "We're ready, ships are armed, fueled and provisioned," declared Admiral Madhavendra Singh.

Faced with this pressure and a squeeze from Washington, which already has a large military presence in the country, Musharraf proclaimed Pakistan's "campaign against terrorism" in his nationally televised address. At the same time, the military ruler

remarked that Islamabad would not "budge an inch from our principle stand on Kashmir," seeking to minimize the backlash over the reversal of its policy toward groups now being driven underground that were once encouraged to operate openly. Many of these organizations kept storefront offices, advertised in newspapers, and conducted fund-raising activities in mosques and on the streets.

Before the U.S. rulers' assault on Afghanistan there were no restrictions on Pakistani citizens joining such groups. In fact cops in the southern province of Sindh reported that the regime instructed them to allow militant groups in Karachi to recruit young men for guerrilla training and to raise funds for armed assaults in Kashmir and Afghanistan.

"A new underground army of 5,000 armed and trained religious extremists [could] revolt against this about-face in the government's posture," a senior Pakistan government official told the *Washington Post*. He noted that this could pose the "greatest threat" to stability in Pakistan in the weeks and months ahead.

The brother of Pakistan's interior minister was assassinated on December 21, which was viewed by many as a warning for the government official who has been spearheading a crackdown on militant groups inside the country.

As U.S. government officials pressed Musharraf to move against a range of organizations targeted by New Delhi, Washington has also sought to tamp down tensions between Pakistan and India. Both regimes are useful for extending U.S. imperialist domination in the region. U.S. military forces are currently operating out of four military bases in Pakistan. Washington rebuffed Islamabad's request that it vacate two of the bases in order to allow Pakistan's troops greater access in the event of a war with India.

"The last thing we want to see happen right now in South Asia is a war between these two nuclear-armed states," said U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell who arrived in Islamabad January 16 in his first stop on a five-nation trip that will also include India, Afghanistan, Nepal, and Japan.

The editors of the *New York Times* called the arrests of thousands in Pakistan a "momentous development" and lauded the "critical turnabout" of the regime in backing Washington's military assault on Afghanistan. They suggest that New Delhi could respond with a "reciprocal gesture" to Pakistan, "perhaps by pulling back some of its forces on the border."

N.Y. rally backs laundry workers' fight

Continued from front page

company enters its second month.

The laundry workers went on strike December 5 as part of their fight to be represented by the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE). Flex-O-Tex owner Gabriel Blau refused to negotiate with UNITE, saying the company could not afford to meet the workers' contract demands.

The proposed contract is the same one that UNITE has in force at other area laundries, and includes medical insurance, paid sick days, paid personal days, the establishment of a union health and safety committee, and a substantial wage increase. Nearly all the workers at Flex-O-Tex currently make minimum wage or slightly better, regardless of their years at the plant.

Among those joining the strikers were UNITE members from several other industrial laundries in the area, including more than a dozen on their lunch break from Princeton Laundry across the street and workers from a UNITE-organized laundry in Brooklyn.

"We're here to support the workers at Flex-O-Tex," Elvis, a worker at Princeton, told the *Militant*. "They work long hours for low pay. They want better conditions and we support them."

Victoria García, who has worked at Princeton for three years, echoed Elvis's sentiment. "We're here to help them and support them in their fight for better wages, better working conditions and medical benefits," she said.

Throughout the two-hour action in front of the plant, strikers and their supporters kept up a spirited chorus of chants in English and Spanish. Among the most popular were, "Si se puede!" (Yes we can) and "No more sweatshops!" referring to the conditions at Flex-O-Tex.

The spirited chants were periodically halted so representatives of a number of organizations could voice their solidarity with the strikers. Among those who spoke were Peter Santiago from the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now

(ACORN), a housing advocacy group in the Bronx; Leslie Lyga from the Bronx Environmental Action Coalition; Luz María Madrigal from San Jeronimo's Roman Catholic Church; and Sharon Joslyn, director of community programs at St. Luke's Roman Catholic Church.

At one point during the action, a worker inside the plant waved in support with one finger poking through one of the first floor

mesh-covered windows.

In addition, a number of people leaving the plant exchanged warm greetings with their co-workers on the picket line.

"We're not only fighting for those of us out here on the picket line," Maritza Córdoba, a leader of the strike, told the gathering. "We're fighting for all the workers at this plant. As far as we're concerned Gabriel can either meet our demands or shut down."

Enron debacle: big firms don't shield workers

Continued from front page

by Enron or its accounting firm, Arthur Andersen LLP. Congress has also begun an investigation. Attorney General John Ashcroft recused himself from the case after admitting that Enron had contributed more than \$50,000 to his senatorial campaign in 2000. Enron, based in Houston, was one of the largest contributors to President George Bush's election campaigns, giving more than half a million dollars over the course of his political career.

The company also contributed to Democratic Party congressional campaigns. Under both Democratic and Republican administrations, company executives joined other capitalists in successful efforts to promote the abolition of regulations governing the buying and selling of electricity and natural gas. Vice President Richard Cheney and other administration officials met with Enron executives on a number of occasions last year during hearings of the government's energy task force.

Although several administration officials say they received calls from Enron executives asking for a government bailout as the company unraveled, no evidence has yet been made public of any criminal wrongdoing by Bush or his cabinet members—just the "normal" dealings between a capitalist government and the big business it serves.

Robert Rubin, Treasury secretary during the Clinton administration, did try to press

the government to bail out Enron, according to press reports. Rubin, now the head of Citigroup, called a high-level official at the Treasury Department to see what could be done. Apparently no action was taken.

The *New York Times* advised Bush to "be forthcoming with Congress about any dealings [he or other administration officials] had with the energy company," and said that Democratic Congressmen "should resist the temptation to use the Enron saga for cheap political gain."

The main concern of the government probes and numerous articles in the big-business press is not to bring some justice to the thousands of employees fired by Enron.

In the wake of the company's collapse, the bosses fired some 4,300 of 7,500 Houston-area employees, leaving them without health insurance and with a worthless 401(k) retirement fund.

Employees, who were not permitted to divest themselves of their Enron stock, were forced to watch their pensions disappear as the company stock took a dive. To add insult to injury, while laid-off workers were offered a \$4,500 severance package, top Enron executives and directors had sold their stock earlier for hundreds of millions of dollars. In addition, just days before the bankruptcy filing, "retention bonuses" worth \$55 million were given to 500 employees. Eleven received payments of between \$500,000 and \$5 million.

Instead, it is the activities of Enron, such as setting up limited partnerships that lost billions, and the conduct of its auditing company that are coming under scrutiny. In a five-year period to 2001, the company overstated its profits by \$586 million. So far reports indicate that Andersen auditors helped obscure questionable business practices and mounting losses, and even shredded documents after the government investigation began.

The U.S. big-business press has spurred on the official investigations, giving the unfolding revelations front-page coverage. "In order to restore confidence in American capitalism and in the integrity of its financial markets, the public needs to understand what brought Enron down so suddenly last year," wrote the *New York Times* editors January 4.

Another editorial the following week returned to the theme, asserting that "investors, as absentee owners, must be able to trust the information public companies report about their businesses."

"This affair shows the accounting profession all too often to be in bed with the oldest profession," wrote conservative columnist William Safire January 14. "Self-dealing; asset-hiding; insider stock dumping—all these were supposedly beyond the ken of an audit committee and legal counsel blindly reliant on the ethics and standards of 'professional' accountants. It's a scandal, all right, and wrongdoers should pay in heavy civil damages if not jail time."

1951 lockout in New Zealand

Continued from Page 8

ister elected in 1949, reaffirmed the Middle East commitment in a February 1951 visit to Washington, pledging to send 35,000 troops to the region in the event of war. In the same month the shipowners and government began the lockout of the watersiders.

Imperialist assault on Korea

The New Zealand rulers' attack on the unions in the late 1940s and early 1950s coincided with their backing for Washington's war on Korea. As workers and peasants consolidated a popular regime in the north and rose up in the south, Washington mounted a massive land, air, and sea assault, aiming to defeat the revolutionary upsurge, impose a puppet government on the peninsula, and position imperialist forces next door to the new Chinese republic in preparation for fresh aggression.

"I admire the part the U.S.A. is playing in Korea," said Prime Minister Holland during a trip to Washington in February 1951, the month in which his government launched the assault on the watersiders. "Tell me what else I can do and I will do it." The words echoed the sentiment in the 1939 declaration of war on Germany by Prime Minister Michael Savage. "Where [Britain] goes we go; where she stands we stand," he had said.

among working people and grumbling among fellow capitalists, they increased freight charges by 50 percent.

The National Party government, like its Labour Party predecessor, backed the shipowners in their disputes with the watersiders. It also acted in defense of the interests of the ruling capitalist families as a whole. The most class-conscious exploiters recognized that the actions of the unions reflected deeper discontent, and potential opposition, among working people.

A number of the WWU's political stances provided further motivation for the hostility of the capitalists—including the union's opposition to New Zealand involvement in imperialist wars in Korea and Malaya.

Workers faced array of forces

The government took the initiative in the early stage of the 151-day confrontation. They mobilized formidable forces to back the lockout, sending soldiers to load and unload ships, passing gagging and antiunion regulations that exceeded the wartime measures in their severity, and giving the police a free hand against unionists and their supporters. The big-business newspapers and government radio stations chimed in as apologists for the assault.

Capitalist politicians joined the propaganda blitz, urging the cabinet to greater efforts. One National parliamentarian drew a disapproving parallel with the Korean War, saying, "New Zealand troops in Korea were engaged in a shooting war against the communists.... In Korea, Communists were being shot—but in New Zealand they were given the freedom of the country."

The response by the 8,000 watersiders, the 12,000 miners, freezing workers and others who launched solidarity strikes, and those who helped organize the unions' relief organizations had a considerable impact. At one point the cabinet had to send naval personnel to move coal out of mines to avert a looming power crisis. Tens of thousands of people found ways, in the midst of intense polarization, to defy the regulations and aid the embattled workers. Isolated rural mining communities stood firm for months, in spite of being placed under siege by the cops.

The role of the class-colaborationist FOL officials was decisive in ending the solidarity strikes and undercutting the social movement that had begun to arise against the lockout. In 1960 Keith Holyoake, who succeeded Holland as National prime minister, said that "the task would have been impossible without the Federation's aid."

When, after five months of pressure, the WWU agreed to accept Holland's onerous terms, the government proceeded to break up the key unions. The capitalists' victory helped lay the basis for them to take advantage of the boom in international trade and capitalist profits that developed in the 1950s.

Syndicalist traditions

Those who gave their all in the fight did not lack for militancy or a sense of solidarity. These and other qualities were evident in abundance, and not only among those who were locked out or on strike. But these fighters faced a handicap: the leadership of the WWU and other key unions did not represent a revolutionary class-struggle wing of the labor movement.

While Stalinist forces held positions of influence, the central leaders of the WWU were politically shaped by the syndicalist traditions that had put their stamp on working-class struggle and politics in a number of imperialist countries during the first half of the 20th century. In New Zealand, militant syndicalism was a major influence among the forces who, during the decade leading up to World War I, led in building the industrial unions organized in the "Red"



Members of Women's Auxiliary, Auckland Waterside Workers Union, speak at city's Railway Workshops to win support for the locked-out workers.

Federation of Labour.

The industrial unionism and class political independence advocated by the "Red Feds" spoke to a pressing need among working people at that time. The craft union leaderships that largely predominated in the labor movement had proven increasingly unable to respond as New Zealand imperialism began to assert itself and prepare for war against workers and farmers at home and abroad.

Major industrial battles of the period included a victorious miners' strike on the West Coast of the South Island in 1908, and a national miners strike in 1912. The following year, struggles by watersiders, miners, and others led to a general strike. The workers faced police repression and brutal vigilante attacks organized by the government.

After the unions had gone down to defeat in the 1912-13 battles, Red Fed leaders stepped up their efforts to draw together different elements in the labor movement into a political party. Many became leaders of the Labour Party, formed in 1916 as a result of these efforts. A number were jailed during World War I for their union activities, and for speaking out against the war. Former Red Fed leaders were among those at the helm of the party two-and-a-half decades later, when it led working people into the slaughter of World War II.

The watersiders' leaders fought the rightward trajectory of the Labour leadership, including as party members themselves. Calling the Labour leaders "penitent sinners," they contrasted their course in government with their earlier record as union militants and antiwar socialists. At the same time, Barnes and others not only failed to confront the syndicalist shortcomings of the earlier leaders, but drew on the tradition they represented.

The international roots of syndicalism

The fact that syndicalism is an obstacle to revolutionary struggle has been played out in a number of countries, including Spain, France, and Italy. Internationally and historically, the forebears of the syndicalist leaders were anarchists, who organized in opposition to Karl Marx and Frederick Engels and other proletarian leaders of the international working-class movement of the mid-19th century onwards.

Anarchists opposed Marx's unequivocal statements that the fall of the capitalist state and the rise of the dictatorship of the proletariat—the workers state—were equally inevitable; that no other road forward out of capitalist barbarism was possible; and that workers must lead a massive social movement of the oppressed to overthrow capitalist rule. To this line of march the original anarchist leaders counterposed methods of individual terror and the construction of communes and cooperative societies that did not directly challenge the capitalist state. State power, they said, was reactionary per se.

Offshoots of this current with deeper roots in the defensive struggles and organizations of the working class, the anarcho-syndicalists fought for the formation of revolutionary unions and posed the general strike as the weapon of revolutionary struggle.

The syndicalist leaders in the New Zealand of the first and second decades of the 20th century often took their political lead from militant currents in the labor movement of the United States. They included the wing of the Socialist Party represented by Eugene Debs, who for a period collaborated with union militants from the syndicalist movement who were drawn to socialism, and the syndicalists organized in the Industrial Workers of the World.

Despite their call for "one big union" on the industrial front, and one big working-class party in the political arena, the American IWW syndicalists ended up devoting most of their energies to ultimately unsuccessful attempts to build revolutionary unions. They abandoned work in the political field to other, mostly reformist, forces.

Socialist Workers Party leader Farrell Dobbs, a central leader of the fight to build the Teamsters Union in the United States in the 1930s, discussed the role of the IWW and other syndicalist currents in the United States in the early 20th century in his book *Revolutionary Continuity: The Early Years: 1848-1917*. Rejecting all political activity, the most extreme syndicalists aimed to build "revolutionary unions...with the object of abolishing capitalism by direct action on the economic field," wrote Dobbs. They "failed to perceive that a workers' victory could be achieved only through revolutionary political struggle to wrest state power from the capitalists; that the new state then had to be organized as an instrument for defense of the revolutionary conquests.... They sought to steer the workers away from their most vital political task in the fight to overthrow capitalist rule—the building of a revolutionary vanguard party."

The example of the Russian Revolution, the first socialist revolution in history, and the decisive role of the Bolsheviks, led by V.I. Lenin, won a number of syndicalist figures in the United States to the perspective of building just such a vanguard party. James P. Cannon was one former IWW cadre who broke with syndicalism and helped found the Communist Party. After their 1928 expulsion Cannon and others continued to defend the Bolshevik program and perspectives, helping to form what later became the Socialist Workers Party.

Despite the very real impact of the Russian Revolution and the Bolshevik-led Communist International, workers in New Zealand were never able to forge such an organization through their struggles in the 1920s, '30s, and '40s. A small Communist Party, separate from the mass forces that looked to the Labour Party, was not consolidated until the 1920s. By that time Stalinist thuggery dominated politics in the Soviet Union and the Communist International. No minority arose within the CP in New Zealand to defend the Bolshevik program. Not until the late 1960s did new forces arise who set out to organize a communist party.

As the ruling-class offensive today against working people in New Zealand meets resistance from unionists, the unemployed, working farmers, and young fighters against oppression, the opportunity to prepare for the coming showdown battles with the capitalists and their government by building a proletarian party is open once again. Conquering the lessons of the antiunion lockout will be a part of the construction of such a leadership.

Michael Tucker, from Auckland, New Zealand, contributed to this article.

From Pathfinder

Revolutionary Continuity: Marxist Leadership in the U.S.

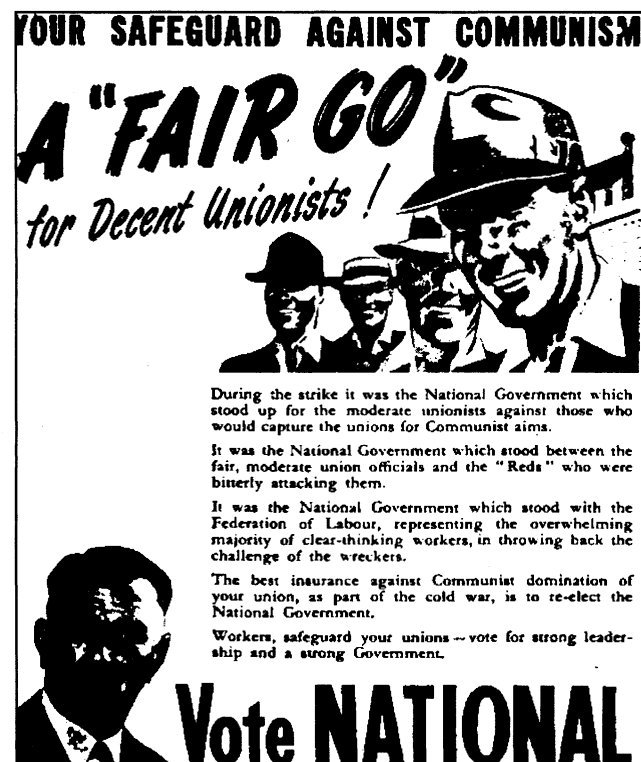
Farrell Dobbs

The fight to build a leadership that can advance the class interests of workers and small farmers and link up with fellow toilers around the world.

The Early Years, 1848-1917 \$16.95

Birth of the Communist Movement, 1918-1922. \$18.95

See bookstores listed on page 12.



National Party continued red-baiting propaganda after defeat of watersiders. Campaign poster in 1951 elections called the lockout a strike, and paid tribute to class-colaborationist Federation of Labour officials.

As part of their aggressive stance at home and abroad, the New Zealand rulers and the big-business media stepped up their red-baiting efforts throughout the 1940s, taking their cue from the administration of President Harry Truman and, later, such rightist politicians as Sen. Joseph McCarthy. The rhetoric was aimed not so much at the Stalinist Communist Party as at the thousands of struggle-minded workers around New Zealand. The capitalists sought to intimidate and silence the opposition to their anti-working-class course.

Assault on watersiders

The assault on the watersiders was keenly observed by the rulers, as well as class-conscious workers, on both sides of the Pacific. At the forefront of the offensive against the Watersiders Workers Union and other militant unions in 1951 stood both the New Zealand government, representing the interests of the country's most powerful ruling families, and the shipowning capitalists.

The shipowners, seeking to maximize their profits from the country's rising international trade after World War II, were itching for a showdown with the 8,000-strong watersiders union—especially its largest and most battle-seasoned branch in Auckland. From their standpoint, the union's actions and campaigns for improved wages, control of hiring, and safety on the job increased the costs of loading and unloading ships and cut into their profits. The shipping company owners exposed their greed halfway through the lockout, when, to widespread outrage

Garment strikers

Continued from front page

approved the contract offer, increasing the pressure on the remaining strikers to approve the contract. Two previous offers were rejected in December by narrow margins.

In the end, workers will receive hourly wage increases of 10, 15, 20, and 30 cents in each successive year of the contract. The bosses, organized in the Men's Clothing Manufacturers Association (MCMA), withdrew two concession clauses they had demanded around vacations. One was a proposed reduction in vacation pay for workers with nine or more years of seniority.

Another clause would have allowed employers to technically fire workers who take unauthorized extended vacation time and rehire them with no seniority. This was modified to remove both a monetary penalty and the stipulation of seniority loss. Authorization for extra vacation time is normally extended to only a few workers. Many immigrant workers occasionally extend their vacation in order to travel more cheaply to their country of origin during peak summer shut-downs. These workers are usually rehired upon their return because of their skill and productivity. Others, however, can still be fired arbitrarily according to the terms of the contract. Eighty percent of union members are women and many are immigrants.

John Alleruzzo, the Canadian director of UNITE, admitted that "a 75 cent wage increase over a four-year settlement is certainly not a gold mine, but it is a gain in relation to the employers' offer of 45 cents over three years." Negotiations, he said, "were not easy," and the union was forced to "conduct them shop by shop," which had not been the case when talks started.

Union negotiators had recommended approval of all three contract offers to the ranks. During the strike union officials did not openly discourage petitions which began to be circulated by more conservative groups of workers demanding that negotiations be resumed on a plant-by-plant basis. The petition gained support among strikers at Jack Victor, under the influence of a layer of better-paid union members who are less affected by the smaller wage increases and occupy a relatively privileged position in relation to the bosses. Supporters of the petition called other workers at home to sign a petition that would "get us back to work."

As during the last strike in 1998, Jack Victor was the first company to leave the MCMA bargaining table. Once a deal had been signed there, other employers come in behind the same offer.

In informal discussions at the union hall prior to the vote, some workers thought that negotiating company by company was a better strategy. Among the 30 percent who

voted against the final offer at Jack Victor, in contrast, many felt strongly that the strength of the union is in its numbers and that the workers who went out together should go back together.

Many workers doubted that more could be won from the employers given the economic recession. Many feel the pressure of unemployment, which over November and December rose from 8.9 percent to 9.7 percent in Quebec. Others said the timing of the strike, coming just before the holiday period when workers had extra bills to pay and the plants would shut down for two weeks, had contributed to the closeness of the previous two votes rejecting the contract. Weekly strike pay was CAN\$75.

The bosses took advantage of the economic downturn to cry poverty. In a letter addressed to workers in the first week of the strike, they said that they could not offer more because of the deteriorating "global situation of our industry" and "lowering sales in North America for many years." In past strikes, workers were able to win salary increases of 75 cents over a three-year contract.

Many workers at Jack Victor, however, felt that more could be won if the union stayed out longer. This sentiment was also expressed by strikers on picket lines at Golden Brand, SFI, and Samuelsohn.



Militant/Naomi Craine

UNITE members picketing Samuelson garment factory in Montreal

A presser at Golden Brand who didn't want his name used because of his immigrant status, said he voted for the contract, not because he liked it, but because like many others, he had no choice but to accept it once other shops had done so. "But we had to strike," he added, "to show the bosses that we're not afraid and that they can't do

anything they want with us."

Philomena, a sewer at Jack Victor, added, "Still, four years is a long time to wait before we can fight for something better."

Sylvie Charbin is a sewing machine operator at Jack Victor and a member of UNITE Local 2581 in Montreal.

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

CALIFORNIA

Los Angeles

Capitalism's Increasing Instability in Central Asia: the Threat of War between India and Pakistan. Speaker: William Kalman, Socialist Workers Party, meat packer. Fri., Jan. 25, 7:30 p.m. 4229 S. Central Ave. Tel: (323) 233-9372.

ILLINOIS

Chicago

The Fight for Black Rights and the Rise of Working-Class Resistance. Speakers: Osborne Hart, Socialist Workers Party candidate for Detroit mayor, meat packer and member of United Food and Commercial Workers; Arrin Hawkins. Sat. Jan. 26, 7:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. 1212 N. Ashland Ave, suite 201. Tel: (773) 342-1780.

MINNESOTA

St. Paul

Workers in the United States Resist Employers' and Government Attacks. Fri. Jan. 25, 7:30 p.m. **Perspectives for a Workers and Farmers Revolution in the United States.** Speaker: Samuel Farley, Socialist Workers Party, meat packer and

member of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 789. Fri. Feb. 1, 7:30 p.m. Both events at 113 Bernard St., West St. Paul. Tel: (651) 644-6325.

MICHIGAN

Detroit

The Crisis in Education. Speaker: Ellen Berman, Socialist Workers Party and member, United Auto Workers. Fri. Jan. 25, 7:30 p.m. 4208 W. Vernor. Tel: (313) 554-0504.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

The Struggle for Black Rights Today. Speakers: Ron Washington, president, Black Telephone Workers for Justice; Ved Dookhun, Socialist Workers Party. Fri. Jan. 18, 7:30 p.m. 506 Springfield Ave., 3rd Floor. Donation: \$4. Tel: (973) 643-3341.

NEW YORK

Brooklyn

The Fight for Women's Right to Choose Abortion. Speaker: Mark Gilsdorf, Socialist Workers Party. 372A 53rd St. (at 4th Ave.) Donation: \$5. (718) 567-8014.

Garment District

A Working-Class Response to Growing Unemployment, Part-Time Work, and the Debt Crisis in Semicolonial Countries. Speaker: Greg McCartan, Militant editor. 545 8th Avenue 14th Floor. Donation: \$4. (212) 695-7358.

Upper Manhattan

Military Occupation of Afghanistan: The U.S. Prepares for Future Wars. Speaker: Brian Williams, Militant staff writer. Fri., Jan. 18, 7:30 p.m. 599 W. 187th Street, 2nd Floor. Donation: \$5. Tel: (212) 740-4611.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

Defend Abortion Rights. Speaker: Janice Lynn, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Jan. 25, 7:30 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m. 3437 14th St. NW. Donation: \$4 program, \$5 dinner. Tel: (202) 387-1590.

NEW ZEALAND

Christchurch

Behind the India-Pakistan Conflict over Kashmir. Fri., Jan. 25, 7:00 p.m. Gloucester Arcade, 129 Gloucester St. Donation: \$3. Tel: (3) 365-6055.

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—CALENDAR—

ALABAMA

Birmingham

Grand Opening of Pathfinder Bookstore at New Location. Sat., Jan. 26, 12:00 noon-5:00 p.m. Open House. Sun. Jan. 27, 12:00 noon, class: **Malcolm X and the Fight against Imperialism Today.** Followed by buffet lunch at 1:30 p.m. Presentation and discussion at 3:30 p.m.: **Imperialist Militarism from Middle East to Indian Subcontinent: Washington's War Abroad, Extension of Growing Attacks on Workers at Home.** Speaker: Ma'mud Shirvani, editor of Pathfinder's Farsi-language publishing program. 3029A Bessemer Road. Tel: (205) 780-0021.

CALIFORNIA

San Francisco

Defend Freedom of Speech and the Bill of Rights. Support Struggle of Michael Itale for Reinstatement. Tues. Jan. 29, 7:00 p.m. Reception at 6:00 p.m. Quaker Meeting House, 65 9th Street. Tel: (415) 584-2135.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

Rally in Support of Martin Luther King Day Holiday. Mon. Jan. 21, 12:00. 540 Broad St. Sponsored by Black Telephone Workers for Justice.

BRITAIN

London

Bloody Sunday—1972 to 2002.

Speakers: Michael McKinney, relative of Bloody Sunday victim; Eamonn McCann, Gerry O'Hara, Derry MLA, Sinn Fein; John McDonnell, Jeremy Corbyn, Members of Parliament. Sun., Jan. 27, 1:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. Hammersmith Irish Centre, Blacks Road, London W6. Bloody Sunday Organising Committee. Tel: 0207-503-1273.

Capitalism, motor of progress—“ALASKA, Whittier—The city council approved a partnership with Cornell Companies to



Harry Ring

build a medium security private prison for 800 inmates at a site near an abandoned government fuel tank facility. Whittier is accessible by boat or by tunnel through Chugach

Mountains. Residents have been seeking ways to diversify the economy.”—*USA Today*.

He got another job—We were disappointed that New York’s ex-mayor Giuliani is grabbing for the big bucks—\$100,000 lecture gigs, etc. We expected he’d get a job clearing the rubble at the Twin Towers. He was the guy who told an inquiring site worker, yes, he’d have to work xmas, and if he didn’t like it, get another job.

Food stamps?—Michael Eisner, top dog at Disney, had his pay for last year cut down to \$1 million from \$12.3 million in 2000.

Lost Wages Int’l—The Las Vegas city council was slated to act on a proposition to authorize an offshore gambling web site to use its name and seal for a cut on the take.

They can’t be both?—“Politicians Must Either Be Rich or Be Beggars.”—Headline. Op Ed page, *Los Angeles Times*.

Isn’t that ducky?—The January 7 *Militant* reported that the wealthiest 20 percent of U.S. farm owners pocket more than \$1 million a year in federal farm subsidies. The other 80 percent, mainly working farmers, get a fast average of \$5,830.

Meanwhile, AP reported that billionaire stock broker Charles Schwab, who enjoys duck hunting in the northern California wetlands, also owns a rice farm there. Last year’s subsidy for Schwab and his family? \$564,000.

Capitalist medical care—Recent reports in the London press: Under the national health plan, more than half of those needing surgery, wait more than a year. And in one hospital cat scanners are being used to diagnose pets (Our cat says, “So?”) because of a shortage of nurses to work on the sophisticated machines to diagnose humans.

Rigorous standards—For years residents of Brimfield, Illinois, endured water from old, corroded pipes that spewed excessive sodium and chlorine. (Washing machines conked out twice as fast as average.) But, the water met federal standards. Finally, a new treatment plant is being built.

Makes sense, no?—In past months, reports the conference of mayors, there’s been a significant rise in need for food and shelter among the working poor, particularly those in low-wage retail and service jobs. The mayors attributed this to the September 11 Twin Towers attack.

EU–U.S. trade war looms over steel tariffs

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

A trade war is brewing between the U.S. imperialists and their rivals on the European continent over moves by the Bush administration to impose steep tariffs on steel imports. Major European steel producers are pressing the European Union (EU) to threaten to use as much as \$4 billion in trade sanctions against Washington in retaliation.

In a warning about the seriousness of the EU announcement, U.S. trade representative Robert Zoellick said that sanctions of that size would be the trade equivalent of a “nuclear bomb.”

The conflict stems from how U.S. steelmakers are responding to a worldwide “overcapacity” of steel, which industry sources estimate at between 10 percent to 20 percent. In capitalist terms, overcapacity means too much steel is being produced for the steel barons to sell it at a profit, not that there is no need for steel in the world.

Long-term overcapacity means the price the steel trusts can demand on the world market has plummeted. For example, prices charged by U.S. companies, which produce 850 million tons a year, or about 12 percent of global steel production, have been hovering at a 20-year low. Steel prices are currently about \$100 a ton lower than they were during the second quarter of 2000.

The big U.S. steel companies have been pressing the government to protect the market. In early December the International Trade Commission (ITC), a U.S. agency, recommended that President George Bush impose tariffs of between 20 percent and 40 percent on steel imported into the United States. EU Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy pointed out the tariff would virtually close the U.S. steel market to the rest of the world. Bush is to decide by late February whether to implement this recommendation.

The EU has said that it would challenge the ITC ruling in the Geneva-based World Trade Organization (WTO), a process that could take years. However, European steel-making companies are seeking a more immediate way to retaliate. On January 14 the WTO’s appellate body ruled that the U.S. corporate tax system was a hidden and illegal export subsidy, worth about \$4 billion annually to U.S. companies such as Boeing, Microsoft, Caterpillar, and Kodak.

“Under WTO rules,” noted a *Wall Street Journal* article, “the [EU] commission could slap sanctions on any U.S. exports—including those that have nothing to do with steel—and could tell Washington they won’t be lifted until the U.S. changes its policy on steel.” EU officials say that they will wait until early March before undertaking this

move to see whether Bush decides to implement the U.S. tariffs on imported steel.

The case brought by the EU against Washington involves a law that allows U.S. companies to establish offshore subsidiaries, called Foreign Sales Corporations, to reduce their U.S. income tax. In a series of cases dating back to 2000, the WTO has consistently ruled that the tax breaks, which save U.S. companies \$4 billion a year, violated world trade rules that forbid export subsidies.

In another planned retaliatory move, the government of Japan is also seeking authorization from the WTO “to be allowed to introduce measures which are similar to the U.S. Anti-Dumping Act of 1916, solely against the United States,” reports the *Financial Times*. The act, which U.S. rulers have previously used against its competitors, “allows domestic steelmakers to pocket three times the level of damages caused by imports that undercut domestic prices,” the paper stated.

Eleven WTO member governments, which includes those in the EU, as well as Japan and Canada, have also filed a complaint in a separate case charging Washington with distributing import duties collected from foreign rivals, worth \$200 million, to U.S. steel companies, and some other corporations.

Meanwhile, some of the leading U.S. steel companies—U.S. Steel, Bethlehem, Nucor, and AK Steel Holding Corp.—have been able to raise domestic prices on key products used in automobiles, appliances, heavy machinery, construction, and other items. The January 10 *Wall Street Journal* speculates that the tariff threat has decreased imports, allowing the U.S. steel trusts to push up prices for hot-rolled steel by 15 percent in the past 60 days. Prices are also being boosted on cold-rolled, galvanized, and wire-rod steel.

In addition, the decision by LTV Corp.—the fourth-largest steelmaker, which has been operating for the past year under Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection—to halt all steel production opened up new demand for products from its competitors. LTV had supplied about 8 percent of the domestic market for flat-rolled steel.

“While the price increases are positive news for steelmakers,” stated a *Journal* article, “this is an industry that has seen 28 companies—or more than half—file for protection under Chapter 11 of the U.S. Bankruptcy Code in the past four years.” Throughout last year the average production rate never broke 83 percent of capacity and for long stretches hovered around 65 percent.

Israeli tanks and bulldozers destroy Palestinian homes and airport



Above: Palestinian airport in Gaza Strip after Israeli tanks and bulldozers tore it up on January 11. This was the one international airport under the control of the Palestinian Authority. Inset: Palestinians in Rafah refugee camp, near Gaza’s border with Egypt, after Israeli incursion the previous day. Tanks and bulldozers burst into the area at 1:30 a.m., crushing 60 Palestinian dwellings and leaving more than 600 people homeless.

This was the most destructive such raid in 15 months of heightened Palestinian struggle and Israeli repression. The Israeli government claimed it carried out the actions in retaliation for a January 9 attack on an army post. The Palestinians whose homes were destroyed challenged the justification. “This is revenge,” said Tamam Ghneim, 52. “We didn’t do anything. The attack happened in Israel, so why us?” Others said they expect further raids as the Israeli army clears a strip of territory along the border fence.

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —

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

January 28, 1977

The cold-blooded murder of Gary Mark Gilmore by the state of Utah January 17—not the gala parties, flag waving parades, and lavish banquets in Washington—shows what is really in store for working people as the Carter administration takes office.

America’s wealthy rulers are congratulating themselves. They got away with it. They killed the first one. And now they plan to hang, shoot, gas, and electrocute hundreds more.

There are no rich people on death row. It is Blacks, Puerto Ricans, Chicanos, Native Americans, and the poor who face execution. These are the people that Gilmore’s killing is meant to terrorize.

Those responsible for this barbarous and vindictive act are the real criminals. They are the real mass murderers. Their hands are stained with the blood of the Vietnamese, the Chilean workers, South African Blacks, and countless others.

Gilmore was white. That helps mask the racist injustice of capital punishment, which has always been used mainly against Blacks and other minorities.

Gilmore admitted killing two people. That helps cover up the notorious use of police frame-ups to send innocent people to their deaths—from the Haymarket martyrs of 1886, Joe Hill, and the Rosenbergs, to people like Gary Tyler and Delbert Tibbs whose lives are in jeopardy today.

The new president, like the old one, stands foursquare for executions. As governor of Georgia, Carter signed that state’s current

THE MILITANT
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death penalty law in 1973.

January 28, 1952

Meeting in defiance of a giant Ku Klux Klan rally of robed racial terrorists in nearby Tallahassee, over 150 delegates representing approximately 10,000 members of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People in 15 Southern states held an emergency conference in Jacksonville, Florida, Jan. 19 and 20. Declaring they would not be intimidated and while the Klan rally hurled curses and threats at them, the conference delegates honored the memory of murdered NAACP leader Harry T. Moore and resolve to carry on the work for which he gave his life.

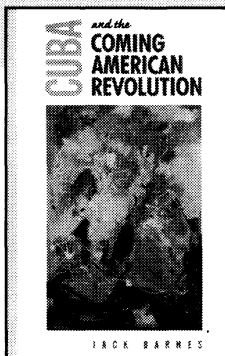
Plans were mapped at the conference to combat the wave of racist terror and to carry on the fight for equal rights.

The emergency conference culminated in a mass meeting attended by 1,200 people. Roy Wilkins, administrator of the NAACP, told the audience that Moore was killed because he fought the doctrine of white supremacy. A message from Walter White, NAACP secretary, declared that “the bomb has replaced the lyncher’s rope” and that violence in the South was no longer directed primarily against the Negro but that now “Jews, Catholics, trade unionists” and others were targets of the bigots. Wilkins also answered a radio broadcast of that afternoon by the Florida Peace Officers Association which had smeared the NAACP as a “racial hate organization.”

CUBA and the Coming American Revolution by Jack Barnes

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution is about the struggles of working people in the imperialist heartland, the youth who are attracted to them, and the example set by the people of Cuba that revolution is not only necessary—it can be made. Preface by Mary-Alice Waters. **In English, Spanish, and French.**

Available from bookstores, including those listed on page 12.



U.S. out of the Philippines!

Washington has sent hundreds of special forces and other troops to the Philippines to assist the government there in its war against Muslim insurgents in the south of the country. This new push to extend the reach of U.S. military power runs against the interests of working people in both countries.

Apologists for U.S. imperialism present this as a move in the "war on terror." In reality, the intervention is consistent with 100 years of U.S. policy toward the Philippines, whose working people have a long history of struggle against the U.S. armed forces.

The bloody history of the U.S. rulers' military action in the Philippines goes back to their victory in the Spanish-American war. In the words of President William McKinley, the Philippines "dropped into our laps." The Philippine people, who had waged their own revolution against Spanish rule, fought a war of resistance against the new occupiers. By conservative estimates, hundreds of thousands of Filipinos died. The fighting was particularly hard in Mindanao, the Muslim region that is being targeted today. The Philippine-American war ended with the country's annexation by Washington.

Formal independence was granted in 1946, but the next year the U.S. took Philippine territory for the Subic Bay naval base and Clark air base. For the next four decades, Washington poured money into the Philippine military and backed a succession of neocolonial governments, including Ferdinand Marcos's martial law regime.

After Marcos was forced to stand down, Philippine

working people stepped up their struggles for land, democratic and union rights, and national sovereignty. A number of huge protests targeted the U.S. military bases, opposing the presence of thousands of imperialist troops, and pointing out their degrading impact on social life, and especially upon the thousands upon thousands of women forced into the prostitution rackets around them. Under this mass pressure, the bases were closed in 1992.

Washington is now pressing to regain some of this lost ground. The Philippine government of Gloria Arroyo, installed one year ago with the backing of the military brass, has made closer collaboration with Washington a centerpiece of its policies. However this move plays out, the U.S. troops will be involved in terrorizing and brutalizing any workers who take action to defend their rights. They will defend the Philippine landlords, their huge estates, and their private armies, against impoverished peasants who are still fighting for land and dignity.

Stationing forces in the Philippines better positions the U.S. imperialists to advance their interests in a region where it has historically taken heavy blows from revolutions in China, Vietnam, and Korea. For the same reason, Washington is also eyeing the possibilities of increasing its military collaboration with the Indonesian government.

The slogan championed by the anti-bases movement speaks to the needs of working people in the Philippines and elsewhere, including in the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and other imperialist countries. Together, we should demand: U.S. Out of the Philippines!

Independence for W. Sahara

Sustained protest actions over the last four months in Moroccan-occupied Western Sahara have given new impetus to the Sahrawi struggle for independence. The release of Mohamed Daddach—the longest-held Sahrawi political prisoner and a symbol of the decades-long fight for self-determination—should be celebrated by all working people and anti-imperialist youth.

King Mohamed VI's recent pardon of 56 prisoners and his decision to improve the living conditions in Lakhel prison are a direct result of the wave of street protests and prisoners' demonstrations, and an international campaign led by Sahrawis in the refugee camps to win broader support around the world for their struggle.

After the Spanish imperialists relinquished control of the country in 1975 and turned it over to the semicolonial powers in Mauritania and Morocco, the foreign forces drove the majority of Sahrawis off their land and into desert refugee camps in neighboring Algeria. Under these conditions, the people of Western Sahara, led by the Polisario Front, have waged a sustained struggle from both sides of the country—the occupied region and the liberated zone.

The Sahrawi people are not only up against the despotic monarchy of Morocco, they also face the imperialist powers in Washington and Paris that have given billions of dollars in economic and military support to the king.

Eleven years ago the Polisario Front forced the Moroccan government to the negotiating table and signed an agreement in which Sahrawis on both sides of the divide were to hold a referendum on independence or integration into Morocco. To this day, Rabat and its backers in Washington and Paris have dragged their feet on implementing the referendum. Now they call for Western Sahara to remain under the king's control with some rights of "autonomy." They know that the overwhelming majority of the Sahrawi people will vote for independence. And they fear the dangerous example this liberation struggle represents for toilers throughout Africa and the Middle East.

The imperialist powers especially fear that Sahrawis may consider the rich phosphate, fishing stocks, and potential oil to be the patrimony of Western Sahara, not the property of a dominant foreign power. The moves by TotalFinaElf and Kerr McGee to begin oil exploration off the Saharan coast point to one of the central reasons that Washington and Paris want to maintain the status quo.

The *Militant* urges all readers to get out the truth and win other working people and youth to support this important anti-imperialist struggle.

Independence for Western Sahara!
Hold the referendum now!

Working-class response to Enron

The collapse of Enron, the seventh largest company on the Fortune 500 list only months ago, helps point out what capitalism holds in store for working people. Pension plans, health insurance policies, and other company benefits can go up in smoke in a matter of days, wiping out a lifetime of savings and putting many working people in a threatening position with loss of health care.

Other big U.S. companies have announced massive layoffs, plant closings, and other retrenchment measures. While Ford and Boeing have not gone bankrupt, tens of thousands of workers face the same fate as their brothers and sisters at Enron.

Especially during the boom years of the 1990s, the bosses tried to make workers believe that being employed by a "big" and "strong" company equaled a lifetime of security. But it was a cruel illusion. This situation argues

volumes for the need for the labor movement to fight to end the deadly trap working people face when their pensions and health coverage are tied to their employers, and to combat the assault on the social wage by the bosses.

In *Capitalism's World Disorder*, Jack Barnes writes that for working people, "Social Security was the beginning of the attempt to moderate the dog-eat-dog competition imposed on the working class under capitalism. Social Security was an initial step by our class—by those who produce wealth—toward conquering social organization of conditions necessary for life, such as education and health care, for a lifetime. Workers think of each other in terms of a lifetime. We cannot think of each other the way capitalists think of us. We cannot make ourselves think of other human beings as though they do not exist up to the age of thirteen or after the age of sixty-five. That is not how workers function. We have a different class view, a different moral view of society. Elementary human solidarity is in our interests, not in conflict with them."

The battle for Social Security is the battle to bring all welfare payments, all medical claims, all supplemental payments for education and child care into a comprehensive, nationwide, government-guaranteed entitlement. This must include old-age pensions at a level that allows a person an adequate standard of living, not the measly starvation pittance most working people now receive.

The crisis of today is not primarily an economic crisis, although there is a deep crisis in the capitalist economy. Look at the owners of Enron, of Ford, of Boeing, and other companies—as well as the government that represents them. The great crisis of our time is a political and moral crisis, one that only the working class has a chance to resolve by transforming society in a truly human way. Unlike the capitalists, the working class has no interest in turning on any victims of the crisis-ridden capitalist system.

Why U.S. is a death trap for all who live here

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

In a letter to the editor published in last week's *Militant*, Matt Skiba asks for a fuller explanation of a statement I made during an antiwar teach-in at the University of California at Long Beach, where I said, "By its actions U.S. imperialism is turning this country into a death trap for working people who live here."

This idea was raised by Socialist Workers Party candidate Martin Koppel in a statement on September 11. Koppel said, "Half a century ago the revolutionary workers movement and other opponents of colonial outrages, racism, and anti-Semitism in all its forms warned that by waging a war of terror to drive the Palestinians from their farms, towns, and cities, the founders of the Israeli state and their imperialist backers in North America and Europe were pitting the Jewish people against those fighting for national liberation in the Middle East and worldwide; they were creating a death trap for the Jews, which Israel remains to this day. By its systematic superexploitation of the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America; by its never-ending insults to their national and cultural dignity; by its ceaseless murderous violence in countless forms—U.S. imperialism is turning North America into a death trap for working people and all who live here."

José Ramon Balaguer, a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Cuba, spoke at the São Paulo Forum held in Havana on December 4–7. He noted that the September 11 attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon demonstrated that "a handful of major powers could not monopolize all the world's wealth, development, technology, culture, education and public health, and at the same time remain immune to the consequences of the political, economic, and social polarization this process would provoke on a global scale."

These two statements get at the heart of what I was addressing in my talk. When Washington carries out ceaseless, murderous violence against the peoples of the world, it does this in the name of all who live in the United States. For example, former secretary of state Madeleine Albright showed no remorse over the tens of thousands of children who die every year because of the U.S.-inspired embargo of that country, coldly saying "that is the difficult choice we have to make." But working people—the vast majority—had nothing to do with making this "difficult choice."

Death trap for Jews in the Middle East

Koppel's statement about the Zionist state of Israel had been put forward some 30 years ago in the Pathfinder pamphlet *How Can the Jews Survive? A Socialist Answer to Zionism*, by George Novack. His conclusion is as true today as it was then: "Every expedient short of the struggle for socialism, any substitute for that, will end in calamity for the Jews. They cannot achieve security for themselves or anyone else so long as the root causes of discrimination, racism and reactionary nationalism continue to exist.... The Jews have to link themselves with those forces in their own country and on a world scale that are fighting to overthrow imperialism and striving to build the new society. The solution of the Jewish question is indissolubly bound up with the complete emancipation of humanity that can be brought about only along the road of international socialism."

Workers' struggles in the United States

A successful example of a fight to begin to break out of this trap was the development of an antiwar movement in the United States during the U.S. assault against the people of Vietnam. I encourage readers to study the chapter, "The Crumbling of U.S. Military Morale" in *Out Now! A Participant's Account of the American Movement Against the Vietnam War*, by Fred Halstead, published by Pathfinder Press.

At first working people in the United States largely supported or were neutral toward the imperialist war in Vietnam. But as the U.S. death toll mounted, and the brutality of Washington's war became a daily fact of life, a massive movement arose in solidarity with the struggle of the Vietnamese people and demanded the U.S. rulers bring the troops home. Through their experience many workers and farmers in uniform came to the conclusion that the war was a death trap as well, and rejected the lie that they had to make a "patriotic sacrifice."

Today the fight to oppose imperialism's assault on working people—both its military aggression against other countries and its attacks on workers' rights at home—is again a central question. The warmakers try to convince us that we should give up the rights we have won because "all Americans" must sacrifice against a common enemy. But the enemy of workers and farmers in the United States is the rulers in Washington who try to pit us against our brothers and sisters from the Middle East to Latin America. Our response must be to build solidarity with these fellow fighters. The solution to the economic and social crisis today, as George Novack stated over 30 years ago, "is indissolubly bound up with the complete emancipation of humanity that can be brought about only along the road of international socialism."

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'The case of Cuba is the case of all underdeveloped countries'

Printed below is an excerpt from *To Speak the Truth: Why Washington's 'Cold War' against Cuba Doesn't End* by Fidel Castro and Che Guevara. This is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for January. The item quoted is taken from the chapter titled "The case of Cuba is the case of all underdeveloped countries," the address delivered by Cuban president Castro to the United Nations General Assembly on Sept. 26, 1960. In the first section of the speech Castro explained the conditions faced by the people of Cuba under U.S. domination, including high unemployment and illiteracy; lack of access to land by peasants; monopolization of industry by U.S. firms; and underdevelopment of the economy. The Cuban leader also explained the range of military, economic, and political measures initiated by Washington to try to overturn the Cuban Revolution.

Titles selected for the Books of the Month are newly reissued by Pathfinder with improved typography and graphics. The selection below is Copyright © 1992 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY FIDEL CASTRO

The case of Cuba is not an isolated one. It would be an error to think of it only as the case of Cuba. The case of Cuba is that of all underdeveloped nations. It is the case of the Congo; it is the case of Egypt; it is the case of Algeria; it is the case of Iran. [Applause] It is the case of Panama, which wants its canal. It is the case of Puerto Rico, whose national spirit is being suppressed. It is the case of Honduras, a portion of whose territory has been seized. In short, although we have not made reference to other countries specifically, the case

of Cuba is the case of all the underdeveloped and colonized countries.

The problems we were describing concerning Cuba apply to all Latin America. Latin America's economic resources are controlled by the monopolies. If they do not directly own these resources, they exercise control in other ways. For example, they may control the mining and extraction of natural resources, as with copper in Chile,

products, as with coffee in Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Costa Rica, and Guatemala; or as with the exploitation, marketing, and transportation of bananas by the United Fruit Company in Guatemala, Costa Rica, and Honduras; or as with cotton in Mexico and Brazil. In all these cases, the monopolies exercise economic control over the most important industries of the country. These economies are completely dependent on the monopolies.

Woe to these countries on the day when they too should wish to carry out an agrarian reform! They will be asked for "speedy, efficient, and just payment." And if, in spite of everything, they do carry out an agrarian reform, the representative from this sister nation who comes to the United Nations will be confined to Manhattan; hotels will not rent to him; insults will be showered upon him; and he may even be mistreated by the police themselves.¹

The problem of Cuba is merely an example of the condition of Latin America. How long must Latin America wait for its development? As far as the monopolies are concerned, it will have to wait until the Greek calends.² Who is going to industrialize Latin America—the monopolies? Certainly not.

There is a report of the United Nations Economic Commission that explains how even private investment capital, rather than going to the countries needing it most to help them set up basic industries and contribute to their development, is channeled to the more industrialized countries because there private capital finds—so it says, or believes—greater security. Naturally even the Economic Commission of the United Nations has to recognize that there is no possibility of development through investment of private capital—that is, through the monopolies.

'Assistance without political conditions'

Latin America's development will have to come through public investment, planned out and granted unconditionally, without political conditions. Obviously we would all like to represent free countries. No one likes to represent a country that does not feel itself free. No one wants the independence of his country to be subject to any interest other than its own. Therefore the assistance must be without political conditions.

The fact that Cuba was denied assistance is of no importance. We did not ask for it. However, on behalf of the peoples of Latin America we feel it our duty, out of a sense of solidarity, to state that assistance must be given without political conditions. Public investment must be for economic development, not for "social development"—which is the latest invention to hide the genuine need for economic development.

The problems of Latin America are like the problems of the rest of the underdeveloped world in Africa and Asia. The world is divided up among the monopolies. The same monopolies we see in Latin America are also seen in the Middle East. There the oil is in the hands of monopoly companies that are controlled by the financial interests of the United States, Britain, the Netherlands, and France. This is the case in Iran, Iraq, Saudi Arabia, and all corners of the world. The same thing happens in the Philippines. The same thing happens in Africa.

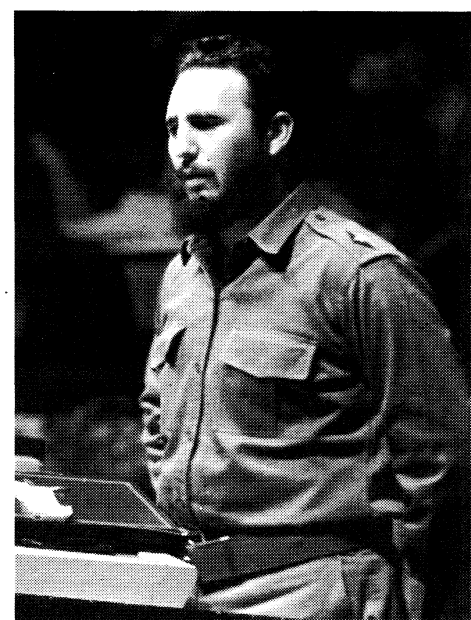
The world has been divided up among the monopolistic interests. Who would dare deny this historic truth? And the monopolistic interests do not want to see these nations develop. What they want is to exploit these nations' natural resources and to exploit their people. And the sooner these interests amortize their investments or get them back, so much the better.

The problems that the Cuban people have had with the imperialist government of the United States are the same problems that



"The problems of Latin America are like the problems of the rest of the underdeveloped world in Africa and Asia," said Castro in 1960. Above, a family from a slum in Sao Luis, Brazil.

Peru, and Mexico; as with zinc in Peru and Mexico; and as with oil in Venezuela. Or they may be the owners of the public utility companies, as with the electricity companies in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Peru, Ecuador, and Colombia; or as with the telephone companies in Chile, Brazil, Peru, Venezuela, Paraguay, and Bolivia. Or they may control the commercial sale of our



United Nations
Fidel Castro addressing United Nations General Assembly, September 26, 1960.

Saudi Arabia would have if it decided to nationalize its oil fields, or if Iran or Iraq decided to do so. These are the same problems that Egypt had when it quite justifiably nationalized the Suez Canal; these are the same problems that Indonesia had when it wanted to become independent.³ They would face the same surprise attack that was made against Egypt; the same type of surprise attack made against the Congo.

Have the colonialists or the imperialists ever lacked pretexts to invade a country? Never! They have always managed to find some pretext. Which are the colonialist countries? Which are the imperialist countries? There are not four or five countries but four or five groups of monopolies that possess the world's wealth.

Let us imagine that a person from outer space were to come to this assembly, someone who had read neither the *Communist Manifesto* of Karl Marx nor UPI or AP dispatches or any other monopoly-controlled publication. If he were to ask how the world was divided up and he saw on a map that the wealth was divided among the monopolies of four or five countries, he would say, "The world has been badly divided up, the world has been exploited." Here in this assembly, where the underdeveloped countries make up the big majority, he could say, "The great majority of the peoples, who you represent, have been exploited for a long time. The forms of exploitation may have changed, but they continue to be exploited." That would be the verdict.

In his speech Premier Khrushchev made a statement that very much attracted our attention because of the value it holds. He said that the Soviet Union had neither colonies nor investments in any country. How great would our world be today—our world today threatened with catastrophe—if the representatives of all nations could make the same statement: Our country has neither colonies nor investments in any foreign country! [Applause]

Why go around and around? This is the crux of the matter. This is the crux of the question of war and peace. This is the crux of the arms race and disarmament. Since the beginning of humanity, wars have arisen for one reason and one reason alone: the desire of some to plunder the wealth of others.

End the philosophy of plunder and the philosophy of war will be ended as well. [Applause] End the existence of colonies and the exploitation of countries by monopolies, and humanity will have achieved a true era of progress.

¹ This is a reference to an incident that occurred at the airport shortly after Castro's arrival. At one point the motorcade carrying the Cuban delegation stopped and Castro began waving to a crowd of several thousands supporters there to greet him. A New York City cop then shoved Castro's arm back into the car in rough fashion.

² The Greek calends is a time that will never arrive. In the calendar of ancient Rome, calends were the first day of the month, from which the remaining days were counted. The ancient Greeks did not use the Roman calendar.

³ Following Egypt's nationalization of the Suez Canal in 1956, the country was invaded by British, French, and Israeli troops.

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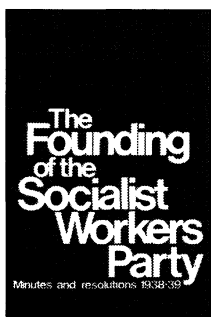
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Irish actions confront British, rightists

BY PETE WILLSON

GLASGOW, Scotland—A week of activities will lead up to a march of thousands February 3 in Derry, northern Ireland. The march will mark the 30th anniversary of the killing of 14 Irish civil rights marchers by British troops, an event known as Bloody Sunday by nationalists. The demonstration retraces the route of the original march in 1972 and has become the largest expression of opposition to British rule over northern Ireland.

John Kelly, one of the march organizers, explained in a telephone interview, "We're finding it difficult getting to the full truth of these events." Kelly's 17-year-old brother Michael was one of those killed in the 1972 massacre.

In the face of the fight for justice mounted by the relatives of those killed, the British government agreed in 1998 to set up a new inquiry into the events. The growing international impact of the relatives' fight had largely discredited London's 1972 inquiry, which had exonerated the British Army.

But the new investigation and hearings being held in Derry have "been frustrated at every stage by the Ministry of Defence and Home Office," explained Kelly. "We were promised an independent inquiry, but this is not what is happening." Kelly said the latest decision undermining the investigation was a court ruling that British soldiers would not have to testify in Derry. Instead, they will most likely be interviewed by video link from England. "They have destroyed their weapons, lost over 1,000 photographs, used informers, and claimed anonymity for the soldiers," said Kelly, listing London's continued efforts to cover up the truth.

Kelly said the week of events leading up to the 30th anniversary march will help to have "an open discussion on the inquiry." For example, many of the 457 civilians who have testified so far are expected to attend a discussion February 2.

These efforts are receiving a boost from the release of two films on Bloody Sunday. They are to be aired on major TV channels in the United Kingdom prior to February 3. "These are powerful films," Kelly said. "The people of England should see them and see the truth about the murder of our people."

Six hundred people attended a preview of one of the films, titled "Bloody Sunday," featuring James Nesbitt. Due to the response, two additional showings were added, attracting 1,000 people each.

The film has provoked protests from those who want to maintain British rule. "Just how much does the British taxpayer have to pay so that a tragedy from three decades ago can be rebashed as a sop to Irish republican feeling?" protested London's *Daily Mail* in a January 7 editorial.

Rise in rightist attacks

London's continued cover-up of its responsibility for the Bloody Sunday massacre is part of resistance to letting go of its



Refusing to be intimidated by attacks and death threats, Catholics in northern Ireland defied rightist school pickets and won public opinion to their side.

rule over northern Ireland. The weakening of British imperialism's hold over northern Ireland and attempts to maintain its grip on the six counties it occupies, are both fueling a rightist violence aimed at the nationalist struggle.

An *Phoblacht*, a paper that supports Sinn Fein, the party that is leading the fight to end British rule, reports that in 2001 there was a nearly 200 percent increase over 2000 in shootings and bomb attacks on Catholics.

One of the latest killings was of 20-year-old Catholic postal worker Daniel McColgan, who was shot dead as he arrived at work. A rightist organization called the Red Hand Defenders, the name used by the

paramilitary wing of the pro-British Ulster Defence Association (UDA), claimed responsibility. The rightist outfit issued further threats to kill Catholic postal workers and teachers.

Some 2,000 people, including hundreds of postal workers, turned out for McColgan's funeral. In response to the killing, postal workers across northern Ireland organized by the Communication Workers Union staged a 24-hour walkout January 15. In Britain, 300,000 postal workers held a two-minute period of silence at the time of McColgan's funeral. Leaders of the Irish Congress of Trade Unions have called a half-day protest strike for January 18.

Colombian military mobilizes against rebels

BY RÓGER CALERO

The Colombian government, with backing from Washington, has become more assertive in using its military forces against armed opposition in the country. This past week President Andrés Pastrana mobilized the military and came within hours of ordering an invasion of a large demilitarized zone where the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC) operates.

Pastrana ordered the mobilization after claiming negotiations with FARC leaders had collapsed. The Colombian army deployed some 23,000 troops supported by light armored vehicles, helicopters, and combat planes around the area awaiting orders to move against FARC-held areas.

In the last three years Washington has directed a steady buildup of the Colombian army. Under the guise of fighting drug trafficking, the U.S. Congress approved last

July a two-year \$1.3 billion military aid package to the Colombian government. The package included a fleet of combat helicopters and some 150 "military advisors," including U.S. special forces, to train Colombian army battalions.

In addition to a 100,000-person strong army, the government has increased from 44,000 to 55,000 the number of career troops it can field. Washington has trained three special forces battalions, upgraded its satellite communications, and purchased surveillance planes and infrared and thermal equipment.

During the latest government mobilization right-wing paramilitary organizations with ties to the regime stepped up their activities. The United Self-Defense Forces of Colombia, or AUC as they are known, have been responsible for killing thousands of peasants, trade unionists, and other activ-

The murder of McColgan came after three days of anti-Catholic riots in North Belfast, depicted in media reports as a clash between Catholics and Protestants to help justify the continued presence of British armed forces as supposed "neutral" arbitrators of the conflict.

According to the *Irish Times*, the initial violence began outside the Holy Cross school after "Catholic parents were jostled and spat upon as they walked up the Ardoyne Road to collect their children." A 12-week anti-Catholic picket of the school was ended in December as Catholics refused to be intimidated, won public opinion to their side, and isolated the rightist forces.

"I blame the UDA," for the recent attacks, explained Gerry Kelly, a leader of Sinn Fein. "Their sectarian agenda is once again coming to the fore."

These rightist developments have been mirrored in the UK parliament. The Conservative party's spokesperson on Northern Ireland said December 17 that his party is ending its bipartisan support for British policy on Ireland. Quentin Davies made this announcement after London decided to give office and other facilities to Sinn Fein at Westminster. Sinn Fein's four MPs (Members of Parliament) had been denied this as a result of their refusal to swear allegiance to the Queen of England, a pledge every MP must take in order to be seated in parliament.

"Hardly a day a week goes by these days without the announcement of some concession to Sinn Fein-IRA," Davies claimed, repeating a ruling-class slander that Sinn Fein and the Irish Republican Army are two wings of the same organization. Davies nevertheless indicated he had no alternative to the concessions made to Irish nationalists known as the Good Friday agreement.

ists. According to the *Washington Post* their numbers have grown from 3,000 to 14,000 in the past three years, with many former soldiers among their ranks.

"We think that if we stay, we will be killed. Once the military comes in here, the paramilitaries will come in and begin their work," said a resident of San Vicente inside the zone, referring to the well-known tactic of the paramilitary forces of going into towns and murdering those they suspect of supporting the guerrillas.

Just hours before the deadline set by the Colombian government for the guerrillas to leave the demilitarized zone, a temporary truce was brokered to allow further negotiations. The FARC has occupied the area since November 1998.

The Colombian president blamed the end of the three-year-old negotiations process on the FARC, claiming that the guerrilla army has refused to implement a cease-fire agreed to last October and has continued to carry out military activities in the rebel-held zone.

Pastrana received support from the White House, with Secretary of State Colin Powell backing the Colombian government's accusation that it was the FARC's "failure to negotiate in seriousness that has caused this crisis to come about."

"We've had this repeated situation sort of crisis with the FARC because the attempts by president Pastrana to open up peace talks or open up discussions about how to resolve this situation have really led nowhere," said Richard Boucher, the State Department spokesperson.

Pastrana has come under growing pressure from Washington to take tougher measures against the guerrilla group and has been criticized for making concessions to the FARC. According to press reports, Powell was to put added pressure on the Colombian government as part of a planned visit that was canceled when Washington went on a war footing against Afghanistan.

Seeking to deepen its intervention in the

Continued on Page 3

U.S. gave nod to 1975 invasion of E. Timor

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Despite public denial by the U.S. government, declassified documents released by the George Washington University National Security Archive show that Washington okayed the 1975 invasion of East Timor by the Indonesian military.

General Suharto, who came to power a decade earlier in a U.S.-backed military coup that slaughtered up to 1 million Indonesian workers and peasants, sought the go-ahead in a meeting with then-U.S. president Gerald Ford and Secretary of State Henry Kissinger. The two U.S. officials had stopped in Jakarta December 6 on their way back from a conference in Beijing.

According to a secret State Department telegram, Suharto told the two U.S. officials that the National Front for the Independence of East Timor (Fretilin) had declared independence and that the former colonial master Portugal was "unable to

control the situation."

The independence struggle gained momentum in 1974-75, as national liberation movements in Portugal's African colonies won their freedom and a democratic revolution had overthrown the dictatorship in Lisbon. The U.S. rulers, fresh from their defeat in Vietnam, also viewed the national liberation struggle in East Timor with anxiety.

Informing Ford and Kissinger of his plans for the military assault on East Timor, Suharto said, "We want your understanding if we deem it necessary to take rapid or drastic action."

Ford replied, "We will understand and will not press you on the issue."

Kissinger added, "It is important that whatever you do succeeds quickly. We would be able to influence the reaction in America if whatever happens, happens after we return. The president will be back on

Monday, at 2:00 p.m. Jakarta time. We understand your problem and the need to move quickly, but I am only saying that it would be better if it were done after we returned."

"Our main concern is that whatever you do does not create a climate that discourages investment," added Kissinger, who had later denied that East Timor was discussed during the meeting. With Washington supplying up to 90 percent of Indonesia's weapons, he told Suharto that "the use of U.S.-made arms could create problems," but added, "it depends on how we construe it, whether it is in self-defense or is a foreign operation."

The next day, December 7, with Ford and Kissinger back in Washington, the Indonesian military launched its invasion. An estimated 200,000 people were killed in the onslaught. By the following year some 35,000 Indonesian troops were occupying East Timor.