

# THE MILITANT

LESSONS FROM REVOLUTIONARY HISTORY

'Marianas in Combat': women and the Cuban Revolution  
— PAGES 6-7

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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## New York transit workers vote to authorize strike

BY STU SINGER  
AND OLGA RODRÍGUEZ

NEW YORK—More than 10,000 workers on the New York City bus and subway system, members of the Transport Workers Union (TWU), met here in two separate shift meetings and voted overwhelmingly to au-

### Support transit workers' fight

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thorize a strike after their contract expires December 15.

The December 7 meeting was marked by the determination of the transit workers to defend their working conditions, benefits, and wages in face of the offensive by the wealthy rulers against the working people

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Participants in October 30 transit workers' rally state their demands in contract fight

## Staffs of 'Perspectiva Mundial' and the 'Militant' fight INS effort to exclude editor

Róger Calero arrested at Houston airport on return from assignment abroad

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

On the evening of December 3, Róger Calero, *Militant* staff writer and associate editor of *Perspectiva Mundial*, a Spanish-language news magazine published in New York, was detained by immigration agents at Houston Intercontinental Airport on his return from a reporting assignment abroad.

After holding him for several hours at the airport, Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) officials told him they were denying him entry to the United States and locked him up in an immigration prison. Calero, a 12-year permanent resident, now faces exclusion from this country by the INS.

Calero was on his way home from a reporting assignment in Mexico, covering an

tional border, the INS is seeking to "exclude" Calero—deny him entry into the United States and deport him to Nicaragua. To do this, immigration officials aim to revoke his permanent resident status.

Calero, 33, has lived in the United States since 1985, when his family moved here from Nicaragua and he was a high school-age youth, and has been a permanent U.S.

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## Inside an INS jail in Houston

BY RÓGER CALERO

HOUSTON PROCESSING CENTER, Texas—The impact of the U.S. government's increasingly brutal attacks on workers' rights is felt here by more than 500 workers of many different nationalities who are locked up here at any given time. Most here face the threat of exclusion or deportation with few if any rights to judicial review or legal representation.

Among those detained at this jail is this reporter. I was arrested December 3 at Houston Intercontinental Airport as I returned home from a reporting assignment abroad for the Spanish-language magazine *Perspectiva Mundial* and the labor and socialist newsweekly the *Militant*.

Every night we are joined by dozens of workers of all nationalities brought here by the federal Border Patrol after they are arrested attempting to cross the border. And every night they pull many others out of the prison dormitories to put them on a plane or a bus—handcuffed and shackled—to be sent to their countries of origin or, in the case of those born in Mexico, dumped on the other side of the border.

Located just a few minutes from Houston Intercontinental Airport, the "Houston Processing Center"—the official name of the jail used by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS)—is also where the immigration cops bring legal residents arrested at the airport on their arrival from abroad when they decide to arrest them on the basis of a previous conviction on their records.

In the first few days since I've been incarcerated here, I've had the opportunity to meet several fellow workers and hear their stories. Many are similar to my own.

Manuel García, 63, a carpenter originally

from El Salvador, who has been living in this country since 1974, was arrested at the airport five months ago as he was returning from a visit to his family there.

The INS detained García when he got off a Continental Airlines flight from San Salvador. They said the record of a misdemeanor case going back to 1987 showed up in the computer. García had passed through this same airport a year ago with no problems. He has been a legal resident since the U.S. government granted him that status through the 1986 general amnesty.

"We are paying a second time for something we did in the past," said García. "We obtained legal papers and now they put us in jail."

After his conviction on the misdemeanor

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Róger Calero, associate editor of *Perspectiva Mundial* and staff writer for the *Militant*.

## Washington releases plans for reservists in war on Iraq

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

Putting in place the front-line and backup forces for an invasion of Iraq, Washington has released plans for an increased mobilization of National Guard and Reserve troops.

Up to 10,000 such forces will be immediately activated for "security duty" in the United States and abroad. With an order to invade, that number would increase to more than a quarter of a million troops stationed at airports, train stations, power plants, factories, and military bases.

The number is in addition to the more than 50,000 reservists already mobilized throughout the United States. The plans include coastline patrols by Navy and Coast Guard Reserve forces. Fighter jets will be scrambled over U.S. cities.

In the big-business media Washington presents its assault plans as close to complete. In a December 8 *New York Times* article, military officials said they will "soon have enough heavy tanks, warships, aircraft, bombs and troops" in the region "to begin an attack...sometime in January." The report

Continued on Page 2

## Venezuela: mass protest opposes bosses' strike

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

MIAMI—Some 400,000 peasants, workers, students and others converged in Caracas December 7 to protest a six-day-old bosses' strike and other provocations aimed at overthrowing the government of President Hugo Chávez. Marching past Miraflores, the presidential palace, they demanded the government take firm measures against the pro-imperialist opposition and their coup plans.

The same day thousands of protesters marched in an affluent section of eastern Caracas in a quieter demonstration, demanding Chávez's resignation. Fedecámaras, the

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## Join the fight to free Róger Calero!

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international student conference sponsored by the Continental Organization of Latin American and Caribbean Students, and the largest annual Latin American bookfair, both held simultaneously in Guadalajara. He had traveled to Mexico after reporting on a conference in Havana, Cuba, on the Free Trade Area of the Americas, attended by trade unionists and other delegates from Latin America, the United States, and Canada.

After learning of his arrest, Calero's colleagues at *Perspectiva Mundial* and other supporters of his rights announced the launching of a public campaign to demand that the INS release the journalist and drop its exclusion proceedings against him.

"We are fighting this government denial of my right to work as a journalist in this country," Calero said in a phone interview from the Houston Processing Center, as the INS prison is called.

Treating the airport point of entry and the immigration prison as part of the interna-

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# Washington calls up reservists to prepare for war on Iraq

Continued from front page described a "constant hum of military preparations" throughout the Gulf.

The preparations include ongoing exercises in Kuwait that simulate an invasion; a Qatar-based "command and control" exercise involving 1,000 "planners" flown in from the Central Command headquarters in Florida; the daily delivery of armaments, along with the equipment needed to unload them, from tugboats to forklifts; and the drawing up of blueprints for strikes by special operations forces.

The military mobilizations on home soil and in the Arab-Persian Gulf region have proceeded alongside the intrusive "inspections" carried out by United Nations teams on Iraqi government facilities and industrial and scientific sites.

On December 7, a day before the UN Security Council-imposed deadline, the Iraqi government turned over a 12,000-page declaration on its arms programs. Iraq Maj. Gen. Hussam Muhammad Amin stated that "Iraq is empty of any weapons of mass destruction."

The report was immediately sent to UN bodies based in New York. U.S. officials have made it clear that the report will be useful to them insofar as it helps provide a pretext for military action. According to one report, "National security officials said...that the declaration must be more than accurate; it must lead United Nations inspectors to arms caches, or to irrefutable evidence that they have been destroyed."

U.S. officials have just completed visits to members of the U.S.-dominated European NATO military alliance to hammer out assistance to the assault.

## Wolfowitz in Turkey

In Turkey, Deputy Defense Secretary Paul Wolfowitz secured the newly elected government's agreement to maintain U.S. forces' access to ports and air bases. On December 4 the Bush administration announced plans to upgrade these facilities to the tune of hundreds of millions of dollars.

Washington's invasion plan also includes placing tens of thousands of infantry and Special Forces troops in Turkey, ready to drive into Iraq over its northern border, targeting oil fields located in the regions in which the Kurdish people and their political organizations predominate.

The Bush administration has also asked the Turkish government to prepare to dispatch a large force of its own into northern Iraq. "If we're going to have significant ground forces in the north, this is the country they have to come through. There is no other option," said Wolfowitz.

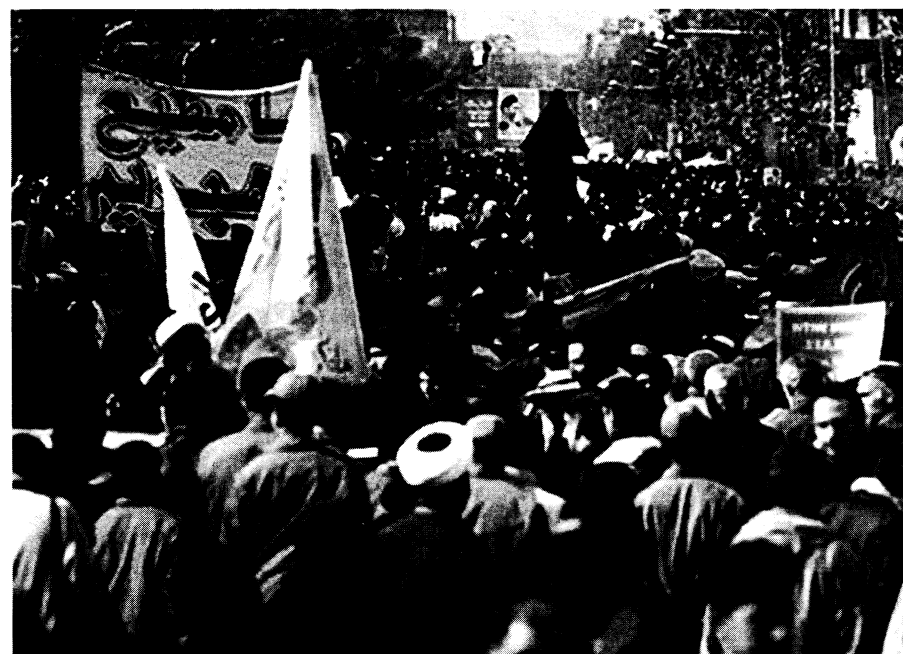
To date the Turkish government—which has already faced one 10,000-strong demonstration in Istanbul against its backing for the U.S. plans—has balked at these demands. "It may be difficult to see tens of thousands of American forces being transported through Turkish territory into Iraq or being stationed somewhere in Turkey to carry out strikes inside Iraq," stated Turkish foreign minister Yasar Yakis.

"Nevertheless," noted a *Washington Post* article, "Pentagon planners are expected to press Turkey to allow tens of thousands of coalition troops on its soil to prepare for a multi-pronged attack on Iraq from the north, south and west." Bush has invited Recep Tayyip Erdogan, the chairman of Turkey's ruling Justice and Development Party, to the White House for further discussions.

A bipartisan delegation from the Senate Foreign Relations committee has followed up Wolfowitz's Turkish visit with a trip to northern Iraq, Jordan, Syria, Turkey, Saudi Arabia, Israel, and the occupied territories. In northern Iraq committee chairman Joseph Biden warned Kurdish leaders that they should appreciate "the concerns of their neighbors"—a reference to the Turkish government's determination to brutally suppress any Kurdish movement for self-determination on Turkish soil.

In a meeting with NATO-member ambassadors in Brussels December 4, Wolfowitz requested the deployment of various countries' forces at bases throughout the Arab-

## Large demonstrations in Iran support Palestinian struggle



Hundreds of thousands demonstrated in Tehran and other Iranian cities November 29 to support Palestinian self-determination and condemn the Israeli and U.S. governments. Marchers labeled the Israeli regime "the standard bearer of state terrorism." A resolution issued at the Tehran demonstration stated, "Today the global tyranny headed by the United States is assaulting and plundering the Islamic world under the guise of fighting terrorism. We condemn any troop movements and military actions carried out by the United States against independent and Islamic countries, including Iraq."

Persian Gulf. He also called for troops to fill the gaps left by Gulf-bound U.S. forces at their bases in Germany, Italy, and elsewhere in Europe. A NATO official said that the governments of Britain, Denmark, Spain, Portugal, Norway, Poland, the Czech Republic, and Turkey expressed "strong and unequivocal support" for the U.S. war preparations.

Despite pronouncements against German forces taking part in a military assault against Iraq, the government of Gerhard Schröder is moving to increase its presence in the area of the coming invasion.

Berlin currently has six Fuch tanks and 52 troops stationed in Kuwait. The parliament has approved the deployment of up to 800 additional troops to Iraq's southern neighbor.

According to Germany's *Die Welt* newspaper, the "inspectors" have also asked Berlin to provide them with unmanned reconnaissance planes.

Washington has made clear that regardless of what the United Nations "inspectors" turn up in the course of their provocative operations, the burden of proof is on the Iraqi government to "cooperatively disarm."

"The United States knows that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction," Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld arrogantly asserted. "The U.K. knows that they have weapons of mass destruction. Any country on the face of the Earth with an active intelligence program knows that Iraq has weapons of mass destruction."

In a meeting with Hans Blix, Bush administration officials have urged him to make use of the section of the recently passed UN Security Council resolution 1441 that gives "inspectors" the authority to round up Iraqi scientists and demand that they

leave the country for interrogation, even without the scientists' agreement.

"If you go back and look at the history of inspections in Iraq," stated Rumsfeld, "the reality is that things have been found—not by discovery but through defectors."

*New York Times* columnist Thomas Friedman, in a op-ed piece entitled "'Sodom' Hussein's Iraq," urged Washington "to hold the U.N.'s feet to the fire." He quoted a U.S. official saying that "the key is finding a defector through interviews. That's the only way we're going to find anything."

## Saudis may be next U.S. target

Concerned that Saudi Arabia could be Washington's next target after Iraq, government officials in that country have consulted with their counterparts in Egypt, Syria, and the Gulf states about the ramifications of an overthrow of the Saddam Hussein regime.

"The Saudi efforts want to ensure that no major Arab country will plot against Riyadh or any other regime targeted by the United States," an unnamed diplomat from the region told a World Tribune.com reporter. "While Washington opposed Iraq on the issue of weapons of mass destruction, the Saudis are worried that Washington will use the banner of democracy" against them, added the diplomat.

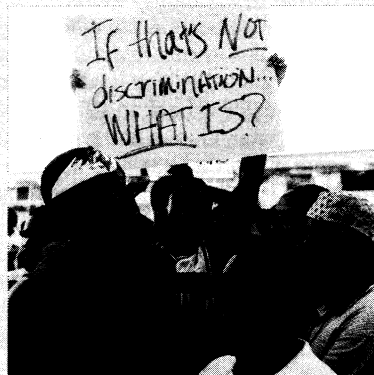
Saudi foreign minister Prince Saud Al Faisal has been touring Middle Eastern capitals to urge them to sign an agreement at their next summit to pledge opposition to any U.S. effort for a "regime change" in the region.

"No one can change the Saudi regime but Allah," said Saudi interior minister Prince Nayef Bin Abdul Aziz. The proposal also asks Arab League members to oppose any U.S. attempt to freeze the assets of any government.

## THE MILITANT

### Haitian immigrants fight discrimination

Haitians living in Florida have been protesting racist discrimination, cop brutality, and the automatic jailing by U.S. immigration cops of those who arrive on flimsy boats from Haiti. Read the 'Militant' to get the truth about this struggle and why it is in the interests of all working people.



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# Venezuela: mass protest opposes bosses' strike

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country's main business association, and officials of the Confederation of Venezuelan Workers (CTV) called a work stoppage December 2 demanding a rapid referendum on whether Chávez should remain in office. The strike had limited success and seemed to wane two days later. Opposition forces then attempted to shut down oil production and distribution. By December 7, oil exports from Venezuela, the world's fifth-largest petroleum producer, slowed. Gasoline shortages began inside the country.

On the evening of December 6, gunmen opened fire at an opposition rally of hundreds at Plaza Francia in the Altamira neighborhood of Caracas. More than 10 military officers who took part in the April coup that failed to unseat Chávez have been staging a sit-in there for months. The site has become an organizing center for opposition forces.

Three people were killed in the shooting and 28 wounded. Security forces arrested seven people. One of them, a Portuguese citizen, reportedly admitted to pulling the trigger with a handgun.

Leaders of the pro-imperialist opposition used the incident to blame the government for the killings and demand Chávez's resignation. Government officials denounced these claims, condemned the assault, and pledged to bring those responsible to justice. Vice president José Vicente Rangel called the shootings a "provocation" to prompt further instability.

## Massive turnout at pro-Chávez march

"About 30,000 people are coming to Caracas from Valencia," said Orlando Chirino, a leader of the textile workers union in the country's main industrial center in a December 7 telephone interview. "Most are workers." He was in a bus at the time on his way to Caracas for the march against the opposition strike. "The more the capitalists attack the poor, the more they are attacking Chávez, the more we are determined to fight," said Nellie Yaerte in another interview.

A health-care worker from Valencia, Yaerte spoke to the *Militant* as she was getting ready to leave for the same march in Caracas that morning. Yhonny García from Maracaibo said 3,000 people made the nine-hour trip to the march from that city, the country's second largest and the capital of Zulia state, where much of the oil drilling and production is concentrated. "Most of the media here and internationally claim that people in Maracaibo are banging pots and pans at the port to support the few pirates who grounded some oil tankers to back the reactionary strike," he said. "But that's a very small part of the picture."

Mari Pérez from San Carlos, the capital of Cojedes, a largely agricultural state, said hundreds of farmers and others went to Caracas "to stand up for our rights." Among them was her husband, Angel Sarmiento, a peasant. Sarmiento toured visiting *Militant* reporters in July to land taken over by dozens of peasant families from Compañía Inglesa.

A number of those interviewed pointed out that at the heart of the brewing class conflict are measures the government passed a year earlier cutting into the prerogatives of big capital. Significant among them is the Law on Land and Agricultural Development, which legalized government takeovers of some large estates and their distribution to landless families. The opposition has also railed against provisions of the Law on Fishing and Aquaculture favoring small fishermen over large monopolies.

Participation was lower than expected, said Antonio Aguillón, in a telephone interview while the pro-Chávez rally was going on. "Because of the killings last night and the last-minute change of date [for the march], there was some fear and confusion and many buses did not make it to Caracas," stated Aguillón, a member of the Bolivarian Workers Force, a pro-Chávez union federation. "Dozens of buses from the state of Medina, for example, were turned back by police last night."

Alfonso Rodríguez, a leader of the Fifth Republic Revolutionary Youth, said Chávez, in his speech to the rally, was responding to



Tens of thousands of working people took to the streets of Caracas, Venezuela, in April to oppose imperialist-backed coup against President Hugo Chávez. On December 7, 400,000 people marched in the capital to protest bosses' strike against government.

growing demands by the toilers for firm measures against those responsible for sabotage in the state-owned oil industry, which is run by the PVDSA.

Chávez reportedly said the government will fire striking tanker captains and replace managers responsible for sabotaging oil production. He also announced his cabinet will restructure the board of directors at the PVDSA oil company, saying he is considering whether to accept the offer of most board members to resign made the day before.

## Developments in oil industry

On December 5 the Venezuelan navy seized a tanker filled with 280,000 tons of gasoline. The tanker, *Pilin Leon*, had been anchored a day earlier off Maracaibo by its captain, Daniel Alfaro, a PVDSA employee, in support of the bosses' strike to oust Chávez. The president called this "an act of piracy."

Officers backing the pro-imperialist opposition had grounded another five oil tankers, most of them empty, from the state fleet of more than 100, according to telephone interviews and press accounts. Zulia Towing, the largest private tugboat company on Lake Maracaibo, yanked all 13 of its tugs from service to join the strike, AP reported December 5. Protesters on tug boats had circled the *Pilin Leon* blowing whistles to back its grounding. "Assaulting the PDVSA is like assaulting the heart of Venezuela," Chávez said in a televised speech that day.

By December 7, the captain and most of the crew of *Pilin Leon* had been replaced.

During the first week of December the National Guard also arrested several PVDSA managers who tried to lock and weld shut the gates of refineries to prevent production workers from entering. According to several phone interviews and Venezuelan TV reports, about 40 percent of the oil giant's employees heeded the strike call, largely technicians and administrative personnel. That halted issuing the necessary paperwork for export cargo. For this reason, 23 tankers were unable to load cargo and depart by December 5, bringing most exports to a standstill. In a number of cases, technicians shut off computerized controls in refineries as they left.

## Most workers oppose bosses' strike

"The National Guard and many production workers have been waging guerrilla warfare, by restarting operations through manual controls until other technicians can be found," said Yhonny García from Maracaibo. "Most production workers in oil extraction and refining have not left their posts. The managers and many in the administration are part of a caste who don't want their privileges touched if the Bolivarian revolution moves forward." Bolivarian is the term used by backers of the president to describe the process unleashed since his election.

By December 6, gasoline shortages be-

gan to be felt in several states. "Here in Valencia the reason is that a number of gas station owners shut down to support the strike, or pump only part of the gas they have," said Nellie Yaerte December 7. "The workers are not behind this. The owners are the big capitalists, and like many bankers they have shut down. We are against them, and they are against us." It was a typical view expressed by workers in other interviews.

The bosses' strike began after the government rejected a November 28 decision by the National Electoral Council (CEN) to call a referendum February 2 on whether Chávez should remain in office. The opposition had turned in 1.5 million signatures of Venezuelans backing such a referendum in early November. Even though the results would be nonbinding, opposition figures hoped a poor showing for the president would force him to resign. The government argued that the country's constitution provides for a binding referendum of this kind in August 2003, midway through Chávez's term.

The country's Supreme Court declared the November 28 CEN decision not valid because it was taken by a 3-1 vote with one of its members absent, where a law requires a four-vote majority for this kind of ruling. The strike was preceded by other clashes. Alfredo Peña, the mayor of Caracas and one of the most prominent figures in the pro-imperialist opposition coalition, used the metropolitan police under his control to fire on pro-Chávez demonstrators in Caracas November 12, killing one and wounding 20. This was one of many such instances in the country's capital in recent months.

Peña has also refused to budge in a labor dispute with nearly a third of the police and attempted to force into early retirement pro-Chávez officers. After an armed confrontation between police officers on opposing sides, the president deployed the National Guard November 16 in armored personnel carriers who took control of the city's 10 cop stations. Chávez also replaced the police chief.

Many workers and the majority of trade unions in basic industry opposed the reactionary work stoppage. "Fedepetrol [the oil workers union], the electrical workers, Sidor that organizes employees in steel and aluminum, the metro workers union in Caracas, and many others came out against the strike," said Orlando Chirino. "The textile and auto plants run full shifts in Valencia, for example. Even chambers of commerce in at least three states broke with Fedecámaras and said no to the strike."

According to Chirino and others interviewed across the country, a number of businesses—McDonald's and Wendy's restaurants, a number of large shopping centers mostly in well-off areas, several banks, and a few other businesses—closed the first days of the strike in Caracas, Valencia, and other large urban centers. At best, the strike suc-

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# Guantánamo prisoners challenge detentions

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

Prisoners held by Washington at the U.S. naval base at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, some for more than a year without seeing an attorney or being charged with a crime, are challenging the legitimacy of those detentions. On December 2, lawyers for 12 Kuwaitis and several British and Australian citizens filed an appeal to the U.S. District Court of Appeals in Washington, D.C., demanding the prisoners gain access to U.S. courts.

Thomas Wilner, representing the 12 Kuwaitis, said the prisoners are seeking "the most modest of rights...we want access to an impartial tribunal." A U.S. district judge ruled four months ago in favor of the Justice Department, which argued that because the prisoners are held outside the United States they do not fall under the jurisdiction of federal courts. The December 2 appeal calls on the court to "recognize Guantánamo Bay for what it is: a fully American enclave with 'the basic attributes of full territorial sovereignty.'"

The U.S. government continues to occupy the Guantánamo base at the eastern end of Cuba against the will of the Cuban people and government.

Washington is holding nearly 600 detainees there from some 40 countries, none of whom have been allowed to see their fami-

lies or have access to an attorney.

The Pentagon has labeled the men "unlawful combatants," refusing to recognize them as prisoners of war, a classification that would require its actions to be judged according to the 1949 Geneva Convention.

Held at Camp X-Ray at Guantánamo, the prisoners were captured by the U.S. military in Pakistan and Afghanistan in the months after September 11.

U.S. imperialist forces transported their captives in the freezing holds of military cargo planes, under sedation and with hoods or blacked-out goggles over their eyes, and held the prisoners in chicken-wire cages exposed to the sun and rain, with one-inch thick foam mats as beds, constantly handcuffed and shackled.

Hoping to blunt some of the international outcry against the conditions at the Guantánamo concentration camp, the U.S. brass claims morale has increased since they expanded the detainees' exercise time to 20 minutes per week. Pointing to the 8-by-6.8-foot cells, Army colonel John Perrone told journalists on a December 3 tour of the camp, "You see, there's plenty of room to move around."

The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Sergio Vieira de Mello, offered a mild rebuke of U.S. denial of basic human rights to the prisoners, calling on

Washington to put them on trial or release them to judicial authorities in their home countries. "It is the legitimate right of any government, including and in particular the United States, to do all it can to gather information [on terrorism]," he said, "but how long can you keep a person in legal limbo?"

## U.S. citizen wins right to see lawyer

Held for six months as an "enemy combatant" at a Navy brig in Charleston, South Carolina, José Padilla, a U.S. citizen, scored a victory December 4 when a federal judge in Manhattan ruled that he had the right to meet an attorney.

Judge Michael Mukasey pointed out that "Padilla's need to consult with a lawyer is obvious. He is held incommunicado at a military facility. His lawyer has been told that there is no guarantee that even her correspondence to him would get through."

But Mukasey affirmed the government's power to hold Padilla, who goes by the name Abdullah al-Muhajir.

The judge agreed with Washington's claims that the president can order the indefinite detention of U.S. citizens by declaring them "enemy combatants," ruling that it was "logically and legally" sound and needed only to meet the minimal standard of providing "some evidence" to back up the president's decision.

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# Trotsky on curve of capitalist development

Reprinted below is an excerpt from "The Curve of Capitalist Development," a letter by communist leader Leon Trotsky that was published in the Soviet Union in 1923. The letter addresses the practical implications for class-conscious workers of discerning the difference between the periodic ups and downs of the business cycle and the long-term ascent or decline in the curve of capitalist development. This question was discussed by the international communist movement in the half decade after the October Revolution in Russia. Trotsky's letter is printed in *New International* no. 10, copyright © 1994 by 408 Printing and Publishing Corp., reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY LEON TROTSKY

It is a very difficult task, impossible to solve in its full scope, to determine those subterranean impulses which economics transmits to the politics of today; and yet the explanation of political phenomena cannot be postponed, because the struggle cannot wait. From this flows the necessity of resorting in daily political activity to explanations which are so general that through long usage they become transformed into truisms.

As long as politics keeps flowing in the same forms, within the same banks, and at about the same speed, i.e., as long as the accumulation of economic quantity has not passed into a change of political quality, this type of clarifying abstraction ("the interests of the bourgeoisie," "imperialism," "fascism") still more or less serves its task: not to interpret a political fact in all its concreteness, but to reduce it to a familiar social type, which is, of course, intrinsically of inestimable importance.

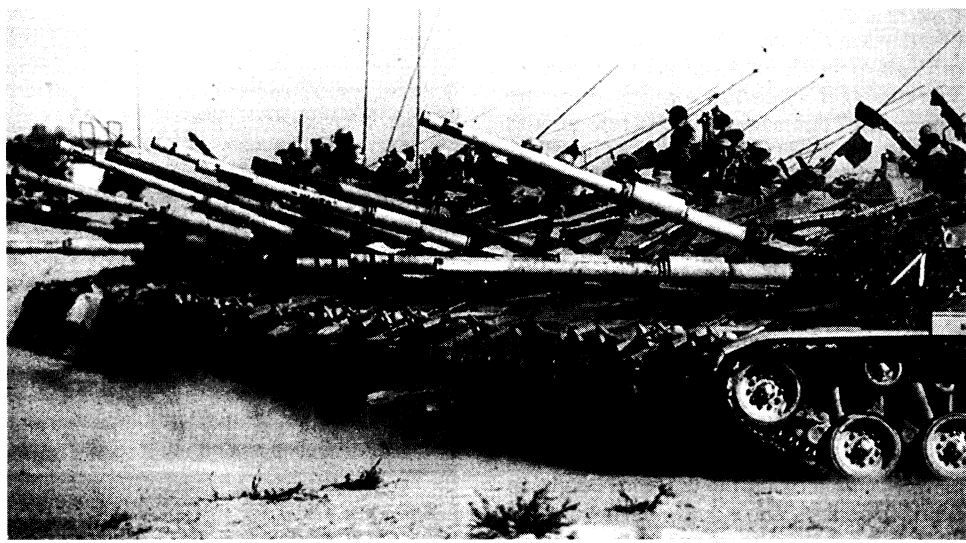
But when a serious change occurs in the situation, all the more so a sharp turn, such general explanations reveal their complete inadequacy, and become wholly transformed into empty truisms. In such cases it is invariably necessary to probe analytically much more deeply in order to determine the qualitative aspect, and if possible also to measure quantitatively the impulses of economics upon politics. These "impulses" represent the dialectical form of the "tasks" that originate in the dynamic foundation and are submitted for solution in the sphere of the superstructure.

Oscillations of the economic conjuncture (boom-depression-crisis) already signify in and of themselves periodic impulses that give rise now to quantitative, now to qualitative changes, and to new formations in the field of politics. The revenues of possessing classes, the state budget, wages, unemployment, proportions of foreign trade, etc., are intimately bound up with the economic conjuncture, and in their turn exert the most direct influence on politics. This alone is enough to make one understand how important and fruitful it is to follow step by step the history of political parties, state institutions, etc., in relation to the cycles of capitalist development. By this we do not at all mean to say that these cycles explain everything: this is excluded, if only for the reason that cycles themselves are not fun-

damental but derivative economic phenomena. They unfold on the basis of the development of productive forces through the medium of market relations. But cycles explain a great deal, forming as they do through automatic pulsation an indispensable dialectical spring in the mechanism of capitalist society. The breaking points of the trade-industrial conjuncture bring us into a greater proximity with the critical knots in the web of the development of political tendencies, legislation, and all forms of ideology.

## Dynamic development of cycles

But capitalism is not characterized solely by the periodic recurrence of cycles—otherwise what would occur would be a complex repetition and not dynamic development. Trade industrial cycles are of different character in different periods. The chief difference between them is determined by quantitative interrelations between the crisis and the boom period within each given cycle. If the boom restores with a surplus the destruction or constriction during the preceding crisis, then capitalist development moves upward. If the crisis, which signals destruction, or at all events contraction of productive forces, surpasses in its intensity the corresponding boom, then we get as a result a decline in economy. Finally, if the crisis and boom approximate each other in force, then we get a temporary and stagnat-



U.S. tanks during 1990-91 Gulf War. That war, and the interimperialist rivalry that marked it, took place in a declining segment in the curve of capitalist development.

downward as a whole, signaling the decline of productive forces.

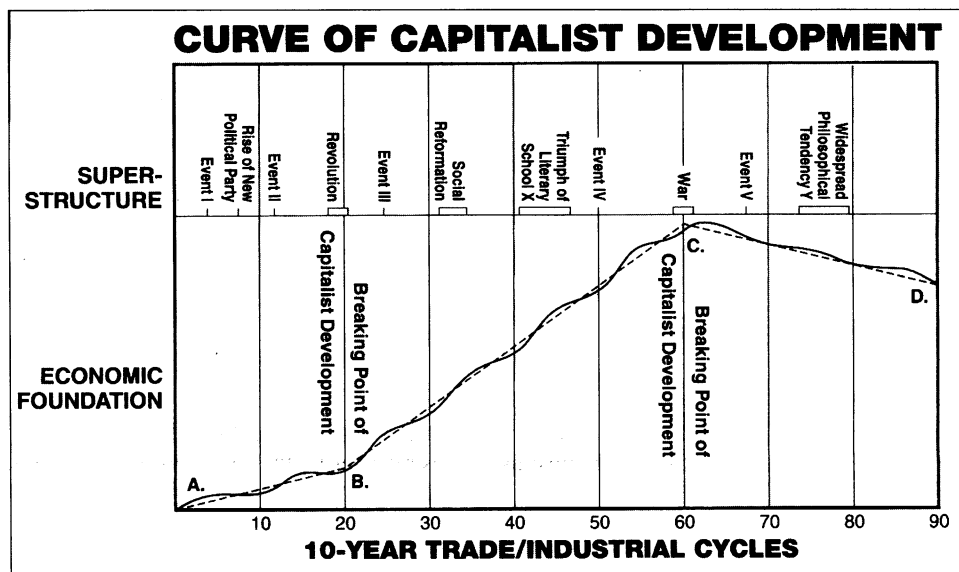
It is already possible to postulate a priori that epochs of energetic capitalist development must possess features—in politics, in law, in philosophy, in poetry—sharply different from those in the epochs of stagnation or economic decline. Still more, a transition from one epoch of this kind to a different one must naturally produce the greatest convulsions in the relationships between

we can then look not only for correspondence—or to put it more cautiously, interrelationship between definitely delineated epochs of social life and the sharply expressed segments of the curve of capitalist development—but also for those direct subterranean impulses which unleash events. Along this road it is naturally not at all difficult to fall into the most vulgar schematization and, above all, to ignore the tenacious internal conditioning and succession of ideological processes—to become oblivious of the fact that economics is decisive only in the last analysis. There has been no lack of caricature conclusions drawn from the Marxist method! But to renounce on this account the above indicated formulation of the question ("it smells of economism") is to demonstrate complete inability to understand the essence of Marxism, which looks for the causes of changes in social superstructure in the changes of the economic foundation, and not anywhere else.

At the risk of incurring the theoretical ire of opponents of "economism" (and partly with the intention of provoking their indignation) we present here a schematic chart which depicts arbitrarily a curve of capitalist development for a period of ninety years along the above-mentioned lines. The general direction of the basic curve is determined by the character of the partial conjunctural curves of which it is composed. In our schema three periods are sharply demarcated: twenty years of very gradual capitalist development (segment A-B); forty years of energetic upswing (segment B-C); and thirty years of protracted crisis and decline (segment C-D). If we introduce into this diagram the most important historical events for the corresponding period, then the pictorial juxtaposition of major political events with the variations of the curve is alone sufficient to provide the idea of the invaluable starting points for historical materialist investigations. The parallelism of political events and economic changes is of course very relative. As a general rule, the "superstructure" registers and rejects new formations in the economic sphere only after considerable delay. But this law must be laid bare through a concrete investigation of those complex interrelationships of which we here present a pictorial hint.

In the report to the Third World Congress, we illustrated our idea with certain historical examples drawn from the epoch of the revolution of 1848, the epoch of the first Russian revolution (1905), and the period through which we are now passing (1920-21).<sup>2</sup> We refer the reader to these examples. They do not supply anything finished, but they do characterize adequately enough the extraordinary importance of the approach advanced by us, above all for understanding the most critical leaps in history: wars and revolutions. If in this letter we utilize a purely arbitrary pictorial scheme, without

Continued on Page 15



Schematic chart used by Trotsky to illustrate a curve of capitalist development, juxtaposing major political and historical events with shifting economic growth and decline.

ing equilibrium in economy. This is the schema in the rough.

We observe in history that homogeneous cycles are grouped in a series. Entire epochs of capitalist development exist when a number of cycles are characterized by sharply delineated booms and weak, short-lived crises. As a result we have a sharply rising movement of the basic curve of capitalist development. There are epochs of stagnation when this curve, while passing through partial cyclical oscillations, remains on approximately the same level for decades. And finally, during certain historical periods the basic curve, while passing as always through cyclical oscillations, dips

classes and between states. At the Third World Congress of the Comintern we had to stress this point<sup>1</sup>—in the struggle against the purely mechanistic conception of capitalist disintegration now in progress. If periodic replacements of "normal" booms by "normal" crises find their rejection in all spheres of social life, then a transition from an entire boom epoch to one of decline, or vice versa, engenders the greatest historical disturbances; and it is not hard to show that in many cases revolutions and wars straddle the borderline between two different epochs of economic development, i.e., the junction of two different segments of the capitalist curve. To analyze all of modern history from this standpoint is truly one of the most gratifying tasks of dialectical materialism....

Along what path then should investigation proceed?

To establish the curve of capitalist development in its nonperiodic (basic) and periodic (secondary) phases and breaking points in respect to individual countries of interest to us and in respect to the entire world market—that is the first part of the task. Once we have the fixed curve (the method of fixing it is, of course, a special question in itself and by no means a simple one, but it pertains to the field of economic-statistical technique), we can break it down into periods, depending upon the angle of rise and decline in reference to an axis on a graph. In this way we obtain a pictorial scheme of economic development, i.e., the characterization of the "very basis of all the proceedings subject to examination" (Engels).

## Impulses which unleash events

Depending upon the concreteness and detail of our investigation, we may require a number of such schemas: one relating to agriculture, another to heavy industry, and so on. With this schema as our starting point, we must next synchronize it with political events (in the widest sense of the term) and

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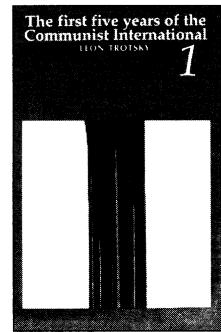
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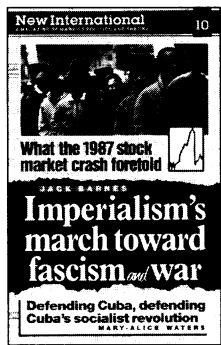


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# N.Y. transit workers authorize strike action, confront gov't threats

Continued from front page of this city.

The question of job safety in this fight for a contract took on added importance after the deaths of two track workers—one on November 21 and the other two days later—in incidents resulting from the fact that the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) had not put flaggers in place to protect work crews. On December 5 the MTA made its first contract offer, months after the union's proposals were put forward. The bosses offered a zero pay increase over three years. In addition they demand a 2.3 percent wage deduction to cover pension benefits and up to \$800 a year more that each worker would have to pay for their health coverage. In addition, the unionists are fighting for improved sick leave and for an end to an abusive disciplinary system.

One worker after another denounced the "zero, zero, zero" proposal, and echoed the statement of TWU Local 100 president Roger Toussaint that it was an insult.

Ronald Martinez, a 32-year-old trainman, said, "They act as if they don't see us, and treat us like second class citizens.... For me the number one issue is health benefits. And the next big one is, we don't want any zero, zero, zero."

Ruling-class politicians and the news media have issued aggressive statements threatening to severely punish the union and the 34,000 transit workers if they go on strike.

## Rulers threaten jail and fines

New York governor George Pataki and Michael Bloomberg, the billionaire businessman mayor of New York City, threatened "very grave consequences" and "the use of every legal means to stop a strike."

A December 5 *New York Daily News* editorial called on Bloomberg to "adopt the same tactics" that his predecessor Rudolph Giuliani did during transit contract negotiations in 1999. "Each striking member faced a \$25,000 fine. Those fines were to double each successive day." The big business daily called on the government to call out the National Guard to break the strike and use "the Coast Guard to move millions of people in and out of Manhattan."

In a December 6 editorial, the *New York Post* advocated the jailing of Local 100 president Roger Toussaint in the event of a work stoppage. "How effective can Toussaint be from inside a jail cell—while his union is forced to pay millions in fines? And workers are docked two days for every day they're out," the editorial stated. "True, even these sanctions may not deter Toussaint's jihad. In which case, if someone's got a tougher penalty, we'd be

all ears."

Workers interviewed by the *Militant*, streaming in and out of the Javits Convention Center for the meetings and votes, said they were determined to fight and to strike if necessary.

Armatullah Zaahir, a train operator, said, "I'm glad we're going into this showing we're ready to strike."

JD, a young man who is an operator, added, "I think we're walking because nobody's bending. The TA [Transit Authority] got the mayor they wanted with Bloomberg."

A worker originally from India who asked not to be quoted by name said he knew both the workers who were killed, both of whom were also originally from India. "The TA and the mayor did not even give condolences for their deaths. The managers are responsible for the safety cuts," he said.

Pedro Lorenzo, who has worked in transit for 13 years, said, "The deaths will help bring public attention to the safety questions."

Vernon Leaks, a track worker, responded, "After the two deaths last week, we got flagging. This should be permanent."

After the deaths the union ordered workers to refuse track work unless there were flaggers, and for train crews to operate as if work crews were present. This led to slowdowns and forced the bosses to open negotiations with the union on safety issues and to agree to assign flaggers to all track crews, but only on a temporary basis.

Matthew, a trainman, said, "I think the government is out to get rid of the unions. Not just us, but unions overall."

Some workers responded to arguments by big-business commentators that, because of the impending U.S.-led war on Iraq, the union should "sacrifice" and not strike. A mechanic from the Gun Hill Road depot said, "We should go out. I was in Vietnam, and if they want to raise the war against us, they can go to hell."

Calvin, a signal worker, said, "The war in Iraq is all about oil. They are just hypocrites."



Militant/Stu Singer

Transport Workers Union members gather for December 7 strike vote meeting

The transit workers' contract fight comes at a time when Bloomberg's administration is calling for "fiscal discipline"—slashing public employees' jobs and wages as well as city services in order to pay off the city's debt to wealthy bondholders.

The MTA has warned that it may seek to hike subway and bus fares by 50 cents to \$2.00. TWU Local 100 has joined other organizations in a "Save the Fare" campaign to oppose the fare hike, rejecting attempts to pit transit workers against transit riders.

Bob Oldham, a motorman who was there with a group of co-workers from Coney Island, stated, "The transit authority should open their books. We are telling the public that the fares should not go up. And they say the fares have to go up and cut service also. They give big bonuses to barn chiefs and other bosses."

## 'Health benefits cuts are main thing'

Rigoberto Matias, an assistant shop steward, was with a large group of train operators who came to the meeting together from Pitkin Yard in Brooklyn. "They're pushing us by offering the zero. Last time we took a bad contract, because they said the budget was bad. But right after that they found all kinds of money. For workers with kids, the

health benefit cuts are the main thing."

Matias and many other workers remarked at how many workers showed up at the meeting who had not been involved in union activity before.

Jay Dean, who works in the 207 Street station, said, "Workers invest our lives in this. What are they offering us? Nothing."

The state's Taylor Law prohibits strikes by public workers, and calls for massive fines against the union, plus taking two days' pay from each worker for each day they are on strike. "That's forced slavery," Charles Whisnant said. "We should strike just to get rid of the Taylor Law."

While the contract expires December 15—a Sunday—union members said they had discussed not beginning a strike until Tuesday, December 17. The union is widely publicizing a mass march and rally for December 16 that will gather at 4:00 p.m. outside the Transit Authority building at 130 Livingston Street in Brooklyn, then march over the Brooklyn Bridge for a rally outside City Hall. The rally is endorsed by the Central Labor Council and a number of other unions.

Romina Green and Arrin Hawkins contributed to this article.

# From inside an INS jail in Houston

Continued from front page

charges, García completed three years' probation. Since then, he has attempted to clear his record in order to apply for U.S. citizenship. Two years ago when he requested a copy of his criminal record, he was told they "couldn't find it" because it had been a long time ago. A lawyer even took \$2,000 to help him clear his record and García has never heard from him since.

García hopes his case will be resolved

soon. He is nearing the end of the six-month period during which the INS can detain someone before it is supposed to either deport or release an individual without having to go before a federal judge. He is looking forward to going back to his job as a carpenter in Utah, where his two children live.

## Salvadorans threaten hunger strike

Workers here report that in mid-November a group of about 80 detainees, mainly from El Salvador, threatened to go on a hunger strike after being denied a hearing for several months.

Many had been at the detention center for well over six months. Some of them had expected to be deported immediately after arriving at this immigration jail because they had just served out a term at a state or federal prison.

In the end the hunger strike did not take place, but the protesters did force the intervention of the Salvadoran consul, who promised they would be released promptly. Since then, those that led the protest have been moved around to other cells in an attempt to isolate them.

Some of the detainees have been locked up here much longer than six months, including at least one who has been here more than two years. Some have had to appeal their cases while in prison after being denied bail.

In my cell, there are immigrant workers from Haiti, Algeria, Nigeria, China, Cuba, Pakistan, Albania, as well as from Mexico and Central America.

The U.S. government has expanded the list of offenses for which an immigrant can be deported under the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act. In addition, the INS has made the law apply retroactively to convictions that took place even before the law was enacted. The infractions for which many have been

locked up here range from driving while intoxicated to trespassing to a variety of petty drug-related crimes.

The INS is carrying out the detentions of U.S. residents who have a previous record with total disregard for the fact that many have made their lives in this country.

One person who was recently brought to this INS prison had been detained when he was returning home from Guatemala with his family.

A resident of Long Island, New York, father of two U.S.-born children, is facing deportation for a disorderly conduct case from 11 years ago.

In my case, the government is attempting to use a 1988 conviction from when I was in high school in Los Angeles and was accused of selling marijuana to an undercover cop, for which I was given probation.

I was arrested December 3 on my return from Guadalajara, Mexico, where I had carried out a reporting assignment for *Perspectiva Mundial* at an international student conference.

Detained at the INS office at the airport, I was denied the right to contact a lawyer on the grounds that it was an administrative detention, even though the immigration cops had just finished reading me my Miranda rights.

I was traveling with an accreditation letter and photo ID press credentials. Among other things, the INS cops confiscated my work tools—*Perspectiva Mundial's* laptop computer and digital camera.

García, the carpenter, referred to the provision of the immigration law used against him and others as a "trap," because it was one that many immigrants did not know about.

"All the flights to our countries are full over the holidays, and many of these people are going to end up in jail," said García. "This must be condemned."



Front page of December 9 *New York Post* announces preparations by New York governor George Pataki to call out National Guard and several hundred state troopers in the event of a transit strike. The big-business press and city and state governments are waging an intense campaign of threats and propaganda against the transit workers.

# Marianas in Combat: women and the struggle for the revolutionary transformation of Cuba

Reprinted below is the introduction by Mary-Alice Waters to the new Pathfinder book, *Marianas in Combat: Teté Puebla and the Mariana Grajales Women's Platoon in Cuba's Revolutionary War, 1956-58*. Copyright © 2003 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

*Before the revolutionary victory, women were objects—mere bed decorations. After the revolution this changed. Women began to organize massively, working to change the conditions of their lives and to free themselves.*

**Teté Puebla**  
*Marianas in Combat*

*The change in a historical epoch can always be determined by the progress of women toward freedom.... The degree of emancipation of woman is the natural measure of general emancipation.*

**Karl Marx**  
*The Holy Family*

Brigadier General Teté Puebla, the highest-ranking woman in Cuba's Revolutionary Armed Forces and a Hero of the Cuban Revolution, joined the struggle to overthrow the bloody U.S.-backed dictatorship of Fulgencio Batista in 1956, when she was fifteen years old. *Marianas in Combat* is her story—from clandestine action in the small town of Yara in the foothills of eastern Cuba's Sierra Maestra mountains, to officer in the victorious Rebel Army's first all-women's platoon, to protagonist in and defender of the social and economic transformation of Cuba.

On January 1, 1959, barely two years after the initiation of the revolutionary war, Batista's army disintegrated in face of the rapidly advancing forces of the Rebel Army and the spreading popular insurrection and general strike called by the July 26 Movement. The dictator and his closest entourage of murderers and thieves fled Cuba. What millions of Cubans came to proudly call "The First Free Territory of the Americas" was born.

The new revolutionary power, responding to spreading mobilizations of working people, set out to change the living and working conditions of ordinary Cubans. In doing so they ignored the supposedly inherent prerogatives of wealthy U.S. families and their retainers in Cuba who decades earlier had taken control of the island nation's lucrative sugar plantations, cattle ranches, nickel reserves, oil refineries, railroads, utilities monopolies, and banks.

Within a few months' time, the first elements of a more equitable social order had been established. A sweeping land reform program had recognized the title of 100,000 peasant families to the land they had been



Above: courtesy Teté Puebla; Left: Militant/Luis Madrid  
Left, Brigadier General Teté Puebla of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Cuba. Above, Mariana Grajales Platoon during Liberty Caravan, January 1959. Puebla is standing in back row, center. "Before the revolutionary victory, women were objects, mere bed decorations. After the revolution, women began to organize massively. The revolution sought to incorporate women into the struggle and into the workforce."

working. Onerous rents, telephone charges, electricity rates, and other utility fees had been slashed. Public education and health care had been expanded to all social layers in Cuba. Racial discrimination in employment and public activities had been outlawed. The brothels and casinos built for the pleasure of the imperialist lords and laddies had been closed. And hundreds of thousands of workers and peasants, especially the youth, had poured into the newly created revolutionary militias to arm and train themselves to defend their gains.

As Washington's antagonism to this popular and patriotic course sharpened, Cuban

working people and their government refused to back down. The revolution deepened and grew stronger in the face of U.S.-organized and -financed sabotage, subversion, assassination plots, and countless acts of murderous terrorism directed at the population. In April 1961, in less than seventy-two hours of intense combat, a full-scale U.S.-orchestrated mercenary invasion at the Bay of Pigs was crushed by the determined response of the popular militias and revolutionary police and armed forces. The victory at Playa Girón, as the battle is known in Cuba, marked a decisive turning point in the revolution.

From these years of titanic class struggle, the first socialist revolution in the Western Hemisphere emerged.

In the pages that follow we meet some of the ordinary women and men—many, like

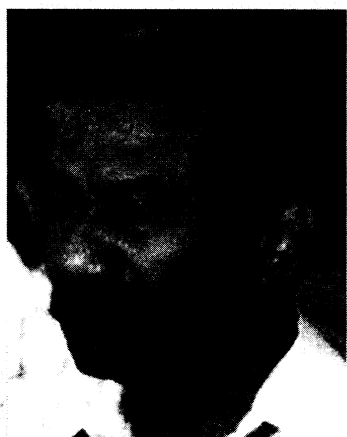
last half century can be opened only as working people in their majority act to break the stranglehold of the propertied classes, the beneficiaries of the second-class status of women. And we see why a revolutionary cadre committed to advancing women's equality is decisive to reaching that goal.



Some eight years after the triumph over Batista, Cuban Prime Minister Fidel Castro, addressing a plenary meeting of the Federation of Cuban Women in December 1966, drew attention to the number of women who were shouldering weighty and challenging new tasks in agricultural programs where widespread social prejudices would previously have prevented them from assuming leadership responsibilities. Among their

## Foreword by Juan Almeida

Reprinted below is the foreword by Commander of the Revolution Juan Almeida to *Marianas in Combat: Teté Puebla and the Mariana Grajales Women's Platoon in Cuba's Revolutionary War, 1956-58*. Almeida is the president of the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution, an organization of Cuban revolutionary fighters of many generations, from the revolutionary war against the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship in the 1950s to international missions around the world.



Havana, November 19, 2002

Year of the Heroes Imprisoned by the Empire

After reading the valuable book based on the interview with our comrade in struggle, Brigadier General Delsa Esther "Teté" Puebla Viltres, I believe it's best not to add words by way of a preface, but rather to let Teté's straightforward answers help readers discover for themselves her humanism, her humble origin, her revolutionary fiber, and to appreciate more deeply the generosity and firmness of our revolution.

She says she has lived the revolution so intensely that she cannot separate it from her life. We might add that through her account the reader will learn to admire Teté and have a better understanding of the justice of our cause.

**Juan Almeida Bosque**  
President of the National Directorate  
Association of Combatants  
of the Cuban Revolution



Bohemia  
Protest in Santiago de Cuba against police murder of 15-year-old William Soler on Jan. 2, 1957. Sign reads, "Stop the murder of our children. Cuban mothers."

Teté Puebla, still in their teens at the time—who made this history. We see how they were themselves transformed in the course of the struggle. We begin to understand the class trajectory that for more than forty years has enabled Cuba's working people to hold U.S. imperialism at bay as they defend their course, building a new society based on economic and social relations that are the negation of the dog-eat-dog realities of capitalism.

We see how the door to advances such as those registered by women in Cuba over the

ranks, as she describes in these pages, was soon to be Teté Puebla. "This is one of the great lessons," Castro noted,

one of the greatest victories over prejudices that have existed, not just for decades or centuries, but for millennia. We refer to the prejudice that all a woman was capable of was to scrub dishes, wash and iron clothes, cook, keep house, and bear children [*Applause and shouts*]*—an age-old prejudice that placed women in an inferior position in society. In effect, she*



did not have a productive place in society.

Such prejudices are thousands of years old and have survived through various social systems. If we're talking about capitalism, women—that is, lower-class women—were doubly exploited or doubly humiliated. A poor woman, as a part of the working class or a working-class family, was exploited simply because she was poor, because she was a worker.

But in addition, even though she was herself a worker, within her own class she was scorned and underrated. Not only was she underestimated, exploited, and scorned by the exploiting classes, but even within her own class she was the object of innumerable prejudices....

If women in our country were doubly exploited, doubly humiliated in the past, then this simply means that women in a social revolution should be doubly revolutionary. [Applause]

And this perhaps is the explanation, or at least provides the social basis, for the resolute, enthusiastic, firm, and loyal support given by Cuban women to this revolution.

This revolution has really been two revolutions for women; it has meant a double liberation: as part of the exploited sectors of the country, and second, as women, who were discriminated against not only as workers but also as women, in that society of exploitation.

The attitude of Cuban women toward the revolution corresponds to this reality; it corresponds to what the revolution has meant to them....

There are two sectors in this country, two components of society that, aside from economic reasons, have had other motives for sympathizing with and feeling enthusiasm for the revolution: the black population of Cuba and the country's women.

Teté Puebla's account provides a vivid and concrete picture of this revolutionary transformation. We see what involvement in the struggle meant for one young woman from a poor family of working people in Oriente province—how and why she refused to accept the status quo, her hopes and achievements, how she grew and changed



Juventud Rebelde

**First Cuban women's anti-aircraft battery on internationalist mission in Cahama, Angola, September 1988. In center in light blouse is Vilma Espín, president of Federation of Cuban Women. "A country where women and men work and fight side by side is invincible."**

as the war intensified. In the Rebel Army camps of the Sierras, she relates, "what we wanted more than anything was to earn the right to fight." In words that capture the determined struggle of women everywhere to establish their equality, she notes that "we had already proved that women could do just about everything.... 'If women have to take part in all the duties of the revolution,' we said, 'why can't we fight the same way as our men fight?'"

After a major offensive by the troops of the Batista regime had been defeated in the summer of 1958, and as the Rebel Army was preparing to launch the counteroffensive that would carry them to victory, "we asked our commander in chief to allow us to fight arms in hand. He agreed. Fidel said yes, women had won the right to fight with a rifle, face to face with the enemy."

The political battle waged by Fidel Castro and those closest to him within the leadership of the Rebel Army to take on the anti-woman prejudices that were then still deeply ingrained even in some of the best combatants, and to establish the Mariana Grajales Women's Platoon, is a measure of the caliber of that revolutionary leadership. It was one of the most important steps taken by the Rebel Army command in the midst of the war, demonstrating in practice the social course, the class course, that would continue to be followed by the new revolutionary power once victory over the dictatorship had been won.

To the men who complained—"How can we give rifles to women when there are so many men who are unarmed?"—Fidel responded, "Because they're better soldiers than you are. They're more disciplined." The Marianas proved him right, and their actions helped open the way to further gains for women as the revolution advanced.

The name of the squad could not have been more appropriate. The Rebel Army unit of which Teté Puebla was second in command was named after a heroine of Cuba's wars of independence from Spanish colonial rule in the nineteenth century. Mariana Grajales was a black woman who sent all her sons to fight for Cuba's freedom; eight members of her family were killed in battle. The most prominent was the Bronze Titan, Antonio Maceo, the legendary general of Cuba's independence army, killed in battle in 1896. Her name has come to

symbolize the spirit of resistance and unbreakable courage of the oppressed fighting for their liberation the world over.



The interview printed in these pages took place in Havana, Cuba, in two sessions, the first on November 18, 2000, and the second on March 1, 2002. It was made possible through the support and encouragement of the leadership of the Association of Com-

Martínez of *Bohemia*.

The glossary, annotation, and much of the editorial preparation in English was the work of Pathfinder editor Michael Taber. Pathfinder editor Luis Madrid participated in the first interview with Teté Puebla and was responsible for final preparation of the text in Spanish. Martín Koppel, the editor of *Perspectiva Mundial*, participated in the second interview session.

A large team of volunteers who are part



Granma

**Fidel Castro, center, with members of Mariana Grajales Platoon, Oct. 8, 1958, as they were leaving on a combat mission in the plains. Puebla is immediately to left of Castro.**

batants of the Cuban Revolution, especially its president, Commander of the Revolution Juan Almeida, who authored the foreword to this volume, and Brigadier General Harry Villegas, who is today the executive vice president of the association.

Without the assistance, perseverance, and capacities of Cuban editor Iraida Aguirrechu, it would not have been possible to bring the manuscript to completion with anything close to the quality and accuracy desired and, we hope, realized.

Special appreciation goes to Teté Puebla herself for the time and attention she generously gave, and for the selection of irreplaceable original photos from her personal archives. Help in assembling the photo pages was also provided by Delfín Xiqués of *Granma* and the leadership of the Federation of Cuban Women, as well as Manuel

of the international Pathfinder Reprint Project made possible the simultaneous publication of this book in Spanish and English. They made their time and abilities available to translate, copy edit, format, proofread, prepare photos and maps, and competently dispatch many other tasks indispensable to prepare the manuscript for press.

Through the collective efforts of many, one more strand of the rich history of the Cuban Revolution is now accessible to all. *Marianas in Combat* is dedicated to the young people in every corner of the earth who today, like fifteen-year-old Teté Puebla before them, refuse to accept the brutality and injustice of the capitalist system that surrounds them and decide to join with others in a disciplined fight for a better world.

Mary-Alice Waters  
November 2002



Granma

**During 1961 literacy drive in Cuba, more than 100,000 youth, the majority of them women, joined the brigades that went into countryside to teach 1 million peasants and workers to read and write. Above, literacy lesson in San Lorenzo, Sierra Maestra. Inset, victory rally after completion of literacy campaign.**

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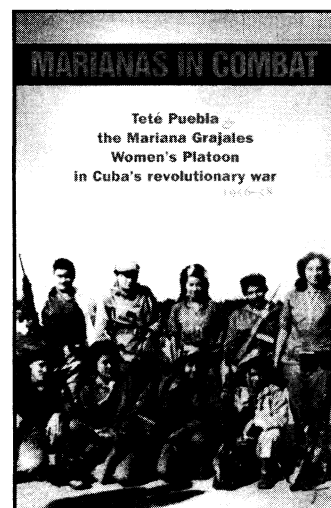
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# Facts on INS detention of Róger Calero and the fight to free him

Printed below is the fact sheet explaining the events behind the detention of Róger Calero. Supporters of the campaign to free Calero can use it to win others to the fight demanding his release from INS custody.

On December 3, Róger Calero, the associate editor of *Perspectiva Mundial*, a Spanish-language news magazine published in New York, was returning home to the United States from a reporting assignment in Havana, Cuba, and Guadalajara, Mexico. At Houston Intercontinental Airport, Calero was seized by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), told he was denied entry to the United States, and carted off to an INS jail. He now faces exclusion from this country.

Calero has lived in this country for the past 17 years and has held permanent residence since 1990. Besides his position as an editor of *Perspectiva Mundial*, Calero works as a staff writer for the *Militant*, a New York-based newsweekly. As a reporter he has traveled widely, both in this country and in Latin America, covering labor and political events.

This attempt by the INS to exclude Calero from the United States and deport him to Nicaragua is an attack on his rights as a permanent resident, on his right to exercise his work as a journalist, and on the rights of all.

Calero and his supporters have launched a public campaign to win his release and the restoration of his rights. Your help is needed. Join the fight!

## December 3: INS detention

The INS seized Calero on December 3 at Houston Intercontinental Airport. Calero was on a one-week assignment for *Perspectiva Mundial* to report on an international conference in Havana on the Free Trade Area of the Americas, attended by trade unionists and other delegates from Latin America, the United States, and Canada. He then spent several days covering an international student conference in Guadalajara, Mexico, sponsored by the Continental Organization of Latin American and Caribbean Students. In Houston, Calero was detained and then transferred to an immigration jail run by a private company, the Corrections Corporation of America.

## Charges against Calero

The immigration cops are seeking to "exclude" him—deny Calero reentry into the United States—and deport him to his native Nicaragua, based on a 1988 conviction, when he was a high school student in Los Angeles, on a charge of selling mari-

juana to an undercover cop. Faced with the prospect of jail, Calero copped a plea and received a suspended 60-day sentence with three years probation.

## Permanent resident for 12 years

When Calero applied for permanent residency in 1989 he specifically included information about his conviction, which immigration officials waived in order to grant him a green card giving him the right to live and work in the United States.

In 2000 the INS replaced his card with full written information of the 12-year-old conviction. Today, Calero, who is married to a U.S. citizen, lives in Newark, New Jersey.

For the past 12 years Calero has exercised his rights as a permanent resident, including most recently as a journalist for a Spanish-language news magazine. INS officials are now trying to take away those rights.

Prior to beginning his job as associate editor of *Perspectiva Mundial* and staff writer for the *Militant*, Calero worked as a meat packer in Des Moines, Iowa, and then in Twin Cities, Minnesota, where he participated in a successful union-organizing drive at the Dakota Premium plant in South St. Paul. He is continuing his work as a journalist from his prison cell in Texas.

## Action is needed now! You can help!

Calero is fighting today to win his free-



Róger Calero, center, checks newly printed pages of the *Militant* coming off presses. Calero was arrested by INS on his return from reporting assignment abroad.

dom on bond from an INS prison and for an immediate halt to government exclusion proceedings against him. He has retained an attorney and is appealing for public support to press the INS to restore his rights and his freedom.

Send a letter of protest to Hipolito Acosta, District Director, Immigration and Naturalization Service, 126 Northpoint Drive, Houston, TX 77060; fax: 281-774-5989; tel: 281-774-4610. Please send cop-

ies to Calero's magazine, *Perspectiva Mundial*, 410 West Street, New York, New York 10014.

Sign and distribute petitions demanding justice for Róger Calero.

Make a financial contribution to help cover rapidly mounting legal and other expenses. Checks can be written out to the Political Rights Defense Fund, P.O. Box 761, Church Street Station, New York, NY 10007. Contributions are tax-deductible.

# Many immigrants face denial of rights like Calero

BY PAUL PEDERSON

The current effort by the Immigration and Naturalization Service to exclude editor and journalist Róger Calero from the United States on his return from a reporting trip abroad is not an isolated case.

Calero, the associate editor of *Perspectiva Mundial* and a *Militant* staff writer, has been locked up in an immigration jail since he was detained at Houston's international airport December 3.

Thousands of immigrants, including permanent residents like Calero, have faced a similar denial of their rights. Over the past decade the U.S. government has adopted a series of laws that it has used to step up attacks on the rights of working people and others born abroad. Those attacks have accelerated in the past year.

Several anti-immigrant measures were passed by Congress and enacted by the Clinton administration in 1996. One was the so-called Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act. It ex-

panded the number of crimes for which a person can be deported to include a range of misdemeanors, as minor as jumping a subway turnstile or shoplifting, redefining them as "aggravated felonies." Another 1996 law that curtailed the rights of the foreign-born was the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act.

The Illegal Immigration Reform law was made retroactive, meaning that even small infractions on a person's record that happened years ago—before the law was enacted—could be used as the basis for deportation proceedings today.

Immigrants who had been granted legal residence with the 1986 nationwide amnesty faced losing their legal status after the 1996 law was passed if they had a conviction on their records. While *la migrá* has carried out factory raids to round up and deport undocumented workers, it has usually not sought out permanent residents who are in this situation. Instead, legal residents have been victimized when they leave the country and try to return; when they go to the INS to apply for a change in their status or some other reason; or if they are subsequently arrested on a criminal charge.

Here are a few examples of people the INS calls "criminal aliens" who have been snared by the immigration police.

## 40-year resident faces exclusion

José Velásquez immigrated here from Panama more than 40 years ago, became a permanent resident in 1960, married, and has children and grandchildren who are U.S. citizens. He and his wife have operated a small grocery store in Philadelphia since the early 1980s.

Twenty years ago, Velásquez was approached at a party by an individual who asked about buying cocaine. When he pointed to someone he thought might accommodate that request, Velásquez was arrested, convicted, and sentenced to five years' probation. In December 1998, as Velásquez was returning home to the United States after visiting his mother, who was having hip surgery, the INS dredged up his earlier conviction, detained him, and began exclusion proceedings.

In Atlanta, Olufolake Oláye has been a permanent resident since 1990 and has

two children who are U.S. citizens. She faces deportation to Nigeria because she applied for citizenship with a shoplifting conviction on her record. In 1993 she was charged with shoplifting \$14.99 in merchandise when she tried to return some baby clothes without a receipt. Lacking an attorney, she copped a plea and was given a suspended sentence of one year probation. In 1998 she went to the INS to apply for citizenship. Her application was denied and she was ordered deported.

John Gaul was adopted from Thailand at the age of five by a family in Florida. At 19 he was convicted of writing bad checks and stealing a car. He received a 20-month sentence and was deported to Thailand. Since he grew up in Florida, he does not speak Thai or have any family contacts in Thailand.

After some of the most controversial aspects in the 1996 law began to spark public debate and opposition, they were modified by Supreme Court rulings in 2001. One of these provisions, called "expedited removal," gave INS agents at a point of entry the powers to summarily deport individuals—without the right to a lawyer or the right to appeal before a court—if the cops merely "suspected" their documents were not valid.

Another clause, known as "mandatory detention," allowed for indefinite jailing of immigrants who were slated for deportation but whose home country would not take them back. It was modified to require they be released after six months unless the government presented additional reasons to keep them in jail.

The immigration legislation also mandated the tripling of the immigration police. Today there are 15,000 officers carrying guns and authorized to make arrests—making the INS the largest federal police force today.

The immigration police have also widened their net. With the passage of the USA Patriot Act, signed in October 2001 by President George Bush, the number of border cops along the Canadian border was tripled.

Building on previous legislation, the USA Patriot Act, in the name of pursuing "foreign terrorists," also grants INS agents

Continued on Page 12

## From Pathfinder

### FBI on Trial

### The Victory in the Socialist Workers Party Suit Against Government Spying

Edited by Margaret Jayko

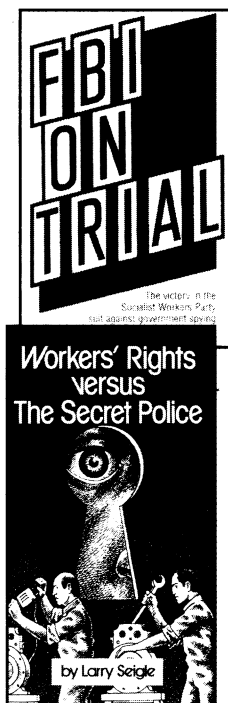
The victory in the case fought from 1973 to 1987 "increases the space for politics, expands the de facto use of the Bill of Rights, increases confidence of working people that you can be political and hold the deepest convictions against the government and it's your right to do so and act upon them"—from the introduction. \$18.95

### Worker' Rights Versus the Secret Police

Larry Seigle

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# 'Militant,' 'PM' reporter fights INS exclusion

Continued from front page

resident for the past 12 years. In addition to his position as an editor for *Perspectiva Mundial*, Calero works as a staff writer for the *Militant*, a New York-based newsweekly. As a reporter he has traveled widely, both in this country and in Latin America, covering labor and political events.

INS officials are seeking to exclude Calero on the basis of a 1988 conviction, when he was a high school student in Los Angeles, on a charge of selling marijuana to an undercover cop. Faced with the prospect of jail, Calero agreed to a plea bargain and received a suspended 60-day sentence with three years probation.

## Effort to win his release on bond

The immediate goal of the campaign is to win the journalist's release on bond. He has retained two attorneys, Martha Garza in Houston and Claudia Slovinsky in New York. Garza told Calero she expects a hearing within the next couple of weeks. At that time she will argue that he should be freed by the INS, or, if the case is continued, that he should be released on bond.

Calero has already begun to receive support from around the country. One of the first backers of his release was Bill Pearson, president of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 789 in South St. Paul, Minnesota. Before his current job as an editor of *Perspectiva Mundial*, Calero was a member of Local 789 and worked at the Dakota Premium Foods meatpacking plant, where he was part of a successful union-organizing drive. Pearson sent a letter of protest to the INS, pointing out that Calero's "co-workers saw him as a person to turn to for help. So did I. Making him leave this country would be a travesty of justice."

"It's great to get support from my former union president," Calero told his wife, Sarah Katz, when he heard the news.

Katz, 30, a sewing machine operator in Newark, New Jersey, reported in a phone interview from Houston that Calero was in good spirits and glad to know about the fight that has been launched to win his release from INS custody. He was also pleased to hear that the previous night, local supporters of his right to live and work in this country raised almost \$600 to help cover the growing costs of the defense effort.

Katz was finally able to visit Calero on December 8, five days after his arrest. Prisoners at the INS prison in Houston—a private jail run by the Corrections Corporation of America—are allowed visitors for one hour a week on Sundays, said Katz. The visitors and detainees are all in one room with no privacy and no right to touch their loved-ones other than a hello and one goodbye kiss and one hug.

"Róger said he sleeps in a large room

Martes 10 de diciembre, 2 002

**LOCAL**

**El INS detiene en Houston a un periodista residente de EE.UU.**

**El Día/Jesús López Tapia**

HOUSTON, TX. Róger Calero, nicaragüense y subdirector de la revista *Perspectiva Mundial*, editada en Nueva York, fue detenido en el Aeropuerto Intercontinental de Houston por las autoridades de migración cuando regresaba de Cuba y México, en donde fue a realizar tareas periodísticas.

Los hechos fueron denunciados ayer lunes, a *El Día* por la señora Sarah Katz, esposa de Calero.

"Cuando mi esposo llegó al aeropuerto el martes de la semana pasada, le dijeron que le negaban la entrada a Estados Unidos y lo trasladaron a una prisión del Servicio de Inmigración y enfrenta exclusión de este país", manifestó. "Róger, con quien estoy casada desde hace un año, ha vivido en Estados Unidos por los últimos 17 años y ha ostentado la residencia permanente desde 1990".

Luisa Aquino, vocera del Servicio de Inmigración y Naturalización, INS por sus siglas en inglés, manifestó al ser entrevistada al respecto, que no puede comentar el asunto de Calero porque se trata de un residente permanente de los Estados Unidos.

"Esta persona está queriendo presentar su caso a un juez de migración para poder luchar su estadia", expresó Aquino. "Yo sólo puedo decir que cualquier persona sea residente permanente o no que haya cometido un delito grave puede ser deportado a su país de origen".



**SARAH KATZ, CIUDADANA estadounidense, busca la libertad de su esposo Róger Calero.**

**Los cargos contra Calero**

La policía de inmigración intenta "excluir" a Calero negarle el reingreso a Estados Unidos y deportarlo a Nicaragua, su país de origen, basándose en una sentencia de 1988, cuando era estudiante de secundaria en Los Angeles, y fue acusado de vender marihuana a un policía encubierta. Frente a la posibilidad de ir a prisión, Calero aceptó declararse culpable y recibió una sentencia suspendida de 60 días con tres años de libertad condicional.

La señora Katz, ciudadana estadounidense, explicó que cuando su esposo solicitó la residencia permanente en 1989, específicamente incluyó información sobre su sentencia, la cual fue desechada por los funcionarios del servicio de inmigración a fin de otorgarle la "tarjeta verde" que le daba el derecho de vivir y trabajar en Estados Unidos. En el año 2000 el INS reemplazó su tarjeta verde, habiendo recibido toda la información pertinente a la condena de 12 años atrás.

Calero de 34 años y su esposa Sara viven ahora en Newark, Nueva Jersey y han contratado los servicios de un abogado para que defienda el caso.

**Injusta detención, dice defensora de inmigrantes**

Martha Olvera, representante de la Coalición por la Dignidad y la Amnistía manifestó que la detención de Róger Calero es injusta.

"Yo estoy de acuerdo en que se castiguen a las personas cuando tienen un delito, pero cuando este delito se cometió en la juventud y se pagó, creo que las gentes deben tener otra oportunidad y no juzgarlos toda la vida", señaló Olvera. "Además, el muchacho recibió su tarjeta de residencia y las autoridades de migración se la renovaron hace dos años y se la volvieron a dar, entonces ese es un error de migración por el que desde un principio no hubieran dejado que hubiera hecho una vida aquí y desconectarse completamente de su país para luego arrancarlo y quererlo mandar otra vez".

Subrayó que las organizaciones en favor de los derechos de inmigrantes en Houston le brindan apoyo moral a la esposa de Calero.

Piden al público enviar una carta de protesta a Hipólito Acosta, director del INS en Houston, al 126 Northpoint Drive, Houston, TX. 77060. Tel. (281) 774-4610, Fax: 281-774-5989 con copia a la revista de Calero, *Perspectiva Mundial*, 410 West Street, New York, New York 10014, y por fax (212) 924-6040.

El Fondo de Defensa de los Derechos Políticos en Nueva York pide a la comunidad su contribución financiera para ayudar a cubrir los gastos legales y demás costos que se van acumulando con rapidez. Los cheques se pueden remitir al Political Rights Defense Fund, P.O. Box 761, Church St. Station, New York, NY 10007. Estas contribuciones se pueden deducir de sus impuestos.

Article on arrest of Róger Calero in December 10 issue of Houston Spanish-language daily *El Día*

with about 35 others in bunk beds," Katz reported, "and the prisoners are called by their bunk number and the letter T or B to designate whether they have a top or bottom bunk." Calero is 804B.

Katz related that on the night of his detention, Calero first called her around 9:00 p.m. while being held at the airport, and that it wasn't until some three hours after his detention that immigration officials told him he was being detained in order to begin "removal proceedings" against him on the basis of a prior conviction on his record.

"I received my last call from him that night at 4:45 a.m., when he was being 'processed' at the INS jail," Katz stated.

"He told me the INS confiscated his reporters' tools, *Perspectiva Mundial* camera and laptop computer with photos and notes from his reporting trip."

Katz noted that earlier that day she had met in Houston with Martha Olvera, who has led an ongoing struggle for justice in the INS killing of her brother-in-law. Serafin Olvera, 48, was brutally beaten during an INS raid on a house in Bryan, Texas, in March of last year. He was denied medical treatment for several hours and died nearly a year later. Olvera was glad to meet others fighting against INS injustice and offered ideas on how to publicize Calero's case. Katz said she was going to be interviewed by the Houston Span-

ish-language daily, *El Día*, thanks to Olvera's assistance.

## Permanent resident since 1990

An increasing number of workers who are born abroad and live and work in the United States, like Calero, have been subjected to Washington's harassment and deportation of immigrants. The 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act allows cops from *la migra* to seek the exclusion of individuals at the border on the basis of previous convictions for petty offenses. The law can be applied retroactively to cases that took place before it was adopted—sometimes decades earlier (see article on immigration laws elsewhere in this issue). In addition, over the past year and a half, the harassment of immigrants has stepped up further, such as the denial of bail to immigrants branded "terrorism suspects."

Calero has been a permanent resident since 1990. When he filed his application in 1989, he specifically included the information about his conviction in high school on charges of selling marijuana to an undercover cops—which immigration officials waived in order to grant him a green card giving him the right to live and work in the United States.

At that time, several letters of support to his application for permanent residence were

sent to the INS: from the Calero family's landlord; the director of the Community Education Adolescent Alliance in Los Angeles County, where Calero had volunteered in the HIV/AIDS prevention education program; and his probation officer.

In 2000, INS officials renewed Calero's permanent residence card, again waiving the full written record of his conviction.

For the past 12 years Calero has exercised his rights as a permanent resident, including most recently as a journalist and associate editor of the Spanish-language magazine *Perspectiva Mundial* and staff writer for the *Militant*.

Prior to working at the Spanish-language monthly, Calero worked as a meat packer at Iowa Beef Products in Perry, Iowa, and then in Minnesota, where he participated

Continued on Page 12

## UFCW official: 'A travesty of justice'

The following message was sent by Bill Pearson, president of Local 789 of the United Food and Commercial Workers union in South St. Paul, Minnesota, to the Immigration and Naturalization Service in Houston, where Róger Calero is being detained in an immigration jail, facing exclusion from the United States.

Calero was a member of Local 789 before beginning his current job as associate editor of *Perspectiva Mundial* and a staff writer for the *Militant*.

My name is Bill Pearson and I am President of UFCW Local 789. We are located in South St. Paul, Minnesota, and have a

membership of 8,000. Our members work in grocery stores, nursing homes, and packing houses.

I am writing you for a very specific reason. It is my understanding that you have arrested Róger Calero. Apparently, there is discussion that he be deported. This would be a travesty of justice.

I came to know Róger when he was working in a packing plant in South St. Paul. It was the Dakota Premium plant, and Róger was an active and committed leader in helping stabilizing the workers and bring about a labor agreement. He was bright, articulate, and well read. His co-workers saw him as a person to turn to for help. So did I.

Making him leave the country would be an injustice. I implore you, do not deport him. Allow him to stay and Latino workers will be the better for it.

Please feel free to contact me at 651-451-6240 for a more personal endorsement of his qualities.

Sincerely,  
Bill Pearson  
President, UFCW Local 789



Rally of workers at Dakota Premium Foods July 20, 2000, one day before UFCW Local 789 representation vote. Calero worked in meatpacking plant and was part of organizing drive.

## How you can help

An immediate response is needed to win Róger Calero's release on bond from an immigration prison and a halt to the government's exclusion proceedings against him. Defenders of the *Perspectiva Mundial* associate editor and *Militant* journalist have launched a campaign to press the INS to restore his rights and his freedom.

These are some of the things you can do:

- Fax protest messages to Hipólito Acosta, District Director, Immigration and Naturalization Service, 126 Northpoint Drive, Houston, TX 77060. The fax number is: 281-774-5989. Originals of the letters should be mailed to that address. Copies should be sent to Calero's magazine, *Perspectiva Mundial*, 410 West Street, New York, NY 10014. The INS district office in Houston can also be called at 281-774-4610.

- Sign and get others to help circulate petitions demanding justice for Calero. A fact sheet and petition are available on the *Militant*'s web site, [www.themilitant.com](http://www.themilitant.com)

- Write to Róger Calero, 804B, File #A27 960 195, Houston Processing Center, 15850 Export Plaza Drive, Houston, TX 77030.

- Contributions are urgently needed to cover the substantial legal and other expenses. Checks should be written out to the Political Rights Defense Fund, P.O. Box 761, Church Street Station, New York, NY 10007. Contributions are tax-deductible.

# Frame-up unravels in N.Y. 'jogger' rape case

BY ANGEL LARISCY

NEW YORK—The five Harlem teenagers who were wrongly convicted of the assault and rape of a woman jogging in Central Park more than 13 years ago, have won a recommendation from Manhattan district attorney Robert Morgenthau to have all of the convictions dismissed.

Prior to his announcement the district attorney asserted that he would make no claims of misdeeds or coercion by cops or prosecutors in the case, but noted that the New York police department had failed to turn over information about a similar attack on a woman in Central Park two days before the jogger was raped.

Prosecutor Nancy Ryan, who led the investigation, had advocated dismissing all the convictions including those not related to the rape—riot and robbery—before Morgenthau made his recommendation on December 5. Judge Charles Tejada will rule on whether to vacate the guilty verdicts.

"Our children have paid a heavy price and so have our families," said Sharonne Salaam, mother of Yusef Salaam, one of the convicted youth, in response to Morgenthau's announcement.

On the evening of April 19, 1989, a 28-year-old woman was brutally raped and assaulted while jogging in the park. The case received nonstop, international publicity and within 48 hours police had rounded up more than a dozen Black and Latino youth as suspects. The cops claimed the teenagers were part of a "wilding spree" involving some 30 youth who raped the jogger and assaulted eight others in the park that night.

Antron McCray, Kevin Richardson, Yusef Salaam, Raymond Santana, and Kharey Wise—all but one under the age of 16—were arrested and charged after giving videotaped "confessions," which they asserted afterwards were coerced. The young men—who have since served their sentences—were convicted despite the lack of physical evidence or witnesses, with the confessions as the primary testimony against them.

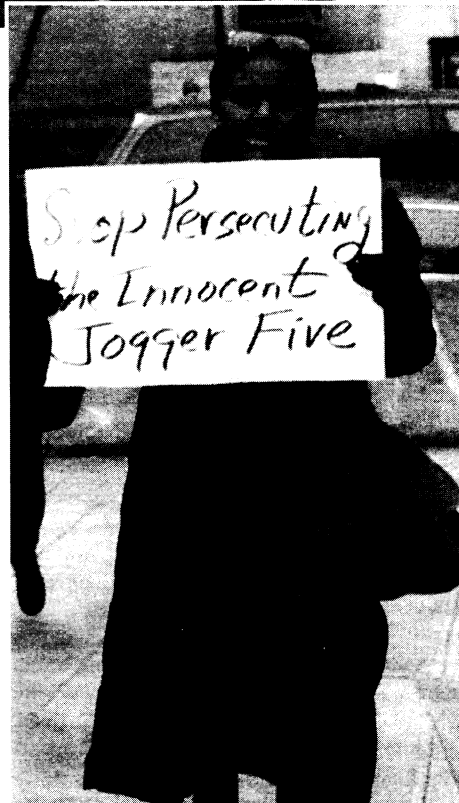
Last January new facts came to light when Matias Reyes, an inmate convicted of rape and murder serving a sentence in state prison, reported to authorities that he alone attacked and raped the jogger. DNA testing determined Reyes's semen did match the only two samples found at the scene. Reyes's confession forced Morgenthau to begin an investigation into the case.

Over the past few months family members, church organizations, and civil rights groups have held protests demanding the charges be vacated. In October Manhattan prosecutors requested more time for their investigation.

At a picket called to oppose the request, Grace Cuffee, mother of Kevin Richardson, told the press, "We had no time when our



Above, relatives of five youth railroaded to prison in 1989 trial for rape of Central Park jogger. From left: Valerie Richardson, sister of Kevin Richardson; Joanna Santana and Ramon Santana, sister and father of Raymond Santana; and Linda McCray, mother of Antron McCray. Left, protester pickets December 2 at office of Manhattan district attorney.



sons were convicted in 1989 and we're not giving them any more time now."

Debate has surrounded the investigation into the more than decade-old case. Police have lobbied against the exonerations, still claiming that the five youth were involved in the attack on the jogger despite the fact

that the DNA evidence links only Reyes with the woman. Linda Farstein, head of the New York sex crimes unit at the beginning of the case, told the *New York Post*, "She [the jogger] was running a 7 1/2 minute mile. I don't believe for a minute he [Reyes] could have caught her."

## Publicity with hysterical atmosphere

At the time of the crime and original hearings, the incident received widespread publicity with an hysterical atmosphere. Within a week of the arrests of the five teenagers, New York businessman Donald Trump took out a full page ad in each of New York's four daily papers to call for reinstatement of the death penalty. "They should be forced to suffer," read Trump's ad, "and, when they kill they should be executed .... I am looking to punish them."

The case against the youth, which was tried in the big-business press, rested solely on the videotaped confessions. At least one cop admitted lying to trick one of the young men into confessing. Others were denied the right to have their parents present during questioning.

"The record does show that much of what

the youths said about the rape was wrong, including when, where and how it took place. Indeed their description of the location, the victim's clothing and other details makes it seem, in retrospect, almost as if they were talking about another crime," the *New York Times* acknowledged in a December 1 article.

In the fall of 1989, defense lawyers fought to get the confessions thrown out based on the fact that police tactics used were coercive, threatening and deceitful. Manhattan Supreme Court Justice Thomas Galligan, who presided over the case, rejected all the arguments and declared that the cops and prosecutors had taken extraordinary steps to ensure the accused's rights. His ruling was crucial given the lack of any physical evidence. At the time of the trial, the lead prosecutor argued that hairs from the jogger were found on two of the boys. Earlier this year DNA testing proved that the hairs were not the victim's.

FBI testimony at the trial said that DNA testing was "inconclusive" but didn't mention that the semen found on the woman and her clothes came from only one person and did not match any of the five young men on trial.

Most of the publicity surrounding the case focused on the rape charge, but the youth were also accused of assaulting others in the park that night. None of the five teenagers were identified by any of the eight who were mugged or attacked.

Defense lawyers have noted that the other convictions came as part of a trial where the youth were portrayed as animals in the big-business press and that they should be exonerated of these charges as well since there is no evidence that they committed any of the crimes of which they were accused.

Myron Beldock, a lawyer for Salaam, noted, "Jurors would have been overwhelmed. It would have tainted their perceptions for the rest of the case."

"Our clients are innocent," said Michael Warren, a lawyer for Richardson, McCray and Santana. "There has not been anything demonstrated to the contrary."

## More workers in U.S. have no health coverage

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

A report released in September by the U.S. Census Bureau reveals that 1.4 million citizens lost their health insurance last year. As a result of the economic downturn and higher levels of unemployment, more middle-class and working people are going without medical coverage.

A number of companies are dropping

health insurance programs or demanding that employees shoulder a bigger share of rising insurance premiums. Many businesses across the country offer no health-care coverage at all. In California, the National Federation of Independent Businesses reports that 42 percent of its 37,000 members provide none.

The census figure does not include thousands of immigrants working in low-wage jobs that do not provide benefits. They are barred from medical aid as a result of changes to welfare rules in 1996 under the administration of William Clinton. Those changes restricted immigrants' access to programs such as Medicaid and the Children's Health Insurance Program.

According to the government agency, 41.2 million people—14.6 percent of the population—lack health insurance, an increase over the previous year, when 14.2 percent went without coverage. The largest group of people who lost their medical benefits—some 800,000 people—had incomes of more than \$75,000 a year. They had either lost their jobs or were unable to afford the rising cost of insurance premiums.

The steady rise in the number of those without health insurance dates back more than a decade to the 1990–92 recession, when it increased to 35.4 million from 32.9 million. Despite the ballyhooed "boom" years of the mid- to late 1990s, the number of those without medical coverage continued to rise, reaching 40.7 million in 1998.

The growing number of bankruptcies rolling across the country, and the drain in value of many pension plans over the past two years due to falling stock prices, have demolished or endangered the company-paid health insurance or retirement benefits that many workers have been relying on.

The federal Cobra program, established as part of the Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1986, was set up to allow workers who recently lost their jobs to maintain their health coverage for up to

18 months if they assumed the full cost of the coverage that had been provided by their former employer. Only 25 percent of workers say they could afford to keep their health insurance under that program, according to a survey by the research group Commonwealth Fund.

In face of the economic slowdown, state government officials are pleading "fiscal crisis" as they sharpen their budget knives to slice more from government-provided Medicaid and Medicare. Such health programs account for 30 percent of state budgets.

"You will see huge cuts in Medicaid" next year beyond the cutbacks already enacted, said Raymond Scheppach, director of the National Governors Association. "This is the worst fiscal crisis states have had since the second World War," he added, after releasing the association's "Fiscal Survey of States." In addition to cutting Medicaid eligibility and benefits, he said, state administrations would increase tuition at colleges and universities, raise taxes, and lay off state workers.

Meanwhile, President Bush is spearheading a bipartisan assault on social entitlements—a hallmark of the Clinton administration—with proposals for more reductions in Medicare payments for a wide range of prescription drugs and medical devices used to treat patients who are elderly or disabled. Those cuts include Medicare coverage for cardiac defibrillators, blood products for transfusions, and cancer drugs. One third of elderly people in the United States have no prescription drug insurance.

Those who need health care the most face the steepest medical cost increases. Out-of-pocket expenses for Medicare enrollees who are in poor health are estimated to rise by 34 percent to \$4,783 this year, up from \$3,578 in 2001. Working people confronted with major illnesses who seek Medicare benefits will have a more difficult time obtaining life-saving drugs, devices, and medical treatment.

## FROM PATHFINDER

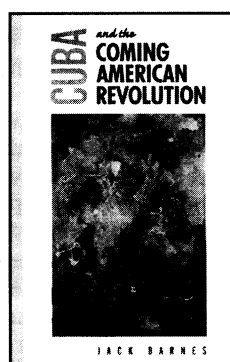
### CUBA and the Coming American Revolution

by Jack Barnes

**There will be a victorious revolution in the United States before a victorious counterrevolution in Cuba — Fidel Castro, March 1961**

*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. \$14.95

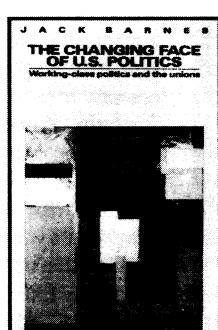


### The Changing Face of U.S. Politics

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Jack Barnes

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# S. Africa mine bosses resist end to color bar on ownership

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

The racial discrimination practiced by South Africa's mining bosses has been spotlighted in a long-running debate on recently passed legislation that transfers rights to mineral deposits from private companies to the government. Over the past two years the big mining capitalists have waged a rearguard campaign to tone down the bill's provisions, and to defang an associated charter for "black empowerment" in the industry.

Almost a decade after the first election of a South African government on the basis of "one person, one vote" and the official end of apartheid, the legacy of that brutal system "still defines the mining sector in this country," stated the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in a June 9 statement supporting the bill. "Highly concentrated ownership patterns have brought huge wealth to a small number of companies, with profits accumulated on the back of the exploitation of mine workers over more than a century."

"Even today," said the union federation, "mineworkers live in abysmal conditions and are subjected to unhealthy and unsafe working conditions underground."

South Africa boasts the world's biggest deposits of gold, platinum, and chromium. The first two account for around 20 percent of the country's exports. The country's terrain also contains substantial deposits of diamonds, manganese, copper, and other minerals. The mining industry employs roughly 500,000 people in a total population of 44 million, 75 percent of which is

African.

The London-based Anglo-American group and other capitalist interests in South Africa have for decades benefited from their stranglehold over these deposits. Even with the abolition of apartheid-era laws that barred blacks from owning or managing mines—operated with cheap black labor—this monopoly has made it almost impossible for would-be black businessmen to get into the industry.

With gold and other precious metals playing an increasing role as refuges for investors in a period of financial instability and economic decline, the stakes go beyond South Africa into the major imperialist powers.

Dubbed the Mineral and Petroleum Resources Development Bill, the legislation was signed into law by President Thabo Mbeki on October 4. It transfers ownership of mineral deposits to the government, enabling it to lease mining rights to a greater variety of companies, including those that incorporate black investors. Successful bidders will pay royalties in return for 30-year mining leases. To qualify they have to provide evidence that they are working with "black partners."

Mbeki assured the companies that they would receive "fair market value" for any assets appropriated by the government.

## Bill meets opposition from capitalists

The first draft of the legislation—whose provisions bring South African legislation "in line with standards in the rest of the world," said COSATU—met widespread opposition from the mining capitalists when it was first introduced. They argued that it "violated property rights" and would "undermine the confidence of international investors."

The bosses reserved special criticism for early versions of an associated document dealing more directly with the industry's color bar, the Broad-Based Socio-Economic Empowerment Charter for the South Afri-



Militant/Margrethe Siem

**Gold miners in mine near Johannesburg, South Africa, in 1990. Mining bosses reaped huge profits under apartheid-era superexploitation of black labor. Proposals to tackle racist discrimination still rife in the industry have sparked opposition among capitalists.**

can Mining Industry.

When government MPs first floated the charter they suggested that new mining operations should be 51 percent black-owned within 10 years and that black-run groups should own up to 30 percent of the mining industry.

After furious objections from mine owners and major companies, government ministers described such figures as a "negotiating position," and affirmed that they would not nationalize the industry.

The charter's final version, which was hammered out in government-employer negotiations, declares its aim to be "the pursuit of a shared vision of a globally competitive mining industry."

Without prescribing quotas to fulfill or penalties for noncompliance, it says that companies that undertake to meet its provisions shall "aspire to 40 percent" participation of "historically disadvantaged South Africans" in management of the industry within five years.

The empowerment charter hints at the living conditions endured by many black miners, urging companies to "undertake to es-

tablish measures for improving housing, including the upgrading of hostels [and] conversion of hostels to family units."

It was in the mines that hostels for male migrant workers were first introduced by the apartheid regime, along with the introduction of "passes" that placed black workers at the mercy of police and other authorities.

The mining companies have for the most part resigned themselves to the passage of the bill and the charter, concentrating their efforts on press amendments on the government. Barry Davison, the chief executive of Anglo American Platinum Corp. and president of the country's Chamber of Mines, called the law a "very satisfactory compromise."

## Regime of the past

A commentary in the liberal Johannesburg-based *Mail and Guardian* stated, "All the acrimony around the Minerals and Petroleum Resources Development Bill should not obscure one central fact—there was no way a majority-rule South Africa

**Continued on Page 15**

## AIDS hits miners

Along with unsafe working conditions and low wages, black mine workers have to contend with a blight of more recent vintage: the HIV/AIDS pandemic. The country's largest gold producer, Anglo-Gold—number two in the world—has announced that between 25 percent and 30 percent of its 40,000 employees are HIV-positive.

In response, Anglo-American started providing antiretroviral drugs to sick workers in mid-November. Chief Executive Robert Godsell explained the calculations behind its decision to pay \$100 million a year toward employees' health costs. With the drugs, the cost of the disease amounts to \$4 to \$6 an ounce of gold. "Unmanaged, these costs would escalate to \$9 an ounce," reported the *Business Report*. The metal is currently trading at more than \$300 an ounce.

—P.O.

# Rightists carry out bombings in South Africa

BY T.J. FIGUEROA

JOHANNESBURG, South Africa—A rightist outfit calling itself the Boeremag (Boer Force) has claimed responsibility for a recent series of bombings in South Africa.

On October 30 nine bombs exploded in Soweto, a Johannesburg township of more than 1 million people, the great majority of whom are black. The blasts hit a mosque and several sections of railroad track. Shrapnel from one bomb killed Claudina Mokane, who was sleeping in her nearby shack.

A day later, a bomb exploded at a Buddhist temple in the rural town of

Bronkhorstspuit.

At the end of November, bombs put the main bridge linking the provinces of Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal out of commission. The Boeremag subsequently sent an e-mail to local newspapers saying it would begin to target people over the Christmas holidays.

Police raided more than 90 farms on November 29, arresting 12 people for illegal possession of weapons or explosives and seizing a range of military equipment. All those arrested were released on bail. Separately over the past several months, the police have arrested 18 men who are charged with a right-wing plot to topple the government. None of them have been charged for the recent blasts. A document discovered on the computer of one of those arrested outlined a scenario of escalating military actions culminating in forcing "Blacks and Indians" out of the country.

An editorial in the October 31 *Sowetan* newspaper remarked that some right-wingers "still believe, rather foolishly, that a white-led government is a distinct possibility. Only in their twisted minds." Responding to the bombing of the bridge, S'bu Ndebele, an official of the African National Congress in KwaZulu-Natal, said, "The bridge was destroyed by forces who are thoroughly frustrated by the successes we have achieved in nation building, reconciliation, and democratic transformation."

## Grieving for endangered privileges

Right-wing currents have used the publicity around the bombings to press their claim that Afrikaner identity is endangered by the policies of the post-apartheid government led by the ANC, including steps to put Afrikaans—the language of the apartheid state—onto an equal footing with African languages as well as English.

The Group of 63, a group of academics and authors campaigning for Afrikaner "cul-

tural rights," suggested the bombings were the result of "Afrikaner alienation."

In an op-ed article in *Business Day*, published in Johannesburg, Dan Roodt, described as "a former head of derivatives at Citibank" and member of various Afrikaner groups, was more specific in his complaints. "What nation-building really means in SA, is the complete destruction of Afrikaans culture and the Afrikaner identity," he wrote.

During the early 1990s, with millions of workers and peasants mobilizing in the revolutionary democratic struggle to bring down the white-minority regime, sections of the apartheid apparatus divided politically. Among them were several prominent rightist figures who could not agree on what steps to take to hold back this movement.

For example, Gen. Constand Viljoen, the former head of the army, and prominent exponent of a "volkstaat"—an apartheid mini-state for Afrikaners—contested the 1994 elections as the standard bearer of the Freedom Front. Others, by contrast, advocated taking up arms against the new government. One of those—the paramilitary Afrikaner Resistance Movement—is today almost nowhere to be seen.

While South Africa remains riven by inequalities, integration of aspects of social and economic life is slowly becoming a reality, particularly in workplaces and schools in urban areas. That reality exists alongside another one: the frequent racist brutality meted out by, in particular, some white farmers and the cops.

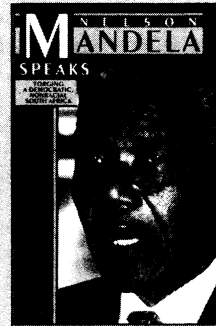
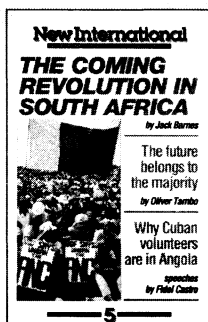
Sections of the police collaborate with the ultraright. This is also true of the army officer corps. Among those arrested for allegedly plotting against the government are several army officers, along with at least one former cop and several farmers. The makeup of the military ranks, meanwhile, is undergoing a relatively rapid transformation: the army now consists of 45,300 blacks and 15,000 whites.

from Pathfinder

## The Coming Revolution in South Africa

Jack Barnes

The one-person, one-vote elections in 1994, and the sweeping victory of the African National Congress, were historic steps in the democratic transformation in South Africa. This article explores the social character and roots of apartheid in South African capitalism and the tasks of the toilers in city and countryside in dismantling the legacy of inequality. In *New International* no. 5. \$9



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# Many immigrants face denial of rights like detained reporter

Continued from Page 8

more powers to wiretap, conduct searches, employ new "monitoring" technology, and detain noncitizens deemed "terrorism suspects" for up to six months without charges.

The Border Patrol has also expanded its random checkpoints, which are already routinely conducted near the U.S.-Mexico border, to northern areas such as state highways in Michigan, where INS cops randomly stop and search cars under the guise of looking for undocumented workers.

The INS has also stepped up its raids at airports, rounding up airport workers accused of posing "security" problems such as a police record.

In addition, the Social Security Administration has so far this year sent 7 million "no match" letters to 800,000 businesses, informing employers that certain employees have Social Security numbers that don't match official records. An estimated 100,000 workers may have lost their jobs as a result of these intimidation tactics.

The increased number of border cops,

security fences, and checkpoints have taken a bloody toll, with record numbers of immigrants dying while trying to enter the country in the past several years. An August report put the death toll at 231 along the U.S. side of the Mexican border for the first eight months of this year alone. At least 2,000 people have died trying to enter the U.S. since 1994.

## Increase in immigrants behind bars

With the step-up in INS arrests, the immigrant prison population has rapidly increased, and the construction of immigration prisons has boomed.

According to a Human Rights Watch 2001 report, the number of immigrants held in detention by the INS rose from an average of 6,700 per day in 1995 to a record 20,000 per day in September 2000.

Today the INS operates nine detention centers around the country. It also rents another seven privately run prisons. And because of the overflowing numbers, it is using county jails to hold thousands more who



Militant/Phil Duzinski

**October 20 march of 500 in Houston protesting police "security" sweep at airport against undocumented workers. Cops arrested and indicted more than 140 workers.**

await possible deportation.

The "Houston Processing Center," where Róger Calero is currently being held, is one of these privately operated jails. It is managed by the Corrections Corporation of

America, an expanding company that brags of being "the sixth-largest corrections system in the country, just behind Texas, California, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, New York, and Florida."

## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

### NEW JERSEY

#### Newark

**United Airlines Bosses Intensify Takeback Demands on Workers.** Fri., Dec. 13, 7:30 p.m. 168 Bloomfield Ave., 2nd floor. Donation: \$5. Tel: (973) 481-0077.

### NEW YORK

#### Garment District

**Release Róger Calero! Protest Attacks on Immigrant Rights.** Speaker: Martín Koppel, editor, the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*. Fri., Dec. 13. Program, 7:30 p.m.; dinner, 6:30 p.m. 545 8th Ave., 14th floor. Donation: \$5 program, \$5 dinner. Tel: (212) 695-7358.

#### Upper Manhattan

**Release Róger Calero! Protest Attacks on Immigrant Rights.** Speaker: John Studer, Political Rights Defense Fund. Fri., Dec. 13. Program, 7:30 p.m.; dinner, 6:30 p.m. 599 W 187 St., 2nd floor. Donation: program \$5, dinner \$5. Tel: (212) 740-4611.

### OHIO

#### Cleveland

**The Crisis of Capitalism in South America: The Challenge of Building Working-Class Leadership.** Fri., Dec. 20, 7:30 p.m. 11018 Lorain Ave. Tel: (216) 688-1190.

### PENNSYLVANIA

#### Hazleton

**Malcolm X Talks to Young People: "You Are Living at a Time of Revolution."** Speaker: Ma'mud Shirvani. Sat., Dec. 21, 7:30 p.m. 69N Wyoming St. Donation: \$5. Tel: (570) 454-8320.

## —LETTERS—

### New York 'budget crisis'

The recent articles about the fraudulent "budget crisis" in New York City and by extension municipalities and states across the country have been excellent, as have the articles regarding the underfunding of pension schemes in corporations and states.

As far as I know no one else is covering this "slow-moving hurricane" like the reporters at the *Militant*. Please, keep up the excellent work. Indeed, I think these critical questions for the survival of working people may even warrant a pamphlet or small book. Keep up the demystifying.

Neil Callender

Cambridge, Massachusetts

### Nationalize airline industry

I was puzzled by one omission

in your December 16 editorial on the assault by the bosses and their government on the United Airlines workers. You counterpose to the bosses' "solutions" a series of demands that address the needs of the United workers and the working class as a whole. But you do not mention taking United, and the entire industry, out of the hands of the capitalist owners.

With the entire airline industry in crisis, virtually every major airline bankrupt or on the verge of bankruptcy, and the bosses and their government savagely assaulting the wages and working conditions of the workers in this industry, wouldn't this be an appropriate and ideal time to propagandize for the solution of "nationalization under workers' control"? Is there some reason not to put forward this de-

mand at this time?

Don Gurewitz

Cambridge, Massachusetts

### Cuba's AIDS programs

Two prominent ruling-class figures, Bill Gates of Microsoft and former president William Clinton, have recently written editorials in the *New York Times* on AIDS treatment programs in "developing" countries. Gates's foundation is focused on doing work in India, while Clinton says "my foundation has begun signing agreements with developing nations, including Rwanda, Mozambique and the 15 states in the Caribbean Community."

Not surprisingly, neither Clinton or Gates makes any mention of the most successful program to combat AIDS in the world, that of the

health system of revolutionary Cuba. Ana Morales Varela, a Cuban doctor who has taken part in internationalist medical missions in African countries like Guinea and Guinea-Bissau, astonished audiences in the United States during a recent speaking tour here with Victor Dreke, a long-time cadre of the Cuban Revolution, with the facts about Cuba's approach to AIDS and other medical questions. She noted that Fidel Castro's speech, "History Will Absolve Me" in 1953, listed all the major questions of development that had to be addressed in Cuba and that, since the revolution's triumph in 1959, Cuba's leadership has led the Cuban people to tackling the majority of these questions—and yet they are not satisfied and continue to press ahead.

The fact that the rate of infection of HIV today stands at 0.01 percent in Cuba is another fact that will never be mentioned in the pages of the *New York Times*.

Seth Dellinger

New York, New York

### Share paper with others

I'd like to take the time to say I really enjoy your paper. I try to share it with others in here so they can get a different view.

A prisoner

Rosharon, Texas

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

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

## Venezuela: mass protest opposes bosses' strike

Continued from Page 3

ceeded in closing 40 percent of such establishments in these areas. Even the Associated Press reported December 2 that "while many shops were shuttered, Caracas' streets bustled with pedestrians, cars crawled through traffic, and cafeterias, shoe stores and video shops were open for business." In most rural areas of the country, however, the strike was a non-event."

In short, their strike was a failure, that's why they stepped up their disruptions in the oil industry," Nellie Yaerte said.

Faced with this situation, and divisions within the opposition, Washington has not taken as openly aggressive a stance against the Chávez government as it did in April when a similar strike preceded the U.S.-backed coup. "We call on all sides to reject violence, act responsibly, continue to support the dialogue process, and respect constitutional processes," said U.S. State Department spokesman Richard Boucher December 6.

### Aspirations of working people

The economic downturn in Venezuela, which the opposition has tried to blame on the government, has continued to take its toll on working people. The country's gross national product contracted by 6.4 percent the first nine months of this year, unemployment stands at 17 percent, and inflation at 30 percent. Despite this, opposition among working people to efforts to oust the president has stiffened. "They can carry a coup against Chávez. But then we come: those of us who are with Chávez," Alexander Carrizo, a shoe repairman, told the Associated Press November 30. "There is going to be a civil war here if they topple Chávez." Nellie Yaerte pointed out that "with all the

problems, going back to what we had before 1998 will take away any hope for a better future, any hope to get rid of the slavery to the rich."

In a December 1 telephone interview, Armando Serpa, a farmer in San Carlos, pointed to some of the problems Yaerte referred to. "The Supreme Court declared four articles of the Law of Land unconstitutional about two weeks ago," he said. "One of them is Article 90, which allows expropriation of large idle estates and distribution of those lands to farmers like us. The government is appealing it. But this shows that the courts and many institutions are filled with the 'squalid ones,'" the term often used in Ven-

ezuela to describe the pro-imperialist opposition. "We need a radical change."

Tomás Blanca, a fisherman in Cumaná, the capital of Sucre state, made a similar point in a December 3 telephone interview. "The credits to small fishermen laid out in the Law on Fishing and promised by the government have not materialized a year later," he said. "The big companies still hold economic power and have their people everywhere in the government. We support Chávez because he took our side, but we need action."

Blanca's organization, the National Bolivarian Command of Artisan Fishermen, is planning a nationwide meeting in Caracas in January to press their demands, he said.

## INS detains 'Militant' reporter

Continued from Page 9

in the successful union-organizing drive at the Dakota Premium Foods plant in South St. Paul. During this time he also served as a field correspondent for *Perspectiva Mundial* and the *Militant*.

While fighting the INS attack on his right to live and work in the United States, Calero has continued his work as a journalist from behind prison walls in Texas.

### Public campaign launched

*Perspectiva Mundial* and *Militant* editor Martín Koppel explained that Calero's colleagues on the New York-based periodicals have initiated the campaign to win his release. Calero is not only the associate editor of the Spanish-language monthly but carries out many responsibilities on the *Militant*, from writing regular articles to busi-

ness work related to the paper's circulation and distribution.

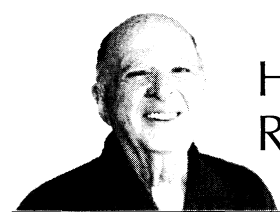
"We produced a fact sheet and petition to distribute broadly to all those who will be outraged by the INS effort to exclude Calero and who will identify with his right to work as a journalist," said Koppel. "Supporters in cities across the country have already begun raising thousands of dollars towards what will be needed to cover legal and other expenses."

The Political Rights Defense Fund, a foundation that has backed important political rights campaigns for decades, has agreed to help raise the funds for this campaign.

"We urge as many people as possible to send a letter to the INS district office in Houston urging them to release Calero and stop their efforts to exclude him," Koppel said.



**'Labor' gov't?**—The *Times* of London found that a third of nurses in the national health plan held second jobs. A further study found that most of them said they did so to supplement their income.



Harry Ring

**Time to rejoice**—"Laid-off workers swell pool of laid off applicants—Retailers say they can be

more picky about whom they hire as former white collar employees vie for seasonal jobs."—Business section, *Los Angeles Times*.

**Purrs like a kitten**—"You can find some very good people in these times."—Wal-Mart chain spokesperson.

**Great for barbeques**—Workers thinning down trees in an area near Los Alamos laboratory in New Mexico were told to avoid certain areas near the site where the first atomic bomb was built. A spokesperson said it was a "precaution" for workers to avoid such areas and also assured there was no risk to recreational users.

**More than a few getting shafted**—A study found that New England customers are paying too much for milk. Unspecified "retailers," the report says, are making a fortune but little gets to dairy farmers. The news service, at least, neglects to mention which "retailers"—the giant chains or the mom 'n pop groceries.

**Why not open the gates?**—Conditions at the Alabama prison for women are so outrageous that a judge—fearful of "a ticking time bomb"—ordered a four-week deadline in preparing an improvement plan. Built in the 1940s, the penitentiary was designed to hold a maximum of 384 inmates. Today

the number is a few short of triple. They're jammed into big, open dorms, with nothing to do.

**Bon Voyage, doc**—Passengers on a third Florida Carnival cruise liner have been slammed by a virulent intestinal infection. William Toth, a state medical official, said such outbreaks are not new and might even be in decline. Asked if he would take a trip himself, he replied, "Sure."

**The sane society**—"The Supreme Court took up a potential landmark case for the gay rights movement, agreeing to decide whether the Constitution permits states to enforce anti-sodomy laws exclusively against same-sex

couples."—News item.

**There is some good news**—What with our emphasis on widespread lack of food, we should give this matter some balance. A generous crop of truffles will hold the current price under last year's price of \$3,300 a pound. And even that's not a fair picture. We've never seen, no less eaten, a truffle. But we're assured you don't have to buy a pound. They're available by the ounce and perhaps even by the gram.

**Beat xmas rush**—Please don't wait until the last minute to send gift-related clippings. Send to Great Society, Pathfinder, 4229 S. Central Ave., Los Angeles, CA 90011.

## Algerians force Ottawa to hold off deportations

BY SÉBASTIEN DESAUTELS AND MICHEL PRAIRIE

MONTREAL—After a campaign of weekly vigils and other protests, hundreds of refugees from Algeria won a victory October 30, when the Canadian government announced that it would lift the immediate threat of deportation that it has held over them since April.

Among the participating organizations at the rally was the Non-Status Refugees Action Committee (CASS), which has played a prominent role in the ongoing protests. While welcoming the decision, which is part of an agreement between the government in Ottawa and the Quebec provincial government in Quebec City, CASS spokespersons have also pointed out its limitations. The fight would not end with this partial success, marchers on November 9 told the *Militant*. "We will continue our struggle to get justice for all the Algerians who don't have legal status," said Mohamed Cherfi.

The refugees and their supporters launched the campaign following the decision seven months earlier by Denis Coderre, Canada's Minister of Immigration and Citizenship, to end an April 1997 moratorium on the deportation of those Algerians not recognized by the government as refugees. The moratorium, which was similar to ones applying to immigrants from Afghanistan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Rwanda, had protected the Algerian citizens from summary eviction from the country.

The immigrants originally sought asylum in Canada from the civil war that has ravaged their country since the beginning of the 1990s. The Canadian government refused the majority of their applications for refugee status. At the same time it established the moratorium on the deportations of those who had exhausted all appeals procedures.

Ottawa justified its lifting of this protection by saying that the situation in Algeria had improved. The decision followed by a few days a trip to Algeria by Prime Minister Jean Chrétien to negotiate commercial agreements between the two countries.

Since that time the refugees have organized, rain or shine, weekly vigils in front of the Canadian Immigration office in Montreal, held several press conferences and demonstrations, and taken the opportunity to speak wherever they were invited.

### Campaign wins backing

Speakers at the November 9 rally included representatives from the Montreal Central Council of the Confederation of National Trade Unions, the Teachers' National Federation of the CSN, the Quebec Women's Federation, among other organizations. Supporters of the refugees have also



Militant/Grant Hargrave

**Montreal protest November 9 to demand justice for Algerian refugees**

collected thousands of signatures on a petition opposing the deportations and the lifting of the moratorium, and demanding that official refugee status be granted.

On October 20, two of the Algerian refugees, Yahout Seddiki and Mourad Bourouisa, responded to an order to present themselves at the airport for deportation by seeking refuge in a church in the majority Black neighborhood of Little Burgundy. On top of their deportation order, ministry officials had declared that they would hold the couple's Canadian-born son in the country if they were unable to obtain the necessary documents from the Algerian government authorizing him to travel with his parents.

Seddiki and Bourouisa's action, which was covered by the media across Canada, helped to lay bare the human consequences of the Canadian government's immigration policies.

Amid the public debate sparked by their protest, the Quebec government proposed to the federal government the procedure to "resolve" the situation of the Algerian refugees—a proposal that Coderre accepted.

According to immigrant rights attorney Noël St-Pierre, the suspension of ongoing deportation procedures is the first of three aspects to the agreement. In the second, Ottawa will forward to the Quebec authorities all immigration applications made on so-called "humanitarian" grounds by Algerian refugees whose demand for asylum had been rejected by the federal government. Thirdly, the Quebec government has stated that it will give these applications "positive and accelerated" consideration.

Aside from the fact that the agreement applies only to refugees inside Quebec, CASS spokespeople have also demanded that it cover 32 refugees whom the Canadian government admits to having forced to leave the country between April 5 and October 30.

They also explain that the evaluation by Quebec of the immigration applications will be done case by case. If Quebec applies its usual immigration criteria the result, they say, will be the rejection of many. One month after the announcement of the agreement, the Quebec government has not yet announced its selection criteria. Finally, say the refugees, the agreement does not affect Algerians who arrive in Canada after April 5.

The initiative by the Quebec government was based on its power to select immigrants

who wish to settle in the province. This was won as a result of the struggles by the French-speaking Quebecois against their national oppression during the 1960s and '70s. At that time Quebec fighters demanded greater provincial control of immigration in

order to counter Ottawa's control of the borders to discriminate against French-speaking immigrants.

The Quebec government has once before used its power to select immigrants in the framework of a struggle by refugees. In 1998 it intervened in the same way in the case of dozens of Chilean refugees threatened with deportation by Ottawa. Some of them went on a hunger strike for 38 days and occupied a Montreal church for several weeks to call attention to their situation.

Meanwhile, the Canadian Minister of Justice has made it known that he may soon decide on the deportation of two Basque activists held in prison in Montreal since June 6, 2001. The Spanish government has demanded their extradition.

Gorka Perea Salazar, 28, and Eduardo Plagado Perez, 30, were condemned in Spain to six and seven years in prison for arson. Since their arrival in Quebec in 1997 they have maintained that their confessions were made under torture. The Basque Prisoners Support Committee has campaigned since their arrest for their release and for the granting of political refugee status.

*Sébastien Desautels is a sewing machine operator in Montreal and a member of the Young Socialists.*

## —25 AND 50 YEARS AGO—

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

### December 23, 1977

ATLANTA—By noon 8,000 to 10,000 tractors driven by Georgia farmers had jammed the state capital. The Atlanta stadium parking lot was full, and the tractors were backed up, five abreast, for miles.

The farmers' protest was typical of the many demonstrations organized by the American Agricultural Movement in scores of cities across the country during the week.

At the rally on the Georgia capitol steps 3,000 farmers and their families huddled in the twenty-two degree weather. They wore blue and red caps carrying the slogan "We support agriculture strike." They cheered speakers demanding the U.S. Department of Agriculture set 100 percent parity for farm prices.

Signs mounted on the tractors reflected the farmers' sentiments: "To hell with the Farm Bureau"; "100 percent parity or farmers must strike"; "If elections were held today would Jimmy win? Hell no!" A sign on another tractor read, "The banks own them, we drive them."

One rally speaker said he was sorry farmers had to resort to public protests. "But we have to," he added. "I've sat back and watched the giant corporations push the independent farmer back. They are taking over the land. Consumers haven't begun to see what high prices are, if this continues."

"All we are doing is expressing our opinion," said another farmer, Lindsey Thomas. "In the past decade we've seen all kinds of groups stand up and demand their rights; it's time the farmer did, too. Our little 4 percent [of the population] can bring the big agriculture business to a halt."

Placards announced support from Teamsters Local 528 whose members transport farm produce.

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

### December 22, 1952

In the most powerful blow for civil liberties struck for a long time in America, a committee of more than 190 prominent labor, civic, educational, and religious leaders in Michigan today issued a scathing denunciation of the Trucks "Police-State" Law as "one of the most undemocratic legislative acts in the history of our state."

The eight temporary officers who head the newly-formed Committee are the Rev. I. Paul Taylor, St. Matthews Methodist Church, chairman; Kenneth E. Boulding, Professor of Economics, University of Michigan; Charles E. Lockwood, attorney for the Consumers Union; and Rev. Robert Bradby, Greater King Solomon Baptist Church, all vice-chairmen; Ernest Mazey, Executive Board Member, Briggs Local 212 of the United Auto Workers, secretary-treasurer; and Al Barbour, Secretary-Treasurer, Wayne County (Detroit) CIO Council; Edgar Currie, Michigan legislator; and Helen Moore Polaner, vice-president of the Michigan State Federation of Labor, all trustees.

In their statement, the spokesmen for the Committee explained that the Trucks Act sets up a vague definition of a "communist front organization" and requires members of organizations so designated by the state attorney general to register with the state police and be fingerprinted, subject to harsh prison sentences for violations. Certain sections of the law are aimed especially at union labor.

"The first organization against which the Trucks Acts has been applied is the Socialist Workers Party," states the committee. "Without any kind of hearing, the attorney general arbitrarily declared the Socialist Workers Party 'subversive under the meaning of the Act' and removed it from the Michigan ballot."

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# Black soldiers played key role in U.S. Civil War

Printed below are excerpts from *Blacks in America's Wars* by Robert Mullen, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for December. The excerpts highlight the revolutionary role played by Black troops in the Union Army in the Civil War. Copyright © 1973 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission. Subheadings are by the *Militant*.

BY ROBERT MULLEN

The Emancipation Proclamation of January 1, 1863, which freed all slaves in the rebel states and stipulated that freed slaves should be received into the armed forces of the

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

United States, indicated that Lincoln had accepted the proposition that the North could only win the war by destroying the slave base of the Confederate States. The Emancipation Proclamation was issued for another reason as well. The British ruling class had been virtually unanimous in its support for the Confederacy, seeing the war as a war between the Southern agricultural free-traders and the Northern industrial high-tariff forces. Free-trade Britain, wanting access for its industrial goods in the American market, naturally sided with the South against its Northern rival in this conflict and, in 1862, seemed about to recognize the Confederacy.

The Emancipation Proclamation, however, changed the situation considerably. With its promulgation, massive pro-Northern demonstrations and meetings took place among English workers, making it politically inexpedient for the British government

to recognize the South.

Once the decision was made to permit the enlistment of Blacks in the army, Black abolitionists like Frederick Douglass and Martin Delany began to act as recruiting agents for the Union army in the North, holding rallies to enlist Afro-Americans. Douglass urged his fellow Blacks to "fly to arms, and smite with death the power that would bury the government and your liberty in the same hopeless grave." It was better to die free than to live as slaves, he said....

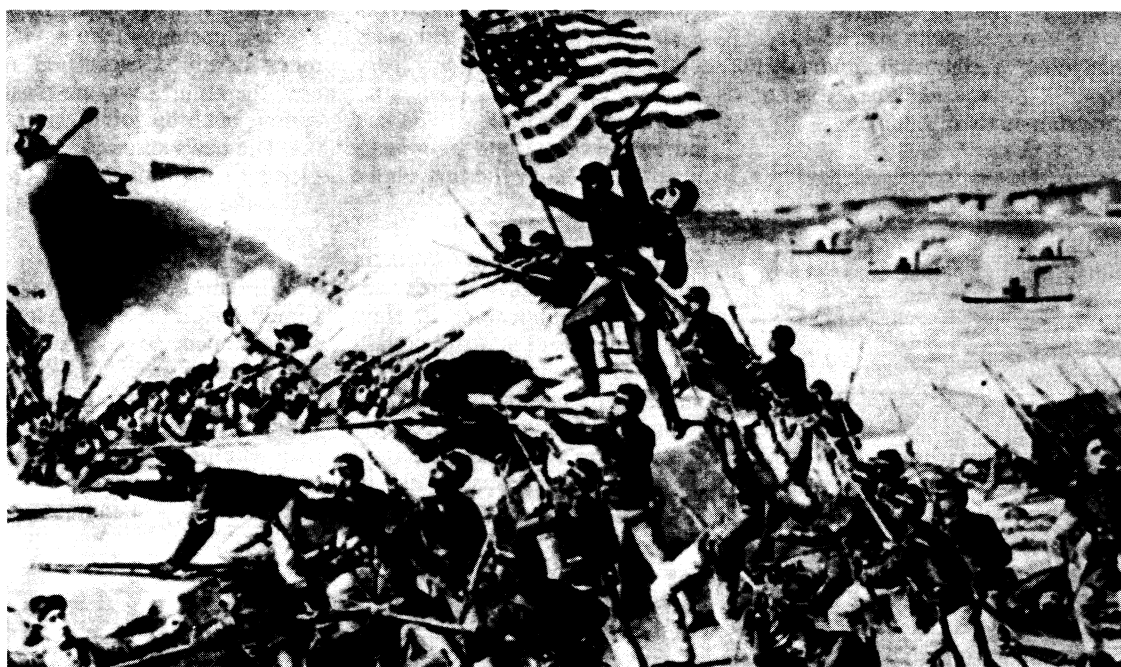
In January 1863 [the War Department] authorized Massachusetts to raise two Black regiments, the first officially authorized Black units. Eventually nearly 200,000 Black troops were to serve in the Union army, and another 300,000 served as army laborers, spies, servants, and helpers. Lincoln admitted that their participation was essential to the victory in the war.

Eventually there were 154 Black regiments in the army, including 140 infantry units. They saw action in 198 battles and skirmishes and suffered 68,178 fatalities on the battlefield in the course of the war.

Of the nearly 200,000 Black troops to take part, 93,000 came from the slave states that had seceded, about 40,000 came from the border slave states, and the remainder from the North.

By the end of the war there was scarcely a battle in which Black troops had not participated. Perhaps their outstanding achievement was the charge of the Third Brigade of the Eighteenth Division on the Confederate fortifications on New Market Heights near Richmond, Virginia. For their gallantry in that engagement Black soldiers received thirteen Congressional Medals of Honor in one day. In all, twenty Blacks received the medal in recognition of "gallantry and intrepidity" in combat during the Civil War.

John Hope Franklin estimates that the Black mortality rate in the Army was nearly 40 percent higher than among white soldiers. This was partially due to unfavorable conditions, poor equipment, bad medical care, and the rapidity with which the Blacks were sent



Troops in the 54th Massachusetts Colored Regiment attack Confederate forces in Ft. Wagner, South Carolina. Some 500,000 Blacks served in Union army as troops, laborers, spies, and helpers, playing a revolutionary role in defeating the slaveholders' rebellion and winning the Civil War.

into battle. But Black troops were also, as W.E.B. Du Bois pointed out, "repeatedly and deliberately used as shock troops, when there was little or no hope of success."

### Integration in navy during war

Black seamen comprised one-quarter of the sailors in the Union fleet. Of the 118,044 enlistments during the Civil War, 29,511 were Blacks. Some of the ships in the fleet were manned by predominantly Black crews, and there was scarcely a ship that didn't have some Afro-American crew members.

Because of the close quarters on warships, it was never practical to segregate the Blacks within the crews, the same way the army did in all-Black units, and for that reason the navy was not only integrated as a service, but also was integrated within each ship....

With the Civil War over, Black soldiers found that they had achieved the legal status of freemen and the Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments to the Constitution had given them the legal rights of citizenship. Once again, as in the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, wartime manpower shortages had forced some kind of tolerance.

But with the war over, the need for Black support diminished and with no jobs, no

money, and no training, Blacks found that they had exchanged legal slavery for economic slavery. When the government reneged on its promise of forty acres and a mule, Blacks found themselves without the economic resources to begin as small farmers and were forced into the status of agricultural laborers or sharecroppers. Displaced and deserted by the very Union forces they had aided, Blacks found, as Addison Gayle points out, that their fight for liberty was in the final analysis no more than a fight for reenslavement, this time by the Black Code laws that swept the South after the abandonment of Reconstruction by the Federal government.

When the army was reorganized in 1866 and put on a peacetime basis, six Black regiments were established by law as a part of the regular army and as recognition and reward for valor. By an act of Congress in 1866, four regiments—the Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth Infantry and the Ninth and Tenth Cavalry—were organized as permanent army units and stationed west of the Mississippi River. Most of the officers in these units were white. The best-known graduate of these regiments was Gen. John Pershing, who earned the nickname "Black Jack" because of his service with Black soldiers.

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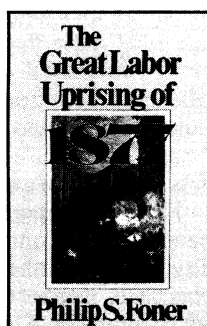
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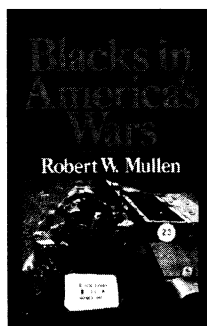
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# An appeal to readers

Dear reader,

We urge you to join the campaign to demand that the Immigration and Naturalization Service immediately free Róger Calero and stop exclusion proceedings against him. On December 3 Calero, a *Militant* staff writer and associate editor of the Spanish-language magazine *Perspectiva Mundial*, was seized by the INS at the Houston airport as he was returning from a reporting assignment in Latin America. He was detained at the airport by the immigration cops for several hours, not allowed to contact his attorney during that time, and then thrown into a privately run immigration jail nearby. He now faces exclusion from the United States.

This is an attack on his right to live and work as a journalist in this country—and an attack on the basic rights of all.

When he was arrested, Calero was traveling back from Guadalajara, Mexico, where he reported on an international student conference and the largest annual book fair in Latin America. A few days earlier he had covered a conference held in Havana, Cuba, on the Free Trade Area of the Americas. He filed articles from these events that have been published in our newspaper. Calero has taken several reporting assignments in Latin America over the past two years—in addition to his range of coverage of U.S. and world events.

Now the INS has thrown one of our reporters and editors in prison. As the associate editor of *Perspectiva Mundial*, he is one of two staff members for the Spanish-language magazine. The arrest is a disruption of the ability to produce these two publications. Despite the severe restrictions imposed by the jailers, Calero continues to write from behind prison walls, as you can see from the report he filed for this issue—telling the story of fellow workers who face a similar denial of their rights by the U.S. government.

Calero has been a permanent resident of the United States for the past 12 years. The INS is now seeking to revoke his status and keep him out of this country, where he works, lives, and has his immediate family. They are trying to exclude him on the basis of a 1988 conviction, when he was a high school student in Los Angeles, of selling marijuana to an undercover cop on a sting operation. Threatened with jail, he copped a plea and received a suspended 60-day sentence with three years' probation, and paid a \$50 fine. That is not exactly the picture of a

"trafficker" that the INS today is trying to convey. In fact, in 1990 the INS itself granted him a green card, waiving the conviction, which was explicitly documented in his application.

Hundreds of thousands of people like Róger Calero have been caught in the nets of the INS, especially as the U.S. government has accelerated its assault on the rights of working people. The U.S. rulers have tripled the size of the INS, making it the largest federal police force, and have stepped up factory raids as well as random stops on highways both near the Mexican and Canadian borders. They have stepped up factory raids and moved to deny immigrants in many states the right to drivers' licenses. With the accumulation of antidemocratic legislation over the past decade, from the 1996 immigration law to the 2001 USA Patriot Act, the government has sought to curtail the right to due process, protection against arbitrary search and seizure, and other constitutional guarantees. This is the brutal face of American "justice" for increasing numbers of workers.

The staffs of the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial* have launched a campaign to win Róger Calero's freedom, to allow him to rejoin our staff and continue helping to provide readers with the coverage of labor and political struggles that contributes to understanding what is happening in the world today.

We ask you to join in this effort. Send a letter to the INS district director in Houston urging that Calero be released now and their moves to exclude him be dropped. Circulate petitions to introduce this fight for justice to your co-workers, friends, and associates. Help raise crucially needed funds to cover the legal expenses and costs of informational literature for mounting this campaign.

Write to Calero to tell him you are part of his fight and to let him know about other struggles for justice you are involved in. Write to Róger Calero, 804B, File #A27 960 195, Houston Processing Center, 15850 Export Plaza Drive, Houston, TX 77030.

Help distribute the *Militant* and *Perspectiva Mundial*—both to tell the truth and win more support for the fight to free Calero, and to present the whole breadth of news and working-class perspectives that these two publications offer.

In solidarity,  
Martin Koppell  
Editor

# Support N.Y. transit workers!

The fight by 34,000 subway and bus workers in New York for a contract is at the center of the resistance today by working people in this city to the employers and the city and state governments. The backing of fellow working people, both in New York and across the country, can weigh in the balance of this struggle.

The billionaire families that run New York City, represented by the Bloomberg administration, are waging an offensive against working people. They are seeking to drive down the wages and benefits and cut the jobs of tens of thousands of city employees. They aim to slash funding for schools, raise transit fares and tolls, and reduce medical coverage for municipal workers. All this in the name of fighting the "budget deficit." While Bloomberg claims he is for "equal sacrifice," some are more equal than others—the wealthy bondholders are always guaranteed their payments, at the expense of working people. The billionaire mayor's pledge to pedal to work in the event of a transit strike is a laughable cover-up of the fact he represents the superwealthy class (besides having a little pocket change himself).

The transit workers are fighting for an end to a brutal disciplinary system, for job safety, to stop the underfinancing of their health fund, and other basic needs. These are very same questions that other working people—union and nonunion alike—confront in face of the bosses' profit drive. The recent deaths of two transit workers—which could have been avoided if the Transit Authority had met the Transport Workers Union (TWU) demand to assign flaggers to every track crew—highlight the crucial question of safety.

The city fathers claim that because of the "budget cri-

sis" there is no money for pay raises and in fact transit workers have to give back some of what they've won in previous struggles. The transit workers correctly reply, "Find the money!" Of course there is plenty of money—beginning with the billions in payments forked out religiously to the bondholders. The needs of working people must be the starting point, not the employers' problems.

The big-business media has been working overtime to crank up its propaganda against the TWU. The *New York Post* has labeled the union's fight a "jihad." Bloomberg says the transit workers, if they go on strike, will be responsible for the worsening of the city's economy, for people dying from lack of medical care, and numerous other problems. No—as long as the Transit Authority refuses to agree to the contract demands of the transit workers, it's the city government that will be responsible for any disruption that may ensue.

Big-business spokespeople call the transit workers "overpaid" to pit working people against each other. But those wages are the result of years of struggles, and a victory by the TWU will put other workers in a stronger position to increase their wages and social benefits.

The transit workers' battle poses many of the social questions facing the entire working class, including the need to expand the national social security system to guarantee workers a lifetime right to free, universal medical care; workers' compensation if they are injured; and unemployment insurance for as long as needed. These social entitlements go hand in hand with the fight to ensure jobs for all; to raise the wages and shorten the hours of the working class; and the union's ability to enforce health and safety on the job.

The government's threats to mobilize the National Guard as strikebreakers underscores the fact that the employers' attack on the TWU and other workers at home is intertwined with Washington's moves toward a war of plunder in the Mideast. They are part of a two-front war on working people.

The government is threatening to assault the transit workers if they strike by imposing massive fines and jailing union leaders. Is it possible to stand up to these threats? Yes, if the whole labor movement comes together behind the TWU and flexes its muscles. Past union battles, like the 1980 transit strike and the 1990–91 *Daily News* strike, show that the working class in New York can be counted on to cut through the bosses' propaganda and extend decisive solidarity.

By standing up to the city government and the employer class, the transit workers help point the road forward for all working people. Their fight is our fight.

# The curve of capitalist development

Continued from Page 4

attempting to take any actual period in history as a basis, we do so for the simple reason that any attempt of this sort would resemble far too much an incautious anticipation of those results flowing from a complex and painstaking investigation which has yet to be made.

## Enrich theory of historical materialism

At the present time, it is of course still impossible to foresee to any precise degree just what sections of the field of history will be illuminated and just how much light will be cast by a materialist investigation which would proceed from a more concrete study of the capitalist curve and the interrelationship between the latter and all the aspects of social life. Conquests that may be attained on this road can be determined only as the result of such an investigation itself, which must be more systematic, more orderly than those historical material excursions hitherto undertaken.

In any case, such an approach to modern history promises to enrich the theory of historical materialism with conquests far more precious than the extremely dubious speculative juggling with the concepts and terms of the materialist method that has, under the pens of some of our Marxists, transplanted the methods of formalism into the domain of the materialist dialectic, and has led to reducing the task to rendering definitions and classifications more precise and to splitting empty abstractions into four equally empty parts; it has, in short, adulterated Marxism by means of the indecently elegant mannerisms of Kantian epigones. It is a silly thing indeed endlessly to sharpen and sharpen an instrument to chip away Marxist steel, when the task is to apply the instrument in working over the raw material!

In our opinion this theme could provide the subject matter for the most fruitful work of our Marxist seminars on historical materialism. Independent investigations undertaken in this sphere would undoubtedly shed new light or at least throw more light on isolated historical events and entire epochs. Finally, the very habit of thinking in terms of the foregoing categories would greatly facilitate political orientation in the present epoch, which is an epoch that reveals more openly than ever before the connection between capitalist economics, which has attained the peak of saturation, and capitalist politics, which has become completely unbridled.

# Mine bosses in South Africa

Continued from Page 11

could hang on to the mineral rights regime of the past. More than any other industry, with the possible exception of agriculture, the mines symbolise white domination of the economy and the labor repression of the colonial and apartheid eras."

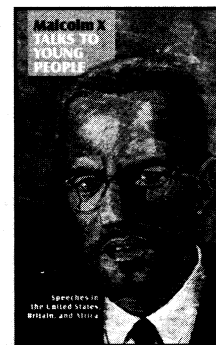
In their June 9 statement the COSATU officials, while recording their support for the legislation, said that along with National Union of Mineworkers leaders they would be voicing "concerns that the Bill does not go far enough in undoing monopoly ownership in the [mining] sector. The danger of the licensing system envisaged in the Bill is that once a company gets an initial prospecting right for a mineral, it becomes very easy for them to get mining and renewal rights ad infinitum. This may well lead to a situation where ownership patterns in a few decades' time are not significantly different from today's."

The union statement also criticized the legislation for paying too little "attention to the human dimension of mining. We want to see the licensing system used as leverage to upgrade workers' living and working conditions and health and safety standards in the industry."

## Malcolm X Talks to Young People

This new, expanded edition includes four talks given to young people in Ghana, the United Kingdom, and the United States in 1964 and 1965; an interview with the *Young Socialist* magazine; and an enlarged display of photographs. In the last months of his life, Malcolm X spoke out more and more directly about the capitalist roots of racism, exploitation, and imperialist oppression. The new English-language edition has been released together with the Spanish-language edition, *Malcolm X habla a la juventud*. \$15.00 for each book.

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## 10,000 march for UK firefighters

BY PAUL DAVIES

LONDON—"If we don't get a settlement we'll be back on the picket line. There is total resolve throughout the union, and the government's tactics haven't broken our will to fight," said Rory McAlister, a firefighter from Berkshire. McAlister was among thousands of firefighters, their families, and other trade unionists from across the country who marched here December 7 in support of the fight waged by the Fire Brigades Union (FBU) in defense of jobs and services as well as their living standards.

McAlister added, "We want less medals for bravery and more money for pay." The firefighters are claiming an hourly take-home wage of £8.50 (£1 = \$1.57).

Up to 10,000 people turned out for the action. Groups of trade unionists from the Communication Workers Union, the Associated Society of Locomotive Engineers and Firemen, and the UNISON public sector workers union marched with the FBU. At a rally in Hyde Park following the march, John Monks, the general secretary of the National Trades Union Congress, spoke in support of the FBU fight. So did representatives of the Transport and General Workers Union, the General Municipal and Boilermakers Union, and other unions.

The action followed two nationwide firefighters' strikes in November. A third national strike, due to begin December 4, was called off when the union decided to take up a proposal to negotiate through the arbitration organization ACAS. During the strikes the government has mobilized close to 19,000 troops to drive fire trucks. Government officials from Prime Minister Anthony Blair on down have taken the lead in a propaganda campaign against the



Firefighters rally at Hyde Park in London December 7. "We want less medals for bravery and more money for pay," said one of the unionists at the demonstration.

firefighters.

A further eight-day strike is due to start on December 16.

"The government accuses us of interfering in politics. If they are going to cut 10,000 jobs we have a right to intervene," said FBU general secretary Andy Gilchrist to the rally in Hyde Park. Referring to the government's last minute intervention to scuttle a deal reached in late November by the union and

the employers, Gilchrist added, "We'll try to find a negotiated settlement, but if the government tries to wreck it we will be back on strike."

Speaking to *Militant* reporters at the demonstration, McAlister—a firefighter for 28 years—recalled the last national strike 25 years ago. That action "lasted 63 days," he said. "It was even harder then—firefighters were so low-paid that 80 percent of them

were claiming benefits."

Dewi Jones, a firefighter from Newport, South Wales, discussed the potential impact of demands by the employers—the Local Government Association—for increased overtime hours. "For the last 25 years our union has prevented overtime working," he said—a stand that has led to the creation of "6,000 extra jobs. The government is trying to put an end to this, to cover their job cuts with overtime working."

### Solidarity on picket lines

Firefighters paid tribute to the solidarity they have received, describing donations of food, money and Christmas presents. "We've had visits to our picket line from members of other unions and students at York university have organized collections for our union hardship fund," said Peter Clark, who marched with a contingent of firefighters from York.

Clark reported that part-time or "retained" firefighters, "who are not in the FBU and have not been on strike, have been joining us on the picket line after they finish work. They realize that this is a fight that affects them; if we lose then their conditions will come under attack. This fight affects all of us—Blair is trying to break our union, because we are strong."

In talks with employers the union is resisting attempts to eliminate night shift jobs, change shift patterns, and establish joint control rooms with the cops and the ambulance service. Clark explained that the latter proposal is part of a package of cuts that would "reduce our ability to respond rapidly to fires. Currently we guarantee to respond to a call within 10 seconds—but in joint control rooms calls would be answered on a 'priority system,' producing a slower response and leading to a loss of life."

A delegation of 38 FBU members came from Northern Ireland. "We have toured firefighters from the Irish Republic, who are members of SIPTU, around our picket lines last week," said Tony Maguire. SIPTU is the Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union. The FBU, he said, "is planning a 'cross-community march in the coming weeks in Belfast across nationalist and unionist [British loyalist] areas in the city—to show the support that exists for our fight."

At the end of the rally an announcement was made for a December 14 meeting of women firefighters, as well as firefighters' partners and their families, to build support for the union's struggle.

## United files for bankruptcy, plans more cuts

BY BERNIE SENTER

SAN FRANCISCO—On December 4 the government-appointed Air Transportation Stabilization Board denied a United Airlines application for \$1.8 billion in government-secured loans. Five days later the airline's bosses filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy, under which the company will keep operating. United's bosses immediately announced their intention to carve more out of workers' wages, benefits, and conditions, in their attempt to stay afloat and pay off their bondholders and other big investors.

United's loan application was based, in part, on agreements by unions covering the company's 81,000 employees for a package of takebacks totaling \$5.2 billion. Organizations representing the pilots, flight attendants, and ramp workers had voted to approve the concessions. The 13,000 aircraft mechanics, members of the International Association of Machinists, rejected the \$700 million in concessions they were handed, however.

With the rejection of the loan and the decision to file for bankruptcy, the company put aside plans to submit a new contract proposal to the mechanics. The IAM has reported that its members are owed nearly \$500 million in back pay.

According to the *Wall Street Journal*, United's chief executive Glenn Tilton said December 9 that he is "convinced that UAL must lower its labor costs more dramatically than it intended to in its loan guarantee application." Tilton said that "the carrier will work with its creditors, union leaders and other stakeholders to make major changes in UAL's towering expenses, 'costly, restrictive' union work rules, routes, fleet and service."

If the company does not gain even larger savings than those already agreed to through "consensual negotiations with the unions... [United] intends to use the bankruptcy process to force changes on its labor contracts," reported the *Journal*.

The *New York Times* spoke just as bluntly in a December 10 headline that read, "Company to Seek Deeper Cuts From its 81,000 workers."

"Now people are wondering what's going to happen. How deep will the layoffs be?" Rick Young, a ramp worker at United in Chicago, told the *Militant*.

A spate of airlines have filed for bankruptcy in the last few years, pressed by the increasing competition in the industry combined with the economic slowdown. Among them are TWA, US Airways, Continental, and America West. In the past, some companies operating under Chapter 11 have reorganized on a more profitable basis. Other times the assets of a given airline—from

aircraft to flight schedules—have been seized by creditors and other carriers.

US Airways, which declared bankruptcy in August, has announced that it is seeking another round of concessions from its workforce. David Bronner, the chief executive of the company's primary lender, Retirement Systems of Alabama, warned union members that if they didn't agree to another \$200 million in concessions, he would "Chapter seven [liquidate]" the airline.

American Airlines' owners seek takebacks totaling up to \$4 billion a year by 2004.

## Workers bear brunt of ice storm in Carolinas

BY STEVE WOLF

KANNAPOLIS, North Carolina—"It's worse than Hurricane Hugo." That's what local government officials say about the December 5 ice storm that hit North and South Carolina especially hard. An estimated 2 million people were without heat and electricity in the first 24 hours.

"Natural disaster?" That's what the big-business media would have one believe. But some of the truth has begun to come out, usually buried at the end of articles or inside pages.

The *Charlotte Observer* for example noted that downtown businesses never lost power "because the area is served by an underground line." In addition, "Heavy industrial users were less vulnerable to power outages because they typically connect directly to higher power transmission lines," the daily noted. Duke Power, the main electric company in the region—with more than 1 million of its customers without electricity the day after the storm—"strings those lines higher and trims the trees around them more frequently."

In other words, to maximize profits and save money, Duke and the local capitalist governments skimp on trimming trees near utility lines and avoid burying existing power lines. The city of Charlotte even has a law that forbids the city from requiring

power companies to pay for burying their lines, and eighty percent of Duke's power lines are overhead. A large percentage of the outage was caused by ice-laden branches falling on power lines.

The small town of Maiden, North Carolina, was an exception. After the February 1996 ice storm, it took town crews three days to clear all the limbs and trees and restore power. Since then, the Town Council has budgeted money every year specifically for keeping trees trimmed. Unlike Charlotte, which as of December 7 was predicting that tens of thousands would be without power for at least several more days and up to two weeks, most Maiden residents were without power for only half a day.

Do profits for big business take priority over the human needs of working people? Readers can draw their own conclusions.

No effort was made to request or organize volunteers to help clear roads of fallen trees to facilitate the passing of traffic and emergency vehicles. Some people on their own initiative took out chain saws and helped clear streets or aid neighbors.

They didn't get much immediate help on this score from the government. Once the disaster began, North Carolina's governor instead asked everyone to "stay off the roads" and declared a state of emergency. No effort was made to actively seek out se-

nior citizens who live alone to make sure they were all right. Most were forced to fend for themselves. A handful of shelters were set up at some area schools and public facilities. Radio reports told people to bring their own bedding to the shelter. But in the case of Kannapolis the opening of the shelters themselves was delayed because of lack of heat.

Most people sought their own solutions. The few stores that were open rapidly sold out of candles, flashlights, batteries, and kerosene heaters. "Some retailers, hotels, restaurants and shopping malls enjoyed a windfall," the *Observer* noted. One store was selling kerosene heaters at \$114 a piece.

Hospitals in the Charlotte area reported that more than 200 people, mostly Asian and Spanish-speaking immigrants, were hospitalized for carbon monoxide poisoning or a number of illnesses caused by improper use of portable heaters or cooking indoors using charcoal grill. Many did not know or were not warned in their first language about possible carbon-monoxide poisoning dangers when using these devices indoors without adequate ventilation.

But the ice storm didn't much hurt the four main shopping malls in the Charlotte area. They had power the whole time. Thousands without heat headed to the malls to stay warm.