

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

When Japanese-Americans were put in 'internment' camps
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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U.S. deploying 150,000 troops for war on Iraq

'Inspectors' step up provocations as invasion force grows

BY SAM MANUEL

Dozens of U.S. Air Force bombers are on their way to the Arab-Persian Gulf to further bolster the air power Washington has amassed against Iraq. At the same time the White House is preparing tens of thousands more troops for deployment in the region. The total number of soldiers and other military personnel is expected to reach 150,000 by mid- to late-February.

A political propaganda buildup is also occurring alongside the military one, as United Nations "arms inspectors" step up provocations designed to give political cover to a U.S. assault on Iraq.

Governments throughout the region are taking steps in anticipation of an imperialist onslaught.

Jordan, which relies on Iraqi oil, has built storage facilities to hold four weeks supply in addition to its normal two-month reserve.

For their part, Iran and Turkey have set up refugee camps just inside their borders. Iran has constructed 19 such camps at its western edge designed to accommodate as many as 1 million refugees. There are already 2.5 million refugees in the country, many from Iraq and Afghanistan.

The B-1B heavy bombers now being
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Worker killed by cop as 20,000 strike GE



Workers picket General Electric's Appliance Park plant in Louisville, Kentucky, on the first day of a two-day nationwide strike. A picketing worker was struck and killed by a cop car at the plant that same morning. See story page 14.

California protesters: 'No to INS detentions!'

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

SAN FRANCISCO—Some 800 people rallied here January 10 to oppose the "registration" process inflicted by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) on U.S. temporary residents from 20 countries. "No detainees" was a popular demand at the action—a reference to the arrests and interrogation of hundreds of people who have complied with the order to give their fingerprints, names, and other details.

Smaller protests during the course of the week built toward the January 10 date—the registration deadline for men 16 years of age and older who were born in Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Eritrea, Lebanon, Morocco, north Korea, Oman, Qatar, Somalia, Tunisia, United Arab Emirates, and Yemen.

The protests were sponsored by a num-
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Move by Governor Ryan focuses attention on death penalty

BY PATTIE THOMPSON

CHICAGO—Outgoing Illinois governor George Ryan announced January 11 that he is sparing the lives of all 167 death row prisoners in Illinois.

The Republican politician spoke before an audience that included former death row inmates released after proving wrongful conviction, along with many other fighters against the death penalty. He urged state legislators to enact reforms that would rehabilitate the death penalty.

Ryan's explanation for the decision included themes that many of those present had organized around, in opposition to lawmakers, cops, and judges. He mentioned unjust convictions leading to death sentences, inadequate legal representation for
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Minnesota union hosts fund-raiser for effort to stop deportation of Róger Calero

BY TOM FISKE

SOUTH ST. PAUL, Minnesota—"Enough of these injustices! The campaign to stop the deportation of Róger Calero is a campaign all of us should be supporting," said Augustina Borroel at a meeting and party organized here under the banner "Stop the Deportation of Róger Calero." A 12-year permanent resident of the United States, Calero faces Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) proceedings to remove him from the country.

Borroel is a meat packer at Dakota Premium Foods and member of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 789. The union local sponsored and

built the event, which was held in its hall.

"There are many other cases like his," she said. "If we win this case, it is a victory for all of us. This is the first campaign I can remember that everyone is fighting together. It is for this reason that Róger got out of jail and that he can win."

The January 11 gathering was part of a national speaking tour organized by the Róger Calero Defense Committee. Calero, a *Militant* staff writer and associate editor of *Perspectiva Mundial*, was arrested and jailed by INS officials at Houston Intercontinental Airport on December 3 as he was returning home from a reporting assignment in Mexico and Cuba.

With protest messages pouring into the mailbox of the INS district director in Houston, the journalist and former meat packer was paroled December 13. The agency now plans to institute "removal" proceedings against Calero at a March 25 hearing.

To justify their attempt to deport him to his native Nicaragua, INS officials cite

Calero's 1988 conviction as a high school student in Los Angeles on a charge of selling an ounce of marijuana to an undercover cop. Threatened with a jail term, Calero had copped a plea and received a suspended 60-day sentence, three years' probation, and a \$50 fine.

Calero reported this when he applied for permanent residency in 1989. Waiving the conviction, the INS granted him a green card and renewed it in 2000. The journalist, who is married to a U.S. citizen, lives in Newark, New Jersey.

Local 789 president Bill Pearson chaired the meeting. He noted the many workers present and the breadth of participation. "There are teachers, truckers, meat packers, and workers from many walks of life," he said. He singled out for special mention two new members of the local who are among 15 workers at Borders Bookstore in Minneapolis who had just organized themselves into the union.

Pearson also pointed to Ray Waldron,
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Fund to meet book requests at Havana fair

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

With preparations under way for the Havana International Book Fair, the *Militant* is appealing for contributions to the Books for Cuba Fund. This ongoing fund, which is sponsored by the paper, makes it possible to respond to requests by Cuban libraries, schools, and other institutions for books and pamphlets published by Pathfinder. It also means that these titles can be sold at affordable prices for Cubans at events such as the annual Havana Book Fair.

As in previous years, Pathfinder will have a booth at the fair, which will run from January 30 to February 9 in Havana, and from there will go to other cities around

the island. If past years are anything to go by, the stand will be jammed with visitors eager to browse and read the range of books on revolutionary politics that Pathfinder offers. During past fairs, librarians, students, workers, soldiers, teachers, and others have made requests for Pathfinder titles. In response to this demand, the publisher has donated books to libraries and other cultural institutions.

On the final day of this year's fair, Pathfinder will make every title in its booth available in Cuban pesos, since many residents of the island do not have access to dollars. This has become a tradition of the publisher's participation in the fair. Many
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Bill Pearson, president of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 789, with Róger Calero at January 11 fund-raiser held at union hall in St. Paul, Minnesota.

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U.S. deploys 150,000 troops for Iraq war

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 quartered in the Middle East have been fitted with 2,000-pound bombs, and are accompanied by manned and unmanned reconnaissance aircraft. More fighter-bombers have also been deployed, adding to the aircraft in Turkey, Kuwait, and Saudi Arabia that regularly attack in the so-called "no fly zones" in the north and south of Iraq.

The aircraft carriers these planes also use have been reinforced. Commenting on U.S. naval strength in the region—which includes several of the giant craft with their massively armed battle groups—Captain Stewart O'Bryan said, "We are spread from the Strait of Gibraltar all the way to the eastern Mediterranean."

Along with their U.S. Air Force, Army, and Special Forces counterparts, Navy commanders are assembling in Qatar. Last month these U.S. Central Command officers participated in a dry-run exercise to set up the new command post at the As Sayliyah encampment. This time, however, it is not an exercise.

Other naval forces are on the move. Marine Corps commanders have announced a halt to any active-duty members leaving the service for a year. The last time the Marines took such action was a decade ago during the buildup to the last war on Iraq.

Commenting up the impact of the accelerated deployments, one U.S. official said, "This will certainly put the president in a very good position to make a decision, and allow us to implement whatever he decides."

Much of the propaganda buildup to that decision has focused on the activities of the UN "arms inspection" teams. While Chief Inspector Hans Blix has stated that no "smoking guns" have been found in the search for alleged arms of mass destruction, he also insisted that Baghdad must provide "proactive cooperation by shedding light on the status of several banned weapons programs."

U.S. "intelligence" operators have put together a list of around 100 scientists and engineers to be transported out of the country for interrogation, offering them asylum in exchange for arms information. The interrogations are planned for UN facilities in Europe and Cyprus. "The idea is to make sure that life starts getting a lot hotter for

Saddam in the next few weeks," said one official. Washington's moves to speed this up led Blix to complain that the UN teams are not in the "abduction business."

The teams have begun using helicopters for "aerial inspections." UN officials said the aircraft would make it easier to "swoop" down on search sites.

Giving a glimpse of their arrogance, the inspectors closed the entrances and exits to an Iraqi manufacturing and research complex on January 5. Thousands of people were confined for almost six hours. Among them was the country's ambassador to the UN, Mohammed Aldouri. "I think their behavior was unjustified, and the inspection teams could behave in a more civilized way," he said.

British troops assemble

While the French president instructed troops to stand by for possible service, saying that UN resolutions "had to be enforced," British Defense Secretary Geoffrey Hoon announced the deployment of a task force of ships and 3,000 Royal Marines to the region. London also called up 1,500 reservists.

The move is "massively in our self-interest," said Prime Minister Anthony Blair. "The price of influence is that we do not leave the U.S. to face the tricky issues alone." British naval preparation for war with Iraq includes the aircraft carrier *Ark Royal* and a number of other vessels.

German ambassador to the UN Gunter Pleuger stated that his government would not insist on a separate resolution if there is a new debate on whether to authorize war against Iraq.

Washington and London, meanwhile, are placing pressure on governments in the region to lay open their facilities to the imperialist forces. Hoon visited Turkey to seek agreement for British troops to use its bases. Some 150 U.S. military officials will visit later this month.

The Gulf oil states are a particular target of this imperialist push. Speaking before a New York business audience last month, former secretary of state Henry Kissinger said that Washington is past "the point of no return with respect to Iraq," according to New York's *Sun* newspaper. Arguing that the

Puerto Ricans march against U.S. Navy exercises in Vieques



March in San Juan, Puerto Rico, on January 12 demands that U.S. Navy abandon next day's military maneuvers on Vieques. Washington announced earlier that it would cease operations on the island by May 1. Navy tops stated that "departure from Vieques will liberate us from this burden" of ongoing protests.

war against Iraq is an integral part of the "war on terrorism," Kissinger said, "How else can we convince the Saudi Arabias of the world that it is too dangerous to collude in challenging the United States?"

The potentially explosive impact of the war could be seen New Year's Eve in Bahrain, a headquarters for both British and U.S. forces. Some 2,000 people rallied there, chanting "Death to America" and "Death to Israel," and demanding the withdrawal of the U.S. troops. Government officials expressed fear that this could be the first in a series of "massive" demonstrations against the United States and its Arab allies in the region.

U.S. pressure on north Korea

Meanwhile, Washington continues its pressure on north Korea. The U.S. government has frozen food shipments and accused the workers state of accelerating its alleged attempt to produce nuclear weapons. While stating that they are willing to enter talks—a long-standing demand of the north Korean government—U.S. officials have continued to insist that Pyongyang must end its nuclear weapons program and that such a move must be "verifiable" and "irreversible"—the words used by White House

spokesman Ari Fleischer on January 13.

Answering those critics of Bush's approach who call for Washington to shift its military focus from Baghdad to Pyongyang, the *Wall Street Journal* editorialized on January 13 that "the most important step President Bush could take to contain North Korea's nuclear ambitions is to end the charade of inspections and speed up the war in Iraq." The editorial was headlined, "To Pyongyang Via Baghdad."

Repeating Bush's slander that, together with Iran, north Korea and Iraq are members of an "axis of evil," the *Journal* claimed that "the faster Mr. Bush disarms the first member of that axis in Baghdad, the easier it will be to contain and disarm the others."

Three days earlier, the north Korean government had announced its withdrawal from the Nuclear Nonproliferation Treaty. Pyongyang explained that it was acting in self-defense because it was "most seriously threatened" by the United States.

"Though we pull out of the NPT," the statement continued, "we have no intention to produce nuclear weapons and our nuclear activities at this stage will be confined only to peaceful purposes." The next day 1 million people mobilized in Pyongyang against the U.S. threats.

Fund to meet requests at book fair

Continued from front page
 people who have visited the booth over the years eagerly await the opportunity to expand their access to books on the international class struggle, U.S. politics, the history of the communist movement, the fight for women's liberation, and a variety of other questions.

This year Pathfinder is bringing several new titles to the Havana fair. Special presentations on three books published in both English and Spanish will be organized.

They are: *Malcolm X Talks to Young People*; *Marianas in Combat: Teté Puebla and the Mariana Grajales Women's Playtoon in Cuba's Revolutionary War, 1956-58*; and *October 1962: The 'Missile' Crisis as Seen from Cuba* by Tomás Diez Acosta.

To make a contribution, please send checks or money orders made out to the *Militant* and earmarked "Books for Cuba Fund" to the *Militant*, 410 West Street, New York, NY 10014.

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Paris steps up intervention in Ivory Coast

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

The French government sent hundreds of troops to the Ivory Coast in late December to reinforce its occupation force there, bringing the total to more than 2,500 soldiers, including special forces and members of the notorious Foreign Legion. The imperialist intervention in this West African nation escalated after the conflict between the government and rebel forces exploded into war last September.

Paris sent the ship *Foudre* to Ivory Coast's main city, Abidjan, loaded with hundreds of paratroopers, 30 armored vehicles, 20 trucks, and 5 helicopters.

The deployment is French imperialism's largest military intervention in Africa since it sent 3,000 soldiers to Chad in the 1980s. Indicating that the occupation may be long-term, the French army chief of staff, Gen. Henri Bentegeat, said during a late December visit to Abidjan that Paris "can leave 2,500 men in Ivory Coast for some years if need be."

The main antigovernment group, the Ivory Coast Patriotic Movement (MPCI), controls the northern half of the country, where the population is mostly Muslim. The government controls the south, which is majority Christian. The rebel group signed a truce in mid-October, but negotiations have not advanced.

In November two new opposition groups, not bound by the truce, emerged in the west—the Popular Movement of Ivory Coast's Far West (MPIGO) and the Movement for Justice and Peace (MJP). They accuse the government of discriminating against oppressed national groups in that region.

The three opposition groups demand that president Laurent Gbagbo resign and hold new elections. Gbagbo had barred a popular leader from the north, Alassane Ouattara, from the September 2000 elections.

The civil conflict erupted in September after a failed coup by soldiers from the north, who protested repression and discrimination against Muslims and immigrants by the increasingly unpopular president.

The French government intervened militarily a week after the coup to provide "logistical support" to the government. Constant references in the big-business media to the country's cocoa wealth leave no doubt as to the interests Paris is protecting there.

French troops have attacked antigovernment soldiers several times, including a battle on January 6 near the western town of Duékoué, in which Paris unleashed its superior firepower, killing 30. Duékoué, a key town along a route leading to the country's two main ports in the south, is a gateway to the country's cocoa belt.

The following day, French president Jacques Chirac declared, "In the Balkans, in Afghanistan, in the Ivory Coast, our forces act to reestablish and maintain peace," referring to Paris's participation in imperialist occupation forces around the world.

On January 9 the two western opposition groups signed a truce with the French government, while continuing to fight government forces. They agreed to attend "peace" talks in Paris.

The next day the insurgents declared they had been attacked by progovernment forces in the far west, near the Liberian border, and accused Paris of aiding them.

MPIGO leader Guillaume Gbatto said they had "been betrayed by France."

Gbatto said Liberian mercenaries were backing the regime's forces. Gbagbo has promised to send all foreign mercenaries home. Liberian combatants are also reportedly backing antigovernment forces in the west.

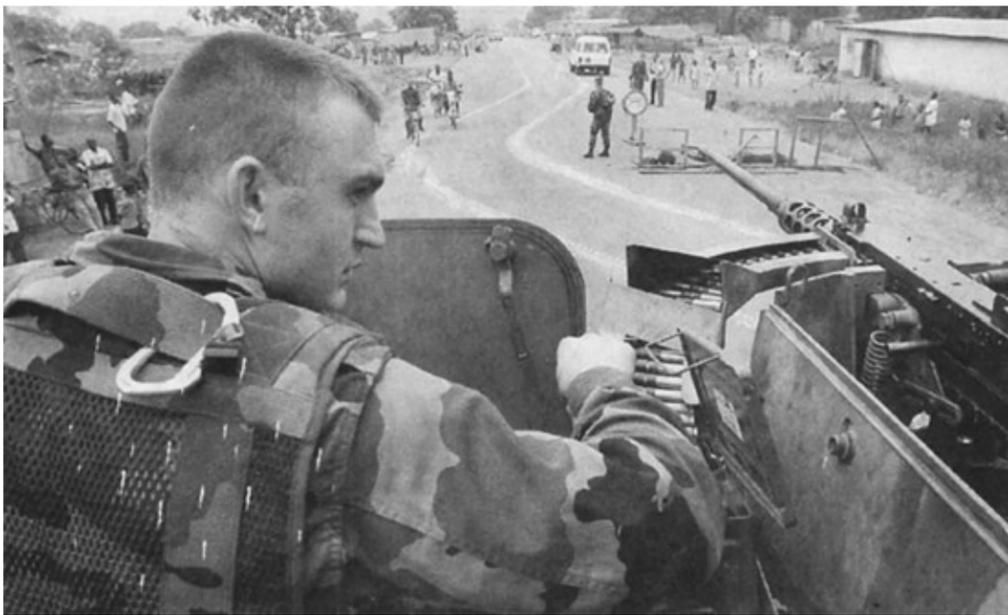
Imperialist interests

In the decades since Ivory Coast won its independence from direct colonial rule, Paris has maintained its economic and political domination of the country. French capitalists control key sectors of the country's infrastructure, including electricity, water, telecommunications, port services, and construction.

The West African country buys 26 percent of its imports from France and sells France 15 percent of all exports. The debt of the Ivorian government to imperialist banks is \$13.9 billion.

The world's largest producer of cocoa beans, Ivory Coast has the second-largest economy in the region behind Nigeria.

U.S. and other imperialist investors have



French military checkpoint on road to town of Duékoué, a gateway to Ivory Coast's cocoa belt. Paris and Washington view the West African country as source of profits from cocoa and oil.

been eyeing potentially large oil and gas reserves off the country's coast.

Both during and since the end of colonial rule, the French rulers have fostered religious and social divisions between

Christians and Muslims as well as between native-born and immigrants. About 30 percent of the country's 16.5 million people are immigrants from neighboring countries, mostly from Burkina Faso.

New Brazil gov't reassures capitalist investors

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

Inaugurated as president of Brazil on January 1, Luiz Inácio Lula da Silva, widely known as Lula, has reaffirmed a central message of his election campaign: that his government will not jettison his predecessor's pro-business policies and, specifically, will maintain payments on the government debt, including the billions owed to foreign banks.

In the week following the ceremony, Brazil's currency, the real, improved 6 percent in value against the U.S. dollar, compared with a slump in 2002 of 35 percent. While generated by the deep economic crisis in Brazil and the immediate region, which includes Argentina, last year's decline of the country's currency also registered the nervousness of big investors about the election, and about the raised expectations among workers and peasants that would accompany a victory of da Silva's Workers Party.

Da Silva won the October 27 election with 61 percent of the vote—the biggest margin ever in the history Brazil's presidential elections.

Those increased expectations were reflected at the inauguration. An estimated 200,000 people turned out for the event, in contrast to turnouts of barely more than one-seventh that number to celebrate past victories of the big-business parties in previous elections. Masses of people jammed a park outside the Congress building, dancing and chanting "Lula! Lula!" Da Silva made a point of hosting Cuban president Fidel Castro and Venezuelan president Hugo Chávez, political leaders demonized by Washington, in the course of his New Year's inauguration.

Among the 119 national leaders who attended the event, Washington sent trade representative Robert Zoellick—a relatively lowly official. Weeks earlier Zoellick

had told the *Miami Herald* that if Brazil did not want to accept the imperialist-sponsored Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA) pact, then it could "take the southern route to Antarctica."

Alongside his campaign reassurances to the capitalists, da Silva had also verbally taken his distance from the FTAA, describing it as "tantamount to annexation of Brazil by the United States."

In its initial statements the new government continues to present itself as a voice of the millions of impoverished and combative working people of town and country. By and large, however, the Brazilian rulers and their imperialist masters have cautiously endorsed its initial moves.

"Today we have grounds for optimism," said Marcelo Mesquita, an analyst for the U.S.-based UBS Warburg in Rio de Janeiro. "For all its life the Workers Party preached default on the debt," he said. "But now the markets are convinced that there will be no default."

The *New York Times* editors warned that despite such positive judgments by voices of big business, Brazil "remains vulnerable to international investors' sentiments and one wrong move by Mr. da Silva's economic team could wipe out the current good will."

Lula visits the White House

Three weeks before the ceremony Lula met with U.S. president George Bush in Washington. White House spokesman Ari Fleischer described as the meeting as "very constructive and positive" for working out joint agreements on business relations between the two countries. For his part da Silva appealed to Bush to encourage U.S. banks to increase lending in Brazil.

Da Silva has reinforced the favorable impression on big business by appointing prominent capitalist figures to his policy team, both before and after election day. They take their seats alongside the seven trade union leaders in the cabinet of 29. Luiz Fernando Furlan, president of Sadia SA, Brazil's largest chicken and food-processing company, was named minister of trade and industry. Roberto Rodrigues, the new minister of agriculture, is a soy and sugarcane businessman and head of the Brazilian Association of Agribusiness, which includes dozens of domestic and multinational commodity giants. The new foreign minister is Celso Amorim, who is currently Brazil's ambassador to the United Kingdom.

All three strike a nationalist stance in trade negotiations and on other matters, reported the December 16 *Financial Times*. The London-based paper stated that they "have been outspoken critics of farm trade restrictions and subsidies by industrialized nations," and that their appointment underscores "da Silva's pledge in Washington last week to drive a hard bargain in trade negotiations with the U.S., the European Union and within the World Trade Organization."

Da Silva appointed Henrique Meirelles as new president of the Central Bank. Meirelles had been elected to Congress with the Social Democratic Party and is a former executive at FleetBoston. The choice was applauded by outgoing president Fernando Henrique Cardoso as well as the departing bank chief.

"Fiscal responsibility," cutting government spending on health, education, and other social services, is a priority for foreign investors in Brazil, the *Wall Street Journal* noted in its January 9 issue. The New York paper cheered, in particular, da Silva's decision to block the transfer of \$26 million in tax revenue to the state of Rio de Janeiro after it defaulted on debt payments to the federal government.

With this move, the *Journal* stated, the new president indicated that he has reversed his earlier opposition to the Fiscal Responsibility Law, which is aimed at enforcing austerity measures. Government workers in a number of states are still waiting for their December paychecks and bonuses. Da Silva is also promising "pension reforms" that the previous administration was unable to impose.

Rise in minimum wage restricted

The *Financial Times* reports that Workers Party leaders have indicated that the new government would increase the monthly minimum wage "only to the extent that it would allow inflation control" and the maintenance of a targeted budget surplus.

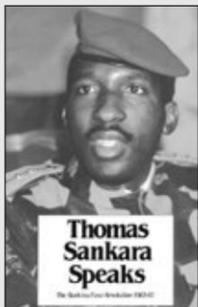
In spite of the government's course, a default on the national debt looms as a threat amid the crisis of the country, region, and continent. A record \$30 billion dollar loan from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in August has done nothing to stem the decline of the Brazilian economy, the largest in Latin America. The government debt has risen from 30 percent of the gross domestic product in 1994 to more than 60 percent, today standing at \$260 billion.

Trade between Brazil and Argentina, the two largest members of Mercosur, the South American common market, dropped 50 percent last year. Adding to the financial instability and capitalist nervousness is the level of interest rates, which has reached 21 percent. Consumer prices have increased by more than 10 percent this year, and wholesale prices by more than double that.

Nor has the withdrawal of foreign investment that marked the election campaign period come to a halt. Foreign banks sold almost \$5 billion in assets last year, causing the first decline in investment in Brazil's financial system since 1994. U.S. banks such as J.P. Morgan Chase, Bank of America, and Citicorp have led the selloff, cutting their "exposure" by up to 50 percent. They have been joined by Germany's second largest bank, Crédit Lyonnais of France, and Banco Fiat, the finance unit of the Italian car company.

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This new 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. 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. In English and Spanish. \$15.00



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Capitalist investors will reap benefits of Bush's tax cut plan

BY MAURICE WILLIAMS

Billed as a "stimulus package" for a U.S. economy marked by anemic growth and high unemployment, the tax cuts proposed by President George Bush on January 7 will primarily benefit wealthy capitalist investors.

The cuts have been estimated to total \$670 billion over the next 10 years. Bush told a meeting of business executives sponsored by the Economic Club of Chicago that the plan would "speed up economic recovery."

The key proposal in the package is the elimination of the tax that shareholders pay on stock dividends, which are paid yearly out of profits by many companies. The package also brought forward to January 1 the implementation of income tax cuts previously scheduled for 2004 and 2006.

"The most obviously bogus claim made is that ordinary taxpayers are the beneficiaries," stated the *Financial Times*. An estimated 42 percent of the monetary gains will go to the top 1 percent of taxpayers. Those among "America's seniors" who will receive windfalls from the tax cut on dividend payments are "the very rich pensioners," the London-based daily noted.

According to the Tax Policy Center, those with income of more than \$1 million a year would rake in about \$89,000, while working people who earn \$21,350 would save \$47. As one example, John Snow, the president's newly appointed treasury secretary, would keep more than \$600,000 a year in tax on dividends from his 2 percent stake in the CSX railroad company.

Bush said that the tax cut scheme is aimed at bolstering "investor confidence" and would "draw more money into the markets to provide capital to build factories, to buy equipment, hire more people."

The *Wall Street Journal*, a strong supporter of the measures, claimed they would also free up "the increasingly large pile of frozen capital" tied up in retained earnings that have built up as companies have allegedly refrained from dividend payouts to avoid paying the taxes. During the 1990s, it reported, corporations purchased their own stock in the effort to boost values—a maneuver that helped inflate the stock market bubble of that period.

Not all capitalist commentators shared the *Journal's* enthusiasm. "If enacted," reported the *Financial Times*, the package "would be the 16th big tax change in two decades." The impact of the proposed tax cuts on dividends would amount to less than 1 percent of the economy in the first year, it said.

"The effect on investment, growth and jobs is likely to be minimal... and the stimulus effect on the economy will be paltry," added the British paper.

While doing his best to present the package in a positive light, Bush also noted the high and persistent levels of unemploy-

ment. The official unemployment rate reached 6 percent last November—about 8.5 million jobless workers, the highest level in eight years. "Manufacturing jobs have declined for 28 months in a row," he said to the business executives, "and the unemployment rate is projected to rise even further in the short run."

The next day Bush signed into law a belated bill extending for 13 weeks federal unemployment benefits to 800,000 workers whose checks were cut off in December after Congress adjourned without extending their temporary benefits. The legislation also provides 13 weeks of emergency federal compensation for an estimated 1.6 million people who could exhaust their 26 weeks of state benefits before the end of May. Millions more, however, will continue to receive no unemployment benefits.

The package includes other provisions partly tailored to counter criticism that it is skewed to the rich. The child care credit would be increased by \$400 to \$1,000 per child, while provision has been made for a "re-employment account" of up to \$3,000 for job training and other expenses related to job hunting. The president didn't say if these funds would be made available to all unemployed workers.

Bush also proposed raising tax deductions for small businesses on their purchases of capital equipment from \$25,000 to \$75,000.

Vin Webber, a former Congressional

N.Y. protesters condemn acquittal of GIs who killed Korean girls



Militant/Don Hammond

More than 150 people rallied in New York December 31 to protest the acquittal of two U.S. soldiers who killed two schoolgirls in south Korea when they hit them with a 50-ton mine-clearing vehicle. Kwan-Ho Choi, chair of the executive committee of the Congress for Korean Reunification, told demonstrators that the U.S. military had tried to cover up the crime by using a fabricated story. He said the protest was called to "commemorate the deaths of the two girls and to condemn the arrogance of the U.S. forces in south Korea."

leader for the Republican Party, acknowledged the vote-catching dimension of the package. He contrasted it to the "debacle" of tax raises enacted by the first President Bush, whose "own base thought he was doing the wrong thing." By contrast, Webber said, "this president has turned that inside out and around" with his tax cuts.

Both the economic proposals by Bush and the counterproposals by Democrats are being used as part of the unfolding cam-

paign for the 2004 elections.

Democratic Party politicians have proposed a smaller-scale alternative with its own built-in inequalities. Their main proposal would be a one-time tax rebate of \$300 to every taxpayer regardless of income. Slightly less generous depreciation rules for small businesses and a little more aid to state governments are included.

While the Democrats demagogically
Continued on Page 14

Gold's appeal grows in face of economic instability

BY PATRICK O'NEILL

One of the trends that mark the increasingly unstable capitalist economy and depression conditions in the world today is a shift toward holdings in gold—among some businessmen, middle-class layers, and governments in a number of countries.

As the U.S. dollar slides in value and world stock markets continue to head bumpily downward, the market price of gold, a traditional haven in times of economic and political crisis, has risen to levels unseen for half a decade.

Although it no longer plays anything like the central commercial role it performed in precapitalist times as a means of exchange, gold retains an appeal because of its traditional role as a store of wealth and savings. Unlike paper money or shares, the metal is a commodity possessing an intrinsic exchange value, derived from the labor power involved in mining and processing it.

"There's just too many things wrong with the world at the minute for gold to trade much lower," said British financial commentator James Moore in a January interview with CBS.MarketWatch.com. The U.S. military buildup in the Gulf and the diplomatic confrontation between Washington and the north Korean workers state are making investors nervous, he said.

Erik Gebhard, another commentator, cited a number of "obvious reasons" that "gold remains well supported." They include "looming war, poor equity performance, [and the] sluggish economy," he said.

The precious metal has surged back in the last couple of years. On January 8 gold reached \$356 an ounce, up from \$343 in December. The level was only 60 cents below the six-year high of March 1997.

The metal rose 25 percent in value through 2002, a rate of increase that has continued in January.

Gold has prospered alongside the steady decline of the stock markets in the United States, which in 2002 turned in their third consecutive year of losses. The Dow Jones Industrial Average, which groups the major industrial companies, suffered its worst year since 1977, falling by almost 17 percent. The high-tech Nasdaq index fared even worse.

Stock markets in the European capitalist powers have also recorded several years of negative returns. The market in Germany, the continent's largest power, fell by

44 percent.

U.S. Treasury bonds, which are at the present time more secure than company stocks because of their backing by the government, and agricultural commodities, both rose in 2002. "Mideast, Argentine unrest, crop failures, stock jitters" fueled increases in the value of cocoa, crude oil, gold, and other commodities, reported the January 2 *Wall Street Journal* in an article entitled, "Bad News Was Good News for Commodities."

Precarious times for stock markets

The *Journal* noted that last year investors' "jitters made gold one of the commodity markets' stars, as the metal reclaimed its traditional role as a financial haven during precarious times."

Speaking on January 2, Frank Holmes, chairman of U.S. Global Investments, predicted that the price would top \$375 an ounce before mining companies could increase output.

Just as striking as the stock market slide has been the decline of the U.S. dollar—up till now regarded by many as a haven in its own right. In 2002 the currency of the world's dominant imperialist power fell by almost 10 percent against a basket of currencies, the steepest drop since 1987.

Among the factors behind the trend is the retreat by foreign investors from the U.S. economy. Net foreign direct investment collapsed from \$308 billion in 2000 to \$14 billion two years later—a decline only partially offset by an increase in investment by foreign governments.

"Instead of using the dollar for protection, investors are fleeing to other refuges like the Swiss franc and gold," wrote Peter McKay in the December 31 *Journal*.

"You hear people talking more about Iraq driving gold, but I almost think that's a sideshow compared to the currency market," said Joseph Foster of the International Investor Gold Fund. "People are looking for some place, anyplace else, to put their money."

In times of economic crisis, it's not just investors that begin to shift to gold. In many parts of the world farmers, small merchants, and others often take what savings they have out of currencies and start buying gold, silver, and other jewelry and pieces of valuable metal—whatever they might be able to sell some day—and stash

it away. This is especially true in the many countries of the world where the majority of people do not have bank accounts, keeping their modest savings in a chest or under the mattress.

The movement toward gold is dramatic in imperialist Japan, where the economy has been stagnant for almost a decade, and where many major banks are teetering on the edge of collapse, weighed down by unpayable loans to bankrupt businesses. "You do not see many smiles in Tokyo's financial district these days, but in gold shops the staff can hardly contain their glee," reported the BBC in February of last year.

"People come in here with paper bags full of money," said Masahiro Arai, the manager of the Tokuriki Honten gold shop. "They're buying large quantities, up to 30 million yen [US\$250,000]."

One elderly woman told the reporter, "Something disastrous could happen to the economy.... That's why I'm buying gold for the family."

Several governments in Asia and in the Middle East have begun to hedge their futures by buying up gold or using it to back their currencies.

Gold-based currency in Malaysia

The Malaysian government of Mahathir Muhammad has taken the lead in promoting the gold-based Islamic dinar as a medium of exchange among a number of majority-Muslim countries. Arguing for the move, Abdalhasib Castineira, credited with initiating the scheme, said, "Give someone a piece of gold, and you give him a real asset whose worth has endured throughout millennia." By contrast, he said, the U.S. dollar "is just a [government] promise."

Commenting on the market performance of valuable metals in the very early stages of this development, in 2001, the online edition of the *Silver Investor* took note of the trend. "The Russians now have a gold coin as currency, the Chevronet, and are building their gold reserves....The Muslims are beginning to run with a gold coin called the Islamic dinar, while Arabs are loading up on gold via purchases out of Turkey and Switzerland. Meanwhile, the Chinese have been quietly buying physical gold. And come January [2002] the Chinese officially open up their gold market to the public."

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N.Y. Pakistani man resists INS deportation

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

NEW YORK—"They told me my case was 'special interest' and that I was being 'transferred out,'" said Faisal Ulvie, describing how last November Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) agents took him from a jail cell and put him on a plane with the intention of deporting him to Pakistan. "But my sixth sense told me this was different, and I managed to make a call to my wife insisting that she contact our lawyer to do something." The INS "was lying straight up and down."

Through the efforts of his family and Pakistani community groups, the 26-year-old Brooklyn resident was able to push back the government's attempt to deny him due process and summarily deport him. Ulvie, who is married to a U.S. citizen with three children, is continuing to pursue his application for resident status.

Before his arrest Ulvie worked as a clothing store salesman. He is one of many Pakistanis and other South Asian immigrants living in the New York City area who have been targeted for harassment and victimization by the federal government over the past 16 months. An unknown number are among the 1,200 U.S. residents of South Asian and Middle Eastern origin who have been rounded up by the INS during this period and subjected to secret detention and, in many cases, secret deportation.

U.S. officials justify the secrecy by labeling these cases "special interest"—INS jargon for all detentions of immigrants carried out under the cover of "fighting terrorism."

Community organizations have reported numerous cases over the past months—some almost every week—of Pakistani-born residents who have "disappeared" as they were grabbed out of their apartments, jobs, or neighborhoods, without their spouses or relatives knowing where they were being jailed. Some merchants in largely South Asian communities report receiving intimidating visits from federal cops at their shops.

The harassment has expanded with the federal government's recent order—issued by Attorney General John Ashcroft—that those from 20 countries, including Pakistan and other countries in South Asia and the Middle East, register to be interrogated and have their movements tracked. This latest move has sparked several protests in cities across the country.

'This must stop!'

At a January 9 hearing here, attended by about a dozen family members and supporters, an immigration judge affirmed Ulvie's right to pursue his application for residency on the basis of his marriage to a U.S. citizen. At the request of his lawyer, the judge ordered an expedited hearing to take place in her court by May 1.

Ulvie's supporters held a press conference after the hearing, celebrating the success in pushing back the government's attempts to strip him of his rights. Other speakers at the press conference included Ahsanullah "Bobby" Khan, director of the Coney Island Avenue Project; a representative of Rep. Nydia Velázquez; Elizabeth Ou Yang, Ulvie's attorney; and Nadine Young Ulvie, his wife.

At the press conference and in an interview with the *Militant*, Ulvie told his story.

"On November 8, six police detectives came to my door at 6:00 a.m.," Ulvie said. The cops broke through the front door of the building and forced their way into the apartment, while Faisal Ulvie was still asleep in the bedroom and Nadine Ulvie was in the shower. They arrested him and delivered him into the hands of the INS. Ulvie was locked up and interrogated for nine days. He protested the arrest, explaining that he was in the midst of an application for residency.

"They just decided themselves that my marriage was fake. They didn't interview my wife; they didn't interview my children," said Ulvie at the press conference. "Thousands are picked up like this every day. This must stop!"

On the evening of November 17, Ulvie phoned his wife from the Hudson County Jail in New Jersey and told her he was being deported. The next morning immigration cops put Ulvie on a plane in Newark, New Jersey, together with dozens of oth-



Militant/Michael Italie

Faisal Ulvie, left, his lawyer, Elizabeth Ou Yang, and supporters at press conference January 9 following hearing in New York in which the Pakistani man won a court date to consider his application for residency.

ers ordered removed to Pakistan.

Only with the dogged determination of his family and supporters like Bobby Khan of the Coney Island Avenue Project, was a judge finally reached, who agreed to give Ulvie a hearing and ordered INS agents to take him off the plane just moments before its departure.

Protests against registration

Ulvie's fight for justice received a boost from the recent series of anti-registration protests, in which Pakistanis in New York are playing an active part. These include organizations such as the Coney Island Avenue Project and the Council of Pakistan Organization (COPO), which sprung up in response to the intensified government harassment of the South Asian communities here.

More than 200,000 people of South Asian origin live in New York City. The Pakistani-born population alone has increased by 80 percent since 1990. At least 60 percent of the city's taxi drivers are from India, Bangladesh, or Pakistan.

The first protests against registration

took place after the INS arrested hundreds who had showed up to comply with the registration requirement before the December 16 deadline for men 16 and older from Iran, Iraq, Syria, Libya, and Sudan. Another round of protests took place around the country leading up to January 10, the deadline for U.S. temporary residents from 13 other countries. February 21 is the deadline for men born in Pakistan and Saudi Arabia.

Those subjected to registration are interrogated, digitally photographed, and fingerprinted, with the information run immediately through various criminal and INS databases. They are required to provide detailed information and documents verifying their residence, jobs, studies, and visa status. Many of those registering are applicants for permanent residence.

On January 10, some 100 Pakistanis—cab drivers, construction workers, small businessmen, and others—showed up for a public meeting and legal clinic sponsored by the Council of Pakistan Organization at its Brooklyn offices. Several of those in attendance had joined a Manhattan rally

against special registration earlier in the day.

Many in the audience stood up to voice their frustration with the myriad lists of cutoff dates and legal definitions that they confront, knowing that missing even a single document could land them in jail, or worse. "What about religious asylum?" "What could happen if I don't register?" were among the questions they asked representatives of the New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU) who described the registration process.

Abbas, a 38-year-old construction worker who declined to give his full name, said after the meeting, "There should be no racial profiling like the government is doing." He has participated in demonstrations against the attacks on immigrant rights. "The protests are important, including the ones against the war in Iraq," he added.

Donna Lieberman, executive director of the NYCLU, reported that one sign of the success of the protests was that this time none of those who entered for the special registration in New York on January 10 were arrested.

Arab prisoners in New Jersey speak out

Meanwhile, a group of Arabic-speaking prisoners in New Jersey jails sent a message of solidarity to the January 10 protest against special registration. "We, the detainees who are being held at the Passaic County Jail who are mostly Arab, and particularly Muslim, strongly protest the brutal acts of the American government performed in compliance with the John Ashcroft plan, and in particular the campaign which commenced this month," the prisoners stated.

Saying that they "condemn all the terrorist acts of September 11," the prisoners protested the fact that they "have been paying the price for those acts.... We therefore call on all Arab, Muslim and South Asian communities who are part of the general American population to take action. We call on you to speak out and demand your rights.... Last but not least, we thank all the free American people of all nationalities and religions who have advocated on behalf of our release." The message was made available by the Committee for the Release of Farouk Abdel-Muhti, a Palestinian activist imprisoned for more than eight months without charges at INS jails in New Jersey.

Governor commutes death sentences

Continued from front page

people accused of murder, and the fact that death row is disproportionately occupied by young Black men.

Ryan had declared full pardons for four prisoners on death row the previous day. The convictions of Aaron Patterson, Madison Hobbey, LeRoy Orange, and Stanley Howard, he said, had relied heavily on confessions obtained by police torture under the supervision of ex-Chicago Police Commander Jon Burge. Cook County State's Attorney Richard Devine announced he would have to review the matter before deciding whether to consider the four cases closed or to reopen the investigations.

In his January 11 speech, Ryan said that one overturned death sentence after another shows that "the death penalty process is deeply flawed." Among many others, he cited the case of Anthony Porter, whose conviction and death sentence were overturned, through the efforts of the Center on Wrongful Convictions at Northwestern University, whose members have played an important part in other exposures.

After the Porter case, he said, a *Chicago Tribune* investigation documented "the systemic failures of our capital punishment system. Half of the nearly 300 capital cases in Illinois had been reversed for a new trial or resentencing."

Black men on death row

"More than two-thirds of the inmates on death row were African Americans," said the governor. Of the more than 160 death row inmates in Illinois, he added, "35 were African American defendants who had been convicted or condemned to die by all-white juries."

The controversy around these and other



Former death row inmate Darby Tillis speaks to Edna Johnson, whose son was on death row, at January 9 Chicago rally against death penalty. Two days later Illinois governor George Ryan announced that all death sentences in the state would be thrown out.

outrages—including unscrupulous prosecutors and the incompetent attorneys often assigned to defend those accused of capital crimes—persuaded Ryan that the strong support he had expressed for the death penalty early in his political career was no longer tenable.

In January 2000, when Ryan declared a moratorium on executions in the state, he noted that between 1978 and 2000, 12 people had been executed and 13 cleared of the crime for which they were convicted. Those exonerated had been on death row for an average of 12 years as they fought

their way through multiple appeals or retrials to establish their innocence.

Ryan expressed frustration that the state legislature did not enact reforms called for by his commission on the question. "One of the few disappointments of my legislative career is that the General Assembly failed to work with me to reform our deeply flawed system," he said.

His package of reforms, he stated, would restrict the use of jailhouse snitches, create a statewide panel to determine death eligible cases, and reduce the number of

Continued on Page 11

The story of the 1955 lynching of Emmett Till

The Murder of Emmett Till, a film produced and directed by Stanley Nelson, written by Marcia Smith. To be broadcast Monday, January 20, at 9:00 p.m. Eastern Time on PBS television (check listings for "the American Experience"). Video available from WGBH television in Boston.

BY STU SINGER

This documentary film was premiered to a packed audience at the Schomburg Library in Harlem December 12. It reports the events around the lynching of Emmett Till, a 14-year-old Black youth from Chicago who was spending part of the summer of 1955 with relatives in a town in Mississippi, where he was tortured and murdered by racists.

The film is a powerful depiction of these events. The courageous response by his mother, Mamie Till, a Chicago city worker; his uncle, Moses Wright, a Mississippi sharecropper; Willie Reed, a young share-

cropper, and others led to protest meetings involving tens of thousands of people throughout the country. Those meetings were still taking place 100 days after Emmett Till's death when E.D. Nixon and Rosa Parks began the protests in Montgomery, Alabama, that became the Montgomery bus boycott. With the struggle in Montgomery, the civil rights movement, which had its beginnings in World War II, rapidly grew into the mass struggle that over 15 years broke the back of the system of legal segregation in the South known as Jim Crow.

On Aug. 24, 1955, after working in the fields, Emmett Till and some other young people piled into a pickup truck and went to a store for snacks in the small rural town of Money, Mississippi. According to a cousin interviewed in the film, Emmett whistled at the young white woman behind the counter, Carolyn Bryant, who ran the store with her husband Roy Bryant.

Three days later, Roy Bryant and his brother, J.W. Milam, went to the house of Moses Wright, Emmett Till's uncle, where the teenager was staying. They kidnapped Emmett and threatened to kill anybody who talked about it. They pistol-whipped him with .45s, shot him in the head, tied a 75-pound fan around his neck with barbed wire, and threw his body into the Tallahatchie River.

The body was found in the river. Bryant and Milam admitted taking Emmett Till, but said they had let him go. They were arrested and charged with murder.

As Mamie Till explains in the film, the coffin containing Emmett Till's body came back to Chicago nailed shut and she was instructed not to open it. She told the funeral home that if they didn't open it, she would get a hammer and do it herself.

She saw the horribly beaten body of her son. "I said, let the people see what I've seen."

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Right, Militant/Romina Green
Above, Chicago funeral of Emmett Till, murdered in 1955 by racists in Mississippi. Fifty thousand filed by the coffin. His mother, Mamie Till, insisted the casket remain open so people could see his horribly beaten body. Right, Mamie Till speaks at July 2000 protest in Kokomo, Mississippi, against lynching of Raynard Johnson the month before.



IN REVIEW

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Refused to be intimidated

The story is that of ordinary people who stood up and refused to be intimidated and let this crime pass. A hero—not just a victim—that emerged was Emmett Till himself, just turned 14. His actions came to light from an unlikely source: the confession of his killers. They had admitted kidnapping him but, in court, denied killing him and were acquitted by an all-white jury. Because juries were selected from a list of male registered voters, and no Blacks were registered to vote in Tallahatchie

50,000 file by the open coffin

Fifty thousand people in Chicago filed by the coffin. The photograph of the body appeared first in the nationally circulated magazine, *Jet*, and then in publications throughout the world. You understand the impact it had when you see the movie.

The lead headline in the Sept. 12, 1955, issue of the *Militant* was, "14-year Old Negro Boy Lynched in Mississippi By White Supremacists; Body Sent to Chicago; Huge Crowds Gather In Dramatic Protest." The protest movement around the Emmett Till lynching remained on the front page of the *Militant* every week for months.

Many scenes documented in the movie are notable: The crowds outside the Chicago funeral home; Moses Wright standing up in court and pointing out the killers—the first time a Black man had testified against a white man in a Mississippi court in nearly a century; Mamie Till speaking at mass meetings throughout the country.

The film also shows the killers holding their young children on their knees during the trial. A coworker told me his wife recently saw a play about Emmett Till. To her, that was one of the most disturbing scenes—the depiction of children in the courthouse being trained on their parents' knees to accept and support the racist brutality being committed against Black people.

As the film shows, the sheriff, a local plantation owner, jailed and threatened potential prosecution witnesses. At the trial, Mamie Till, Rep. Charles Diggs from Detroit—one of the few Black congressmen—and Black observers, photographers and journalists, were forced to sit at a card table in the corner of the room. Crowds of racists jeered them every day outside the courthouse. The sheriff contemptuously said, "hello niggers," as he walked by their table. The chairs they sat on were stolen every time they left the court room and they

had to stand part of the time.

Both Moses Wright and Willie Reed, a young sharecropper who testified that he saw the killers with Emmett Till, had to be smuggled out of Mississippi, where they would have been killed.

The defense lawyers for the murderers argued that Emmett Till was not dead, that the body pulled from the river was someone else, even though Mamie Till and others had identified the body and Emmett Till's father's engraved ring was still on his hand. His father, part of a segregated army unit, was killed in World War II.

The all-white jury took one hour to acquit Bryant and Milam. Mamie Till led the congressman and others away from the courthouse before the jury came back, knowing there would be a victory rally for the killers. "It was like the fourth of July," she said.

Inaction of federal government

The front page of the October 17 *Militant* demanded: "Immediate federal intervention!" and asked, "How many more lynchings, beatings, floggings and kidnappings must we have before the federal government acts to protect the Negro people of Mississippi? ...When big business wanted to intervene in the Korean civil war on the side of the landlords and Syngman Rhee's dictatorship, hundreds of thousands of American boys were mobilized by Truman for 'police action' against the workers and farmers of Korea. But for the protection of one million Negroes in Mississippi, living under a reign of racist terror, the federal government has not lifted a finger."

In 1955 the United States was in the midst of an antilabor, anticommunist drive by the employers, and worldwide Washington was coming under heat for continued segregation. The *Atlanta Constitution*, a major liberal daily in the South, wrote concerning the Till case, "Once again the South has been rubber-stamped with a lynch-murder...grist in the mill of those who picture all the South as a region of violence. It assists the Communist propagandists. It conveys us into the hands of our enemies."

The movie reports how Mamie Till and thousands of others wrote President Dwight D. Eisenhower requesting federal action, but the White House never even acknowledged her request. Mississippi Democratic senator James Eastland is shown addressing a large rally. "You are not going to permit the NAACP to take over your schools," he declared. "You are not going to permit the NAACP to control your state."

In 1956 during the Montgomery bus boycott and months after the Till lynching, Eastland was chosen to head the Senate Judiciary Committee. The *Militant* headline read, "Racists Handed Big Victory By Democrats in U.S. Senate." Just two years earlier, Trent Lott's hero, segregationist Strom Thurmond, had been elected to the Senate.

When an all-white grand jury announced

November 9 it would not file charges against Bryant and Milam for kidnapping, the *Militant* wrote, "Arrogant Racists Free Till Killers On Kidnap Count; Lynch Tide Mounts All Over South." Sixteen-year-old John Earl Reese of Longview, Texas was killed when racist thugs shot up the Black community there. Howard Bromley, 23, was killed with impunity by a white shopkeeper in Heathsville, Virginia. The *Militant* demanded, "Send federal troops to Mississippi."

Eisenhower finally did send federal troops two years later to Little Rock, Arkansas, to enforce school desegregation. And in 1962 President John F. Kennedy sent troops to Mississippi after the governor provoked a riot to stop James Meredith from entering the University of Mississippi.

Rise of civil rights movement

The lynch mobs were still active, but now protests answered the lynchings. And the civil rights mobilizations grew larger and started to hit every city and town. Jim Crow's days were numbered.

In Mississippi the turning point came in the summer of 1966. Some national civil rights leaders were giving up on that state, but James Meredith, who in 1962 became the first Black student at the University of Mississippi, started a march down Highway 51 from Memphis through the length of Mississippi. Racists attacked him, but he kept marching and others joined in. By the time the march reached Tougaloo, a Black college north of Jackson, there were thousands of demonstrators and international attention focused on the confrontation.

The march went into Jackson. The capitol building was surrounded by armed state cops, all white, but the march bypassed the capitol and poured into the downtown streets and the Black community. Those of us who were there will never forget it. The doors of nearly every home in the Black community were thrown open. Groups of people went around to restaurants, hotels, and stores and desegregated them on the spot.

Watching *The Murder of Emmett Till* gives a vivid picture of a decisive chapter in the history of the Black struggle. You see some of the fighters who seem to emerge from nowhere and put their lives on the line. A movement grew up against seemingly insurmountable odds and won.

Emmett Till's mother, Mamie Till, who just died on January 6 at the age of 81, was one example of these fighters. Though she was suffering from kidney failure, she continued speaking around the country, right until the end, about her son's lynching. "People have told me to let this thing die, even people in my own family," she said. "But people need to be aware."

See this film with coworkers and young people and talk about what it says about the real history of workers and farmers and the capacities they will demonstrate in the battles to come. It is a source of confidence for rebel youth and fighters today, here and throughout the world.

from Pathfinder



Fighting Racism in World War II
C.L.R. James, George Breitman, Edgar Keemer, and others.

A week-by-week

account of the struggle against racism and racial discrimination in the United States from 1939 to 1945, taken from the pages of the socialist newsweekly, the *Militant*. \$21.95

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Protesters demand, 'No detentions!'

Continued from front page

ber of organizations, including the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC); the National Lawyers Guild and the American Civil Liberties Union; and groups representing Chinese, Filipino, Japanese, Iranian, and Latin American residents of California.

The issue exploded into public prominence at the first registration date in December, after INS officers in Los Angeles arrested many people as they registered. Amid widespread outrage, thousands joined protests in Los Angeles at that time. Since then pickets have been mounted to coincide with each week's registration process outside INS offices in Los Angeles, New York, and San Francisco (see coverage in this issue).

The Justice Department has admitted to 400 arrests in California since the process began.

In defending their actions, government officials have made it clear that they have every intention of extending the "registration" process. INS representatives say they are merely fulfilling a 1996 congressional mandate to develop an entry-exit system that would track all immigrants here as visitors, whether under work, tourist, or student visas. They predict that the program will encompass all immigrant groups by 2005.

Registration of men from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia begins January 13 and ends February 21.

A number of organizations put forward speakers at the January 10 action in San Francisco. They included representatives of the ADC; Filipinos for Affirmative Action; the Islamic Society of San Francisco; the San Francisco Labor Council; and the Glide Memorial Church.

Internment of Japanese-Americans

"We must not let the government muzzle us now," said Chizu Iiyama, 81, who was sent to one of the camps for Japanese-Americans set up by the U.S. government after its 1941 declaration of war on Japan.

John Tateishi of the Japanese-American Citizens League, said, "60 years ago this government enacted the 1940 Federal Alien Registration Act for those from Japan, Germany, and Italy to register. This led to the incarceration of 120,000 Japanese-Americans. This was the worst case of racial profiling."

Renee Saucedo of La Raza Centro Legal's INS Watch project said, "When you detain some of us, you detain all of us; when you terrorize some of us, you terrorize every single one of us. No human being is illegal!"

While the protest proceeded, members of the ADC and other participants spoke

to men coming and going from the INS office to register. They noted that several have been detained over the past week in San Francisco.

Men leaving the INS building said it took about four hours to be interviewed, fingerprinted, and photographed. INS agents had asked questions about where they lived and worked, they said, as well as about their families and their country of origin.

"I've seen people going in and not coming out. Basically it's like luck whether you have to stay," said Ali, a Marin resident who had just been questioned.

On the same day several dozen people staged a protest along similar lines outside the INS office in San Jose. "No community should go through this," said Anabel Ibanez, the organizing director for the South Bay Labor Council. "So today it's one group. Who's next tomorrow?"

San Francisco resident Nabil Jemai told the *Oakland Tribune* that he had been detained for two days after voluntarily turning up to register, in spite of the fact that he is married to a U.S. citizen and had just filed an application to become a legal permanent resident himself. Immigration officials told the Tunisian-born man that he had to provide proof that he was married. However, they would not allow him or his wife to go home and fetch the necessary documentation.

"They treated us like criminals," he said of the prison guards he had faced. The Yuba



Militant/Nan Bailey

Defenders of immigrant rights join January 12 march in Los Angeles against U.S. war drive in Middle East. Protests against INS targeting of U.S. residents from 20 nations have taken place in several cities around the country.

County Jail where he was placed didn't even have a bed for him the first night, he said. For food he was given ham sandwiches even after he explained that he does not eat pork.

Jamais' wife Justina Perry reported that the INS had shipped her husband to Yuba

County for a second night despite the fact she had posted \$5,000 bond for him as instructed.

Deborah Liatos is a member of the United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 120.

U.S. agency: no to union for airport screeners

BY PAUL PEDERSON

The head of the government's Transportation Security Administration (TSA) signed an order January 9 banning airport screeners from organizing a union, saying collective bargaining is "not compatible" with "fighting terrorism."

TSA chief James M. Loy made the statement in response to attempts by the American Federation of Government Employees (AFGE) to organize the workers, who number some 56,000 nationwide. Passenger and baggage screeners at New York's La Guardia and Baltimore-Washington International airports have gone ahead with their petition for AFGE representation in the face of this ruling.

"Fighting terrorism demands a flexible workforce that can rapidly respond to threats," said Loy. "That can mean changes in work assignments and other conditions of employment that are not compatible with the duty to bargain with labor unions."

The AFGE has said it will contest the union-busting order in federal court. "We're going to continue our organizing

campaign," said union official Diane Witiak.

Loy claims the right to bar unionization under the 2001 Aviation and Transportation Security Act. The TSA was created in November of that year and will be a division of the Department of Homeland Security. In legislation passed in November 2001, Congress voted to give the president the power to strip collective bargaining rights from employees of that department in the name of protecting "national security."

On similar grounds President George Bush last year denied union representation to 500 employees at the U.S. Attorney's office and other divisions of the Justice Department.

In preparing to implement the legislation, the government reviewed the criminal and immigration records of privately employed airport workers, raiding their workplaces and arresting some 250 work-

ers nationwide on immigration charges.

The new agency requires all screeners to be U.S. citizens, making thousands ineligible for rehire in their old jobs. Some 15 percent to 25 percent of the airport screeners who had worked for private companies before the government takeover did not qualify.

Since the new agency took over the screeners have been forced to work shifts lasting as much as 21 hours. They have reported being paid up to a month late at times, and have been denied necessary safety equipment.

TSA spokesman Robert Johnson acknowledges that workers have been forced to work long hours and that they have not been paid on time, but dismissed their effort to organize. "When it comes to responding to new intelligence or terrorist threats on a moment's notice," he said, "we don't have time to check with a shop steward."

N.Y. protest opposes INS 'registration'

BY NAOMI CRAINE

NEW YORK—Some 300 rallied outside the Immigration and Naturalization Service offices here January 10 to protest the second deadline in the Justice Department's "special registration" program. Speakers addressed both the crowd and the long line of people waiting to get into the building to register and to attend other appointments.

The registration includes being fingerprinted, photographed, and interrogated by immigration officials. Protests in Los Angeles in December at the time of the first deadline had shone a spotlight on the INS arrest of hundreds who were complying with the order to register.

"What they are doing to us is not right," said Rajh, who came to the New York protest with a group of Pakistani immigrants from the neighborhood around Coney Island Avenue in Brooklyn. "A lot of families are sitting at home while the men come to register. What happens if the men are detained?"

January 10 was the registration deadline for temporary residents who are citizens or nationals of Afghanistan, Algeria, Bahrain, Eritrea, Lebanon, Morocco, Oman, Qatar, Somalia, United Arab Emirates, Yemen, and north Korea. Immigrants from Pakistan and Saudi Arabia are next, with a registration deadline of February 21.

Over the last year and a half immigrants from the Middle East and south Asia have faced stepped up harassment, arrests, and deportations, even before Attorney General

John Ashcroft ordered the special registrations. "Hundreds of cab drivers are being deported," declared Farooq A. Bhatti, president of the Pak Brothers Yellow Cab Drivers Union, one of several speakers from the Pakistani community to address the rally. Bhatti described the case of one driver who he had worked with for nine years who was detained recently. "Now he's in jail in New Jersey and his family is in Brooklyn."

Many of those who joined the rally have been campaigning for the release of the hundreds of immigrants detained by the immigration cops without charges since September 11, 2001. Supriya David, a staff worker for Desis Rising Up and Moving (DRUM) said that her group has been working with the detainees and their families. "There are groups of people that just disappear" from their communities, she said. In the INS jails they receive "no proper medical treatment and no proper food. They have 15 people in a cell."

Jeanette Gabriel, the organizer of the New Jersey local of the National Writers Union, said that her organization has called for the release of the detainees, many of whom are held in New Jersey county jails. "Conditions in the jails are so horrible that a lot accept voluntary deportation," Gabriel said. She handed out flyers for a conference of Middle Eastern, South Asian, and Muslim-American writers, "Writing for our Rights: Writers in the Defense of Civil Rights," to be held at Rutgers University's Newark campus January 25-26.

FROM PATHFINDER

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution

By Jack Barnes

Cuba and the Coming American Revolution is about the struggles of working people in the imperialist heartland, the youth who are attracted to them, and the example set by the people of Cuba that revolution is not only necessary—it can be made. Preface by Mary-Alice Waters. Also available in Spanish and French. **\$13.00**



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Chicago: broad support to antideportation fight

BY BETSEY STONE

CHICAGO—Róger Calero is doing “the same thing I am doing in my case, trying to unite us to fight together,” said Julieta Bolivar. She was one of the 100-plus participants in a January 3 public meeting called here to organize support for the fight by Calero, a U.S. permanent resident, against plans by the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to exclude him from the country.

Fighting back “is the only way we can end the situation where the government treats us like objects,” Bolivar told the meeting. She was one of three members of Latino Union, an organization of day laborers and temporary workers, who was turned over to the INS after being arrested when their car got a flat tire.

Many immigrant workers in attendance had gone through experiences like those of Calero or Bolivar, either directly or through relatives and friends. Partly because of who was there, the event became a forum to discuss how to fight back against the intensifying attacks on immigrants and other working people.

Participants included garment and laundry workers from three workplaces organized by the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE), and two UNITE organizers. A United Electrical Workers organizer attended, and distributed information about the strike at the Azteca tortilla factory. Guadalupe Peña, one of the meat packers who are waging a determined fight to gain back wages from the closed American Meat Packing Corporation plant, also took part, having earlier accompanied Calero to a TV interview.

Held at St. Pius church in Pilsen, one of the largest Mexican communities in Chicago, the meeting was part of the Midwest stop on Calero’s national speaking tour organized by his New York-based defense committee. Calero has also spoken at successful events in the Twin Cities, Minnesota; Des Moines, Iowa; and Omaha, Nebraska (see accompanying articles).

“What happened to me is happening to tens of thousands of other working people,” Calero emphasized when he told his story to the Chicago meeting as part of a panel of speakers.

The labor and socialist journalist, who serves as the associate editor of *Perspectiva Mundial* and on the writing staff of the *Militant*, was thrown in an INS jail in Houston December 3 on his return from a reporting trip to Mexico and Cuba. After being swamped by protest letters, the city’s INS director gave the order for Calero’s release 10 days later. The INS has set March 25 in Houston for the hearing on their attempt to “remove” him from the country.

At the time of his release, Calero was just putting the finishing touches to his second article based on interviews with his fellow inmates. Both articles were pub-



Mary Johnson, longtime fighter against cop brutality, addresses January 3 meeting in Chicago to fight deportation of Róger Calero. Left to right: Calero, interpreter behind Johnson, and Gerardo Sánchez. Inset, José Landaverde, director of Latino Union, tells participants at meeting about fight against police and INS harassment.

lished in the *Militant*.

“They are portraying me as a criminal, saying this is the reason to deport me,” said Calero. “They base this on a conviction while I was in high school when the punishment was no more than a suspended sentence, a \$50 fine and the provision that I had to finish high school, which I did.”

Successfully applied for green card

The defense committee’s fact sheet explains that the journalist had told the INS

of this conviction when he successfully applied for permanent residency in 1990. In 2000 the green card was reaffirmed—again with full INS knowledge of Calero’s record.

The Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, passed in 1996, strengthened the hand of the government in victimizing immigrant workers, said Calero. Under this law, thousands have been deported, many for minor infractions committed years ago. “This is done in to-

tal disregard for human beings, destroying families, destroying the lives of people who have been working here for years with no problems,” Calero said.

He stressed the importance of continuing to flood the INS with letters demanding that the deportation attempt be halted. “Without the initial letters and petitions I would still be in jail,” he said. “If the staff members on my newspaper had not launched this public campaign and gotten such a response, the INS would have probably chewed me up by now, and I would be back in Nicaragua.”

“We intend to continue to fight this out publicly,” Calero stressed. “This is something the government doesn’t want. They don’t want their brutalities and injustices to be out in the open. They like to operate in secret. It will take a public movement, expressions of outrage and pressure, to expose what they are doing and to stop them.”

Other panelists expressed solidarity with Calero’s fight, and emphasized its connection with broader issues and struggles.

Randy Jasper, a Wisconsin dairy farmer and activist in Family Farm Defenders, stressed the importance of opposing INS policies that undercut the right to travel. “I had the chance to go to Cuba to talk with farmers there. I went to England to demonstrate with those farmers. I learned a lot from those experiences.”

“The same big corporations that are destroying farmers in Mexico with their lower prices are also destroying the farmers here,” he said. “We have to support each other.”

Mary Johnson, a longtime fighter against police brutality and the death penalty,

Continued on Page 14

Nebraska meat packers defend Calero

BY JOHN PINES

OMAHA, Nebraska—“We come here to work and they abuse us. We live in a country where many don’t know about this. We live under that pressure. That is why I am here to support brother Róger Calero in his fight.” So explained Juan Herrera, a veteran packinghouse worker in Omaha, to a January meeting of more than 40 people entitled, “Stop the deportation of Róger Calero!”

Calero, who is the associate editor of *Perspectiva Mundial* and a staff writer for the *Militant*, traveled to Omaha as part of a national speaking tour organized by his defense committee in New York. Tour events in the Midwest have successfully built support for his fight against the INS drive to deport him.

As the featured speaker at the Omaha event, held at the Our Lady of Guadalupe Church, Calero described how Immigra-

tion and Naturalization Service (INS) cops had seized and jailed him on December 3. The arrest occurred as he was returning through Houston from a reporting assignment in Mexico and Cuba. INS agents cited a previous minor conviction as grounds for Calero’s removal, in spite of the fact that he had been granted permanent residency status since the offense.

Although the INS released him 10 days later, after being deluged by protest letters, “they have every intention of deporting me—or, as they put it in their notice of a March 25 hearing in Houston, of seeing to my ‘removal,’” said Calero. “Only an effective public defense campaign that mobilizes solidarity and links up with other struggles can make them pull back from this,” he said.

The speakers panel and audience showed the potential for drawing people from diverse backgrounds to the fight. Ed Leahy, the coordinator of the Immigrant Rights Network of Iowa-Nebraska, served as the co-chair. Joining Herrera and Calero on the platform was Father Stanley Luis Kasun, a pastor of the St. Leonard church in Madison, Nebraska.

Lisa Rottach, a meat packer at south Omaha’s Swift and Company plant, opened the meeting. She noted that five co-workers present had helped lead the successful organizing drive that had won union recognition for the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) at the plant in May of last year.

Calero had himself participated in the organizing drive at the Dakota Premium Foods plant in Minnesota. He noted the similar challenge now facing workers at both plants. “Some workers say that things are better with the union; others say things are the same or worse. But the real question facing us is how to use our union structures to effectively fight, mobilize workers to defend themselves, and reach out to broader struggles.”

Broad working-class participation

Herrera agreed. “We need to be able to organize ourselves in a way that we can take on these companies,” he said. “The only way to do that is with a real organized fight.”

The comments were of direct interest to

the dozen or more meat packers from five packing houses who participated in the meeting. Five UFCW organizers and two organizers from the Carpenters Local Union 444 also took part.

Members of several community organizations attended and signed the petition in support of Calero, including the Latina Resource Center, Interfaith Immigration Services (IIS), and Omaha Together One Community (OTOC).

Participants contributed \$350 to help defray legal and other expenses in the fight and in the speaking tour.

In the discussion that followed the speakers’ presentations, a Swift plant worker noted that he knew Calero’s name from his articles in *Perspectiva Mundial*. “The INS amounts to a second army of the United States,” he said.

In response, Calero said that the INS acts to divide the working class by isolating and victimizing its immigrant component. “I will continue to write articles on these questions,” he said, adding that “we have one obligation—to fight for our rights.”

One of the kill floor workers at Swift and Co. saw the struggle to defend Calero as a unique opportunity for immigrant workers like herself. “Most immigrants wouldn’t have a shot at defending ourselves from this kind of attack, including myself. But Róger, because he’s a political person who’s a journalist, can reach out for broad support. He has a chance to beat back this attack, which would help all of us.”

The previous evening Herrera had hosted a meeting for Calero at his south Omaha home. Seven meat packers welcomed the opportunity to discuss the possibilities of waging a fight against INS victimization, and the stakes involved for all working people.

The January 9 meeting was covered by the *Omaha World-Herald* (see box at left) and a local television news broadcast. During this three-day stop in Omaha, Calero was interviewed by the *Herald*, *Nuestro Mundo*, and other media outlets. He also met with Donna McDonald, president of UFCW Local 27, and the representatives of several other organizations.

Lisa Rottach, a kill floor worker at Swift and Co., contributed to this article.

Omaha daily reports on defense campaign

Printed below is an article headlined “Immigrant talks on INS fight” from the *Omaha World-Herald*, published on January 9, 2003.

BY CINDY GONZALEZ

A New York-based journalist fighting deportation brought his campaign to Omaha Wednesday, saying he is just one example of an “erosion” of rights faced by immigrants.

“What is happening to me is happening to thousands of people who were born in other countries and work here,” Róger Calero, associate editor of *Perspectiva Mundial* and staff writer for the *Militant* newspaper, told about 40 people gathered at Our Lady of Guadalupe hall near 23rd and O Streets.

The 33-year-old Nicaraguan native, who formerly worked at an Iowa meatpacking plant, found moral and financial support from the audience that included packing plant workers and labor union organizers. Calero has been a permanent resident in the United States for 12 years and is married to a U.S. citizen.

His plight began Dec. 3, when federal agents arrested him at the Houston

airport as he returned from a reporting assignment in Cuba and Mexico. The basis for the arrest and deportation proceedings, he said, is a 1988 conviction for selling one ounce of marijuana to an undercover officer while he was a high school student in Los Angeles.

Immigration and Naturalization Service officials say that a law passed by Congress in 1996 makes deportable an immigrant with a past drug-related offense such as Calero’s.

Calero urged the Omaha group to write to the Houston INS district director, Hipolito Acosta, asking for a stop to the deportation. Acosta released Calero after 10 days in jail pending a March 25 immigration hearing.

Omaha was the fourth stop in a national tour to publicize Calero’s case and to gain momentum for immigration reform.

Calero said the INS wants him to pay for the same crime twice. He said the agency was aware of his conviction, as he explained it when applying for permanent residency in 1989 and again in 2000 when his green card was renewed.

“If we can get a victory, it will reinforce the fights of many others,” he said.

Minnesota union hosts fund-raiser for defense of Calero

Continued from front page

the president of the state AFL-CIO, and officers of the Service Employees International Union and the Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees (HERE) unions in the Twin Cities. Also attending the meeting were Minnesota state representatives Tim Mahoney and Carlos Mariani.

Students, other young people attend

Among the young people present were four students who had traveled 45 minutes from St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota. Also there were five members of the Minnesota Cuba Committee; a leader of Pro-Choice Resources, which defends woman's right to choose abortion; and four members of the Social Action Committee of Our Lady of Guadalupe church. Two young activists helped to staff a resource table for the defense effort.

Among the meat packers in attendance were five workers from GFI, a plant in Minneapolis, and well over 20 of Borroel's co-workers at Dakota. Starting in June 2000 these workers had fought a series of battles to organize a union in the plant and win a contract. During his time on the Dakota slaughter floor in 2000 Calero had participated in and helped lead this fight.

The favorite slogan of the Dakota fight has been "Si, se puede" (Yes, we can do it). "I want to express now something I have learned recently," said Pearson. "Is it possible to win the fight to stop Róger's deportation? Si, se puede! Si, se puede!" The entire meeting stood and joined in the chant.

"About a month ago," Pearson reported, "I was asked to be a national co-chairman of the Róger Calero Defense Committee. I thought to myself, 'How would it look for the president of a union to hook up with the Socialist Workers Party?'" Calero is a long-standing member of the SWP.

"Then I looked in a mirror," said the Local 789 leader. "How could I tell workers in struggle not to be afraid if I was afraid to publicly stand by Róger? So I decided to agree.

"Besides, Róger is my friend. He has spent much of his life fighting for workers' rights. I am proud to stand with him."

Pearson said that he would personally donate \$100 to the national defense campaign on condition that the local's secretary-treasurer, Don Seaquist, contribute \$200. Seaquist promptly replied, "I will contribute a check for \$200 from UFCW Local 789."

This began the fund collection. Between this and the proceeds at the door, the event netted more than \$2,000 toward the drive of the New York-based defense committee to raise \$50,000 for the campaign.

In several meetings of unionists over the previous week union staffer Bernie Hesse had raised hundreds of dollars toward the fund. Hesse had headed up the building of

the meeting for the local—an effort that included a mailing to other unions and the distribution of a flyer at Dakota Premium Foods and other plants. The notice was displayed in stores in neighboring communities and was also posted to the local's website, which will feature a video of the event.

'We are facing the same issues'

"Your fight is our fight because we are facing the same issues," said Zainab Hassan, another speaker and a leader of the fight against INS harassment and deportations of members of the Twin Cities Somali community. "There are lots of young Somali men in INS detention centers. Soon after Sept. 11, 2001, 30 were deported to Somalia," she said. One had been killed.

"There does not exist any central government in Somalia to take responsibility for them if they are deported," said Hassan, "yet the INS is trying hard to deport more Somalis." The Twin Cities and Seattle are home to more immigrants from Somalia than any other U.S. city. A meeting of more than 200 people had been held in the Somali community to protest the deportations, she said.

Calero had spoke at the Somali community event, receiving applause when he stated, "I am in complete solidarity with the Somali community against the deportations. The Somali community has been portrayed by the US government as unworthy of defense against these attacks." The government shut down a number of Somali businesses here in November 2001.

"Immigrants have been taken advantage of," said Feliciano Laurent, the coordinator of the Social Action Committee of Our Lady of Guadalupe Church. "They trample on us. They mistreat us. But we have to get out of the basements and fight them." A member of ISAIAH, a church-based coalition that speaks out for the rights of immigrants, Laurent encouraged all those present to participate in the organization's program on January 19 for Martin Luther King Day.

Calero defense committee announces officers

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

The broad support won by supporters of the fight to stop the deportation of Róger Calero is described in a January 10 newsletter issued by New York-based Róger Calero Defense Committee. In it, committee coordinator John Studer describes the successful Midwest leg of Calero's speaking tour, encourages readers to support the \$50,000 fund-raising campaign, and announces the availability of a new brochure explaining the case in both English and Spanish.

The newsletter's masthead lists the defense committee's new national officers. The chairpeople of the committee are José Oliva, who is the director of the Interfaith Workers' Rights Center in Chicago; Martha Olvera, coordinator of the Coalition for Dignity and Amnesty in Houston; Bill Pearson, president of United Food and Commercial Workers Union Local 789 in South St. Paul, Minnesota; and Pamela Vossenias, National Grievance Officer in New York for the National Writers Union.

The committee's treasurer is Eugene Katz, professor of microbiology at the State University of New York at Stony Brook, as well as Calero's father-in-law. Studer is the executive director of the Political Rights Defense Fund.

Supporters of the committee meet weekly in New York to help promote speaking engagements for Calero in the New York-New Jersey area, and to assist the committee's officers in their national responsibilities. The committee is asking supporters everywhere to join the defense effort in one or more of the following ways:

◆ Send messages to INS District Director Hipolito Acosta demanding the exclu-



Militant/Sandi Sherman

Above, participants in Jan. 11 fund-raiser at UFCW Local 789 hall in South St. Paul, Minnesota, to back campaign to stop INS deportation of Róger Calero. More than \$2,000 was raised for the defense effort. At left, Augustina Borroel, a meat packer at Dakota Premium Foods, where workers carried out a successful union organizing drive. She and well over 20 other workers from the plant attended the event.

"What's happening to me is happening to hundreds of thousands of other immigrant workers in this country," said Róger Calero. "That is why I am getting a hearing from civil libertarians, unionists, Black rights fighters and those struggling for immigrant rights. We are launching a fighting campaign against my deportation. An injury to one is an injury to all. A victory for one is a victory for all!"

"I want to thank you for your help," he said. "I am convinced that I would still be in jail if it were not for this kind of response."

After Calero's remarks, Pearson opened up the meeting for others to speak. Among those who took advantage of the opportunity was Uriel Perez, an official of HERE Local 17, which led a victorious strike of hotel workers in Minneapolis in the summer of 2000; a leader of Centro Campesino, which defends farm workers in areas south of the Twin Cities; and Juan Luis Garcia, an unemployed industrial worker who stressed the need for united action. ISAIAH vice

president Pablo Tapia also spoke and, like Perez, later endorsed the defense effort.

Local 789 members took responsibility for important aspects of the event, from the greeting of people as they arrived, to the food and music for the party that followed. The wife of one Dakota worker cooked a meal of *puerco con mole*. The local donated coffee, cider, and soda, while union staffers helped with the setting up of the tables and the serving of the food. An energetic DJ provided music for the event.

Calling the turnout "evidence of what we can do," Calero noted in his remarks that he had "spoken at similar meetings in Des Moines, Omaha, and Chicago.

"In Omaha a number of meat packers who are fighting to organize a union were present," he said. "They discussed the connection between their fight and other struggles, including the fight to stop my 'removal.' The fight against the deportations is an important part of building and defending unions in this country today."

sion moves against Calero be dropped. Messages can be faxed to (281) 774-5989; or mailed to him at the Immigration and Naturalization Service, 126 Northpoint Drive, Houston, TX 77060. Copies should be sent to the Róger Calero Defense Committee, c/o PRDF, Box 761, Church St. Station, New York, NY 10007; fax (212) 563-0585.

◆ Sign and distribute petitions demanding the INS drop the exclusion of Calero. A petition and the new brochure are avail-

able from the defense committee (e-mail: calerodefense@yahoo.com).

◆ Funds are urgently needed to meet rapidly mounting legal and other expenses. Defense campaign backers in every city need to raise thousands of dollars for the committee. Organize phone calling for donations, seek honoraria for speaking engagements, and take collections at public meetings. The goal is to raise more than \$50,000 by the end of January. Contributions are tax-deductible.

Róger Calero defense campaign tour

The Róger Calero Defense Committee has launched a speaking tour of Calero in cities around the country to broaden the fight to stop his deportation by the INS. Below is the schedule for the next steps in the tour. Requests for additional tour dates can be made to the committee.

San Francisco Jan. 16–18

Tampa Jan. 20–21

Miami Jan. 22–23

Houston Jan. 24–27

N.Y./New Jersey Jan. 28–Feb. 2

Seattle Feb. 20–22

Colorado Feb. 23–25

For more information or to send a contribution, contact the Róger Calero Defense Committee; Box 761, Church St. Station, New York, NY 10007;

tel/fax: (212) 563-0585;
e-mail: calerodefense@yahoo.com



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.

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How Washington put Japanese-Americans in concentration camps in World War II

“What’s Next? Concentration Camps?” Signs asking that question were clearly visible in mid-December in Los Angeles when thousands of people marched in protest at the arrests of 500 or more people by Immigration and Naturalization Service cops. Those arrested were among the thousands of U.S. residents who had complied with a new federal order and shown up at INS offices to give their fingerprints and register their names and other details. The order affected men from some 20 Middle Eastern and Asian countries holding temporary residency permits.

The wording on the signs was one example of how many are drawing pointed comparisons between present-day mass detentions and the concentration camp internment of Japanese-Americans following Washington’s declaration of war against Japan in 1941.

The following is an excerpt from an article that was printed in the April 18, 1994, issue of the *Militant* on the 52nd anniversary of the internment. In it, *Militant* correspondent Patti Ilyama reviews *Prisoners Without Trial: Japanese Americans in World War II*, a book by Roger Daniels, a professor of American history at the University of Cincinnati. In his book, which is still available today, Daniels describes the history of discrimination against Japanese in the United States, their internment in World War II, and their subsequent fight to obtain redress.



BY PATTI IYAMA

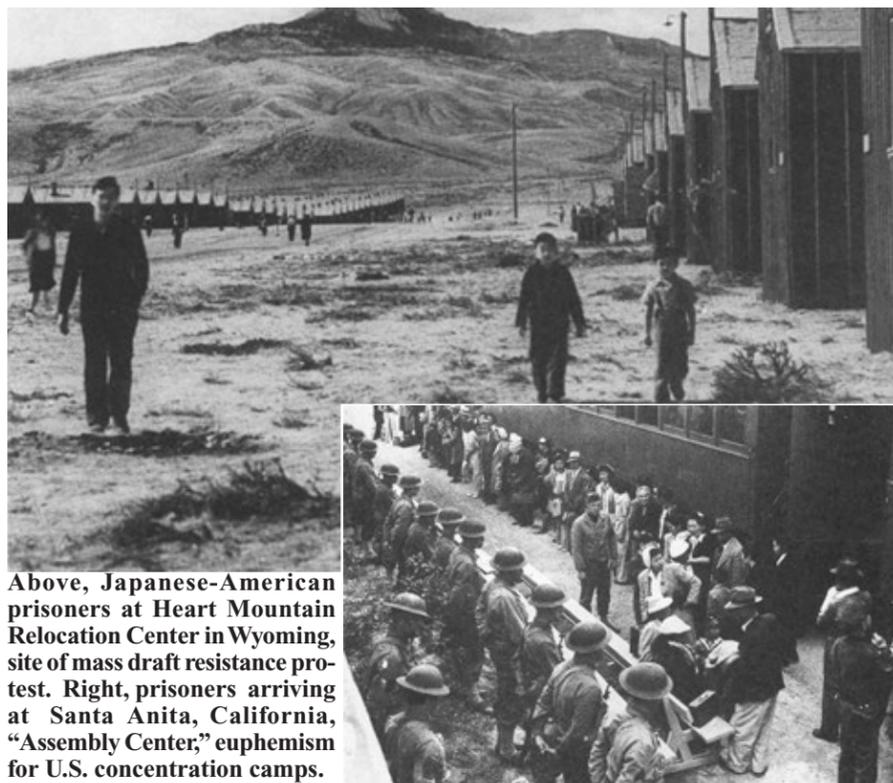
In 1942 more than 120,000 men, women, and children were incarcerated behind barbed wire in concentration camps euphemistically called “assembly centers.” Two-thirds of the evacuees held illegally without trial were citizens of the United States. Their only crime was their Japanese ancestry. And for that they served one to five years. The last camp was not closed until 1946, six months after World War II ended.

“The American camps were not death camps, but they were surrounded by barbed wire and by troops whose guns were pointed at the inmates,” Daniels says.

This policy was not a mistake or an aberration, as many would like to believe. Japanese residing in the United States were, because of their race, singled out as a target. But their evacuation and internment was only the most blatant and vicious aspect of a general policy of repression excused by the needs of war.

The East Asian theater of World War II was essentially an interimperialist conflict between two capitalist powers, Tokyo and Washington, for control of markets and natural resources in the Far East. The U.S. ruling class appealed to racist prejudice against Japanese to justify the war and disguise its true character. The creation of racist hysteria against the “sneaky, dishonest, sly Japanese” was necessary for the ruling class to ensure that U.S. workers would fight.

This racist dismissal of the Japanese as less than human reached its logical conclusion when the U.S. government ordered two atomic bombs dropped on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945. Tens of thousands of people were killed in the blasts and their aftermath. Although President Harry Truman claimed this atrocity was necessary to make the Japanese government surrender, the fact is that before the bombs were dropped Tokyo had al-



Above, Japanese-American prisoners at Heart Mountain Relocation Center in Wyoming, site of mass draft resistance protest. Right, prisoners arriving at Santa Anita, California, “Assembly Center,” euphemism for U.S. concentration camps.

ready requested to surrender on terms that the U.S. government accepted in September. In reality, Japanese lives were sacrificed to show the world that Washington had emerged as the top imperialist power, unafraid to act ruthlessly to maintain its might.

Racism used to divide working class

Racism has traditionally been used by the U.S. rulers to divide the working class and to consolidate their rule. Japanese in the United States have faced widespread discrimination since they began arriving in the late 19th century. As with the Chinese before them, they could not by law become citizens, buy land, or marry whites. Japanese were denied entry into the United States after 1924, some 42 years after legislation banning immigration of Chinese laborers.

Racist agitation against them reached a crescendo following the Japanese military attack on Pearl Harbor. The U.S. government claimed the mass internment was necessary because it was impossible to distinguish loyal from disloyal Japanese because they all look alike.

General John DeWitt, who was in the Western Defense command of the U.S. Army, said, “A Jap’s a Jap...There is no way to determine their loyalty...It makes no difference whether he is an American citizen, theoretically he is still Japanese and you can’t change him by giving him a piece of paper.”

Daniels examines the U.S. government’s justification that internment was a “military necessity” to avoid sabotage and espionage by Japanese Americans. No cases of sabotage or espionage were ever proven against any person of Japanese descent living in the United States.

The Supreme Court upheld the doctrine of the military necessity of the concentration camps. The author points to evidence that came to light 40 years later proving the U.S. government withheld, suppressed, and altered evidence indicating that there had been no military necessity to incarcerate Japanese Americans.

A 1981 report by the Presidential Commission on the Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians concluded that the roundup of Japanese Americans “was not

justified by military necessity.... The broad historical causes which shaped these decisions were race prejudice, war hysteria, and a failure of political leadership.... A grave injustice was done to American citizens and resident aliens of Japanese ancestry.”

With the president, Congress, and Supreme Court joining together at the time to implement and justify internment, it is not surprising that few spoke out for the constitutional rights of the Japanese. The only union to oppose evacuation was the International Longshoremen’s and Warehousemen’s Union. Even the supposedly revolutionary Communist Party not only failed to protest the concentration camps but actually supported the internment of Japanese Americans. As one CP member noted in 1972, “Immediately after Pearl Harbor, the *People’s World* [the West Coast daily newspaper reflecting the views of the CP] dis-



Poster in San Francisco ordering roundup of Japanese-Americans in 1942.

missed its Nisei [U.S.-born Japanese] woman office worker and the Party suspended all Nisei from membership saying that ‘the Party was the best place for any Japanese fifth columnist to hide and we don’t want to take any chances.’”

This support for internment was an integral part of the CP’s policy of subordinating all struggles to the U.S. war effort in compliance with Joseph Stalin’s wartime alliance with U.S. imperialism.

In sharp contrast the Socialist Workers Party attacked President Franklin Roosevelt’s Executive Order 9066 as “an indiscriminate and brutal witch-hunt ... having the character of a racial pogrom.” It criticized the evacuation as a violation of the rights of Japanese Americans — “a repressive measure, based purely on racial discrimination and motivated chiefly by the desire of Big Business for additional profits, which is presented as a necessary part of the ‘war for democracy.’”

Only 72 hours to pack

With few allies to withstand the power of the U.S. government, the Japanese Americans obediently turned up at train or bus stations as they were instructed to by notices placed on telephone poles and in store windows. They suffered enormous financial losses during the hasty evacua-

tion. Most were given only 72 hours to pack and dispose of their property, including farms, fishing boats, houses, and cars. They could take only what they could carry in two bags per person.

The Federal Reserve Bank of San Francisco conservatively estimated in 1942 that the total loss to evacuees, not including lost interest, wages, income, and appreciation, was \$400 million.

The U.S. concentration camps were not like Auschwitz or Buchenwald; there were no gas ovens, firing squads, or torture chambers. They were essentially prison camps, each relatively isolated on land where no one else chose to live—the desert or swamps. Guarded by armed military police and surrounded by barbed wire, the inmates maintained the upkeep of the camps under the supervision of white personnel.

Most of the evacuees were resigned to their fate, but resistance, both active and passive, did occur—more frequently and significantly than is generally known. Daniels writes that protest rallies, demonstrations, work stoppages, and even general strikes of evacuees took place at all 10 camps around the issues of living conditions—especially food and housing—the availability of employment, wages, and working conditions.

The author effectively summarizes two of the most important controversies in the camps—the loyalty oath all evacuees were asked to sign and the draft resistance at Heart Mountain, Wyoming, which resulted in the largest mass trial of draft resisters in U.S. history. Sixty-three were found guilty, and sentenced to three years in jail.

Altogether 33,000 Japanese Americans served in the U.S. Army in segregated units under white officers during World War II. The most famous formation, the 442nd Combat Team, was the most decorated unit in the U.S. Army during World War II.

In the racist tradition of the U.S. military, however, the 442nd was consistently used as the first wave of assault troops whose bodies paved the way for the white troops following them into battle. They suffered 9,486 casualties, 314 percent of the unit’s original strength.

The U.S. armed forces were able to use the 442nd as shock troops by exploiting the Japanese Americans’ desire to prove their loyalty. Washington felt confident that there would be no protest from troops who believed that only their blood could win freedom for the Japanese still interned at home.

By the summer of 1943, in response to the critical labor shortage caused by the war, the War Relocation Authority, which administered the camps, began a program encouraging permanent relocation outside the camps. Most evacuees returned to the West Coast several years after World War II, in spite of a campaign of intimidation waged in 1945–6 in Oregon and California by growers in the produce and floral industries, as well as officials of AFL unions like the International Brotherhood of Teamsters, aimed at keeping them away.

In 1948 the government began to adjudicate claims for losses due to evacuation. The payments were stingy—an average of 10 cents per dollar at 1941 values, not including inflation. The average award per claim in one year was \$40 while it cost the government \$1,500 simply to process a single claim. The final claim was processed in 1965.

Demands for redress and reparation

The redress movement—the term used by Japanese Americans to describe their struggle for official recognition that a grievous wrong was done to them—originated in the early 1970s under the impact of the victorious civil rights movement and growing support for the anti-Vietnam War movement

At first it was raised by only a few activists but soon it gained the support of virtually the entire Japanese American community. In 1978, the community’s major organization, the Japanese American Citizens League, passed a resolution calling for an apology by the government and a cash payment. Congress passed the Civil

from Pathfinder

In *New International* no. 6
Washington’s 50-Year Domestic Contra Operation
 LARRY SEIGLE
 As the U.S. rulers prepared to smash working-class resistance and join the interimperialist slaughter of World War II, the national political police apparatus as it exists today was born. Documents the consequences for the labor, Black, antiwar, and other social movements and how the working-class vanguard has fought over the past fifty years to defend democratic rights against government and employer attacks. \$15.00

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Rights Act of 1988, which officially apologized to Japanese Americans and provided reparations of \$20,000 to each of the 56,000 survivors of the concentration camps. A few days later President Ronald Reagan signed the bill into law.

One of the few weaknesses in Daniels's book is that he focuses only on the legislative and judicial processes that resulted in redress and reparations. He thereby neglects the movement of groups and individuals that organized speakers to reach out to many organizations, like churches and veterans groups; petitions and resolutions by city councils; letter-writing campaigns to legislators and the president; and intensive lobbying efforts. Redress was won by Japanese Americans and their supporters, not simply granted because of a change of heart by legislators.

Were centers 'concentration camps'?

A review that appeared in the New York Times attacked Daniels for daring to use the term "concentration camp" when referring to the internment centers.

Herbert Mitgang, the reviewer, says it is not accurate to equate the U.S. relocation centers—which "resembled American communities" with schools, libraries, hospitals, newspapers and churches—to Nazi "murder factories," which killed 6 million Jews.

Mitgang misses the point. The Nazis did not invent concentration camps. All forms of capitalist rule, from bourgeois democracies to military dictatorships to fascist regimes, have resorted to concentration camps when they felt the need. And more often than not, they have felt the need during wartime.

The term "concentration camp" actually originated during the Spanish attempts to suppress the movement for Cuban independence in the 1890s. The whole population of a district was herded into camps as part of a policy of forcible-pacification. Many died of starvation, disease, and exposure.

Just a few years later, the British government used the term to describe the detention centers it set up in South Africa during the Anglo-Boer War of 1899–1902. Approximately 20,000 Afrikaner civilians and more than 12,000 Africans died in these camps.

The British also set up concentration camps during World War I—for German prisoners of war and temporarily for Russian revolutionaries—in Nova Scotia. The Weimar Republic of Germany set up six state concentration camps to hold thousands in "protective custody."

The fascists under Francisco Franco in Spain incarcerated more than 1,600 people in the Canary Islands from 1936–37 both in prison and in the Gando concentration camp.

When Franco's forces won the Spanish Civil War in 1939, more than 450,000 anti-fascist fighters fled to France. Paris put the 270,000 considered "military personnel" into 16 French concentration camps. They were held in the camps until 1940 when the men were drafted into the French army or were permitted to volunteer for foreign legion units to fight Germany.

Some 8,000 of these veterans had the dubious distinction of being held in concentration camps of two capitalist powers. They were captured by the Nazis and held at Mauthausen concentration camp until the end of the war.

During World War II, virtually every imperialist government used concentration camps to hold without trial populations considered to be "politically unreliable." London had at least one concentration camp in Great Britain for politically "undesirable" Europeans who had fled the German fascists.

Paris incarcerated Austrian intellectuals, artists, and literary figures at the Camp des Milles in France. The unoccupied French government built the Montreuil-Bellay concentration camp to detain vagrants and gypsies ostensibly because they were spies.

Austria had two concentration camps for social misfits and gypsies in Weyer.

Tokyo built concentration camps in the Philippines for enemy civilians, as well as in other Asian nations it invaded.

The German government, of course, developed concentration camps the most methodically of all. They had concentration

camps for those who were not charged with any specific offense but were considered "politically incorrigible." They had punitive labor camps for those charged with specific offenses, including Russian civilians and soldiers. And they had extermination centers to eliminate the so-called "Jewish problem."

So the U.S. government was not alone or unprecedented in its use of concentration camps for an entire population. While the camps varied from country to country and within each country in terms of starvation, brutality, and torture, the only ones used as extermination centers were run by the Nazi regime.

In short, concentration camps have been endemic in modern times. They have historically been used to hold "undesirables"—unwanted races, political dissidents, immigrant workers, prisoners of war.

After World War II the term became synonymous with the Nazi extermination centers that executed millions of Jews, Russians, gypsies, trade unionists, political prisoners, and others. But even the majority of Nazi concentration camps were not death camps. As Daniels points out Roosevelt, senators, and nationally syndicated columnists publicly used the term "concentration camps" to describe the places where Japanese Americans were sent. Only after the massive publicity surrounding the liberation of Nazi death camp inmates did many shy away from this terminology.

So-called democratic governments have needed to resort to concentration camps particularly during wartime because they need to trample on democratic rights in order to conduct the war. The camps don't only punish their enemies and focus on scapegoats. By their very existence, they terrorize working people and deter them from even contemplating resistance.

During World War II, for instance, "liberal" president Roosevelt initiated an entire program curtailing civil rights and liberties in the United States. He imposed censorship on the media, suspended the right of habeas corpus, arrested and imprisoned leaders of socialist organizations and trade unions who opposed the war.

To his credit, Daniels has a final chapter in his book titled "Could It Happen Again?"

Governor's move highlights death penalty question

Continued from Page 5

crimes eligible for death. "These reforms...would have dramatically reduced the chance for error."

"I don't know why legislators could not heed the rising voices of reform," he said. Over the two days of his pardons and commutations, supporters of reforming the Illinois capital punishment system have stepped up their appearances on TV, radio and in newspapers speaking on the need for action in the next state legislative session.

He also noted the inhumane and mind-deadening conditions that the men and women will face in the state's jails. One prisoner had even petitioned him not to commute his sentence, he said, preferring to die rather than face long years of confinement.

The governor's dramatic action received headlines around the country. Noting that "governors have broad, virtually unchecked constitutional powers for pardons and clemency," the *New York Times* reported that Ryan is at least the fourth to take such sweeping action. The largest number ever released from death row before, however, had been 22.

Struggles against the death penalty

Ryan's pronouncements on the issue have not been uttered in a vacuum. Many rallies and public meetings across the state have involved growing numbers of exonerated death row inmates, families of prisoners, church and campus groups, civil rights organizations, organizations of law professionals, and political parties.

In a "Dead Men Walking" protest in mid-December, men from around the United States whose death sentences have been overturned took part in a relay. Accompanied by a prominent companion walker, each one walked one mile of a 37-



Above, Japanese-Americans being interned May 8, 1942. Tag has number assigned to each prisoner. Left, prisoners preparing for demonstration at Tule Lake camp in California, where a number of protests, demonstrations, and strikes were organized by prisoners.

Executive Order 9066, which authorized the camps; was repealed by President Gerald Ford in 1976. The Emergency Detention Act of 1950 that authorized keeping concentration camps in readiness for people who "probably will engage in acts of espionage or sabotage" was repealed in 1971.

But, "Japanese Americans were quick to point out that they had been shipped off to camps in 1942 even without such a law," Daniels says. There was no legislation on the books in 1942, but the president issued an executive order, Congress passed laws to enforce it, and the Supreme Court backed both as constitutional.

As Daniels also points out, the U.S. government has debated using concentration camps several times since World War II. Tule Lake, one of the Japanese American concentration camps, was even reactivated as a standby camp for political dissidents during the height of the Cold War in the 1950s.

The last three presidents have considered mass incarceration of nationalities with whom the U.S. government was in conflict. James Carter considered internment of Iranians in the United States dur-

ing the overthrow of the Shah of Iran in 1979; Reagan detained Haitian refugees, many in the notorious Krome Avenue camp, after the overthrow of the Duvalier dictatorship; George Bush weighed the incarceration of Arab-Americans before and during the Gulf War of 1990–91.

Daniels concludes, "While most optimists would argue that, in America, concentration camps are a thing of the past...many Japanese Americans, the only group of citizens ever incarcerated simply because of their genes, would argue that what has happened before can surely happen again."

Given the historical use of concentration camps by imperialist governments, if the U.S. ruling class needs to establish concentration camps again in order to be able to wage war, it will not hesitate to try.

The only force capable of stopping them is the working class. That is why Daniels's book is an important introduction to this subject. By learning the lessons of our past, we will better be able to arm ourselves to fight and take on the new challenges posed in the coming period by depression, wars, and revolution.

mile route beginning at the Statesville Correctional Center near Joliet—the Illinois state executions site—and ending at the downtown office of Gov. George Ryan.

The powerful protest of the formerly condemned men was one of several actions organized late last year by members of the Center on Wrongful Convictions. Thirty-nine former death row inmates traveled to Illinois to urge Ryan to exercise his prerogative as outgoing governor and empty death row.

Exonerated prisoners and the families of death row inmates also played a prominent part in earlier protests on the issue. Upon their release, many former death row inmates have joined campaigns to win the freedom of others and to abolish the death penalty. These efforts gained momentum this year as the state legislature considered but failed to pass any of the reforms recommended by the governor's commission.

For example, upon release the day before from Pontiac Correctional Center, Aaron Patterson—one of those whom Ryan pardoned January 10—told the *Chicago Tribune* that "there are more innocent people locked up." Although he was fully pardoned for the crime for which he spent 12 years on death row, Patterson was informed by prison authorities that he would be on "supervised release for three years" and might be home monitored.

In October families of both prisoners and murder victims appeared before a series of hearings by the governor-appointed Prisoner Review Board assigned to advise him on the granting of clemency. The board recommended commutations, stating that "the question is whether a system that was as riddled with problems as the Illinois capital punishment system can generate the level of confidence necessary before we kill

another human being."

Ryan's actions have not been well received in all quarters. Bristling at his use of the term "torture" to describe the actions of Chicago city detectives, Police Superintendent Terry Hillard dissociated himself from Commander Burge, and said that the department was cooperating with a special prosecutor's investigation into the torture allegations.

Governor-elect Rod Blagojevich, who is a Democrat, characterized Ryan's decision as "a big mistake." Blagojevich said he backs the death penalty in "clear-cut and extreme cases." He also said he would uphold the moratorium "until he is comfortable the system is overhauled."

Around the country moratorium resolutions affect at least 19 states and 24 municipalities.

At a victory party on the evening of Ryan's speech, held at Anthony Porter's house, David Bates of the Justice Coalition of Greater Chicago passed out fliers for a Town Meeting on Police Brutality January 15, to focus on accusations directed at Commander Burge. Bates himself spent several years in prison after being framed by Burge and his squad. "We have to push this issue now, while the heat is on," he said.

Pattie Thompson is a sewing machine operator and member of the Union of Needletrades, Industrial and Textile Employees (UNITE) in Chicago.

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FDR closed doors to Jews fleeing Nazi terror

Reprinted below is an excerpt from *Socialists and the Fight Against Anti-Semitism: An Answer to the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League*, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for January. The pamphlet, by Peter Seidman, was a response to slanders against revolutionary socialists who oppose Zionism and champion the Palestinian struggle for national liberation. It explains the real record of the fight to force Washington to open its doors to refugees from Nazi terror and the work-



Picket line at the German consulate in New York, November 1938, calls on Washington to end barriers to immigration by Jews in Nazi-occupied Europe.

BOOKS OF THE MONTH

ing-class opposition to the growth of fascist movements in the United States. Copyright © 1973 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

BY PETER SEIDMAN

Following World War I German capitalism faced unparalleled economic crisis. Lacking investment funds and squeezed out of foreign markets, the economy reeled from bouts of intensive inflation to prolonged recession and massive unemployment.

This produced a tremendous radicalization of the powerful and well-organized working class. Ultimately, in order to maintain its profits, a section of the ruling class chose a collision course with the workers aimed at breaking the backs of their unions and political parties.

The mass movement of small shopkeepers, professionals, and other middle class and lumpen elements crazed by the effects

of the economic crisis and welded together by Hitler behind his fascist National Socialist Party became a weapon of big capital against the workers movement.

Anti-Semitism, along with anti-Communism, was part of the ideological glue used to hold the Nazi movement together and to direct its fury against the Jews and the workers. In this way, and given the failure of the Communist and Socialist parties of Germany to provide effective leadership in the struggle against it, fascism served to turn the middle class victims of the capitalist crisis against the workers and the Jews, who were also victims, instead of against the real criminals—the capitalist ruling class.

When Hitler became chancellor of the German government in 1933, he transformed the anti-Semitic actions of the Nazi goon squads into official state policy against the 350,000 Jews of Germany. In April 1933, the Nazi regime imposed an official boycott on all Jewish businesses. In that year, Jews began to be excluded from all the professions and many of the cities and towns of Germany....

The Nazis unleashed a campaign of physical terror against Jews, making public announcements that their police chiefs could not be "responsible for the safety of enemies of the Reich." By 1933, the *New York Times* had carried descriptions of the

prison camp at Dachau. That year, there was one estimate that said there were 80,000 prisoners in sixty-five camps throughout Germany.

Following the assassination of a Nazi ambassador in Paris by Herschel Grynszpan, the son of a Polish Jew expelled from Germany by the Nazis, the Nazis unleashed a pogrom against the German Jews on November 10, 1938—the infamous "Kristallnacht," the "Night of Broken Glass." This orgy of revenge for the death of the German diplomat included the burning of some 195 synagogues, the destruction of more than 800 Jewish-owned shops, and the looting of some 7,500 others.

Twenty thousand Jews were arrested and sent to concentration camps. And on November 12, 1938, the German government imposed a collective fine of approximately \$400,000,000 (one billion marks) upon German Jews as "money atonement" for the death of Vom Rath, Grynszpan's victim.

During this time, anti-Semitic regimes were also bearing down on the 725,000 Jews in Hungary, the 900,000 Jews in Rumania, and the 3.3 million Jews in Poland. With the conquest by German imperialism of Austria (with 200,000 Jews) and Czechoslovakia (with 350,000 Jews), the

anti-Jewish terror threatened to engulf all of Europe.

In the wake of this mounting Nazi repression, refuge in other countries became a matter of life and death for hundreds of thousands of Jews and other fighters against fascism as well. By May 1939, for example, there were enough applications for U.S. entry visas on file in the U.S. consular offices in Germany, Austria, and Czechoslovakia to fill the existing U.S. immigration quotas for the next five years!

The Roosevelt administration, the upholder of the "liberal democratic values" so beloved by the B'nai B'rith, followed a consistent policy of barring entry to this country for these refugees, thereby condemning many of them to death. This policy of the U.S. government showed that any serious effort to save the victims of European anti-Semitism would require a fight against Roosevelt's administration, and not reliance on it.

New Deal and refugees

Following Hitler's march into Austria in March 1938, President Roosevelt announced plans for an international conference to aid refugees from Germany and Austria to be held at Evian, France. Roosevelt launched this conference with a statement about how the U.S. has always been a haven for the oppressed and a land of the free.

But in motivating the conference, he explained that no country that attended would be expected to raise its immigration quotas to solve the refugee crisis, that the U.S. would not raise its quota, and that all funds for projects of the conference would be raised from private agencies....

The outcome of all these artificial barriers to immigration was that even the existing quotas were not filled. Between 1933 and 1943, more than 400,000 more people could have legally entered the U.S. from countries under Nazi domination than were actually permitted. Between 1938, the year of "Kristallnacht," and 1941, the year the involvement of the U.S. in the second world war made transportation from Europe almost totally unavailable to refugees—a period of time when the acute plight of the refugees was at the height of public attention—there were still some 60,000 unfilled places in the U.S. immigration quota.

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Next, pay toilets—Declaring the intent is to avoid a fare hike, America West will do a coach-section trial run on selling food. Snack



Harry Ring

boxes, \$3 and, for gourmet flyers, “Chicken Kiev,” \$10.

A small insight—Complaining

of fund shortages, police departments are considering selling ad space on patrol cars. Not all of them buy the idea. According to AP, some joke about “the poor guy who gets stuck driving a car with an ad for a feminine hygiene product, or worse.” And the chief in one New Jersey town declares, “I don’t want my officers driving around in a car that says, “Trojan ribbed for extra pleasure.”

Matter of values—“NEW YORK--World Trade Center rescue dogs are getting better, more expensive, and longer-term medical monitoring than World Trade

Center rescue people.”—New York Daily News.

Grand petty larceny—With a token corporate tax structure, the island of Bermuda continues to attract big-time U.S. companies who are allergic to paying even the modest U.S. corporate taxes. Like, for instance, Tyco International—where the top dogs got caught with their paws in the cookie jar—has its headquarters officially located there. Of its 240,000 employees, two actually live there.

Next, deportations?—“Tardy sweeps” are a new practice at San

Leandro high school in California. At class starting times, teachers are instructed to lock the doors. Tardy students are swept up in the hallways and subjected to one hour “detention.” A forward-looking assistant principal said the school had developed into “a culture where the kids didn’t really take bells ringing seriously. I hate to be draconian, but I like to see them scurrying.”

Concise—The Oakland Tribune story about the San Leandro sweeps added that many students responded with a like term: “It sucks.”

Subversive lawmakers?—The

California legislature recently enacted a statute requiring a warning to credit-card users how much and how long it will take to erase a \$5,000 balance with minimum monthly payments—40 years. The law was short-lived. According to AP, a federal judge accused the lawmakers of “meddling in the business of banks.”

Start the year right—It’s a modest and, we trust, nonaddictive habit to send clippings for this column. Please send to Great Society, c/o Pathfinder Book, 4229 S. Central Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90011.

Youth in Sweden wage antideportation fight

BY CATHARINA TIRSEN

HAGFORS, Sweden—“When we heard that Rebeca and her family were going to be deported, I just stood up in the school cafeteria and announced that anyone who wanted to stop that should meet outside their house,” said Jessica Schochow, who went to the same high school class as the young woman threatened by deportation.

“I went there just to find out if I could do something,” said Hannah Ohlén, who did not know the family before. “I know Helen, who is married to the young man in the family—that’s why I went there,” said Sophie Sjögren.

Dozens, and eventually hundreds, of young people in Hagfors, a small town in central Sweden, joined the fight to prevent the Immigration Department from deporting a family back to El Salvador, where they faced a death threat from an ex-husband. Many of the youth who joined together did not really know each other before this fight, which lasted four weeks, until the family was finally deported December 19.

A growing number of workers have immigrated to Sweden from around the world, including from Latin America. The number applying for asylum on humanitarian grounds has risen from 16,000 in 2000 to 33,000 last year. A majority come from the Balkans, Iraq, and the former Soviet Union.

Over the past several years the Swedish government and big-business parties have been pushing to restrict the rights of immigrants, scapegoating them for the social ills of capitalism.

The resulting polarization has been reg-

istered both in the development of ultrarightist groups that target immigrants, on one hand, and a response by some layers of young people and workers who are repelled by these anti-working-class attacks. The Hagfors youth provide one example.

“Pretty soon we made a schedule, where three different teams took turns guarding the house of the family,” said Ida, who did not want to give her last name. “We also decided that no alcohol or other drugs would be allowed on the picket line or around the house where the family lived, so we would always act the right way.”

The youth soon arranged to set up a fire barrel, to help those on picket duty stay warm in the cold winter weather. “When we ran out of firewood, we would mention it on the local radio, and 10 cars would come by and give us more wood,” Jessica explained. When the temperature dropped even further, the youth got permission to use the shelter room in the basement of the apartment house where the Salvadoran family was living.

“And we got food from the local stores,” Ida reported. Several of the young people pointed to the support from people who had come to visit them at the picket line. “The owner of a hotel here gave us a lot of food left over from a Christmas dinner he had served that day,” said Ida.

A woman had brought an envelope “with a little money”. When the youth opened it, the envelope contained 1,000 Swedish Kronor (\$110). “That money we gave to the family to buy food,” Ida explained.

Since they were going to be deported, they received no money from the Immi-

gration Department. “And the authorities said all refugees live under the minimum for existence, so they could not help anyone. In the end they got 42 Kronor a day for all three of them!”

“We’ve learned a lot of things in this fight,” said Ida. “We have learnt how the Immigration Department and other authorities function. We have learnt how the border police act,” Ida explained. “They just told the family, ‘You’d better just pack up your bags and leave, there is nothing more for you to get here.’”

The youth organized a demonstration for the first time. “We had placards that said, ‘Let the family stay, let them live’, ‘Stop the deportation’, and ‘Stop state racism,’” Jessica Karlsson explained. “That day,” said Tomas Lundberg, “only 6 or 7 students went to school at Asplundsskolan,” one of the local junior high school that Rebeca and other youth active in the fight were attending.

“When the border police came to get them that morning, I just wanted to stop them at all costs,” Ida explained. “But we respected the family’s will. And the border police told them that if they did not leave voluntarily, they would have police escort all the way to El Salvador, and they did not want to arrive publicly like that,” Ida said.

Explaining how the events had opened her eyes, Hannah said, “You hope things should be fair, but then you realize they

aren’t. And you thought that Sweden maybe is a little bit better, but it isn’t.”

The youth and the family had hoped the family would have been able to stay for a new investigation of their case which was under way. But the investigator took a sick leave, they explained angrily. Now the family is back in El Salvador, and they have to restart the whole process of applying for asylum.

The 15 to 20 youth who were at the center of the fight still meet daily. Different ideas about what to do next have come up. “One organization wants us to go to El Salvador and make a documentary about the family,” said Jessica. “We have talked about forming a youth club of some kind,” Ida said. “Maybe we can help others. Maybe we can continue to fight this state-organized racism,” said Stefan.

After hearing about the case of Róger Calero and his fight against deportation in the United States, the youths took materials about the defense campaign. Within a few minutes they had divided up where to take the different petitions. “Well, there are a lot more people here than will fit on this list”, said Hannah. “I’ll just make some more copies at work,” said Ida. “Just let us know if you will organize a demonstration, and we will try to come.”

Åsa Holmström, a member of the Young Socialists, contributed to this article.

— 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —



January 26, 1953

PHILADELPHIA—Bowling before powerful pressure, transit workers yesterday ended a four-day strike.

The union had been negotiating a contract since last October. The company stalled agreement while it pushed through a new fare rise, the seventh in five years. Finally the union set a strike deadline for Jan. 13.

Mayor Clark called both sides together for a final try. The company raised its bid a few cents and union officials declared their acceptance.

Assuming acceptance of the settlement by the membership, officials permitted the union meeting to be broadcast over the airwaves. They were in for a big shock. The members turned out waving the newspapers announcing the settlement on which they had not yet voted and which they did not approve.

President O’Rourke’s assertion that it was “the best contract the local ever had” was met by a storm of boos. Every official who tried to “sell” the contract was shouted down while rank and file pleas for action were applauded.

Finally, recognizing that there was no brooking the will of the meeting, a vote was called. It was almost unanimous for strike.

Immediately almost every possible pressure was brought to bear on the men. The Mayor and the company threatened to withdraw their offer. [National union president] Quill blasted the meeting as “anarchy” and “not democratic unionism.”

The local leadership declared a secret ballot was necessary. Despite the extreme pressure, one-third voted to stay out. The membership was forced back to work with

an unpopular agreement. They will not forget this instructive experience when elections and the next contract negotiations roll around.



January 27, 1978

The *New York Post*’s banner headline read: “Happy Warrior is Dead at 66.” A more accurate tag for Hubert Horatio Humphrey would have been “cold warrior,” or “warrior against the Vietnamese people.”

Hubert Humphrey was a prime architect and defender of American imperialist foreign policy. He bears a large share of the historical guilt for the massacre of countless thousands of Vietnamese—to mention only the worst of many crimes.

As Lyndon Johnson’s vice-president, he was the country’s most ardent war booster, making hundreds of speeches all over the world in defense of American aggression.

By 1967, the “happy warrior” was really exuberant. “This is our great adventure, and a wonderful one it is,” he told staff members of the American Embassy in Saigon.

Although Humphrey managed to create a civil libertarian image for himself, his record shows him to have been an enemy of civil liberties. The clearest evidence of this occurred in 1950, when he worked to amend the infamous McCarran Act to set up concentration camps for dissenters during wartime. Six of these camps were actually constructed but never used.

Hubert Humphrey died a Democrat after more than three decades of absolutely loyal service to the American ruling class. That is why the capitalist press is now trying to make him a saint.

Farmers in Ireland organize convoy to Dublin to protest plunging incomes



Farmers line up hundreds of tractors in Dublin January 10 as a finale to a weeklong convoy from the west of the country, organized to draw attention to their plunging incomes. The Irish Farmers Association (IFA), which organized the action, said falling agriculture prices and bad weather had hit farmers hard last year, reducing overall returns by almost 9 percent. Farmers’ incomes are further threatened by planned reductions in subsidies under the European Union’s Common Agricultural Policy. IFA president John Dillon warned that many farmers are being driven off their land.

Imperialism drives to war

White House press secretary Ari Fleischer said January 13 that the U.S. president saw “no point” in using diplomacy to resolve the conflict with Iraq. Later he revised his comment, saying the White House “was not optimistic” about a so-called diplomatic solution. In fact, Washington’s decision to launch an invasion of Iraq was made some time ago. The accelerating concentration of troops and military equipment in the Middle East brings that fact sharply into relief.

The imperialist “arms inspectors” are not preventing a war. In fact, they are giving political cover to Washington and other imperialist powers to unleash an assault on the people of Iraq.

This is not Bush’s war—it’s U.S. imperialism’s war. The debates over the past months between Democrats and Republicans reveal no fundamental difference over this course, only tactical disputes over how to conduct imperialist war policy and convince working people to accept it. The Democrats are doing their part by criticizing the Bush administration for “intelligence failures” in preventing a “terrorist” attack—an argument for further widening the powers of the political police to carry out secret detentions and trials, spy on and disrupt political organizations, and attack union rights.

The drive to war today is an acceleration of the U.S. rulers’ political course over the previous years. Washington’s preparations to invade Iraq, which has the world’s second-largest oil reserves, are a step toward seeking greater control over Mideast resources. They are driven to compete with their imperialist rivals from London to Berlin to Paris, to Tokyo—each of which is maneuvering to defend its own class interests in the region.

What is shaping up is a series of imperialist wars, as the ruling billionaires try to salvage their increasingly depression-ridden system. At stake is not only Mideast oil but the world’s markets and resources. Other major targets of Washington’s increased threats and aggressive actions are north Korea and Iran.

In driving to reverse the decline of their profit rates,

the U.S. employers are also waging a war on workers and farmers at home. The recent government order banning airport screeners from organizing a union underlines this. The roundups of immigrants by *la migra*, probes toward establishing a national ID card, and the increasing militarization of U.S. airports and other facilities are further attacks on the ability of working people to organize in defense of their interests, as the bosses step up their assault on wages, working conditions, retirement pensions, and health care.

To tie the hands of working people, the employers promote the fiction of “our American interests.” But the capitalist class and working people in this country have completely opposing interests. Any solution that promotes an America First viewpoint, whether protectionist measures to defend “American jobs” or even “money for jobs at home, not war,” reinforces that trap. Working people need to join together across national boundaries in struggles for our common interests.

Although it presents itself as all-powerful, U.S. imperialism is driving to war out of the growing weaknesses and disequilibrium of its system. The future is not a Pax Americana but a world of sharpening turmoil, wars, and rebellions. The unbreakable struggle of the Palestinian people for their homeland, the refusal of the Korean people to get on their knees before Washington, and the determination of Cuban workers and farmers in defending their revolution against Washington’s aggression for 44 years are all obstacles to imperialism’s aims. So is the resistance by workers and farmers in the United States today.

The brutal logic of capitalism cannot be prevented. It can only be ended by working people overturning capitalist rule, taking political power, and carrying out a socialist revolution as working people did in Russia in October 1917 and the early years of soviet power, and as they have done in revolutionary Cuba since 1959. Through the struggles of today and out of the class battles of coming years, working people will be able to forge a movement capable of taking on the ruling rich and winning.

Abolish the death penalty!

The decision of outgoing Illinois governor George Ryan to commute the death sentences of 163 men and four women registers the growing difficulty capitalist politicians are having in justifying this barbaric practice. Ryan mentioned some of the most glaring injustices that are bound up with the death penalty, all of which have been the target of protest, debate, and controversy.

Blows against this punishment, including the commutations and pardons of January 10 and 11, should not be credited to the consciences of capitalist politicians. Rather, they are the product of struggles by workers and farmers. In particular, resistance against racist violence by working people who are Black has ensured that today lynchings of all kinds are apt to face protests and stir debate.

The recent protests in Illinois, including the “Dead Men Walking” relay, are part of a long history of such struggles. Far from leading such protests, Ryan has devoted his energy to unsuccessful efforts to rehabilitate the death penalty through installing more checks and balances. At the same time, his action is a reflection of how support for the use of this weapon has eroded.

The government’s reinstatement of capital punishment nearly three decades ago was a truly reactionary act by a ruling class that intends to defend its interests and rule by

any means at hand. Under capitalism, the death penalty has always been used as an instrument of terror by a government that represents the wealthy class of employers, landlords, and bankers. While the rulers’ courts are quick to condemn more and more working people as criminals, their cops are allowed to brutalize and kill with impunity.

Opponents of capitalist injustice will gain confidence from these recent developments and step up their struggles against its many abuses. Far more working people are executed by a policeman’s bullet, chokehold, or hog-tying than by lethal injection or electrocution. There were at least 2,000 deaths at the hands of police and prison guards between 1990 and the beginning of 1998, in addition to the judicially sanctioned deaths of 312 people.

In opposition to the social conquests we have achieved in struggle, the capitalists will employ rougher methods to safeguard their profits and defend their rule. This can be seen from the streets of U.S. cities to the Middle East, where the imperialists are marching toward a bloody war on the people of Iraq. In the course of such wars and attacks, however, they generate resistance. Through increasingly weighty struggles, working people will gain the experiences necessary to chart a course to overthrow capitalist rule and its endemic brutality for good.

Working-class program

While expressing concern about the unfolding economic crisis, which is hitting workers and farmers the hardest, the Bush administration has proposed an “economic stimulus package,” centered on ending taxes on dividend payouts, that would provide a windfall for the rich. The child tax rebates, tax write-offs for small businesses, and other measures offer paltry relief for tens of millions who face a tightening income squeeze.

The Democrats’ “alternative” proposal, a one-time tax rebate, offers, if anything, even smaller payments to working people. Many would receive nothing because their earnings are so low they do not pay income taxes.

Feigning concern for workers who are jobless, Bush signed a measure extending short-term unemployment benefits that the Democrats and Republicans in Congress had so callously delayed when they rushed off to take their holiday break. But the 13-week extension is shorter than what Congress has passed during previous periods of growing unemployment.

Shifting the tax burden even more from the rich to working people, limiting unemployment benefits—that’s what the twin big-business parties have to offer.

But workers and farmers, who create the wealth, should not pay one penny of taxes. The labor movement should demand: Tax the rich, not working people! For a steeply graduated income tax—up to 100 percent—on

the wealthiest individuals.

More broadly, the working-class movement needs to champion a program of demands to defend the needs of working people from the ravages of the spreading depression. The central demands include the following:

- Jobs for all! For a massive government program of public works to create jobs, at union-scale wages, building facilities for the educational, health, housing, recreational, and other needs of the population.
- Shorten the workweek with no cut in pay to spread the available work around.
- Defend and extend affirmative action in employment, housing, and education. For dual-seniority lists in layoffs.
- Raise the minimum wage.
- For full and automatic cost-of-living increases in wages and benefits to protect working people from inflation.
- Halt farm foreclosures. For government-funded cheap credit and price supports to guarantee a secure living to working farmers.
- Cancel the foreign debt that is strangling Third World nations.

Calero meeting in Chicago

Continued from Page 8

linked the Calero case to the struggles of Blacks and all workers under attack. “I can identify with Róger because I have a son who was charged when he was 17 and they still are holding that against him,” Johnson said.

“The rich people are attacking us because they aren’t making as much profit as they used to. They have stripped and robbed all of the foreign countries. That is one reason why all of us are here!”

“All the groups have to support each other,” she said. “We have to identify with the Haitians. As the farmer here said, watch each other’s backs. If we stand up for what is right, that will bring us together.”

Another panelist, José Landaverde, the director of the Latino Union, talked about the fight of the day laborers and temporary workers against police and INS harassment, including the case of Julieta Bolívar.

‘Keep fighting these injustices’

Cecelia Guajardo was the first to speak in the discussion period. She had driven to the meeting from Calumet City, Illinois, with her daughter and niece. “I want to ask Róger to keep fighting these injustices,” she said. “This is so important. It doesn’t matter where you came from. We have to unite!”

The end of the program did not bring the political give and take to a close. As many signed up for the campaign and took away defense committee literature on how to write letters to the INS in Houston, the room filled with informal discussions.

A number of people told the *Militant* of hearing about the meeting in the media. Socorro Montano came after she heard Calero interviewed on a popular Spanish language radio talk show. She said she had been angered by the INS roundup of workers at Chicago’s O’Hare airport on December 10. Carried out under the pretext of “fighting terrorism,” the raid had led to the firing of hundreds and the arrest and deportation of others.

Alma Garcia, the owner of a beauty salon around the corner from St. Pius church, came after she saw Calero interviewed on Univision, one of the city’s two major Spanish TV channels. The fact sheets and petitions she picked up at the meeting are now displayed in her shop.

Articles on the case have also appeared in the Spanish news weeklies *Exito* and *La Raza*, and Calero appeared on a talk show hosted by Cliff Kelly on WVON, a radio station oriented to the Black community.

The day after the meeting, Calero was greeted warmly by workers on the Azteca strike picketline. Calero spoke with them about his experience as part of a successful union organizing drive while a worker at Dakota Premium Foods in South St. Paul, Minnesota. The workers said they would send a petition to the INS demanding that the deportation move be stopped.

Bush’s tax cuts

Continued from Page 4

criticize Bush’s plan as “a gift to the rich,” noted the *Times*, they “are less likely to emphasize that Mr. Bush’s plan would provide bigger tax cuts for many people at middle-income and lower-income levels than theirs would,” through the \$400 per-child increased family rebate.

Brief celebration

Despite its promotion as a boon for business, Bush’s announcement only buoyed stock markets for a couple of days. Stock market investors had “second thoughts about their initial enthusiasm” for the tax cut program, the *Wall Street Journal* reported January 9.

“A strong profit recovery still isn’t guaranteed,” the big business paper noted, as “worries about the strength of corporate profits and the risks of war...which had been pushed aside by the Bush proposals, returned to investors’ minds.”

“Even by Wall Street’s notoriously short attention span, the stock market surge surrounding President Bush’s \$657 billion plan to fix the economy earlier this week was uninspiring,” wrote CBS.MarketWatch.com editor David Callaway in the January 9 edition of the online publication. “A one-day nod to the prospect for lower taxes and tax-free dividends for investors gave way to more real concerns about a weak earnings season and a looming war with Iraq.”

Within three days coverage of the tax plan was competing for headlines with more bad news on the jobs front, as the government reported that the economy had shed 101,000 jobs in December, with retailers hiring fewer people for the holiday season and manufacturing suffering a further month of decline.

On January 8 the aluminum giant Alcoa provided a shock to the markets by reporting a greater than expected loss and announcing plans to lay off 8,000 workers. “Alcoa provided the first peek at an industrial bellwether and it clearly shows that the recovery on the industrial side isn’t here yet,” John Forelli, portfolio manager for the Boston-based investment firm Independence Investments, told the *Wall Street Journal*.

Maine rally of 4,000 defends Somali residents

BY MAGGIE TROWE

LEWISTON, Maine—More than 4,000 people converged on this New England city January 11 to defend Somali immigrants and counter a rally of white supremacists.

Student and community groups, labor unions, churches, and Black rights organizations formed an ad hoc “Many and One” coalition that secured the Bates College gymnasium in Lewiston for a rally that reached capacity well before the 1:00 p.m. starting time. Hundreds stood outside in the sub-freezing weather, listening to speakers outside. A musician who opened up the rally stated, “We are here not for the Somali refugees, but for the Somali residents.”

Nathalie White, 20, a student at the University of Maine in Machias, said she came “to show support for the cause because we were outraged about the other rally across town,” referring to the gathering at the city

armory of a few dozen people organized by the World Church of the Creator, a self-avowed white supremacist group based in East Peoria, Illinois.

In response to the events the state and city deployed what media reports said was the largest police presence for any event in the history of Maine.

Over the past two years some 1,100 Somalis have come to Lewiston, a mill town of 36,000, to live and work. Last October Lewiston mayor Laurier Raymond issued a letter asking Somali community leaders to “exercise some discipline” and to discourage friends and family from relocating in the city, citing a “drain” on city resources. Some residents put up anti-Somali yard signs and drive-by hecklers insulted Somali-born residents in their neighborhoods.

The controversy around Raymond’s letter received national press attention and

provoked an ongoing debate reflected in newspapers and radio talk shows throughout the region.

White supremacists

On November 24, World Church of the Creator leader Matthew Hale announced his group would organize a January 11 rally in Lewiston. “I want to rally the white people of Lewiston for their own interests, and those interests do not tolerate the invasion of Somalis in their city,” Hale told reporters. “The Somalis are unwelcome there, and they shouldn’t be there.”

The World Church proclaims the goal of a “whites only” United States that would bar Blacks, Asians, Latinos, Jews, and all immigrants. World Church cadres have had a presence in New England several times over the past year, including at a protest at the dedication of the Zakim bridge, named

for a Jewish man.

Hale was unable to deliver his scheduled speech, titled “The invasion of Maine by Somalis, and how we can end it,” because he had been arrested in Chicago several days earlier, accused of soliciting the murder of a federal judge. His chief deputy, Jon Fox, took his place.

Another rightist group, the National Alliance, recently distributed flyers denouncing Blacks and Jews in Lewiston and nearby Portland, including in a working-class district where some Somalis live.

The city council in Holyoke, Massachusetts, voted last October to turn down \$1 million in federal funding for the resettlement of 300 Somali refugees. Holyoke mayor Michael Sullivan justified the rejection of the immigrants based on the anticipated “strain” on city resources, and a *Boston Globe* editorial endorsed his stance, stating “the burden of living up to America’s welcoming image should not be dropped solely on the most vulnerable populations.”

Big turnout of students

Some of the speakers who addressed the rally included: Winston McGill, president of the Portland branch of the NAACP, and Joyce Williams, president of the New England Area Conference of the NAACP; Jose Soto, an organizer for the Maine Rural Workers Coalition; Fatuma Hussein, director of the United Somali Women of Maine; James Carignan, dean of Bates College; and Omar Jamal, executive director of the Somali Justice Advocacy Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

“I am surprised to see, with so many schools, that there are some people who are still so ignorant,” said Safia Nur, a Somali, who was one of several high school students who spoke. “Who are they to tell me Cara [her friend on the platform] can’t be my friend because she is white?”

“When anyone is attacked, you shouldn’t sit back,” said Sarahbelle Marsh, 20, a sophomore at Bates College. Students from the college prepared a banner for the brief march after the rally, and streams of people entering the hall lined up to sign their names.

Former world heavyweight boxing champion Muhammad Ali sent a message to the meeting, recalling that he knocked out Sonny Liston in Lewiston in 1965 and therefore had fond memories of the town. Responding to the mayor’s letter to the Somali community Ali said, “Somali Americans, like all, have an inalienable right to live anywhere they want. You have my wholehearted support in fighting racism.”

Several speakers whose ancestors were French-speaking people from Quebec and other parts of Canada made the connection between discrimination against the Somalis and against French-speaking immigrants. Rachel Rodrigue recalled how her forebears had faced signs reading “No French need apply,” how some local Catholic churches had barred French speakers from attending masses held in English, and how they had also faced attacks by the Ku Klux Klan.

Among the crowd were the governor, John Baldacci, who spoke, and both senators, Olympia Snowe and Susan Collins, who had taken some heat from the Portland NAACP for refusing to call for the resignation of Sen. Trent Lott. Also present were the state attorney general and several former Lewiston mayors. The mayor was conspicuously absent. Many people wore stickers asking, “Where’s the mayor?” and some speakers demanded his resignation.

Across town at the armory, where a heavy police presence guarded the meeting of 45 supporters of the white supremacist organization, several hundred counterdemonstrators protested their presence.

Laura Garza contributed to this article.

— CALENDAR —

NEW YORK
Manhattan

Fund-raising Party for Farouk Abdel-Muhti, Palestinian Activist Jailed by INS. Sat. Feb. 8, 6 p.m. *Winston Unity Hall, 235 West 23rd St. (between 7th & 8th Avenues).* Donation: \$10 in advance, \$12 at the door. For more information, call (212) 674-9499; Committee for the Release of Farouk Abdel-Muhti.

UK firefighters resume battle to defend jobs

BY TONY HUNT

LONDON—Members of the Fire Brigade Union (FBU) will resume their battle to defend their jobs and living standards with a 24-hour strike January 21. Facing what he called “nonnegotiable” proposals by Fire Service employers for wholesale job cuts and fire station closures, FBU General Secretary Andy Gilchrist announced the action January 9. Two-day strikes have already been called for January 28 and February 1.

The 55,000 firefighters in this country staged two national strikes late last year—for two days and eight days—to demand a 40 percent pay increase.

Firefighters are also fighting to defend jobs and maintain the quality of fire fighting services. An agreement reached in November between the FBU and the Fire Service employers—combining a 16 percent wage increase with negotiations on “working practices”—was vetoed by the Labour government, precipitating the second strike.

Subsequently the government admitted its real intention was to cut jobs from the fire service under the banner of “modernization.” Firefighters’ view of this was captured by a slogan on a banner at the Orpington picket line in Kent: “Modernization = Cuts.”

A third strike, due to last eight days, was called off in December by FBU leaders after they agreed to enter further negotiations; the two 48 hour actions in January and February were announced at the same time. FBU General Secretary Gilchrist said in December that, “Fire Service employers now have several weeks to put together a serious pay offer.” A spirited demonstration and rally was held by firefighters in central London December 7.

When the employers met union officials on January 8, they presented proposals that would lead to 4,500 job cuts and 150 fire station closures. These proposals were based on an “independent” review commission—in reality heavily biased against the workers and in favour of the bosses—

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

ALABAMA

Birmingham

Oppose U.S. War Threats Against North Korea. Speaker: James Harris, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Jan. 24. Program, 7 p.m.; dinner, 6 p.m. 3029-A Bessemer Road. Donation: program \$4, dinner \$5. Tel: (205) 780-0021.

NEW JERSEY

Newark

The Fight for Black Rights and the Debate Over Trent Lott. Fri., Jan. 17, 7:30 p.m.. 168 Bloomfield Ave., 2nd floor. Donation: \$5. Tel: (973) 481-0077.

PENNSYLVANIA

Hazleton

Defend Workers’ Rights; Stop the Deportation of Róger Calero. Fri., Jan. 24, 7:30 p.m.. 69 N. Wyoming St. Tel: (570) 454-8320.



Militant/Jim Spaul

Members of the Fire Brigades Union rally at Hyde Park in London December 7. The firefighters waged two national strikes late last year demanding a wage increase.

chaired by George Bain.

The union described the Bain review, published in December, as “insulting.” However, an employers’ representative told the BBC January 8 that, “We will say Bain is the only game in town”—confirming that the Fire Service bosses had no intention of entering real negotiations. Gilchrist described their actions as “dictatorial.”

Because of the bosses’ conduct, the FBU executive had received a “very clear” message at a meeting of 100 union representatives from around the country, the FBU

leader said. A campaign of further “flexible and varied” strikes is to be announced shortly. Kenny Ross, an FBU representative from Strathclyde in Scotland, told the BBC, “There is no other option but to go on strike, all the talking is over.”

Meanwhile, Fire Service minister Nicholas Raynsford announced that troops had been undergoing further training for their strike-breaking duties during the forthcoming firefighters’ strikes.

Tony Hunt is a meat worker in London.

Workers evacuated after mine catches fire in Pennsylvania

BY TONY LANCASTER

PITTSBURGH—Nearly 100 miners were evacuated from Consol’s Eighty-Four mine near January 6 after a fire broke out on the coal conveyor belt line leading from the mine’s longwall face. Carbon monoxide detectors alerted miners to the fire, which the company said had engulfed a 1,000-foot section of the coal seam and the belt line entryway. The fire was only 1,000 feet from where the longwall mining machine had advanced to.

One hundred miners trained as firefighters were brought in from other Consol mines in Pennsylvania and three other states to battle the fire. On January 14 the company reported the fire was still smoldering.

Karl Lasher, a Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) spokesperson, said it was “way too early to speculate” on what caused the blaze. Consol vice-president Thomas Hoffman said hot rollers on the conveyor could have ignited the fire.

A union mine, Eighty-Four mine was the scene of a recent United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) victory in defense of job safety. The union successfully appealed in Pennsylvania Commonwealth Court a waiver by the DEP that relaxed rules on pre-shift safety inspections in the mine.

Such inspections are designed to detect and deal with problems like hot rollers before they start a fire.

The union noted that “with mine conditions ever changing and hazards developing quickly...the DEP’s decision placed workers at greater risk.” UMWA president Cecil Roberts said that they “have been concerned for some time about the enforcement and approval decisions made by [DEP official] Richard Stickler.”

Last year Eighty-Four mine produced about 4 million tons of coal. That year the mine had a fatal accident when miner George Shirley was electrocuted as the ram car he was operating hit an electrical cable.

The last time a Consol mine had a fire was in 1999 at the Loveridge mine in northern West Virginia, also a longwall mine. That fire caused a methane explosion and lasted for weeks, eventually closing the mine for two years.

Two miners were killed by a methane explosion in the wake of a fire at RAG American Coal’s Willow Creek longwall mine in Colorado in 2000. The fire broke out on the longwall face during production. The crew sought to fight the fire but before they were able to get it under control, the blaze ignited a pocket of methane gas. Two other miners were seriously injured.

Venezuela: boss 'strike' to oust gov't weakens in face of mass opposition

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

MIAMI—Frustrated by the looming failure and increasing unpopularity of a six-week-old oil "strike" and stoppages, an opposition coalition trying to overthrow Venezuela's president Hugo Chávez has intensified its economic war on the government. The majority of the country's banks were shut down January 9–10, spurring a further devaluation of the currency, the bolivar, by 12 percent. Opposition leaders also called for a tax revolt January 7, asking firms and individuals to stop paying income or sales taxes.

At the same time, millions of workers, peasants, students, small businesspeople, and others have continued to push back against the effort to oust Chávez. Workers at oil wells and refineries have steadily increased production despite sabotage by their former bosses. Toilers and young people from around the country now guard oil-producing facilities, alongside National Guard troops. Landless peasants have accelerated their efforts to gain land titles in some areas. Under increasing popular pressure, the government threatened January 10 to take over privately owned food production plants currently shut by their owners in support of the opposition-led "general strike," which began December 2.

"Many believed economic and political pressure would force [Chávez] to agree to a vote—or even resign—by Christmas," AP reported from Caracas January 10. "But Chávez has the backing of Venezuela's military—armed forces purged of dissidents after a brief April coup. General after general has declared loyalty to the constitution and to a democratically elected government. Chávez also is stubborn in a crisis where other leaders might feel threatened. After oil production was paralyzed, eliminating the source of half of government revenue and 80 percent of export earnings, he fired 1,000 people from the state-owned oil monopoly and vowed to tighten government control over the company."

Opposition lost control of oil company

"No one believed a couple of months ago that the government and the people would be able to take control of PDVSA [the state-owned Petróleos de Venezuela oil company]," said Claudia Orsini, a national leader of the Fifth Republic Revolutionary Youth (JVR), in a January 9 phone interview from Caracas. "But it's now basically done. The entire previous management of the state oil company, where the opposition had its strongest base with people stealing millions from national resources for their individual enrichment, is now gone. [Progovernment] Bolivarian circles, some trade unions, peasant organizations, associations of professionals, and others now guard oil refineries and other installations. The pressure from gasoline shortages has begun to ease in some states. We've got them on the defensive now."

According to this and other interviews, technicians from other countries have come to help put production back to prestrike levels. Venezuela used to produce some 3 million barrels of oil per day (bpd). In mid December, production fell to one-twelfth that level—250,000 bpd. It is now back up to 1 million barrels, according to the Venezuelan government. Opposition leaders admit to half a million barrels.

Despite media claims that the overwhelming majority of PDVSA's 40,000 workers have joined the "strike," many people interviewed by the *Militant* insist that only 20 percent to 50 percent of the 30,000 production workers did so, in contrast to the 10,000 administrative-technical personnel, who in their majority backed the pro-employer stoppage. "It is these workers, along with the National Guard



Militant/Argiris Malapanis

Venezuelan farmers line up to apply for credit under agrarian reform law at meeting in San Carlos, Cojedes state, last July. Landless peasants are stepping up their efforts to gain land titles in some areas, while workers at oil facilities have steadily increased production despite sabotage by the employers.

and other specialists, who are pushing ahead with production, despite all the sabotage caused by the former executives," said Yhonny Garcia, a unionist from Maracaibo in Zulia state, where much of the country's oil drilling and production is concentrated.

"Specialists from Brazil's Petrobras are now in several refineries," said Fevers Garspe, a radio newscaster in Valencia, the country's third-largest city, in a January 9 interview. "Algeria is also sending technicians."

Help from Brazil's new Workers Party government of president Luis Inácio Lula da Silva, came after Chávez visited Brazil for da Silva's inauguration on New Year's Day, where he also met with Cuba's president Fidel Castro.

At the same time, peasants, students, and others are taking action to further their struggles against big business and counter the effects of the bosses' stoppage.

"I just came back from a conference of 600 peasants and our families," said Armando Serpa, in a January 9 phone interview from his home. Serpa, who had first met *Militant* reporters during their trip to Venezuela in July, farms a small plot of land on the outskirts of San Carlos, Cojedes state, a largely agricultural area. "Adina Bastidas presented 300 titles to land for peasant families who have occupied them for years. Now they can get credit and other things."

Conflict over land law

Adina Bastidas is a former vice president in the Chávez government who is now involved in helping to implement the Law on Land and Agricultural Development. Signed in November 2001, this is one of the most controversial measures undertaken by the government. Among other provisions, the new legislation allowed the state to confiscate some idle private farms of more than 12,000 acres, and distribute the land to the peasants. "The Supreme Court declared two of the most important provisions of this law unconstitutional in November," said Bastidas in a January 9 phone interview. "So the land redistribution process will be a long struggle."

Speaking to peasants and thousands of other supporters in San Carlos January 10, Chávez said he is ready to send troops to take over food production plants shut by their owners in the month-and-a-half long stoppage. "This is an economic coup. They are trying to deny the people food, medicine, and even water," Chávez said. "They won't succeed."

Elsewhere, students are organizing assemblies demanding the reopening of universities shut down by opposition supporters. "Today, 2,000 students met at the University of Carabobo here demanding the dean reopen the school and classes resume," Felipe Pantoja, a medical student in Valencia, told the *Militant* on January 9.

According to Pantoja, Orsini, and others interviewed, popular anger across the country at the opposition-led stoppage is growing. "This was evident when 14,000 people marched in Caracas for the funeral of two people shot dead by the police January 5," Orsini said. The two died from police gunshots after an opposition march on military headquarters in Caracas was confronted by hundreds of Chávez sympathizers. The Caracas police are under the control of Mayor Alfredo Peña, a fierce opponent of Chávez and a figure in the pro-imperialist opposition.

Opposition forces are demanding Chávez's resignation and early elections, which the president has refused. Now these forces are witnessing the dwindling of some of the support they had had among working people and larger backing among middle-class layers.

"On the long lines to get gasoline, the talk by almost everyone is that Carlos Fernández and Carlos Ortega are to blame for this crisis," said Garspe. "The opposition is losing." Carlos Fernández is the president of Fedecamaras, Venezuela's main business association, which is the motor force behind the drive to oust Chávez. Ortega is the president of the Confederation of Venezuelan Workers (CTV), which is backing the bosses' strike.

Basis of opposition forces

At the core of the Democratic Coordinator opposition coalition are business figures and other leaders of the social democratic Democratic Action (AD) party and the Social Christian COPEI. These two parties alternated in the government for decades before Chávez was elected president in 1998. In the eyes of millions of working people, these politicians are responsible for the impoverishment of the majority of Venezuelans and the brutality with which the ruling class kept the status quo in place prior to Chávez's election.

Venezuela is the world's fifth-largest oil-producing country. It has many mineral resources and a relatively high level of industrialization for Latin America. At the same time, its population of 23 million is

riven by gross inequalities of wealth and income. While the top 10 percent of the population receives half the national income, 40 percent live in "critical poverty," according to a 1995 estimate.

An example of what this opposition is associated with is a rebellion, known as the *Caracazo*. It broke out in 1989, when the government of Carlos Andrés Pérez of Democratic Action doubled bus fares and hiked prices of gasoline and other essential goods. An urban revolt then engulfed Caracas and many of the country's major cities. Working people from city slums burned buses, broke into supermarkets and took food, and marched onto the rich neighborhoods.

In response, the social democratic regime sent in the army, shooting at anything that moved. As many as 2,000 died in Caracas alone. Thousands were wounded. While Pérez succeeded in staying in power for a few more years through this ruthless repression, the events marked the beginning of the breakup of the two-party system that had ruled Venezuela for decades.

Top CTV officials are part of the Democratic Coordinator opposition coalition. The CTV is the largest of the country's union federations. Its officers are an encrusted bureaucracy with its social base in a narrow layer of better paid workers. CTV president Ortega, one of the main figures in the opposition that's trying to oust Chávez, still describes himself as a member of Democratic Action. Many workers in Venezuela often tell stories of how the CTV leadership supported police repression against militant workers and restrictions by the bosses on organized labor during the reign of AD and COPEI. These labor officials sat on their hands for decades in face of attacks by the employers on wages and working conditions while keeping a bureaucratic lid on workers' struggles.

Chávez is a bourgeois nationalist figure who became popular as a military officer when he led a failed 1992 coup to oust the Pérez regime. He was elected president in 1998 with huge popular support against the discredited traditional capitalist parties. He was reelected in 2000, using pro-working-class demagoguery and promising to use executive power to deal with the corrupt elite. Capitalist market relations have remained intact under his administration, with economic power remaining firmly in the hands of the capitalist class.

At the same time, the government has aroused the ire of the capitalists with some limited measures that impinge on their prerogatives. Aside from the land expropriation law, recent measures include protection for working fishermen from overfishing by large commercial companies, and use of some state funds for cheap housing and other social programs.

Worried about the increased expectations of workers and farmers generated by Chávez's election and some of the measures taken by his government, the dominant section of the Venezuelan rulers have set about overthrowing it. Last April, about a third of the military's high command, with support from the dominant capitalist families and Washington, ousted Chávez in a coup. This proved short-lived, however. Chávez returned to power in two days, after huge mobilizations by working people forced divisions in the military.

"A new contentious measure is now being debated in the National Assembly," said Yhonny Garcia, the unionist in Maracaibo, Zulia state, in a January 9 telephone interview. "A new law on social security would nationalize health insurance and eventually make it free for all. The bankers, insurance companies, and big business don't like this. It's one of the reasons they tried to spread their strike to the banks. But they have an uphill battle."