

# THE MILITANT

INSIDE

'The war party, workers' resistance, and building communist movement'

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

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## Co-Op strikers force gov't to investigate mine safety

Union-organizing battle spurred by dangerous job conditions

BY ANNE CARROLL

HUNTINGTON, Utah—A special investigator and a Utah inspector from the Mine Safety and Health Administration (MSHA) interviewed Co-Op miners here December 16. It was the fourth round of interviews of these miners conducted by the government agency in the last two months.

"We decided to go directly to the MSHA to make them fully aware of all the dangers we have seen," said Rigo Rodríguez, who has worked at Co-Op for 14 years and was a witness to two fatalities. "It's no good what they do at this mine. It's time to put a stop to this."

The coal miners have been on strike for three months against CW Mining, also known here as Co-Op. The company, owned by the Kingston family, locked out the miners September 22 after they had walked off the job to protest the suspension of one of their fellow workers, William Estrada, and unsafe working conditions. The miners were involved in organizing themselves into the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA).

One of the issues in the strike is the dangerous mining conditions and lack of adequate training for the miners. That is why the Co-Op strikers went to the local MSHA office in Price and demanded an

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Militant/Teri Ross

Co-Op miners, their families, and supporters filled bleachers of Huntington school gym December 13 in largest solidarity rally to date in strike for union recognition, dignity, and safety on the job.

### At Christmas party, Co-Op miners get strong support from nearby UMWA union local

BY ANNE CARROLL

HUNTINGTON, Utah—"We are very happy to be here representing all the miners at Deer Creek who have tried hard to support the workers at the Co-Op mine,"

said Lou Shelley, President of United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) Local 1759 at the nearby Deer Creek mine. Shelley was addressing the crowd

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## Facing U.S.-British attack, Libya surrenders sovereignty, says will dismantle arms programs

U.S. gov't claims Pakistanis are key nuclear suppliers to Iran

BY SAM MANUEL

The Libyan government announced December 19 that it will dismantle its nuclear and chemical weapons programs and allow United Nations inspectors to verify compliance. With this move, Tripoli effectively surrendered a good part of its sovereignty. The decision came after Washington and London made it clear that the Libyan regime would face a similar fate to that of former Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein unless it bowed to U.S. dictates on "weapons of mass destruction."

Over the following two days, the *Washington Post* and other major U.S. dailies said that evidence from the UN probe of Iran's atomic programs showed that Pakistani individuals and companies were key suppliers of parts and tools for development of nuclear arms by Tehran. Washington has been on the prod recently to pressure Islamabad to take harsher action against al-Qaeda and other "terrorists" based in Pakistan.

"We said that if our efforts with Afghanistan and Iraq were successful, our diplomacy then could be simplified to two words: 'You're next,'" said Richard Perle, a Bush administration adviser, on December 21. "The point was not 'we're going to invade you next.' It was 'we're going to turn to you next.'" This policy would then become enormously efficient, Perle concluded, according

to the December 22 *Financial Times*.

The December 20 London-based *Guardian* published an edited version of a Libyan government statement on the arms program agreement. According to this statement, Tripoli made the decision after Washing-

ton and London made it clear they would use the de facto admission of responsibility by the Libyan government for the bombing of a passenger airliner to go after the regime of Muammar Qaddafi. In January

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## Contribute to the \$150,000 Headquarters Building Fund

The following is an appeal for contributions to help build a new Pathfinder bookstore and distribution center in New York, by Martin Koppel and Janice Prescott, directors of the fund.

Dear Friend,

We urge you to contribute generously to the campaign to raise \$150,000 for the 2004 Headquarters Building Fund. The fund campaign, which concludes January 31, will make it possible to construct the new, expanded Pathfinder bookstore and distribution center in New York City.

This work began December 13 as part of a Red Weekend of voluntary labor. The new space is located on the 10th floor of a building in the mid-Manhattan Garment

District, which is one of the main industrial districts in New York, the center of the UNITE garment workers union—including its national headquarters, and an area where many political organizations are centered.

A construction crew of volunteers is now being assembled to build these facilities in New York City so that they can serve as the flagship Pathfinder bookstore in the United States.

The address—307 West 36th Street, 10th Floor North, New York, N.Y. 10018—will be listed on the data page of each Pathfinder book that comes off the press, just as 47 The Cut, the address

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## London to restructure military and tie operations to U.S. army

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

LONDON—Days before the Labour government publicly announced a major reorganization of the British military, Prime Minister Anthony Blair said that the armed forces are "a huge part of British foreign policy in the 21st century."

The reorganization was outlined in a government White Paper—a precursor to legislation to be submitted to the parliament for approval—titled *Delivering Security in a Changing World* and published December 11. Building on a close military alliance with Washington in the war on Iraq, the policy outlined in the paper ties the British military in any major expedition to being deployed only if alongside U.S. forces. "Large operations, against foreign states, can only be plausibly conducted if U.S. forces are engaged, either leading a coalition or in NATO," the White Paper says. "Our armed forces will need to be interoperable with U.S. command and control structures [and] match the U.S. operational tempo."

The document specifies that the emphasis

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## Puerto Rican political prisoner Oscar López wins demand for medical care

BY PAUL PEDERSON

After being denied medical treatment for more than eight months, jailed Puerto Rican independence fighter Oscar López Rivera received an operation December 16 for one of two bilateral hernias—a procedure doctors recommended he receive last March. Prison authorities finally scheduled the operation after an international campaign was launched demanding López be allowed medical care.

Following a period of recuperation, López will need a second operation. Supporters are closely following the actions of the prison authorities and have pledged to relaunch the international campaign if the Bureau of Prisons refuses to allow further

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# California: protesters condemn repeal of driver's license law

BY CHESSIE MOLANO

SAN FRANCISCO—Thousands of working people, many of them immigrant workers from Mexico, stayed away from work and demonstrated across California in support of a December 12 statewide economic boycott to demand the right to driver's licenses. "We grow the food. We take care of the kids. We clean the bathrooms. We are the wealth of the country. Give us driver's licenses now!" a handwritten sign here demanded.

Hundreds more marched in cities statewide. In San Francisco's Mission district, a working-class Latino neighborhood, a handful of protesters in a cold drizzle grew to hundreds at a spirited rally waving Mexican flags and singing. People grabbed cardboard boxes off the street, ripping them up to make signs demanding driver's licenses. Many drivers, including bus and sanitation truck drivers, honked their horns in support.

In Oakland, 500 marched throughout the day along a 10-block stretch of International Avenue, between Fruitvale and High Streets. Most of the stores in this usually busy commercial district in the Latino community were closed for the day. Some closed in solidarity and put up signs of support in their windows. Others were forced to close because of lack of workers and business. "Honk your horn if you support the drivers license bill," were among signs in shop windows drawing a favorable response from passing vehicles. Other slogans included, "We demand licenses. Why? Because we deserve it!" Another in Spanish read, "Aquí estamos y no nos vamos. ¡Licencias demandamos!" "Here we are and we're not going. We demand licenses!"

Despite pressure from bosses and school officials, thousands participated in the protest to coincide with the feast of the Virgin of Guadalupe, Mexico's patron saint. Maricella Rosas, one of the organizers, from Clinica de la Raza, said, "The school sent me a letter to tell me not

to keep my child out of school today. We are planning an economic protest every month leading up to a another big work stoppage on Cinco de Mayo. They thought we were asleep. We won't get anything if we don't fight. Many people fought to get what we have now so we have to continue the struggle."

Arturo Solís, a young machine shop worker, said, "I told the boss that I was taking off for this and he said, 'okay.'"

Concepción Solís, a student at Life Academy High School, said there has been a lot of debate in her school on whether immigrants deserve driver's licenses. "The principal" she reported, "told the teachers to tell us not to take off school, but my teacher told me do what you think is right. Most Latinos didn't go to school."

Other demonstrations included 400 in Los Angeles, more than 3,000 in Santa Barbara, and 400 in Redwood City; 1,000 marched to the San Jose Department of Motor Vehicles, 500 marched from the DMV to City Hall in Santa Rosa, hundreds marched in Fresno, 400 at Richmond city hall, 300 mainly students in Berkeley, 100 in Fremont, and others in San Rafael and Ukiah. Large numbers of students stayed home from school. Some districts, particularly those with largely Latino populations, reported anywhere from 50 to 90 percent absent. In San Francisco, as many as 60 percent of the students stayed out of several public schools that have large



Youth carries banner of driver's license in December 12 march in San Jose, California. Thousands took day off work or school to protest repeal of pro-immigrant measure.

Latino populations. The Stockton Unified school district reported over 13,000 absent. Pedro Nanranjo, a life skills teacher at Frick Middle School in Oakland said, "I went to teach but only 6 out of 25-30 students were in class. Two were Latino and four Vietnamese." *Contra Costa Times* reports, "In Oakland's Latino Fruitvale district, teacher Rosa Aguirre led about 45 students out of her Manzanita Elementary School classroom Friday while chanting and holding signs."

The boycott was called by several Latino and immigrant rights organization, among them the Mexican American Political Association and Hermandad Mexicana Nacional, in response to the repeal of a law that would have given immigrants the

right to obtain driver's licenses. Bowing to Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, the Democratic Party-controlled State Assembly voted 64-9, December 1 to repeal Senate Bill 60. Schwarzenegger had campaigned vocally against the bill, which had been signed into law a few months before his election.

Opponents of the law charge that it undermined national security. In the wake of the boycott and demonstrations, Schwarzenegger said that he might reconsider the bill if it includes background checks on applicants and other "security" measures.

Deborah Liatos and Mark Gilsdorf contributed to this article.

## Washington forces Libya to surrender weapons

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2001, a Libyan military intelligence official was convicted in the 1988 bombing of Pan Am flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland. As part of that settlement, Tripoli agreed to pay up to \$10 million to the relatives of each of those killed on the flight after UN sanctions against Libya were lifted.

"As American tanks began to roll through Iraq to overthrow Saddam," wrote conser-

vative columnist William Safire in the December 22 *New York Times*, the Libyan government "came up with a strategy to avoid being next on the regime-change list: pre-emptive surrender." Safire's customary pro-imperialist tone notwithstanding, he had a point when he argued against the attempts by liberal politicians and pundits to describe Tripoli's action as a result of a drawn-out process of diplomacy.

An article in the December 22 *Wall Street Journal* reported that the conclusion of the agreement "was accelerated by a still-secret interception of weapons materials under a fledgling international program to block the shipment of illicit materials around the globe." Application of the U.S.-led Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) helped pressure Tripoli into a corner, the article said. Under the PSI, Washington and a select group of its allies work to track and seize materials—including by stopping and boarding ships on the high seas—allegedly destined for weapons programs in "states of proliferation concern."

U.S. deputy secretary of defense Paul Wolfowitz spoke clearly about this initiative at a December 17 conference on the PSI. He applauded the five new governments that joined the U.S.-led effort—those of Canada,

Denmark, Norway, Singapore, and Turkey. The group's original 11 members were the governments of Australia, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Spain, the United Kingdom, and the United States.

"Your attendance testifies to the fact that weapons of mass destruction in the hands of bad actors and rogue states is something that the international community cannot continue to live with," Wolfowitz said. "For too long we relied on diplomacy, arms control, non-proliferation and export controls to stop the trade in weapons of mass destruction." Now the focus shifts on joint military action, including stopping and boarding ships on the high seas and confiscating their cargo, he said.

"It used to be that when countries joined the so-called 'nuclear club' they seemed to think that the club had just about the right number of members in it," Wolfowitz continued. "They wanted to stop further expansion. But in the last ten years or more we've seen a very dangerous trade in the most dangerous materials and the most dangerous technologies among these countries that lie outside the non-proliferation regime. It's going to take concerted international

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Quebec unionists protest anti-labor bills

Thousands of unionists blocked entrances to ports and major highways across Quebec in December to protest antilabor bills in the National Assembly. The 'Militant' brings you regular coverage of these protests across Canada and similar labor actions around the world. Don't miss a single issue!

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# Libya squeezed

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effort to prevent that rogue trade in rogue materials from coming home to any of us in a disastrous form.”

North Korea and Iran are “of particular concern,” the U.S. department of defense official said, but they are not the only targets of the Proliferation Security Initiative.

Recent actions by Washington have indicated that Damascus is high on the list.

“In word and action, we have clarified the choices left to potential adversaries,” U.S. president George Bush told reporters at the White House December 19. “I hope other leaders will find an example in Libya’s announcement today,” he stated, adding that this is a “development of great importance in our continuing effort to prevent the spread of weapons of mass destruction.” The U.S. president also indicated Washington won’t let up the pressure, maintaining U.S. sanctions against Libya until it is satisfied that Tripoli has carried out its promises. “Because Libya has a troubled history with America and Britain, we will be vigilant in

ensuring its government lives up to all its responsibilities,” Bush said.

“Libya wants to solve all problems and we want to focus on development,” Foreign Minister Mohamed Abderhmane Chalgam told Al-Jazeera television December 20. “This program does not benefit our people or country,” he said, referring to the arms program. “We want to have ties with America and Britain.”

Tripoli reportedly opened secret negotiations primarily through London months ago. British prime minister Anthony Blair “was continuously sending letters and personal envoys who met with leader Muammar el-Qaddafi,” according to the Libyan statement reported in the *Guardian*. “They promised that Libya would get great economic benefits.... This will speed up the restoration of American-Libyan relations...and improve them. Coordination took place between the Libyan Intelligence, the CIA, and MI6 [British secret service] which required calling for experts from the three agencies to examine and discuss the nature of these programs



AFP

**Saddam Hussein (right) gets jailhouse visit December 18 from Ahmed Chalabi of U.S.-backed Iraqi National Congress. Washington told Qaddafi, “You’re next.”**

and to help Libya to prepare its files before entry into international treaties that prevent the proliferation of biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons.”

The White House has claimed that Libya’s program to develop nuclear and chemical weapons began two decades ago. Officials of the U.S. and British spy agencies were shown 10 nuclear facilities by Libyan authorities. An unnamed Bush administration official told the *Washington Post* they had learned a considerable amount about north Korea’s “missile trading business” in the course of negotiations with Libya.

Under enormous pressure from the governments of Britain, France, Germany, and Russia, Iran agreed in October to end programs to develop nuclear weapons in exchange for assurances that Tehran’s past violations of the Nuclear Non-proliferation Treaty would not be brought before the UN Security Council. The three countries also agreed to help ease Tehran’s access to technology for nuclear power.

The campaign to pressure Tehran to end any steps towards acquiring nuclear weapons took a new twist with Washington’s accusations of possible involvement by Pakistani entities.

“Documents provided by Iran to UN nuclear inspectors since early November have exposed the outlines of a vast, secret procurement network that successfully acquired thousands of sensitive parts and tools from numerous countries over a 17-year period,” said an article in the December 21 *Washington Post*. “While Iran has not directly identified Pakistan as a supplier, Pakistani individuals and companies are strongly implicated as sources of key blueprints, technical guidance, and equipment for a pilot uranium-enrichment plant that was first exposed by Iranian dissidents 18 months ago, government officials and independent weapons experts said.”

U.S. and European intelligence agents are now conducting an investigation of Abdul Qadeer Khan, the Pakistani scientist credited with the development of Islamabad’s nuclear bomb, and his aides to probe assistance to Iran, with the cooperation of the Pakistani government. Until recently, Islamabad had vigorously denied selling nuclear technology to Iran or other countries deemed “rogue states” by Washington.

## London aims to transform military

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in the future must be on “speed, precision, agility, deployability, reach and sustainability.” This means organizing lighter units that can be dispatched quicker and more effectively, emphasizing the role of Special Forces on the ground, and arming the air force with more precision-guided “smart bombs” and the navy with more cruise missiles.

Speaking on the White Paper in the House of Commons, Defense Secretary Geoffrey Hoon said that the priority must be on what he described as “providing the capabilities to meet a much wider range of expeditionary tasks, at a greater range from the UK and at an ever-increasing tempo.”

Currently the British military is deployed in over 80 countries around the world. Its major troop concentrations abroad today are in Northern Ireland, Iraq, and Sierra Leone. The armed forces maintain substantial bases in Germany and Cyprus.

The British military must be able to mount either three simultaneous small- and medium-scale operations, or a small- and large-scale operation at the same time, the White Paper says. “Where the UK chooses to be engaged, we will wish to be able to influence political and military decision-making throughout the crisis, including during the post-conflict period.”

The justification for this shift in military policy, one that echoes a similar shift by Washington, are the challenges of the 21st century for the British rulers: the priority of prosecuting their “war on terrorism,” which includes dealing with “rogue states.”

In the case of the United Kingdom, the strategic alliance with the United States is essential given British imperialism’s declining role in the world over decades. London has been a defender within the European Union of the continued and increasing dominance of NATO. In recent talks London insisted upon, and won, the complete subordination of a proposed EU military planning cell to the U.S.-dominated military alliance. George Robertson, former UK defense secretary in the early years of the Labour government, was appointed general secretary of NATO in October 1999, and served in that capacity until his term ended in December 2003.

London’s nuclear capability is also vital, the White Paper adds. “The continuing risk from the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and the certainty that a number of other countries will retain substantial nuclear arsenals, mean that our minimum nuclear deterrent capability, currently represented by Trident, is likely to remain a necessary element of our security,” it says.

The affirmation of the indispensability of Britain’s nuclear capability comes days after London confirmed that the naval task force that spearheaded the 1982 war against Argentina over the Malvinas (Falkland) Islands had been equipped with nuclear weapons.

As a result of the reorganization, a new light brigade is being created and the number of tank-heavy units is being reduced to one-third of their previous number. Also to be cut are a significant number of Eurofighter planes from the Royal Air Force. In line with the strategic relationship with

Washington, the government is shifting to the Joint Strike Fighter aircraft being developed by the U.S. military.

The Joint Strike Fighter will not be available until 2012. Nevertheless, London has decided that beginning in 2006 the Sea Harrier jets commonly used on aircraft carriers today will be withdrawn from service. In addition, one of the navy’s aircraft carriers is being mothballed. This will tie UK naval expeditions tightly into the U.S. naval command and control orbit, with the need to enlist the help of an American aircraft carrier to provide the planes in any expeditionary force.

Two days before the White Paper was announced, Britain’s chief of defense staff, Gen. Michael Walker, announced his full agreement with the shift in policy. His speech was given prominent coverage on British TV.

In fact there has clearly been a major struggle within the military top brass over the policy shift. Admiral Michael Boyce was retired early as chief of defense staff in July 2003. Boyce had condemned the U.S.-led “war on terrorism” as a “high tech 21st century posse in the Wild West.” In a December 2001 speech at the Royal United Services Institute, Boyce had also run into a public scrap with U.S. defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld during the war on Afghanistan.

Boyce’s early retirement followed the resignation of the First Sea Lord Admiral Nigel Essenhigh in protest at the decision to withdraw the Sea Harriers.

The dispute has now been settled clearly in favor of Walker and those who back a UK version of Washington’s course.

Almost all the main daily papers editorialized in their issues following the publication of the White Paper, a number in nervous terms. The pro-EU *Financial Times* cautioned that London didn’t have

the financial resources to mirror moves taken by Washington, calling for “more emphasis on joint procurement and pooling of resources between European allies in NATO.” The right-wing *Conservative Daily Telegraph* warned against cuts in staffing levels and finance. “Numbers still matter,” it said, “and money matters more, too, in the era of smart weapons.”

The nervousness is an expression of the United Kingdom’s weakness in the world today. It expresses itself also in divisions within ruling circles on the relations with the European Union and the United States. Blair has proposed a foreign policy that prioritizes the special relationship with Washington but at the same time places Britain at the “center of Europe.” This position is becoming increasingly untenable. With a deepening recognition that there is no such political, military, or economic entity called “Europe,” the ruling class in the United Kingdom is shifting decisively in the direction of living in Washington’s coattails. None of the newspaper editorials cited above offered any alternative to the White Paper.

The right-wing *Daily Mail* applauded the government’s announced shift in military strategy. The Conservative Party and Liberal Democrats also backed the changes. Nicholas Soames, the Conservatives’ defense spokesperson, welcomed the “thrust” of the White Paper. In previous parliamentary debates, both the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties have sought to play on what they have labeled a crisis in the defense budget. But in their response to the White Paper their limited criticisms were much more muted than they were even a year ago. Then, the Tories were claiming that the Labour government was “ripping the heart out” of Britain’s defense strategy.

## Venezuela: proimperialist forces push recall referendum

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

The pro-imperialist opposition coalition trying to overthrow the government of Hugo Chávez in Venezuela said it submitted 3.4 million signatures to the country’s National Elections Council (CEN) December 19 on petitions demanding a referendum to recall the president.

After a holiday break lasting until January 5, the CEN will have a month to check the signatures and determine whether enough are valid or not to meet the minimum 2.4 million required to trigger a recall referendum.

Washington and other imperialist governments have backed the effort by the Coordinadora Democrática opposition coalition, which is spearheaded by Venezuelan big business. The Organization of American States and the U.S.-based Carter Center had observers during the four-day signature gathering between November 28 and December 1. These observers claimed there were no flaws in the petition drive.

The Chávez government, on the other hand, charged the opposition with major fraud. Caracas has backed up its claim

with testimony by workers who said their employers coerced them into signing the opposition petitions on the threat of losing their jobs. It has also presented evidence of forged signatures of people who have died; thug attacks on pro-government observers at polling stations; and Venezuelans not listed on voter rolls crossing into the country from Colombia to back the anti-Chávez ballot drive. Government officials said the opposition got fewer than 2 million signatures, below the margin required for a referendum.

The looming showdown between the big majority of working people, on one hand, and the Venezuelan bourgeoisie and its backers in Washington, on the other, is shaping up to be the third major confrontation in the country in the last three years over who holds governmental power. Previous attempts to oust Chávez—an April 2002 military coup and a two-month employers’ lockout a year ago—failed because of mass mobilizations by working people that caused deep rifts in the military.

The Chávez government has won widespread popular support among workers,

peasants, fishermen, and other exploited producers with measures that are in the interest of the toilers. These include an agrarian reform law that grants titles and credits to peasants who have taken over land from big landlords and are tilling it; a bill that substantially expands the rights of small fishermen to the detriment of capitalist fishing firms; and legislation that strengthens state control of oil and other natural resources that are part of the country’s national patrimony.

Attempts by working people to implement these measures have been at the heart of why the capitalist class, with Washington’s backing, has not let up in its drive to topple the government. Chávez has also drawn the wrath of U.S. imperialism and its supporters in Venezuela for developing close ties to revolutionary Cuba. These have included close working relations in the country’s nationwide literacy program launched in June 2003 and a program that has brought to the country thousands of Cuban doctors operating free neighborhood clinics in areas where working people have had little or no access to medical care.



# Tyson strikers hold holiday support rally

BY ROLLANDE GIRARD  
AND MAURICE WILLIAMS

JEFFERSON, Wisconsin—Some 200 members of United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 538 and their supporters rallied here December 13 to celebrate the holiday season and mark nine and a half months on strike against Tyson Foods. The meat packers stood in the cold for about an hour, listening to speeches and messages of solidarity.

Jim Provenzano, 28, who has nine years in the plant, expressed resolve to stand up to the bosses' concession demands. "The concessions are way too much. There's no reason for a company that makes that much profit to ask so much from us," he said. "They want to cut our pensions, but the owner of the company has a pension and makes millions of dollars a year. What's fair for one is fair for all."

Some of the concessions the Tyson bosses are demanding include a two-tier pay scale cutting hourly rates for new hires from \$11.10 to \$9.00 and a four-year pay freeze for current workers, a freeze on pension benefits and eliminating them entirely for new hires, increased health-care premiums and deductibles that would take up to \$4,600 a year out of families' pockets, eliminating a health-care supplement for retirees, cutting sick leave and disability benefits by more than half, reducing vacation benefits by 33 percent, and eliminating severance protections that would give Tyson Foods license to cut jobs at no cost.

In 2001, Tyson Foods bought out the former Dorskocil Food Services plant as part of a \$3.2 billion cash and stock acquisition of the beef packing giant IBP Inc. The company raked in handsome profits with sales of \$23 billion last year.

Local 538 president Mike Rice, who chaired the December 13 rally, announced that the company had offered to reopen negotiations December 17–18. "We are going back to the negotiation table," he said, "but I don't want you to build too much hope, the issues are the same as February 28" when the meat packers first walked off the job. Rice asked the crowd, "Are you willing to give up these issues?" They answered with a resounding "No!"

Rice noted the latest financial contribu-

tions to the strike, including two \$5,000 donations from employees at two local companies, a contribution from Council 7 of the AFL-CIO, and an \$8,000 donation from the UFCW in Canada. He announced that the total amount given to the strike fund, excluding food and clothes, came to \$940,000. The fund included contributions from the United Auto Workers, Teamsters, International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers, the Painters Union, and the Wisconsin Educators Association, among others.

A solidarity message was read from striking miners in Utah who are engaged in a battle against the owners of the Co-Op coal mine to win union recognition for the United Mine Workers of America (see below).

One of the rally speakers, Bill Roberts of UFCW Local 73A in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin, noted how the Tyson strikers' unity and determination had an impact on negotiations with other employers to win decent contracts. "Your efforts hit those companies and we have been successful in signing contracts with no cutbacks," he said.

Tony Schultz, from the Students Labor Action Coalition at the University of Wisconsin in Madison, told rally participants that as a result of protest activities organized by students there, the university divested \$200,000 it held in Tyson stock. Another student, Liana Dalton, said she supported the strike because "corporate domination is



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Tyson strikers and supporters rally December 13 after nine and a half months on strike

ever-increasing in the world and we have to stand up against it rather than just let them keep exploiting us."

"We are just asking for a fair share for workers," said Jim Kringer, 57, who worked at the plant for 37 years. He explained that he was one of about 30 workers who was forced to retire before the strike started because the company plans to increase the age that workers can retire with full pension benefits from 55 to 65.

"We want the company to treat us right," said Mike Hill, who worked in the maintenance department for 17 years. Before starting at Tyson he said he quit a nonunion job

because of the abusive treatment workers received from the bosses.

Meanwhile, the Tyson bosses were dealt a blow when a recent federal court decision ordered the employers to award \$1.2 million in severance pay to more than 200 workers who worked for the company in Chicago, the Spanish language daily *Hoy* reported December 3. Tyson Foods had closed its doors there in January 2002 without any notice to its employees. The ruling was based on one of the first collective lawsuits filed in Illinois, under a new federal law that mandates companies to give 60 days notice before they close a plant.

## U.S. courts rule: indefinite jailings of 'enemy combatants' are unconstitutional

BY SAM MANUEL

In mid-December federal appeals courts in two separate but related cases handed down rulings that could potentially set back Washington's policy of detaining either U.S. citizens or foreign nationals as "enemy combatants" and holding them indefinitely without charges or access to lawyers. The rulings follow a decision by the Supreme Court on November 10, over the objection of the White House, to hear two appeals filed on behalf of 16 of some 660 individuals detained as "enemy combatants" at a military prison camp at the U.S. naval base in Guantánamo Bay, Cuba.

The rulings reflect the tensions and divisions in the U.S. ruling class over the pace and extent to which it can undermine democratic rights using the rationalization that it is pursuing the "war on terrorism."

At issue is whether the president has the authority, in the first case, to detain citizens arrested on U.S. soil and, in the second, foreign nationals captured in Afghanistan, and hold them indefinitely without charges. Attorneys for the administration of U.S. president George Bush argued that the president is granted that authority under Article II of the Constitution, which outlines the powers of the president, and through his powers as commander in chief of the armed forces.

"The President's inherent constitutional powers do not extend to the detention as enemy combatant of American citizens without express congressional authorization," wrote the majority of a three-judge panel for the Second Circuit Court of Appeals. "Padilla will be entitled to the constitutional protections extended to other citizens."

José Padilla, a U.S. citizen who is also known as Abdullah al-Muhajir, was arrested in May 2002 at Chicago's O'Hare International Airport as he arrived from Pakistan. He was taken to New York as a material witness in the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks on the World Trade Center and Pentagon. Two days before a judge was to hear a challenge to Padilla's detention, the Bush administration declared him an "enemy combatant" and transferred him to a Navy brig in South Carolina. Padilla has been held there incommunicado for 18 months without charges or access to his attorneys or family.

The designation of Padilla as an enemy combatant is based on information from two individuals who claim he met with leaders of al-Qaeda and discussed plans to detonate a radiological bomb in the United States. The device, dubbed a "dirty bomb," uses conventional explosives to disperse

low-grade radioactive material. According to Padilla's attorneys, one of the individuals has since recanted his accusations. The other, they say, has a reputation for providing false information.

The latest ruling gives the government 30 days in which to release Padilla from military custody, or take another course. The court offered the government the options of transferring Padilla to a civilian authority that can bring criminal charges against him, or to have him held as a material witness in grand jury proceedings. In response, Justice Department spokesperson Mark Corallo said curtly, "We are reviewing the opinion."

The appeal on Padilla's behalf was backed by the American Bar Association and the Lawyers Committee for Human Rights.

In a second ruling, the majority of the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals in San Francisco went even further, writing, "We simply cannot accept the government's position that the executive branch possesses the unchecked authority to imprison indefinitely any persons, foreign citizens included...without permitting such prisoners recourse of any kind to any judicial

forum."

The appeal was filed by attorneys for a Libyan national who is being held at Guantánamo with the more than 600 others, who come from 40 different countries.

The Pentagon has appointed military defense attorneys for two of the detainees, Salim Ahmed Hamden of Yemen and David Hicks of Australia. Both men are among a group of six who have been chosen by President Bush to face special military tribunals. Only two of the 20 lawyers who have applied to represent the detainees have been approved for the job by the Pentagon.

The December 3 London *Guardian* reported that the first team of military defense lawyers assigned to defend the detainees was dismissed by the Pentagon the same day it reported for duty. When the attorneys complained that the rules of the tribunals would make it impossible to properly represent their clients they were told to leave. The rules would allow, among other things, for the government to listen in on any conversations between attorney and client. Major John Smith of the Pentagon's Office of Military Commissions called the *Guardian's* report "not true."

## Grocery workers settle strike in East

BY JOHN HAWKINS

By a vote of 962 to 717 members of United Food and Commercial Workers Local 400 in West Virginia, Ohio, and Kentucky approved a new four-year contract December 11, ending their nearly eight-week walkout centered around Kroger's refusal to meet workers' demand that there be no take-backs in medical coverage.

The new contract calls for the company to increase its contributions to the employee health-care fund by 8 percent each year—the same company proposal workers had rejected and struck over on October 13. But Kroger also agreed to pay up to 2.5 percent more annually if a consultant determines that more is needed.

According to a report in the December 12 *Charleston Gazette*, United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 400 president James Lowthers said the consultant will be from Milliman USA, an actuarial firm that union leaders cited repeatedly during the strike as saying that 8 percent annual increases would leave employee benefits short. Milliman has worked with the employees' health-care fund for 15 years.

The new contract contains wage increases of 20 cents and 25 cents per hour in the first

and third years of the contract, and lump sum payments of \$300 and \$500 in the second and fourth years.

One worker interviewed by the *Gazette* expressed displeasure with the wage settlement. "I've been working there for 11 years, and I'm still part-time," Evelyn Robertson said after voting on the agreement. "I only make \$8.65 an hour now, and if this passes, I'll only be making \$9.05."

In California 70,000 UFCW members at Safeway, Albertsons, and Ralphs, a Kroger-owned subsidiary, have been on strike or locked out since October 11, two days before the strike began in West Virginia, Ohio, and Kentucky.

Lowthers announced that he and 600 to 700 UFCW local presidents plan to travel to California December 15 to reinforce workers there, reported the *Gazette*. "We're going to California to support those workers for the long haul. The people there have the same resolve as the people here," he said.

Before the ink was dry on the new agreement, Kroger announced the closing of three of the 44 stores that were struck in the three eastern states. Between 30 and 40 Local 400 members work at each of the closed stores.

### Co-Op miners salute striking meat packers

The following is the solidarity message sent December 13 by the Co-Op miners in Utah to the meat packers on strike against Tyson Foods in Jefferson, Wisconsin.

Please receive warm greetings of solidarity from the fighting Co-Op miners on this December 13th, 2003. Thanks to the support and assistance we have received from president Cecil Roberts and the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), of which we are fighting to be members of, and thanks to the support we have received from other organizations, today we celebrate 86 days of struggle for our dignity and our honor, for our right to have the same rights as every miner and worker across the country.

We are happy to establish contact with fighters such as you, who have now been on strike for nine and a half months, and we hope to be able to talk and exchange experiences with you soon.

Brother Keith Griep praised our struggle by saying it belongs to all workers across the country. With this message we want you to see us as brothers in struggle as well. We want Tyson to know that your fight is now our fight, and starting today we will help to get the truth out about your strike. We celebrate your nine and a half months of resistance. You are an inspiration that reaffirms our decision to fight for justice.

An injury to one is an injury to all!  
What time is it? It is union time!

*Jesus Salazar  
for the fighting Co-Op miners  
leadership committee*



# Co-Op strikers force gov't safety probe

**Continued from front page**  
investigation of the situation.

The miners recounted many stories. On Dec. 23, 1996, Rodríguez was working next to a mechanic, Harvey Randall, when a slab of coal—9.5-foot long, 2-4 feet wide, and 1-2 feet thick—slid off the continuous mining machine crushing Randall on his chest and stomach. He died next to Rodríguez, who barely escaped injury. “My lamp battery on my waist got caught between the coal rock and the continuous miner,” said Rodríguez. “I was stepping on Harvey’s feet as I tried to free myself. He laid on the floor dying from the injuries.”

Rodríguez worked in the same mine where Alejandro Medina, a continuous miner operator, died after a rib—13 feet long, 5 feet high, and 3 feet thick—fell on him in 1999. MSHA cited the company at the time with four 104d violations, which mean that the bosses knowingly caused the conditions that led to the death. The investigation concluded that the mine did not have adequate hazard and roof control training and did not have adequate pre-shift and on-shift examinations. The 1999 MSHA report said that “Loose, hazardous rib conditions, that were not taken down (barred down) or supported at the accident site, were the direct cause of the fatal accident on July 15, 1999.” Of the last six fatalities in Utah coal mines, three have taken place at Co-Op.

Rodríguez and 12 other Co-Op miners went to the Utah MSHA Field Office in Price for the first time on October 29. They met for several hours with supervisory MSHA inspector Ted Farmer.

William Estrada was part of this delegation. He said that after several miners described the conditions at the mine, Farmer stopped and said he was going to call the regional MSHA office in Colorado. “Farmer told us that what we were describing was so serious that he needed to get special investigators involved,” Estrada said.

Miners reported to Farmer that the mining certification classes are given by Co-Op employee José Ortega, who charges them between \$250 and \$300, in cash only. The College of Eastern Utah and a local contractor, Rocky Mountain Miner, offer the same classes in Price for \$120.

Ortega, who works at the Co-Op mine, is a *rompehuelga*, the Spanish word for a scab, several miners pointed out. According to the Co-Op strikers, Ortega makes \$18 an hour—compared to the \$5.25 to \$7 an hour most other miners were paid—and has been visiting strikers at home trying to convince them to cross the picket line. So far, the strikers reported with pride, he has only succeeded in getting one miner to cross.

Just a few days after the October visit in Price, MSHA contacted the miners and said it wanted to begin taking affidavits from them, strikers reported. In November more than 30 Co-Op miners met three MSHA special investigators at the UMWA District 22 office in Price. The investigators only completed eight interviews that day.

“The following week MSHA inspectors

went to the mine to investigate the training records and accident reports of the company,” Estrada said. “At one point there were five inspectors inside the mine. We have a notebook in the trailer at the picket line with copies of the violations they wrote up on the mine.”

CW Mining operates the Bear Canyon mines, which are popularly known as the Co-Op mines. There are three portals in this canyon. In one, known as the Hiawatha Seam or Bear Canyon #1, miners have always complained of dangerous roof tops and inadequate roof supports.

“This mine is very dangerous,” said Rodríguez. “After roof falls at the entry way, the bosses sent us in through a hole in the return. That is the only entry and only exit now. We were never sure if we were going to come out after we went in. If the roof collapses there, you’re trapped.”

Rodríguez described how the mine managers wanted to rescue equipment and secure access to water from that mine. “They had five of us going in there to build cribs everywhere to support bad top,” he said. “We rescued the roof bolter, the feeder, much of the belt and rollers. Others rescued the transformers, water pipes, and other small equipment in the middle of these conditions. I never saw an MSHA inspector at this mine during all this time. The company got away with using the short 48-inch bolts to secure the roof. That was a

big part of the problem.”

Three serious roof falls occurred in the first six months of 2003 at Bear Canyon #1. The most dangerous took place on January 14 when a roof top 120 feet long and 20 feet high suddenly collapsed. A coal hauler operator jumped out and ran over to safety. The hauler equipment remains buried under the mountain, a miner reported.

Five MSHA investigators, one fluent in Spanish, returned to finish the interviews. They came to the picket line trailer to do the job. Miners said that the trailer was packed all day with strikers waiting to describe their experiences at the Co-Op mine.

On December 16, the investigators came back to get additional testimony. Several miners described the lack of training they received. The Mine Health and Safety Act requires coal operators to provide eight hours of annual refresher training classes. One miner said he told the investigators that he received only two hours of training and was charged \$100 for the class given to him by José Ortega. According to several miners who reported similar problems, the investigators said it is illegal to charge for the eight-hour annual refresher.

Another miner said that the initial training he received from Ortega lasted three days, two hours per day, at Ortega’s house. He was charged \$300 and was told by Ortega to say he had gotten 40 hours of new miner training—instead of six—if he was asked by

MSHA inspectors or the bosses.

Several miners pointed out that the classes given in Price were offered only in English, so they had no option but to take the classes by Ortega because he gave them in Spanish.

One miner said he explained to investigators that bosses used intimidation and threats against the workers who complained about unsafe conditions or injuries on a regular basis. He said the crew he was on would ride up the steep mountain into the mine in the back of an open pick up truck driven by a boss. On one shift the crew told the boss to stop at the office for supplies. The boss slammed on the brakes, throwing the crew in the back all around. The miner said he was thrown against the side of the truck jamming his finger. When he described the incident and the injury to the production foreman, he replied, “I don’t want to hear you complaining about your boss or you won’t have a job here anymore,” the miner said.

One of the miners interviewed was Jesús Salazar, who has worked at the Co-Op mine for four years as a mechanic. “During all the time I have worked at Co-Op, the company has always forced workers to operate unsafe equipment,” Salazar said. “Even after an MSHA inspector tagged equipment out of service, the foremen would order the workers to operate it unrepaired, after the inspector left. Numerous injuries occurred because of it.”

## UMWA local backs strikers at Christmas party

**Continued from front page**

of Co-Op miners and their families at the Christmas party held December 21 at the Mission San Rafael Catholic Church here. “This is a happy time of the year,” continued Shelley, “and we wish Merry Christmas to all of the children of the Co-Op miners. These children should enjoy the holidays like it is supposed to be because this is their holiday.”

Shelley then called Gonzalo Salazar, a leader of the Co-Op strike and organizer of the Food Committee, to the front of the room to present him with a check for \$1,000 from UMWA Local 1759. Deer Creek is an underground coal mine. The UMWA local there is one of the largest in the western coalfields.

Shelley came along with three other members of the local. The delegation included Tain Curtis, head of the local’s safety committee, and Michael Durran and Ernesto Ibañez. Ibañez is also a member of the San Rafael Catholic Church. Along with retired miner Ernesto López and Rosario Cano León, Ibañez has helped organize the church to back the strike. The church has paid rent and utilities for strikers in need for three months.

The Deer Creek miners said that there has been an outpouring of support for the Co-Op strikers in their local. The union bulletin board at work, they said, has a display on the Co-Op strike and a big donation jar



Militant/Teri Moss

**Co-Op miners’ December 21 Christmas party at Mission San Rafael Catholic Church in Huntington, Utah, drew 80 people, including Santa Claus, to the childrens’ delight.**

sitting in front of it. The miners collected the \$1,000 through donations from members. They also gathered toys and other presents for the children of seven families of strikers, which they brought in huge bags.

Retired miners from UMWA Local 9959 from East Carbon and Sunnyside, Utah, members of the Paper, Allied-Industrial, Chemical, and Energy Workers union from an oil refinery, and representatives of the AFL-CIO in Salt Lake City, also contributed bags of presents for the kids. Ann Fivecoat, who is married to a retired miner, knitted beautiful hats and slippers for the children of four families. The retired miners also brought gifts, as well as bags full of candy, taffy, and oranges that had been donated by the Miners Trading Post in East Carbon.

The children were called to the front of the room and given armfuls of gifts and then went over to sit on the lap of Santa Claus. One of the Co-Op strikers was dressed in full Santa Claus gear and was a big hit with the kids.

There was also lots of food. Several of the spouses of the strikers cooked tamales, beans, and salad for everyone to enjoy. Two huge sheet cakes were donated by UMWA District 22 for dessert. The cakes had inscriptions on them. “United Mine Workers of America,” said one, and “Los Mineros de Co-Op Navidad” (Co-Op Miners’ Christmas), said the other.

## Puerto Rican prisoner wins fight for medical care

**Continued from front page**  
treatment.

López, who is currently imprisoned at Terre Haute, Indiana, federal penitentiary, has served more than 22 years of a 70-year sentence for his activities in opposition to Washington’s colonial domination of the Caribbean nation. He and four other Puerto Rican militants—Haydée Beltrán, Carlos Alberto Torres, Juan Segarra Palmer, and Antonio Camacho Negrón—have together served more than 100 years in U.S. prisons for their activities in support of independence for Puerto Rico.

López was jailed in 1981. Framed up on charges of “seditious conspiracy” and sentenced to 55 years in prison, López was slapped with a further 15-year sentence for “conspiracy to escape” seven years later.

**Last of ‘Vieques 12’ sentenced**

On December 18 the last sentence was handed down in the trials of the Vieques 12. The 12 were arrested for participating in the May 1 celebration of the Navy’s departure from the Puerto Rican island of Vieques. In all, six of the 12 face prison terms ranging from four months, in the case of Heriberto Hernández, to five years, in

the case of José Pérez González.

“No one should be jailed for what happened on May 1. The Navy destroyed, killed, and polluted for over half a century and nobody received any sentences for those crimes,” said Robert Rabin in a December 19 phone interview. Rabin, a 23-year Vieques resident who spent six months in prison last year for participating in the mass civil disobedience campaign on the island, is one of the founding members of the Committee for the Rescue and Development of Vieques.

Rabin stressed that the struggle in Vieques continues. “Right now we are fighting to get the land out of the hands of the [U.S.] Department of the Interior. We are pressuring the U.S. and Puerto Rican governments to decontaminate the island and deal with the health issues, the long-term cumulative effects of U.S. Navy bombing,” he said.

The other four facing prison terms are Néstor de Jesús Guishard—8 months; Jorge Cruz Hernández—18 months; José Montañez Sanes—18 months; and Jose Velez Acosta—33 months. The remaining six have received sentences ranging from probation to nine months under

house arrest.

The jailing of Montañez Sanes, in particular, has struck a chord among many on the island. He is the nephew of David Sanes, a civilian security guard at the U.S. Navy base in Vieques who was killed April 19, 1999, when a pilot dropped two 500-pound bombs during bombing exercises from a U.S. warplane onto the observation post where he was working.

David Sanes’s death sparked the wave of protests that forced Washington to silence the bombing range.

During the first sentencing hearing December 4, Montañez Sanes collapsed in the courtroom. A student who tried to come to his aid, Scott Barbés Caminero, was charged with contempt of court and locked up for 15 days.

“José Montañez Sanes and his family are symbols of the hardship and suffering the Navy’s repression has brought the people of Vieques,” Rabin said. “His case is also an example of the fact that the federal court in Puerto Rico is simply a branch of U.S. militarism on the island.”

Rabin said the campaign for their release and efforts to pursue legal appeals are underway.

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# ‘The war party, working-class resistance, and building the communist movement’

## Public meeting launches new premises of New York Pathfinder Books

BY PATRICK O’NEILL

NEW YORK—Nearly 300 people attended a public meeting held here December 14 to launch the work of building a new and expanded Pathfinder bookstore and distribution center in New York City. More than a third of those who attended the gathering—titled “The War Party, Working-Class Resistance, and Building the Communist Movement”—had joined work crews over the previous day and a half of the Red Weekend to do initial construction work on the new premises. (See article in last week’s issue.)

Participants had two things to celebrate, said Mary-Alice Waters, editor of the Marxist magazine *New Internationalist* and one of the speakers. In addition to officially launching the construction project, she said, “We have come to celebrate what is represented by these four titles—many months of labor by volunteers in the Pathfinder Printing Project.” She was referring to four new Pathfinder books scheduled for publication in January. Blow-ups of the covers of these books hung above the stage. They were *Aldabonazo: Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground, 1952–58* by Armando Hart, in both English- and Spanish-language editions; *Rebelión Teamster*, the first edition in Spanish of *Teamster Rebellion* by Farrell Dobbs; and *Leur Trotsky et le nôtre* by Jack Barnes—the first French-language edition of *Their Trotsky and Ours*.

Waters and Jack Barnes, the Socialist Workers Party national secretary, were the featured speakers. Martin Koppel, organizer of the executive committee of the New York SWP, and Arrin Hawkins of the New York Young Socialists co-chaired the event.



Above, German chancellor Gerhard Schröder (left) and French president Jacques Chirac (second from right) are gloomy as EU Brussels summit collapsed December 13. Right, mood was upbeat as volunteers met same day in New York to begin building new, expanded premises for Pathfinder Books. Public meeting took place there next day.

The first speaker, SWP National Committee member Norton Sandler, told the meeting that voluntary construction teams would rapidly turn the space into the flagship Pathfinder bookshop in the United States. The address—307 West 36th Street, 10th Floor

North, New York, NY 10018—would be listed on the data page of each Pathfinder book that comes off the press, he said, just as 47 The Cut, the address of the publisher’s London distributor, has appeared in every Pathfinder book since 1972.

Pathfinder supporters in the United Kingdom organized their own Red Weekend and public meeting in mid-November to spruce up the London bookshop and celebrate its 15th anniversary, said Pete Connors of the Communist League (CL) in the United Kingdom. Extended shop hours have already helped increase off-the-street traffic and sales.

Volunteers fill orders on the premises for customers in Africa and much of Europe, and deliver books to buyers within London, Connors said. Just in the last week an outlet in Italy used Pathfinder’s web site to order about \$900 worth of books.

### New CL branch in Scotland

Connors announced the formation of a new CL branch in Edinburgh, Scotland. “We’ll be opening a new bookstore and Militant Labour Forum hall there,” he said. “This step is a product of a couple of years work reaching out to farmers and workers in Scotland.” Socialist workers have also seen firsthand how Scottish national pride and desire for self-determination are “living elements in the class struggle,” Connors said.

Bill Schmitt of the Twin Cities Young Socialists said that during a recent political visit to the United Kingdom, Iceland, and Sweden, he had joined CL members at the 100,000-strong demonstration in London November 20, held to protest the visit of U.S. president George Bush. “The ‘Stop Bush’ line of the organizers did nothing to advance the fight against British imperialism, which is a key player in the assault on Iraq,” he said. By contrast, CL members carried a banner that put the heat on London. It read: “British troops out of Iraq, Northern Ireland, the Balkans, and Sierra Leone.” The banner drew interest from many, but also criticism from a wider range of protesters, Schmitt said, who agreed with the “troops out of Iraq” part but argued that “‘We’ can’t leave the Balkans or Ireland.”

Schmitt and other speakers said that this banner was likely the only anti-imperialist banner in that London demonstration. Despite their “antiwar” pronouncements, the main organizers of the action are in fact part of the imperialist war party by calling actions with a British nationalist tone.

In her presentation, Waters noted that production of the four new Pathfinder titles, from formatting to indexing, had been

undertaken by volunteers in the Pathfinder Printing Project—one side of the expanding responsibilities undertaken by supporters of the communist movement. All four will be part of Pathfinder’s booth at the Havana International Book Fair in February.

Armando Hart’s *Aldabonazo: Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground, 1952–58* will fill an important place in Pathfinder’s growing arsenal of books by leaders of the Cuban Revolution, Waters said. “This part of the publishing program began with the production in the mid-1990s

of the *Bolivian Diary of Ernesto Che Guevara* and Che’s *Episodes of the Cuban Revolutionary War, 1956–58*.”

Through this series of books, Cuban revolutionary leaders speak in their own words, from those who started out as anti-Batista army officers within the military to the women fighters in the Rebel Army. These accounts help to fill in the picture of how the Cuban Revolution was actually made, she said.

A feature of *Aldabonazo* is the rich trove

of primary sources it contains, said Waters—including letters, articles, and statements by revolutionary leaders. Along with Hart’s narrative, they show the complexities of the struggle in the cities, and its place in the anti-Batista struggle alongside the Rebel Army, which was built in the mountains of the Sierra Maestra.

The revolutionary leadership team around Fidel Castro was constructed in the Sierra, said Waters, and the struggle for a proletarian party went through the Sierra as well. But the Sierra would have been wiped out in a week without the work of the cadres in the cities.

### Collapse of EU negotiations a ‘fiasco’

“We heard some very big news today,” said Jack Barnes in the gathering’s main presentation, referring to Saddam Hussein’s capture by imperialist forces the previous day. “But the most important story of the day was the fiasco of the European Union’s effort to agree to a new constitution.” The collapse of the EU summit in Brussels amid deep divisions among the member states shows that the term “Europe” is a myth in any political sense, he said.

By contrast, Barnes said, “Old Europe” and “New Europe,” the terms used by U.S. secretary of defense Donald Rumsfeld, “do have functional meaning.” They reflect real political alignments. New Europe includes the governments that Washington includes in its “coalition of the willing.” Old Europe is the bloc of imperialist powers led by Paris and Berlin, which includes most of the original members of the Common Market, the EU’s forerunner.

The crisis of the European Union, said Barnes, “was not prepared by the U.S. government but by the French and German imperialists themselves.” Their approach to weaker European countries, from Spain to Poland, as “subordinate vassals” laid the basis for the latter to line up on Washington’s side, “the biggest power, which won’t squeeze them so directly.”

In the past, the French and German governments pushed aggressively for rules codified in the 1996 Stability and Growth Pact that put more pressure on weaker capitalist countries in the EU. Then, as capitalist depression conditions deepened, Paris and Berlin violated these regulations themselves and used their weight to brush off sanctions after arrogantly insisting that less powerful countries had to abide by the very same rules.

Washington’s expanding use of its military power is tearing apart the entire

Continued on Page 10

Coming late January

## Rebelión Teamster

by Farrell Dobbs

The 1934 strikes that built the union movement in Minneapolis and helped pave the way for the CIO, recounted by a central leader of that battle. The first in a four-volume series on the class-struggle leadership of the strikes and organizing drives that transformed the Teamsters union in much of the Midwest into a fighting social movement and pointed the road toward independent labor political action. \$19

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...how the employing class, backed by union officials, stepped up government efforts to gag these class-conscious militants, and how workers mounted a world campaign to free eighteen union and socialist leaders framed-up and imprisoned in the infamous 1941 federal sedition trial.

“The American workers,” Dobbs concludes, “must learn to act politically and to think socially if they are to attain the class consciousness and solidarity needed to defeat the exploiters.” Each volume \$18.95

Order online from [www.pathfinderpress.com](http://www.pathfinderpress.com)  
or from bookstores, including those listed on page 8.





# How swift action saved Cuban revolutionary's life

## Phone operators spoiled dictatorship's plan to murder July 26 leader jailed in 1958

Over the coming weeks the *Militant* will be reprinting excerpts from *Aldabonazo: Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground, 1952–58*, by Armando Hart, a new Pathfinder to be published in January in both English and Spanish editions. *Aldabonazo* makes available for the first time ever to English-speaking readers this first-hand account of the struggle, led by the July 26 Movement and the Rebel Army headed by Fidel Castro, to overthrow the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship. Hart, a central organizer of the urban underground and one of the historic leaders of the Cuban Revolution, recounts how revolutionary cadres organized in the cities.

This week we reprint excerpts from an interview with Carlos Amat and Rosita Casán, which first appeared in the June–September 1975 issue of the magazine *Santiago*. Amat and Casán, members of the July 26 Movement underground in Santiago de Cuba, both worked as switchboard operators at the Cuban Telephone Company in January 1958 when Armando Hart was arrested near Bayamo in eastern Cuba. With access to the telephone conversations of top officials of the dictatorship's army and police, they provided information that enabled the organizers of the underground movement to save Hart's life. Also included is an account of that event by Luis Buch, who was then head of public relations for the July 26 Movement in Havana. Copyright © 2004 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.



### Carlos Amat

I was still in high school when I went to work at the company. I worked in what was called the Transmission Department. Given the technique used in splitting the incoming lines on their way to the operator switchboards, all lines passed through our department first. We had our own switchboard through which, whenever a call came through, we were able to listen in on the operators and on the people talking without them noticing. This was done by the company as a measure of supervision and control. But it would later be of great use to us....

### Rosita Casán

Generally speaking, I had to remain on guard continuously. If I was off work, I'd be at home or easily findable. But I spent most of my time at the phone company, because we also had to keep an eye on the local phones in Santiago. We knew where the compañeros in hiding were, so whenever the military would monitor the phones, we had to warn them immediately. For this we devised a system of passwords and countersigns.

"Hey, how's Aunt Dora?" someone would ask.

"Aunt Dora couldn't be better," we'd answer. That meant they could speak freely.

But sometimes the response was: "Aunt Dora's seriously ill, and today she's terrible. We had to admit her to the hospital." By that, the compañero knew the military was listening in. Another aspect of our work was that Rogelio [Soto] would listen in to Chaviano's phone at the Moncada garrison and to the offices of the Military Intelligence Service (SIM), to find out everything they were talking about. Often we intercepted orders to arrest or search people, and we'd warn them.... These cops were very clumsy in their repressive work, and they committed real indiscretions over the phone.

In this way, the telephone jobs made it possible for the Movement to have a secure means of communication locally and nationally both for directing our clandestine effort and as a source of first-hand information on the enemy's communications....

There's a concrete case where the telephones fulfilled a fundamental mission. It was in January 1958. One night around 10:00 p.m., I got a call from Vilma [Espín]. "They've seized a number of people," she said, "and we need to find out who they are. Make inquiries in Bayamo."

A little later Daniel [René Ramos Latour] phoned me and told me the same thing, but



Photo courtesy of Armando Hart

**Armando Hart (striped shirt) with Tony Buch (to Hart's right) and Javier Pazos (to Hart's left) in Moncada garrison after being captured Jan. 10, 1958. At right is Gen. Alberto del Rio Chaviano. Second from left is Vallejo, peasant who informed on them.**

he referred to some farmland attached to the Palma sugar mill, located between Palma Soriano and Bayamo, where they had arrested Jacinto Pérez (Armando), Tony Buch, and Javier Pazos. Carlos Amat called me, too, with the news and I phoned Haydée [Santamaría]. Meanwhile, I called an operator in Bayamo who worked with us, and told her to investigate the lines to the Bayamo garrison. She called back around midnight.

She confirmed that the prisoners were indeed being held, that they would be transferred to Santiago the next morning, and that they were "three big shots." I immediately passed this all on to Déborah (Vilma) and Daniel.

Later when we were at work, Carlos [Amat] and I listened in on a call where Tabernilla ordered Chaviano to kill Hart and the doctor (Buch). Tabernilla reminded him that Hart had escaped from the courtroom once before.

"Get moving and do it fast!" I recall Tabernilla saying. "These degenerates mobilize quickly and they mustn't learn of this. The father of one of them (Felipe Pazos) is appealing to the president. Don't dally. Carry out the order!"

Carlos Amat phoned Haydée and I called Déborah (Vilma). I was simultaneously speaking with Daniel, because in those days the phone in my house had a secret connection to what we called the Cave, the basement of an apartment building that had virtually been converted into our headquarters.

The mobilization was immediate. From the Cave, a number of compañeros took off by car: Eduardito Mesa, Belarmino Castilla (Anibal), Miguel Angel Manals, Carlos Chain, and Gloria Casañas. The latter was carrying two hidden revolvers for the emergency operation they were leaving to undertake: seizing a radio station over which they would announce the news so that the population would remain on alert.

Arriving at the station—located on the second floor of the Lido social club in the Terrazas neighborhood of Vista Alegre—the compañeros pointed a gun at the announcer and the operator on duty. Meanwhile, Carlos Chain took the microphone and warned the population what was happening, urging them to remain on alert and to remember the strike around [the murder of] Frank [País].

### Carlos Amat

...Tabernilla phoned Chaviano again to tell him not to kill Javier Pazos, because the latter's father had spoken with Batista and was pulling strings, but that the others should be killed right away.

"Kill Armando like a dog!" Tabernilla said. "Hurry up, since the news is spreading, and afterwards you won't be able to."

Chaviano answered that the news was already out, since a radio station had just been seized. "What should I do?" he asked.

"Imbecile! You've wasted a lot of time! Now there's nothing you can do."

A few days later the prisoners were transferred to the Boniato jail. Their lives

had been saved.

### Luis Buch

Captured on Hart's person were some compromising documents, and he was savagely beaten. In a second telephone call—this time from Tabernilla to Chaviano—the order was given to stage an alleged skirmish between the army and rebels, with three rebel dead—that is, the three prisoners....

From what we know, the order was not carried out immediately due to the opposition of Laureano Ibarra Pérez. This would not help the government at all, Ibarra Pérez raised, since Hart was the son of a respected magistrate, Pazos was the son of a noted professional who had been president of the National Bank of Cuba and was very well known among economists in Latin America, and Tony Buch was the son of a distinguished doctor with a high scientific reputation, who exercised his profession in Santiago itself and was highly regarded by the entire population. It was easy to order the death of the three prisoners from afar, he said, but those who ordered the execution would confront the indignation and rebellion of an entire city that could become transformed into a national protest, as had happened when Frank País was killed.

These contradictions within the tyranny's high command caused a delay that was decisive for gaining time for the efforts that were carried out in Havana and Santiago.

A little before 6:00 a.m., through the July 26 Movement's clandestine phone line at my home in Miramar, my wife Conchita got a call from Haydée Santamaría. "My child is gravely ill," Haydée said tersely. "You must send the medicine as urgently as possible. There's no hope of saving him."

We had absolutely no doubt that she was referring to Armando Hart, that he had been arrested and was in an extremely precarious situation. . . .

Rushing into action, we headed to the official residence of the Papal Nuncio, where we were greeted by a nun. We explained to her the reason for our presence at such an

early hour, which was to urgently meet with Monsignor Luigi Centoz. The nun told us to wait in a reception room. She came back to say that the Nuncio could not be bothered at the moment, because he was saying Mass.

In face of our insistence that she pass on to him our life-and-death message, however, she agreed. A few minutes later we were in the presence of Monsignor Luigi Centoz, ambassador of the Holy See and dean of the Diplomatic Corps accredited in Cuba, who asked us into his office. We apologized for the unscheduled visit, explaining that we were there to ask for help from his good offices to save the life of Armando Hart, who had been arrested by the police, and that we had learned through totally reliable channels that the order had been given to physically eliminate him. Such a deed could possibly be averted through his swift and valuable intercession with Cuban authorities....

Facing what seemed a lost cause, Conchita then addressed the monsignor, who was seated behind his desk. In back of him on the wall was an enormous portrait of the Pope. She told him that this improvised meeting was symbolically presided over by the Holy Father. She was convinced, she said, that if a human life depended on his efforts, he would surely make them without hesitation. Those words seemed to move Centoz, and from then on he began to change his stance. He told us that it was 6:30, too early to call Gonzalo Güell, Batista's minister of state. He would do so at 8:00.

Despite his initial reluctance, in face of our insistence, he eventually decided to telephone him at that early hour.

We didn't know who he spoke with or the content of the conversation, but on returning to his office, he informed us that at 8:00 a.m. he would be received at the Ministry of State, that he was optimistic, and that we should come back at 9:00 a.m.

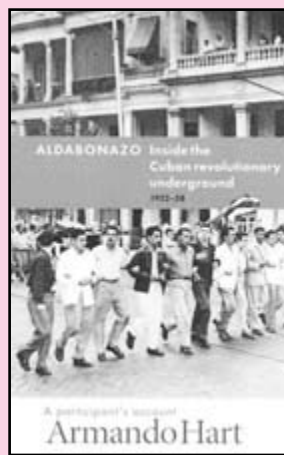
We showed up again at the Nuncio's residence half an hour before the scheduled time to find out the response.

Monsignor entered the room, somewhat discommodated, which put us all on tenterhooks. Addressing us, he said he had made the efforts and had been promised that the lives of the three prisoners would be spared. He was very unhappy... since he had not been received by Minister of State Gonzalo Güell—whom he had requested the interview with—but rather with Undersecretary Cortina. And he was going to send a vigorous diplomatic note to the Cuban government protesting the disrespectful attitude shown to him by the minister. . . .

We left the Nuncio's office. Although our concern had been lessened a bit, it had not disappeared entirely, since it was not possible to trust the promises of Batista's henchmen. Utilizing the telephone again, Haydée Santamaría called Armando's parents, but this time she was more direct, since the conversation was done clearly and openly: "Armando has been arrested together with Buch and Pazos. Their lives are in danger, so you must make every effort to prevent them from being killed."

The family mobilized. They spoke with José Miró Cardona, to arouse the interest of the Lawyers Guild....

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# Genocide against the American Indians

Printed below is the opening section of “The conquest of the Indians,” chapter one of *America’s Revolutionary Heritage* by George Novack, a December Pathfinder Book of the Month. The book presents a Marxist appreciation of key aspects of the history of the United States, including the first American revolution, the Civil War, slavery, and the rise of U.S. imperialism. Copyright ©1971 by Pathfinder Press, reprinted by permission.

BY GEORGE NOVACK

The capitalist rulers of the United States rose to power through a series of violent struggles against precapitalist social forces. The first of these upheavals took place at the dawn of modern American history with the invasion of the Western Hemisphere by the nations of Western Europe and the conquest of the aboriginal inhabitants. The uprooting

has any important bearing upon the formation of the United States.

This conventional view of Indian-white relations is shared by conservative and liberal writers alike. In their classic liberal interpretation of *The Rise of American Civilization*, Charles and Mary Beard, for example, utterly fail to grasp the social significance of the wars against the Indians, making only scanty, disconnected references to them.

President Conant of Harvard supplied an instructive illustration of how far the Indian conquest has faded from the consciousness of bourgeois thinkers during a speech at the New York Herald Tribune Forum in October 1948: “In the first place, this nation, unlike most others, has not evolved from a state founded on a military conquest. As a consequence we have nowhere in our tradition the idea of an aristocracy descended from the conquerors and entitled to rule by right of birth. On the contrary, we have developed our greatness in a period in which a fluid society overran a rich and empty continent...” Conant’s speech summoned American educators to demonstrate in theoretical questions what American capitalism must prove in practice—the superiority of bourgeois ideas and methods over the “alien importations” of the “philosophy based on the writings of Marx, Engels, and Lenin.” The Harvard president insisted that “not words, but facts” must be the weapons to convince the youth and defeat Marxism. The passage we have cited will hardly promote that purpose, for it contains two serious misstatements of fact about early American history.

In the first place, contrary to Conant’s assertion, the bourgeois structure of this nation did “evolve from a state founded on a military conquest.” It was the conquest of the Indian tribes, not to speak of wars against the Spanish, Dutch, and French, that gave England and her colonists mastery of



**Bigfoot, a Lakota chief, lies dead after he and nearly 300 other unarmed Lakota were massacred in 1890 at Wounded Knee.**

North America.

Secondly, although North America in colonial times was far more thinly populated than Europe or Asia, it was scarcely “empty” of inhabitants. In order to occupy and overrun the continent, the pioneers first had to “empty” the land of its original possessors. The founders of Harvard could tell its president many tales of the difficulties involved in this task.

What are the reasons for this extraordinary blind spot in bourgeois historians and those who, like Conant, push to the extreme their preconceptions of our national origins?

There is, first of all, the weight of tradition. Historians continue to treat the Indians with the same disdain and lack of comprehension that their forefathers manifested in practice. The pioneers looked upon the Indians as little more than obnoxious obstacles in the path of their advancement who had to be cleared away by any means and at all costs. The English colonists rid their settlements of Indians as ruthlessly as they cleared the lands of trees and wild animals. In fact, they placed the Indian “varmints” and “serpents” on the same level as wild beasts. In early New England bounties were paid for Indian scalps as today they are awarded for the tails of predatory animals.

The contemporary professors do not know how to fit the Indians, and the facts of their dispossession and disappearance, into their schemes of interpretation any more than the pioneers were able to absorb them into bourgeois society. The government’s final solution of the Indian problem has

been to segregate the survivors in reservations, an American equivalent of the European concentration camps and the African compounds. The historians dispose of the Indians by also setting them off to one side, in a special category completely detached from the main course of American historical development.

Indeed, because of their unconscious and narrow class outlook, the bourgeois historians, on the whole, are hardly aware that the fate of the Indians presents any problem. They assume that private property must be the normal foundation of any “good” society. And so the annihilation of Indian collectivism by the white conquerors for the sake of private property seems so much in the nature of things as to require no explanation.

But there is more involved than inertia or indifference. Freud has explained individual lapses of memory by an unconscious wish to hide from whatever is shameful, fearful, socially unacceptable. Where a social lapse of memory occurs, a similar mechanism and similar motives for suppression are often at work, especially where representatives of ruling classes engage in systematic forgetfulness. That is the case here. The abominable treatment of the Indians is extremely unpleasant to contemplate, and equally unpleasant to explain.

At the bottom of their censorship lies the bourgeois attitude toward the communal character of Indian life. The bourgeois mind finds communism in any form so contrary to its values, so abhorrent and abnormal, that it recoils from its manifestations and instinctively strives to bury recollections of their existence. In any event, the run-of-the-mill historian feels little impulse to examine and explain primitive communism, although it was the cradle of humanity and, in particular, formed a starting point of modern American history.

Even contemporary writers sympathetic to the Indians, such as Oliver LaFarge, go out of their way to deny that the basic institutions of the Indians can be termed “communitistic” even while offering evidence to the contrary. “The source of life, the land and its products, they [the Indians] owned in common,” writes LaFarge in *As Long as the Grass Shall Grow*. (p. 25.) “Loose talkers have called this Communism. It is not.” Here is a striking example of how deep anticommunist prejudice runs.

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

of the Indians played a significant part in clearing the way for bourgeois supremacy on this continent.

However, the pages of the most learned historians contain little recognition and less understanding of this connection between the overthrow of Indian tribalism and the development of bourgeois society in America. As a rule, they regard the ousting and obliteration of the natives simply as an incident in the spread of the white settlers over the continent. They may condemn the treatment of the Indians as a lamentable blot on the historical record, but they do not see that it

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The Militant January 12, 2004



**Comprenez tete klop?**—The *New Zealand Herald* reports that cops will be provided a 40-language phrase book to improve



Harry Ring

treatment of immigrants. Among the eight phrases in each of the 40 tongues: “Do you need help?” “Thank you. You may go now.” Or, in Police (41), “I’ll crack your skull.”

**The sane society**—“Fort Lauderdale, Florida—A Florida appeals court reversed Lionel Tate’s

first-degree murder conviction and life sentence. Tate, now 16, was convicted as an adult for the 1999 beating death of 6-year-old Tiffany Eunick. He was 12 at the time of the slaying and is believed to be the youngest person in the U.S. in modern [!] times to have been sentenced to life in prison.”—*South Florida Sun-Sentinel*.

**May he get what he serves**—“Birmingham, Alabama—The prisoners call it chicken explosion. It arrives dehydrated—just add water and boil. The multi-colored dish is the centerpiece of Tuesday lunch at Kilby Prison and one of the many mysterious items that Food Service director M.A. Warren serves to cut costs. He can feed a prisoner on \$1.08 a day. That’s three meals [with] two

on Sundays and holidays.”—*Birmingham News*.

**The golden society**—“WAR ON HUNGER—The UN announces that the number of undernourished people has risen to some 842 million. It adds that a goal to halve hunger by 2016 looks remote.” *The Times*, London.

**Studios approach**—“U.S. Territory, Puerto Rico—The Farmers Association criticized the government for not distributing \$9 million in emergency aid to farmers affected by heavy rains and flooding [November]. Agriculture officials reported more than \$30 million in losses to crops like cassava and plantains. The government said it’s still reviewing all requests.”—December 10, *USA Today*.

**Capitalist education advances**—A reader forwards a fund appeal from his children’s public school: “This year... will be an especially challenging one, as severe budget cuts have greatly impacted our ability to provide an excellent education for our students. The cuts have already resulted in many programs and services in our schools being eliminated...some of the things you will NOT see next year are: Art, Music, Science Kits, Physical Education...and Evening Custodial Services.”

**The principal has the flu, maybe?**—In Reno, Nevada, illness is not counted as an excuse for school absence. Less than 90 percent attendance and you don’t get promoted. Anxious to do their time, students are showing up sick.

**Alienated? Nonsense**—If you’re worried about your new TV getting ripped off, check out Beverly Park. Outside L.A. the down-home community features security guards, electronic gates and high stone walls. One \$20 million home on sale has the customary amenities, plus 18-foot front doors. We assume they’re drawbridges.

**Thought for the week**—“According to the latest census data... 47 million U.S. residents, age 5 and older, speak a language other than English at home.... With the growing numbers of non-English speakers in the work force experts say many employers worry about workers using another language to insult or harass others. They want to know what’s being said in the workplace.”—News item.

# The ‘Militant’ and the Cuban Revolution

Continued from Page 11

a central axis of the SWP campaign. Dobbs went to Cuba to get the facts that would help combat the lies. He and Hansen spent nearly a month visiting various parts of the island, talking with workers, farmers, and government officials.

“We saw the gains of the agrarian reform program,” Hansen said. “How they took over the big sugar plantations—and the sugar mills—and turned them into state farms. We saw how they broke up other holdings and turned over these smaller plots to the peasants.

“They eliminated unemployment in a country where previously most people didn’t work nine months of the year,” Hansen emphasized. “They made it possible for children to go to school. They slashed rents, cut food prices, provided medical care, opened a drive against illiteracy.

“And there was a real liberating atmosphere in the country,” he added, “not the totalitarianism the State Department kept talking about.”

On their return, Dobbs effectively used that firsthand knowledge on TV and radio and at public meetings. As the Cuban press noted, he was the only presidential candidate to stand up for Cuba.

Hansen wrote a series of articles for the *Militant*, later published as a pamphlet, *The Truth About Cuba*. At the same time, Hansen recalled, members of the SWP were actively involved in building the Fair Play for Cuba Committee, which worked to counter the anti-Cuba campaign. It published literature, held meetings, provided speakers, and—before the United States instituted a travel ban—organized tours to Cuba so people could see the revolution for themselves.

## Impact in U.S.

The Cuban revolution, Hansen recalled, coincided with the victory of the Algerian revolution over French colonialism.

“These were popular causes,” Hansen said. “Not in the sense that they swept the country. But they found considerable backing among people who were beginning to radicalize because of the situation they

found themselves in here.

“The revolution came at the same time as the whole movement for Black freedom in this country,” he continued. “You had the marches and sit-ins in the South, the new awakening of the student movement.”

And, he added, there were a lot of poor people who simply didn’t accept as “gospel” what they were being told about Cuba. This was demonstrated in the most dramatic way, Hansen recalled, when Castro headed a 1960 delegation to the United Nations. Rudely treated at their original hotel they packed their bags and moved up to the Theresa, then a well-known Harlem hotel.

Every night during the week the Cuban delegation was there, thousands of people gathered in the streets outside, cheering and demonstrating. The outpouring of the people of Harlem, Hansen said, was a stunning rebuke to Washington’s hate-Cuba campaign.

For those following the Cuban development closely, the *Militant* performed a unique service. Despite its very small size, at the time—as few as four pages in 1961—the *Militant* became a paper of record for the Cuban revolution.

It printed more speeches by Castro and Che Guevara than any other English-language publication. The texts of major Cuban documents appeared in the *Militant* as well. Other radical publications were sympathetic to Cuba, but they apparently did not see the importance of publishing what the Cubans themselves were actually saying.

And some radical groups were only lukewarm in their support, Hansen noted.

## Record of CPUSA

For example, “the U.S. Communist Party gave ‘all hail’ to the revolution, verbally,” Hansen said. “But they dragged their feet about doing what was needed to defend it.”

This was because they had a big political problem, Hansen explained. The Cuban Popular Socialist [Communist] Party had bitterly opposed the July 26 Movement until it was on the road to power. The PSP had previously denounced the July 26 Movement as “adventurist” and, several times during Batista’s reign, had given open support to the dictator.

Not surprisingly, the July 26 Movement had bypassed the PSP in making the revolution.

That victory, Hansen said, exploded the carefully nurtured illusion that only Communist parties could lead revolutions. This, he said, dealt a heavy blow to Stalinism.

For authentic Marxists, the process by which the Cuban revolution succeeded was, in many respects, unanticipated. After coming to power, the evolution of the July 26 Movement from radical reform to the enactment of deepgoing socialist measures was something entirely new in world history and had to be assessed in the light of prior Marxist experience and theory.

The SWP carefully followed its evolution in an open-minded, objective way.

“We went by the Marxist criteria that what’s decisive are the actions that are taken,” Hansen explained.

“You can lay down a blueprint that lists the main steps that should be taken and say that’s where you stand.

“But you also have to be prepared for a development that doesn’t fit the blueprint but nevertheless points in the same general direction. You have to take that into consideration. That was the basis of our judgment.”

The SWP and *Militant* demonstrated our respect for the Cuban leaders by frankly stating our opinions—critical as well as positive—on the basic political issues facing the revolutionary government.

“For instance, we welcomed the desire of the Cuban leadership to extend the revolution into Latin America,” Hansen said. “But we disagreed with them on how that could be done.

“While they placed reliance on the organization of guerrilla movements, we argued for building mass-based, revolutionary working-class parties. It was a mistake, we insisted, to believe the Cuban experience could be mechanically duplicated in other countries in Latin America.”

Hansen continued, “Another issue on which we argued for our particular point of view was how best to develop and expand the new climate of freedom that followed the triumph over Batista.

“What was necessary, we said, was the development of structured workers democra-

cy; that is, the creation of institutions, under the control of the working people, whereby they could actively participate in Cuba’s decision-making process. Such forms of democracy, we said, would strengthen the revolution.”

## Decisive transformation

In the late summer of 1960 the expropriation of major U.S. and Cuban holdings reached the point where the power of capitalism was broken. The significance of this historic development received major treatment by the *Militant*.

And, when the ill-fated U.S.-organized invasion of Cuba occurred in 1961, the SWP and *Militant* stood in the forefront of those denouncing and opposing it.

“STOP THE CRIME AGAINST CUBA,” was the headline emblazoned in block type across the front page of the *Militant*. It featured a statement by the SWP Political Committee assailing the imperialist aggression.

There were other major developments in Cuba that we followed closely, Hansen said. “But it would take a book to deal with them all. So, if I can be permitted a plug, I would suggest people check out *Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution*. A lot of it is material that first appeared in the *Militant*....”

## — 25 AND 50 YEARS AGO —



January 12, 1979

CLEVELAND—Democratic Mayor Dennis Kucinich and the Democratic-dominated city council are implementing the program of the bankers who hold the workers of this city in bondage.

Central to the bankers’ plan is a 50 percent increase in the city’s flat-rate income tax—from 1 percent to 1.5 percent. The tax increase will be on the ballot in a city referendum to be held February 27.

Just after midnight on December 16, the city of Cleveland defaulted on \$15.5 million worth of loans from the city’s banks. This was the first default of a major American city since the Great Depression.

Following the default last month, Kucinich said that 3,500—more than a third—of the city’s work force would be laid off. In further negotiations with the banks and the city council, these massive layoffs were postponed pending the outcome of the tax referendum.

A second measure on the ballot in the special February election will be a vote on whether or not the city should sell the Municipal Light Company. This facility, however, doesn’t generate any power and hasn’t for years. It merely buys power from CEI [Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company] and other sources and distributes it.

The issue is a bogus one, however. The utility rates are regulated by the state’s Public Utilities Commission. The PUC will allow the rates to go as high as they think they can get away with—or lower them if they are forced to by mass pressure—whether Muni Light is run by the city or absorbed by CEI.



January 11, 1953

An open Jew-baiter is one of Senator Joseph McCarthy’s richest backers. Eugene M. Biggers, one of the Texas oil kings pouring funds into McCarthy’s war chest, told a Milwaukee Journal reporter: “This country is in great danger and Joe is about the only one that knows it.” Much of the trouble, Biggers added, is that “there are too many Jews in Washington.”

This is part of the additional information on the big money behind McCarthy presented in the Jan. 2 Labor, organ of the Railway Brotherhoods. Basing itself on recent Milwaukee Journal material, Labor helps to fill out the picture of the sinister figures subsidizing America’s No. 1 fascist.

“I don’t worry about Russia,” Biggers said. “We could shut them up in 48 hours. Just give ‘em an ultimatum.” The real “danger” to America, he claimed, “is being swallowed up by liberalism, socialism or whatever you want to call it.” He added, “The Republicans are all through unless they embrace McCarthyism completely.”

Listed as one of McCarthy’s earliest supporters is H.R. Culien, Houston oil man, who has accumulated several hundred million dollars. In 1952 he made the biggest contribution reported by McCarthy’s Wisconsin campaign club.

Two other big McCarthy backers are oil men Clint Murchison and H.L. Hunt.

Austin Hancock, Dallas insurance executive, has set up the American Heritage Protective Association, which he uses to boost McCarthy for president.

Just a “lunatic fringe”?

*From Pathfinder*

## Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution

By Joe Hansen

How did the Cuban revolution come about? Why does it represent, as Hansen puts it, an “unbearable challenge” to U.S. imperialism? What political challenges has it confronted? Written as the revolution advanced.

**\$22.95**

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Or from bookstores, including those listed on page 8



# Greeting to readers behind bars

Warm New Year’s greeting to our brothers and sisters behind bars!

We agree with Eugene Debs, who said, “The prison in our modern life is essentially a capitalistic institution, an inherent and inseparable part of the social and economic system under which the mass of mankind are ruthlessly exploited.” The U.S. socialist leader, jailed for speaking out against the first imperialist world slaughter, had personal experience with the American prison system and with fellow working people locked up inside it.

The *Militant* follows this labor tradition of solidarity with prisoners. We send a special salute to those jailed by the capitalist rulers for refusing to stop fighting for justice. They include:

Five Cuban revolutionaries serving draconian sentences in U.S. prisons on frame-up charges stemming from their monitoring of ultrarightist Cuban-American groups that have carried out violent attacks on Cuba. Their federal appeal will be heard in March. In February the five were put in the “hole” for a month, and the wives of two of them have repeatedly been denied visas to see their husbands. We urge you to protest this outrage and demand that Washington grant the visas now.

Five Puerto Rican political prisoners—Haydée Beltrán, Antonio Camacho, Oscar López, Juan Segarra Palmer, and Carlos Alberto Torres—who have been jailed for some two decades for fighting for the independence of Puerto Rico from U.S. colonial rule. We urge a big welcome to Segarra Palmer on January 23, when he is due to be released. And,

following the victory in forcing prison authorities to back down and let López get a hernia operation, we should press harder to force them to allow a second needed operation.

Without charges or legal recourse, some 660 men from 40 nations remain locked down “indefinitely” under subhuman conditions at the U.S. military prison camp at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, and two U.S. citizens—José Padilla and Yaser Hamdi—have been jailed in a U.S. naval brig in South Carolina.

Class war prisoners around the world—from Saharan independence fighter Ali Salem Tamek, locked up by the U.S.-backed Moroccan regime, to Irish republicans jailed in the United Kingdom.

Many others are in U.S. prisons because of their political activities. Among them are: Native American leader Leonard Peltier, jailed for a quarter century on frame-up murder charges; Sami al-Arian, a Florida professor awaiting trial on phony “terrorism” charges; Farouk Abdel-Muhti, a Palestinian revolutionary currently in a New Jersey county jail with no charges against him; Mumia Abu-Jamal, a Black rights fighter who was framed up in 1981 on charges of murdering a Philadelphia cop; Ciarán Ferry, an Irish republican fighting efforts to deport him to Britain; and five union coal miners—Donnie Thornsburg, Arnold Heightland, James Daryl Smith, David Thornsburg, and Jerry Lowe—framed up on murder charges.

We join with others in demanding the immediate release of these men and women, and in saying: you are not alone.

## The war party, workers’ resistance

Continued from Page 6

relationship between Europe and America that was shaped by the Cold War, Barnes said. Throughout that period, Washington’s military policy was built around its standoff with the massive armed forces of the Soviet Union. At the same time, the Stalinist regimes and the privileged social layers on which they rested served as transmission belts for imperialism’s interests and capitalist values into the workers states, the semicolonial countries, and parts of the imperialist world. This arrangement took place under the banner of “peaceful coexistence,” invented by Moscow to justify its class-collaborationist course.

The service that Moscow offered as the misleader and often as assassin of revolutionary struggles gave it value in the imperialists’ eyes. With the collapse of the Stalinist regimes, Barnes said, the Russian rulers are as eager as ever to wheel and deal with Washington, “but no one listens to Moscow anymore, the transmission belt is shattered.” U.S. imperialism now has to confront working people in the workers states and throughout the world directly.

It took the U.S. rulers a decade to absorb and begin acting on this reality, the SWP leader noted.

### Iraq contracts, interimperialist conflicts

Barnes described in detail the memo by U.S. deputy defense secretary Paul Wolfowitz, made public December 9, through which Washington first announced its policy of shutting out French, German, Russian, and other companies from the \$18.6 billion worth of contracts that the U.S. occupation authorities in Iraq are going to award for the reconstruction of the country. (See “U.S. gov’t bars ‘old Europe’ from lucrative contracts” in last week’s issue.)

Washington’s “coalition of the willing” is not about Iraq, Barnes said. “It’s a permanent wartime coalition,” he stated, through which the U.S. rulers aim to remake the world in their image by force, country after country, in order to extend the life of their empire. It’s a practical and pragmatic coalition that Washington will use to go after its main capitalist competitors and others in the world. It is being supplemented with the construction of new “missile defense” programs, Barnes said, aimed at putting a moat around Washington and its allies, while using the U.S. military to go after the holders and potential holders of “weapons of mass destruction.” With the advance of technology, such weapons are increasingly within the grasp of a range of governments, including those in the semicolonial world.

The U.S. rulers are also pushing to transform the Atlantic imperialist military alliance, NATO, into taking a world role and shouldering more of the burden of imperialist military aggression, said Barnes. They aim to restructure the forces under NATO’s command along the lines of the transformation underway in the U.S. military, he pointed out. U.S. military bases in Europe, which encompassed virtual cities modeled on those in America, are on the way out. These bases are being replaced by command centers located closer to areas of battle—such as the Balkans, Middle East, and central Asia—and are manned by smaller, more agile units with more lethal firepower, built around Special Operations troops that can move within days to any theater of conflict.

Building a military alliance, however, is not the same as resolving conflicts between imperialist powers, Barnes said. To the contrary, these can be expected to intensify as world capitalism marches deeper into depression. What the U.S. rulers are carrying out will decide the entire dynamic of the conflict, he said.

This includes the real prospect of using the military to stabilize and take control of the United States at a time of a

great crisis, Barnes noted. He pointed to an interview with Thomas Franks in the December issue of *Cigar Aficionado*. Franks, now retired, is the former head of the U.S. Central Command who commanded the U.S. invasion forces in Afghanistan and then Iraq. “What’s the worst thing that can happen in our country?” Franks asked in the interview. “The potential of a weapon of mass destruction and a terrorist, massive casualty-producing event somewhere in the western world—it may be in the United States of America—that causes our population to question our own Constitution and to begin to militarize our country.”

That’s what’s behind the establishment of the Northern Command, Barnes said, the first time in U.S. history that Washington has structured its military openly to act on the domestic front. Within the workers movement, Barnes said, Washington’s current course will create new opportunities to recarve revolutionary leadership in many countries around the world that can lead working people to put an end once and for all to the imperialist system, its plunder, and its wars.

### Milestone of *Rebelión Teamster*

“This is what *Teamster Rebellion* is good in preparing us for,” the SWP leader said—“the kind of battles and political preparation it will take for the working class to develop the leadership it deserves to end the rule of the bosses.”

In *Rebelión Teamster*, the Spanish-language edition of the first of the four Teamster books (see ad below), Farrell Dobbs describes the fight in the 1930s to build and defend the Teamsters union across the Midwest.

After referring in detail to several pictures in the book’s powerful photo signature, which was included in a complimentary program given to all those who attended the meeting, Barnes suggested that Dobbs’s dedications in each of the books would in themselves make for a rich educational for revolutionary-minded workers and youth.

The dedication for *Teamster Rebellion* reads: “To the men and women who gave me unshakable confidence in the working class, the rank and file of General Drives Local 574.” *Teamster Power* is dedicated “To the main army of the over-the-road campaign, the rank-and-file Teamsters of Omaha and Sioux City,” and *Teamster Politics* “To the members of Local 544’s union defense guard.” The dedication in the last of the series, *Teamster Bureaucracy*, reads: “To the Trotskyist militants of General Drivers Union Local 544 and to the comrades of the Socialist Workers Party who so loyally backed them in a time of great need.”

The revolutionary program of the working-class movement that is renewed and brought to life in books such as these, said Barnes, is the congealed blood of the historic struggles of the working class in its line of march towards conquering political power. “What we are celebrating today,” he said, “is not just producing and selling these books to working people but acting with the confidence that these political weapons will be more and more used in today’s struggles, and that the workers involved will get a lot more out of reading them.”

Barnes pointed to the striking Co-Op miners in Utah, and those around the world organizing solidarity with their struggle for union recognition, as examples of this potential.

The SWP leader finished his presentation by encouraging participants to volunteer for the work crews that will undertake construction of the new Pathfinder bookstore and distribution center. He appealed for contributions to the one-off \$150,000 fund launched at the meeting to finance the project. Pledges and contributions totaled \$97,000 by the end of the meeting—an amount that had risen to almost \$103,000 by December 20.

# How ‘anti-Bush’ London protests aided UK rulers

BY PETE CLIFFORD  
AND XERARDO ARIAS

LONDON—In a letter on the opposite page, reader Brian Lyons takes issue with the lead article in the December 8 *Militant* titled, “Bush visit to UK bolsters imperialist ‘war on terror.’” The subhead of the article—“‘Stop Bush’ protests, marked by nationalism, aid British rulers,”—is one of the main points on which Lyons disagrees.

The article described how the visit here by U.S. president George Bush allowed him and British prime minister Anthony Blair to highlight the “special relationship” between Washington and London and lay out the pillars of their commonly agreed upon foreign policy. It explained that from the vantage point of the Anglo-American imperialists the visit had been a success, which “was only reinforced by the anti-American, pro-British tone of the demonstrations.”

“Focusing their fire on the U.S. government and portray-

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## REPLY TO A READER

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ing Blair as a mere ‘puppet’ of Washington, they buttressed the nationalist framework of the British rulers’ efforts to assert their own imperialist interests in the world,” the article correctly said. A further sign of this progress for the UK rulers is their move to reorganize their military in order to better join with Washington in their “war on terror” around the world. (See front-page article.)

The “Stop Bush” protests were literally that, pointing the finger almost exclusively at Bush, as though what was happening was the result of policy decisions of one individual, and an American one at that.

In fact the leaders of the protest went so far as to suggest that the bombing of the British consulate in Istanbul was a product of “George Bush visiting London.” You could almost hear them saying, “If only we ‘British’ could be left to manage our own affairs then there’d be peace and harmony the world over.” The reality that London is hated the world over for its bloody and brutal record to this day hardly gets a look in!

The protests, though, did attract tens of thousands of young people repelled by imperialism and its wars. That made what communists did on that day doubly important—not to pander to the themes of the protest organizers. Members of the Communist League and Young Socialists set up campaign tables to distribute the *Militant* and Pathfinder books. They carried banners and signs declaring: “British troops out of Iraq, Ireland, Sierra Leone and the Balkans.” These signs turned the fire where it belongs for a demonstration in the citadel of British imperialism: London and its war against working people the world over.

Those staffing the tables also discussed with participants the significance of workers struggles today as potentially the most significant resistance to imperialism and its wars, including the strike by miners in Huntington, Utah.

Substantially more is required than “larger protests” pleading to the rulers for “peace.” That’s a theme that Bolshevik leaders Leon Trotsky and Vladimir Lenin constantly stressed in response to imperialist war moves in their time. In his 1938 article “Lenin and imperialist war,” Trotsky wrote that “It is impossible to fight against imperialist war by sighing for peace after the fashion of the pacifists. ‘One of the ways of fooling the working class is pacifism and the abstract propaganda of peace. Under capitalism, especially in its imperialist stage, wars are inevitable.’ [he quotes Lenin]... Only a revolutionary mass struggle against war and against imperialism, which breeds war, can secure a real peace. ‘Without a number of revolutions the so-called democratic peace is a middle class utopia.’” The Bolshevik strategy rested on forging parties that could lead working people to end the system that breeds war—capitalism.

Another point of disagreement with Lyons is his suggestion that French and German imperialism have a “timid opposition to the war against Iraq.” But this is false. The French and German rulers’ problem with the Anglo-American war on Iraq is that their imperialist interests have been marginalized. Where they can in other parts of the world, they have no hesitation in backing the use of military force to fatten their pockets.

Finally, Lyons suggested the *Militant* article on the London “anti-Bush” protests selectively reported aspects of the rally to prove pre-conceived notions. We don’t share the criticism. Lyons would be hard pressed to find any other speaker at the protests who said anything fundamentally different from the coalition spokesperson that the *Militant* article quoted. They all aimed their fire at Bush, not London first and foremost. They all fed the illusion these protests were somehow going to “stop the war.” The core of the issue is that London and Washington did make progress on their course during Bush’s visit and have continued to do so. You can remain in denial of that or face the fact that the protests had little impact and their nationalist character objectively aided the war party. The crucial thing, and the reason communists did take part in those actions, is the effort to win youth and working people to see the need to fight and eventually defeat British imperialism—from Belfast to Pristina to Baghdad.



# The 'Militant' and the Cuban Revolution

A 1978 interview with Joseph Hansen, one of the paper's former editors

Following are excerpts from an interview with Joseph Hansen conducted in 1978 by Harry Ring, on the occasion of the *Militant's* 50th anniversary. The interview was published in the Dec. 22, 1978, issue. Hansen was a longtime leader of the Socialist Workers Party who served as the *Militant's* editor at various times in the 1950s and '60s. This is the tenth and last installment of this column, launched in the November 3 issue to mark the *Militant's* 75th anniversary. It's also fitting to publish the excerpts below in this issue—the first in 2004—because the turn of the year coincides with the celebration of 45 years of the Cuban Revolution.

BY HARRY RING

One of the most exciting chapters in the *Militant's* history was our coverage of the first years of the Cuban revolution. The revolution was an inspiring event that left a profound imprint. Countless people around the world were radicalized and won to socialism by it.

From the very outset, the American imperialists worked overtime to strangle the revolution—a fact that posed special responsibilities for socialists in this country. The revolution also posed many political and theoretical questions in a new way for the Marxist movement. All this was reflected in the pages of the *Militant*. The *Militant* became must reading, week in and week out, for those who wanted to keep up with Cuban developments.

Throughout that period, Joseph Hansen was on the editorial staff of the *Militant*. In a recent interview, he discussed how U.S. socialists responded to the key stages of the Cuban revolution. Currently the editor of *Intercontinental Press/Inprecor*, Hansen is a longtime leader of the Socialist Workers Party. He was secretary to Leon Trotsky and is the author of a voluminous body of Marxist writings. Among these is the recently published *Dynamics of the Cuban Revolution*, an invaluable compilation of his writings on Cuba.

## July 26 Movement

In the interview, Hansen discussed the changing attitude of the *Militant* toward Fidel Castro's July 26 Movement as that movement evolved.

From the very beginning, of course, socialists wholeheartedly supported any struggles against the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship. "We took our stand against Batista and against U.S. domination of Cuba," Hansen said. "But we didn't politically support the July 26 Movement."

The reason, he explained, was that the initial program of Castro's movement specifically excluded expropriations of capitalist holdings. It pledged that the democratic reforms it was committed to would be carried out within the framework

of capitalism. "We knew this was a totally utopian idea," Hansen commented. "None of the basic problems of Cuba could be solved on a capitalist basis, so we couldn't support Castro's political program."

At the same time, he added, the *Militant* was very much aware of the potential of the struggle then developing in Cuba. A staff writer was assigned to follow these events.

With the fall of Batista on January 1, 1959, our coverage greatly expanded. "We were particularly concerned," Hansen said, "to get all the material we could that indicated the direction in which the movement was going."

"It should be remembered that in the first days after it came to power, the July 26 Movement did not carry out expropriations. It reiterated its intention not to."

## Socialist direction

Why did the revolution, over its first two years, take a socialist direction?

There were several reasons. To begin with, Hansen said, the Cuban leadership began to learn fairly quickly that it couldn't carry out an effective land redistribution and other social programs within the framework of capitalist property relations. And U.S. interests, which dominated the



*Militant*/Walter Lippmann

Joseph Hansen at time of 1978 interview

island's sugar economy, were determined to thwart the new government's program to place control of the land in the hands of those who worked it.

To that end, the Eisenhower administration directed an intensifying barrage of

economic and political blows against Cuba. But the new government responded not with retreats or compromises but by moving more resolutely to realize its goals. This quickly led it to expropriate capitalist interests in the countryside and city.

"It was inevitable that Washington would direct heavy blows against Cuba," Hansen commented. "But it wasn't inevitable that the Cuban leaders would respond the way they did. Like many other reform governments, they could have knuckled under."

"But they didn't. They responded by deepening the revolution, by taking it in an anticapitalist direction. "They started out as middle-class reformers—they described themselves that way, you know. But in the heat of the struggle, they became socialist revolutionists. They deserve a lot of credit for that."

## On the scene

In April 1960, Hansen got a chance to see the process first-hand. He went to Cuba with Farrell Dobbs, the SWP's presidential candidate that year. This was at a time when Washington and the capitalist media were whipping up a menacing anti-Cuban slander campaign.

Defense of the Cuban revolution became  
**Continued on Page 9**

# Contribute to \$150,000 HQ Building Fund

## Continued from front page

of the publisher's London distributor, has appeared in every Pathfinder book since 1972.

Among these are four new titles that Pathfinder Printing Project volunteers are currently helping produce: *Rebelión Teamster*, the Spanish-language edition of *Teamster Rebellion* by Farrell Dobbs; *Aldabonazo: Inside the Cuban Revolutionary Underground, 1952–58*, by Armando Hart, in Spanish and English editions; and *Leur Trotsky et le nôtre*, the French-language edition of *Their Trotsky and Ours* by Jack Barnes. They will come off the presses in January.

Initial work by the construction crew will allow Pathfinder Books to move in by early January. The overall work needs to be completed within two months.

Funds for this effort are needed now. To begin with, an estimated \$30,000 is needed to purchase materials, of which only \$10,000 is on hand.

On December 13 more than 100 volunteers came from cities across the United States and other countries for a Red Week-end of voluntary labor and a public meeting on "The War Party, Working-Class Resistance, and Building the Communist Movement." [See article on page 6.]

There, nearly 300 socialist workers from

United States and other countries, young socialists, volunteers in the Pathfinder Print Project, and friends of the communist movement got a chance to see the new location. Speakers on the program explained that it fits well the needs and budgets of the movement today. The meeting was a celebration of the hard work and successes that have brought the communist workers movement to this point.

In response to the appeal for funds made at the public meeting in New York, those in attendance made contributions of more than \$9,000 and pledges of \$87,000. The pledges now add up to \$103,000. Contributions of all kinds—big and small—are needed from those who support this effort. Receiving a number of sizable contributions larger than \$1,000 will be essential in meeting the \$150,000 goal on time.

The new premises will become a political center for those who already use Pathfinder's books on revolutionary politics as well as those who come looking to find them. It will have a kitchen that will serve as a place where workers and young people who come in after a day's work or those coming out of the offices at the headquarters during a break in their political work, can sit down, relax and talk politics, often with a pot of chili or chicken stew cooking.

In local areas across the United States and

other countries, supporters of this effort are urged to make the broadest possible appeal to fellow workers, farmers, students, and others who value Pathfinder books and the work of the communist movement.

They will get a receptive response from many working people engaged in union-building activities, young people involved in fights for social justice, militant farmers, opponents of Washington's aggressive policies abroad, and many more.

In every city, sending out mailings to potential contributors, holding public fund-raising events, and other creative initiatives will make it possible to reach the goal.

Local supporters of the 2004 Headquarters Building Fund are asked to keep records of pledges and payments by those in their areas, and to send a note of thanks and an update on progress to contributors when the project is finished. The *Militant* will report on the fund campaign, and weekly reports on progress in local areas will help the paper follow it.

Checks and money orders should be made out to the 2004 Headquarters Building Fund, P.O. Box 30, New York, NY 10018.

In solidarity,  
*Martin Koppel*  
*Janice Prescott*

2004 Headquarters Building Fund directors

## — LETTERS —

### UK 'anti-Bush' protest

Your December 8 lead article on George Bush's visit to the UK in November made some very useful points. I particularly appreciated the criticism of the speeches by Lindsay German of the Stop the War coalition and of other platform speakers which feed the view that Britain is not an imperialist state in its own right and with its own interests in Iraq and elsewhere. As you correctly explained, the government of Tony Blair acts not as Bush's poodle but rather as a junior partner alongside Bush. The views of Lindsay German and others in the leadership of the Stop the War coalition are all the more misplaced in the context of the interimperialist rivalries which have surfaced around the war in Iraq and the divisions within the ruling class here concerning British imperialism's place in the world vis-à-vis Europe and America.

To be sure, this has both opened

the door for the mass protests which have occurred here and has influenced them to some extent.

However, I believe it was wrong for your article to conclude from this that the protests in London to mark the state visit of U.S. imperialism's executive director aided the British ruling class.

These protests were not motivated primarily by anti-American, British chauvinism but rather formed part of an antiwar campaign capable of mobilizing millions of people who are opposed to the U.S./UK war drive for a variety of different reasons: some because it wasn't authorized by the United Nations; some because they think it leads to greater instability and more "terrorist" attacks in the world; others because they don't believe in war; even more who believe that it is a war dictated by the interests of the oil corporations and other big business interests; others who think it is an unjust war against a third

world country; and many who see it as part of continual imperialist aggression in the region headed by the Israeli state's war against the Palestinian people.

In other words, this is a broad mass campaign involving a coalition of forces united by one thing: it is opposed to the U.S./UK war drive and the current occupation of Iraq. We might also add, and this is not purely incidental, that this same campaign has repeatedly condemned the Israeli occupation of Palestine and has featured this as a central part of its protests.

As a long-standing reader of the *Militant*, I have always considered it exemplary in the field of journalistic reporting of events. The recent reporting trip to Venezuela was a marvelous example of this tradition in which struggles and the viewpoints of their participants are reported factually, extensively, and not selectively solely to justify a

predetermined position.

It seemed to me, however, that the author of your article broke with this tradition in choosing to report selectively from some of the speeches made by platform speakers and an article from the right-wing *Daily Telegraph* reporting the comments from a millionaire who was apparently in the demonstration. He also chose to make the comment that the size of the protests were smaller compared to previous marches when in fact this was one of the biggest ever mid-week protests held during working hours. In this manner, your reporter's coverage of the event was selective to say the least.

The vast majority was there to protest against the occupation of Iraq and the so-called war against terrorism driven by U.S. imperialism and supported by its junior partner in Whitehall.

*Brian Lyons*  
London, England

### 75 years of 'Militant'

Re: "New York Meeting Celebrates 75 Years of the 'Militant'" (December 15): I picked up a copy of your newspaper this weekend for the first time in many years and was pleased to see that you're still around, and still "speaking truth to power," as we used to say. I've lived in New York all my life, and your fine newspaper is linked in my memory with many political events and movements of the last decades. I even attended a meeting sponsored by your paper at which Malcolm X spoke! So keep up the good work.

*Erik Shinn*  
New York, New York

**The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.**



## Appeal hearing set for Cuban Five

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

The 11th Circuit Court of Appeals will hear oral arguments from lawyers for five Cuban revolutionaries who are appealing their convictions. The Atlanta-based court of appeals will hold the hearings March 10 in Miami, said Leonard Weinglass, attorney for Antonio Guerrero.

The five men—Fernando González, René González, Antonio Guerrero, Gerardo Hernández, and Ramón Labañino—are serving draconian sentences after being convicted in June 2001 on frame-up charges brought by the U.S. government. The Cuban Five, as they are known, had been carrying out an internationalist mission to gather information on ultrarightist organizations with a record of violent attacks on Cuba launched from U.S. soil with Washington's complicity. They were arrested by FBI agents five years ago and charged with conspiracy to commit espionage and conspiracy to act as unregistered foreign agents. Hernández was also charged with conspiracy to commit murder. After their convictions, they were given sentences ranging from 15 years to a double life term, and sent to five federal prisons in different regions of the country.

The appeal of the convictions is based on a number of issues, Weinglass stated in a December 19 telephone interview with the *Militant*. These include, he said, the government's failure to prove that there had been a conspiracy to commit espionage or murder; the court's "failure to permit the necessity defense," whereby the five men could demonstrate that "their actions were necessary to prevent a larger wrong," that is, the violent actions carried out against Cuba by rightist groups based in the United States; and the government's improper use of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act and the Classified Information Procedures Act to hamper the defense effort. He also pointed to the harsh prison terms handed down to the five as "excessive sentencing outside of all existing guidelines."

The March 10 hearing will also take oral arguments on the appeal by attorneys for the Cuban Five demanding a new trial, based on new evidence, said Weinglass. The attorneys had brought this appeal to a lower court in November 2002, but the motion for a new trial was denied.

The defense had argued that a fair trial for the five could not have been held in Miami, and that government prosecutors knew it. The big-business media, with sensationalist articles about a "Cuban spy network," convicted the five men before the trial even began. The motion highlights an editorial by the *Miami Herald*, the main daily in south Florida, that echoed Washington's charges that the five were connected to the Cuban government's shootdown of planes flown by pilots of the right-wing Brothers

to the Rescue group in 1996, in which four of the counterrevolutionaries died.

As part of its campaign to inflame public opinion against the five, the *Herald* editorialized that "nothing could honor their memory more than to call to account their murderers," referring to the deceased Brothers to the Rescue pilots, adding, "more than compensation, the families want the moral sting of a U.S. criminal prosecution in federal court."

The five Cuban revolutionaries had filed for a change of venue for their trial, from Miami to Broward County—25 miles to the north. The U.S. Attorney countered that Miami is a big city with "great diversity" and therefore should be able to produce a fair jury in a case of defendants charged with conspiring to spy for Cuba.

Just one year later, however, the same U.S. Attorney, Guy Lewis, moved in *Ramirez v. Ashcroft*, in an employment-related discrimination suit against Attorney

General John Ashcroft, that there should be a change of venue, claiming a fair trial for the attorney general was "virtually impossible" because of "prejudice" among Cubans in Miami.

The May 13 appeal of the ruling against the motion for a change of venue argues that the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida "erred in failing to conduct any sort of hearing on the motion, effectively presuming the innocence and good faith of the government without considering such relevant questions as: Has the government ever before sought a change of venue because it could not receive a fair trial?" The appeal calls on the 11th Circuit Court to "direct the district court to grant the defendants a new trial. Alternatively, the Court should remand to the district court for an evidentiary hearing on the motion."

Since their imprisonment the five men have faced continued, but unsuccessful,

government attempts to break them. On February 28 all five were thrown into solitary confinement under an order by the Justice Department charging that the extensive solidarity they had received in the form of correspondence and the few visitors they were allowed made them a "national security risk." An international campaign of protests was launched immediately by their supporters. They were released from the "hole" a month later.

In November, Washington denied visas for the fourth time to Olga Salanueva, the wife of René González, and Adriana Pérez, the wife of Gerardo Hernández, to travel from Cuba to the United States to visit their imprisoned husbands. The U.S. government rejection of the visas came four months after the women had submitted their applications, and claimed that the decision was made because Salanueva and Pérez were a threat to "national security."

## Polisario envoy speaks in Australia

BY LINDA HARRIS

SYDNEY, Australia—"It was quite a challenge and a brave gesture to organize the 11th Congress there," said Kamal Fadel, the Polisario representative in Australia, referring to the 11th Congress of the Polisario Front. The congress took place in Tifariti, October 12–16, in the liberated territory of Western Sahara, which comprises about 20 percent of the country. Fadel, a participant in the congress, spoke about the future of the struggle of the Saharawi people for independence at a Militant Labour Forum here December 5.

Western Sahara, a former colony of Spain in northwest Africa, has been occupied since 1975 by Morocco, with the backing of Madrid, Paris, and Washington. The Polisario Front is the organization leading the Saharawi struggle for independence.

Fadel told the meeting that the 2,000 participants included nearly 300 international guests, with delegations from Algeria, Cuba, Venezuela, and South Africa. The greatest number of delegates came from the camps in southwest Algeria where thousands of Saharawi people have been living since the government of Morocco invaded Western Sahara in 1975.

Despite the hardships in the camps, the Saharawis have achieved far-reaching social gains. Fadel reported that at the congress there was discussion about how to advance organization in the camps and improve conditions. In particular, he said, they face problems as a result of recent floods. After a long dry spell, the floods affected food stocks and damaged tents and mud-brick houses.

The Saharawi people continue to fight to improve health, education, and for youth to have access to jobs or to train in the liberation army. Strengthening the capabilities of the military forces in the liberated zone is an important task, Fadel said. Under the leadership of the Polisario Front, Saharawis fought a 16-year war with Morocco for their independence.

In 1991 a ceasefire agreement was reached that guaranteed a referendum under United Nations auspices on independence in Western Sahara. The Moroccan government, however, has continued to place

obstacles in the way of implementing the agreement.

The latest proposal put forward by former U.S. secretary of state James Baker, the UN special envoy on Western Sahara, establishes a five-year transition period at the end of which the United Nations would hold a referendum on self-determination for the Saharawi people.

Discussion at the congress focused on whether or not to go ahead with the Baker Plan. Fadel said that many viewed the plan as "an opportunity—if we let it pass, the issue may be ignored for many years to come."

He explained that during the recent visit of U.S. secretary of state Colin Powell to Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria, Western Sahara was one of the main issues discussed. "The American administration wants to see a solution; they are interested in the potential of the region," Fadel said. "It seems that there is an increased interest by the big powers in the whole North African region, which is strategically important. It is close to Europe and has oil and gas resources." He pointed out that French president Jacques Chirac had visited Tunisia immediately after Powell.

The Baker plan is a compromise, Fadel explained. It concedes a lot to Morocco. It recognizes Morocco as the occupying power and grants Moroccan citizens living in Western Sahara the right to vote in the referendum. Fadel said that after the ceasefire the Moroccan government encouraged

many people to move to the occupied territories of Western Sahara in an attempt to outnumber the Saharawi population. People were attracted by jobs and low taxes. "The irony is that Morocco persists in its rejection of such a solution," he said.

The congress reaffirmed Polisario's commitment to fight for the liberation of the entire Western Sahara. A new leadership of Polisario was elected and a new government that included a layer of younger leaders, Fadel reported.

During the congress, Ali Salem Tamek, one of the Saharawi political prisoners currently held in Morocco, spoke by satellite telephone from his prison cell.

Fadel said that in the occupied territories "the courage of the people and the risks they are taking is tremendous." They take part in demonstrations and in continuous clashes with the authorities. Fadel said the carrot-and-stick policies of the Moroccan government had failed. "They were not able to crush the resistance and not able to win the hearts and minds of the Saharawi people," he stated.

The regime in Morocco is fragile, he said. "The economic and social situation there is deteriorating, the promises of democratic reforms are not being implemented." This is why the Moroccan monarchy is so afraid of the referendum process, Fadel said.

"We have to do our best to help those in the occupied territories—they are the ones waging war now. It's a very important area of the struggle."



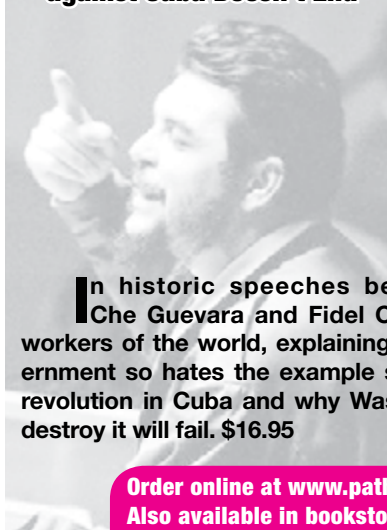
Militant/Paul Pederson

Above, Mohamed Abdelaziz, Polisario general secretary, opening organization's 11th Congress October 12 in Tifariti, liberated Western Sahara. Right, Kamal Fadel, Polisario representative in Australia.



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