

# THE MILITANT

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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE VOL. 69/NO. 50 DECEMBER 26, 2005

## Ireland: 100,000 rally to back ferry workers

### Seafarers win fight against union busting

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN

HOLYHEAD, Wales, December 14—Tens of thousands walked out of factories and offices, and bus and rail services were affected across Ireland December 9 in a mass display of support for the fight against union busting by workers at Irish Ferries. The workers have been fighting plans by the company, which operates car ferries between Ireland and the United Kingdom and France, to replace all its 543 workers with nonunion labor employed at half of Ireland’s minimum wage of 7.65 euros (US\$9.10).

An estimated 100,000 workers took part in protest marches called by the Irish Congress of Trade Unions (ICTU) in the Irish cities of Dublin, Cork, Waterford, Limerick, Galway, Sligo, Athlone, and Rosslare. The national trade union day of protest, the largest in Ireland for decades, was backed by most ICTU-affiliated unions and by the nonaffiliated Association of Secondary Teachers. Unions in the United Kingdom organized a solidarity action in Wales two days before.

As this issue goes to press, the seafarers’ union—Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union



AP/Charlie Collins

About 40,000 people march in Dublin, Ireland, December 9 to support workers at Irish Ferries resisting bosses’ attempt to replace them all with nonunion labor, mostly from eastern Europe, who would be paid half the minimum wage. Ferry workers occupied two ships as part of their fight against this union-busting effort.

(SIPTU)—announced it had reached a settlement with the owners of Irish Ferries. Under the deal, workers would keep their jobs with existing terms, continue to be represented by SIPTU, and no one would be paid below the Irish minimum wage. Some of the workers

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## N.Y. transit workers resist ‘productivity drive,’ health-care and pension cuts for new hires

BY MICHAEL ITALIE

NEW YORK—Nearly 2,000 bus and subway workers rallied here December 13 near Grand Central Station in their fight to beat back company concession demands and win improved wages and working conditions.

The 33,700-member Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 voted three days earlier to authorize strike action if no agreement is reached by expiration of the current contract on December 16 at 12:01 a.m.

The same day as the Grand Central union rally Mayor Michael Bloomberg obtained a court injunction against a strike under the Taylor Law, which bars walkouts by public employees. The city is also seeking fines of \$25,000 per member and \$1 million against the union on the first day of the strike. The fines would double every day.

Transit workers said they reject the Metropolitan Transit Authority’s (MTA) “productivity drive” that will undermine safety, and the bosses’ call

for a reduced medical and pension plan for new hires. “We can’t afford to let that happen to the new guys,” Mansoor Ganie, a subway operator with 14 years on the job, told the *Militant* outside the December 10 union meeting. “They would try to get rid of the pension plan next.”

The MTA is pressing for new workers to pay 2 percent of their wages toward medical coverage, and increasing from 55 to 62 the age at which workers would be able to retire with a full pension.

In exchange for union acceptance of this plan, the MTA has proposed a 27-month contract with two 3 percent raises. Many workers pointed to the MTA’s \$1 billion budget surplus this year for their demand for a much larger wage increase.

The MTA is also trying to institute “broadbanding” (jobs combinations) that would result, for example, in one-person crews on some subway

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## New Orleans: hundreds march for ‘Justice after Katrina’

BY ANTHONY DUTROW AND JOSÉ ARAVENA

NEW ORLEANS—Several hundred people gathered December 10 in historic Congo Square near the French Quarter here to march to City Hall. “Justice After Katrina” proclaimed one of their main banners.

“We’re back! We’re back!” chanted the protesters. Many residents displaced from the city since Hurricane Katrina returned to take part in the action. A significant percentage came from Houston, Dallas, and Austin, Texas; Baton Rouge and Lafayette, Louisiana; and other cities in the region.

More than 300,000 people have been

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## European powers commit more occupation troops for Afghanistan after Rice tour

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In a four-day visit to Europe in early December, U.S. secretary of state Condoleezza Rice won support for NATO to send 6,000 additional troops to southern Afghanistan, and signed agreements with the government of Romania for use of military bases there. The trip included stops in Germany, Belgium, Romania, and Ukraine.

Despite self-serving criticisms by Washington’s imperialist rivals, especially in Germany, France, and the Netherlands, about reports in the media that CIA secret prisons have been operating in some eastern European countries, NATO secretary-general Jaap de Hoop Scheffer said Rice’s visit “cleared the air” over treatment of detainees. Washington promised that those de-

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## 1,200 miners, other workers march in St. Louis to back union organizing

BY BILL ESTRADA

ST. LOUIS—About 1,200 people marched and rallied here December 9 outside the headquarters of Peabody Energy, the largest coal mining company

in the world. The United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), St. Louis Central Labor Council, and other trade unions called the action to promote union organizing as part of AFL-CIO rallies across the country around international human rights day.

“UMWA, all the way!” and “Hey hey, ho ho, Peabody’s gotta go!” chanted hundreds of miners. UMWA president Cecil Roberts was among several union officers who addressed the rally.

Many busloads of retirees and some working miners, mainly from southern Illinois and Kentucky, took part in the action.

St. Louis is near the coalfields of southern Illinois. A number of UMWA members pointed out that Peabody closed its last unionized facility in Illinois in 1999, while it acquired the Black Beauty Coal Company that owns many nonunion mines in that state and in Indiana.

Roberts told the crowd he favors bypassing the process of union representation

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## Air marshals kill mentally ill man in Miami; passengers dispute bomb claim

BY PAUL PEDERSON

Rigoberto Alpizar, a mentally ill man, was gunned down December 7 by two undercover federal air marshals after being followed off an American Airlines plane at Miami International airport.

The cops claimed that Alpizar said he had a bomb. Press accounts, however, show passengers tell a different story.

“I absolutely never heard the word ‘bomb’ at all,” said John McAlhany, a construction worker on the same flight. “I heard an argument with his wife. He was saying, ‘I have to get off the plane.’ She said, ‘Calm down.’”

“The wife was telling him, ‘Calm down. Let other people get on the plane. It will be all right,’” Alan Tirpak, another passenger, told the press.

“I did not hear him say that he had a bomb,” Mary Gardner, a third passenger, told the media.

Alpizar then reportedly ran down the aisle of the plane with his wife behind him. “She was running behind him saying, ‘He’s sick. He’s sick. He’s ill. He’s got a disorder,’” said McAlhany. “She was trying to explain to the marshals that he was ill. He just wanted to

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# Irish Ferries workers

Continued from front page who have decided to accept redundancy (layoffs) will keep the enhanced payments for the job loss despite threats by the company that these would be withdrawn. Workers at various ships are now voting on the proposal, but one of the boats they had struck, the *Jonathan Swift*, has already sailed from Dublin to Holyhead.

Since November 25, SIPTU members had been occupying two Irish Ferries ships, the *Isle of Inishmore* and the *Ulysses*, docked in the Welsh ports of Pembroke and Holyhead.

In an operation carried out with “military precision,” the London *Guardian* reported, company-organized gangs of thugs boarded the two ships in civilian clothes. Once on board, they changed into dark uniforms with padded jackets and took up pre-arranged positions. It was then announced over the loudspeakers that they were in control of “security.” After the ships were docked, the bosses planned to bring in a new crew to replace the fired workers.

In response, however, union members occupied the two ships and barricaded themselves inside.

The company tried to employ non-Irish workers, especially from Latvia and Estonia, and to escape Ireland’s minimum wage law by re-registering the ships under the Cyprus flag. It claims that 95 percent of its business competitors are using “outsourced” labor and flying flags of convenience.

Irish Ferries already employs crews of contracted workers on one of its ferries, the *MV Normandie*, which operates between Rosslare in Ireland and Cherbourg in France, under the flag of the Bahamas. Its sailings have been hit by a SIPTU boycott at Rosslare.

The director of the Latvian seafar-

ers’ register, Jazeps Spridzans, said he doubted that Latvian workers would work for the wages being offered, according to Leta, the national press agency in that Baltic country.

The company currently employs 70 Latvians as sailors, mechanics, and floor staff at a minimum of 8.37 euros (US\$9.96) an hour plus meals, uniforms, and round-trip transportation to their country of employment.

ICTU general secretary David Begg told the press that the protests were not aimed against foreign-born workers. “The Congress banner at the head of today’s march puts the case quite emphatically: Equal Rights for All Workers,” he said.

One of the occupying workers, John Curry, told the *Guardian*, “This is not just about us and our jobs. It’s much wider than that. If this company is allowed to get rid of its workers in one fell swoop, then what’s going to stop other countries across Europe from doing the same?”

The Seamen’s Union of Ireland, which claims to represent 60 percent of the seafarers at Irish Ferries, has not been on strike. It has expressed concern that the company would slash the redundancy terms (severance pay) it has offered and which a majority of its members have accepted.

## Australian gov’t boosts cop powers for ‘counterterrorism’

BY RON POULSEN

SYDNEY, Australia—Laws giving cops and secret agents substantial new powers in the name of “counterterrorism” were raced through federal and state parliaments in early December. Their adoption comes just weeks after the government conducted the largest “antiterror” raids in the country’s his-

## Stanley Williams executed after governor of California rejects demands for clemency



Militant/Betsey Stone

SAN QUENTIN, California—On December 13, after California governor Arnold Schwarzenegger refused calls for clemency, Stanley “Tookie” Williams, 51, was executed. At protests around the world, including a November 30 rally in San Francisco (above), many had pressed to save his life. Williams, convicted in 1979 for four Los Angeles-area murders, had insisted that his convictions rested on coerced and fabricated testimony of informers, and that the prosecutor in his trial excluded Black jurors. Schwarzenegger refused a pardon because “Williams insists he is innocent,” citing also the dedication of Williams’s book *Life In Prison* to “Nelson Mandela, Angela Davis, Malcolm X, Assata Shakur, Geronimo Ji Jaga Pratt, Ramona Africa, John Africa, Leonard Peltier, Dhoruba Al-Mujahid, George Jackson, Mumia Abu-Jamal,” and others behind bars. The governor claimed most of these individuals “have violent pasts.”

—LEA SHERMAN

The dispute at Irish Ferries comes after a similar move by Doyle Concrete, a breeze-block (cinder block) company based in County Kildare, to cut wages and bring in a replacement workforce.

A six-week strike at the Doyle’s plant in Rathangan ended when the Labour Court ruled that the company had acted unreasonably in reducing established pay rates.

tory, as 600 cops raided on 22 homes in largely immigrant working-class suburbs of Melbourne and Sydney. Since then Liberal and Labor party leaders have been vying with each other to enact measures increasing police powers and attacking political rights.

Under the new laws, the government will be able to lock up people in secret “preventive” detention without charges for 14 days—double the time previously allowed. The police will be able to impose electronic shackles or other restrictions for one year on the movements and communications of “terror suspects” who have not been convicted. Cops will also have wider search and interrogation powers. A federal lower house Labor amendment to drop the sedition section was defeated November 29. Sweeping curbs on free speech and press freedoms were reduced in the bill

after widespread public criticism.

The law revives the offense of “sedition,” covering supposed threats to the “peace, order and good government of the commonwealth.” Critics say the charge of “sedition” is so sweeping it could be used to prosecute individuals opposing government policy on the basis that they support the insurgency in Iraq or Afghanistan. While some Labor Party politicians criticized the conservative Liberal Party prime minister, John Howard, over a few of his proposals for increased police powers, Labor-led state and territory governments have passed similar laws.

All but one of the Labor members of Parliament voted for the Liberals’ bill December 7. The Democrats and Greens, minor capitalist parties in the senate, opposed the bill, arguing that sufficient police powers already exist.

## THE MILITANT

### Workers’ response to Gulf Coast disaster

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Militant reporter Karl Butts (right) with Louisiana farmer Authur Becnel, whose farm was devastated by Hurricane Rita.

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# ‘Oil is not the curse in Africa, imperialism is’

## New York event hears report from first book fair in Equatorial Guinea

BY OSBORNE HART  
AND BRIAN WILLIAMS

NEW YORK—More than 180 people attended a meeting here December 10 around the theme “We start with the world and how to transform it.” Held at Hunter College, the gathering attracted people from throughout the northeastern United States and from Canada. The event, sponsored by the Socialist Workers Party and the Young Socialists, featured a panel of speakers reporting on their experiences participating in the first-ever book fair in the Central African country of Equatorial Guinea.

Those attending the meeting ranged from garment workers in Philadelphia to groups of students from Albany, New York, and Amherst, Massachusetts.

Arrin Hawkins and Brian Taylor, who were part of the five-person team that participated in the book fair with Pathfinder books, described the hunger among young people at the event for books on struggles against imperialism. “The book fair became a place for discussion of culture and politics. The Pathfinder literature we brought was part of this,” said Taylor.

The response we got from many, noted Hawkins, was “We need these books!” That was especially true of titles by Malcolm X, Nelson Mandela, and Thomas Sankara, leader of the Burkina Faso revolution in the 1980s, as well as on the Cuban Revolution.

Mary-Alice Waters, president of Pathfinder Press, who led the team, pointed to the growing class contradictions sharpened by the rapid development of oil extraction operations in Equatorial Guinea. Many in that country hate the imperialist plunder of their wealth, while at the same time, “many working people have the illusion that the development of an oil industry will lead to a qualitative improvement of their situation.”

She pointed to Nigeria, where 50 years since the beginning of the oil industry, controlled by Royal Dutch Shell and other imperialist corporations, the impoverishment of working people has deepened. In Equatorial Guinea, the oil-driven economic changes are leading to the birth of a hereditary working class, one that will begin to gain self-confidence and seek to transform its living and working conditions.

In the discussion period, Dean De-brosse, a worker from Newark, New Jersey, referred to discussions he has had with workers originally from Nigeria. Many working people know about their exploitation, but, he asked, what will it take to get to “a higher stage of militancy” to combat these conditions?

In Equatorial Guinea, as well as other countries, “working people will have go through some struggles and experiences for consciousness to change,” Waters responded. “In that sense it’s no different there than for working people in the United States. Confidence is born out of struggles and only the working class can lead this struggle,” she explained.

Martín Koppel, another panelist, cited recent articles in the big-business media about the “curse of oil” in some African countries. They seek to portray working people in Africa as helpless victims, but there have been important struggles such as those in Nigeria, from strikes by oil workers to the fight by the Ogoni people to protect their land. “Oil is not the curse in Africa,” Koppel said, “imperialism is.”

At the meeting, a fund collection to help defray the team’s expenses raised more than \$4,100.

Discussion continued the next day among more than 80 people who attended a Sunday morning brunch at a Senegalese restaurant in Harlem. A number of the young people present attended a meeting beforehand orga-

### Miami: ‘Free Jean-Juste from Haitian prison’



Militant/Eric Simpson

MIAMI—More than 1,000 people rallied downtown here December 10 for the release from prison in Haiti of Reverend Gérard Jean-Juste, a long-time fighter for immigrant rights and a leader of Miami’s Haitian community. An ally of deposed president Jean-Bertrand Aristide, Jean-Juste returned to Haiti several years ago, where he has been detained without charges since July. “Free Gérard Jean-Juste. Tie up Latortue!” was one of the popular chants in Creole. Gérard Latortue is the U.S.-backed prime minister of Haiti. He came to power in February 2004 after a rightist takeover that toppled the elected government headed by Aristide, who was forcibly removed from Haiti by U.S. troops.

—ERIC SIMPSON

nized by the Young Socialists.

During the brunch, Taylor, Koppel, and Waters were interviewed by a reporter for a weekly cable television show directed at the growing African immigrant population in the New York City area.

Two of those attending the weekend events were Christine Crowe, 20, a student at Arcadia University near Philadelphia, and Alfredo Huante, 22, who goes to school at the University of California in Los Angeles. They recently spent 10 weeks in Equatorial

Guinea participating in a biodiversity program. At the National University of Equatorial Guinea they attended the book fair, where they met Hawkins, Taylor, and the others who brought Pathfinder books to the fair.

Crowe said that the New York program “was great. It really illustrated how imperialism has affected the country.” She said she learned about the role of the U.S. oil companies in exploiting Africa. “I hope meetings like this one continue to raise awareness,” she added.

## *Palestinian acquitted of ‘terror’ charges in Florida; supporters demand his freedom now*

BY DEBORAH LIATOS

MIAMI—In a victory for political rights, a federal jury in Tampa, Florida, on December 6 acquitted Sami Al-Arian of eight of 17 charges against him, including a key charge that he served as a leader of Palestinian Islamic Jihad. The 12-member jury deadlocked on the other counts.

Nahla Al-Arian, Sami Al-Arian’s wife, said the trial “showed there was no case and my husband was innocent,” the *Miami Herald* reported.

Al-Arian, a former University of South Florida professor in Tampa, is a supporter of the struggle for the rights of the Palestinian people. University

officials fired him shortly after he was indicted in 2003. Two others, Sameeh Hammoudeh and Ghassan Zayed Ballut, were found not guilty of all charges and released. Hatem Naji Fariz was acquitted on 24 charges, with the jury unable to decide on eight others.

After 33 months in jail, Al-Arian and Fariz were returned to prison while prosecutors decide whether to retry them on the deadlocked charges.

The four had been accused of “rack-teering, conspiracy to maim and murder,” and of providing material support to Palestinian Islamic Jihad, which the U.S. government has labeled a “terrorist organization.”

After more than five months of testimony by nearly 80 witnesses and the presentation of 1,800 faxes, wiretap transcripts, e-mail, and other exhibits, prosecutors conceded that none of the evidence linked the defendants to “terrorist” acts.

The U.S. Constitution “protects Dr. Al-Arian for his speech,” William Moffitt, one of Al-Arian’s lawyers, told reporters. “The fact that Dr. Al-Arian is a Palestinian deprives him of no civil rights.”

In an interview, Melva Underbakke, an activist in Tampa-based Friends for Human Rights, which has defended Sami Al-Arian, said that her group “organized people to attend the trial,

and we had someone in the courtroom almost every day. Every Monday we had people outside the courthouse with signs saying, ‘Everyone deserves a fair trial’ and ‘Charity to women and children is not terrorism.’ On the two-year anniversary of his arrest, before the trial began, we held a candlelight vigil outside the jail where Dr. Al-Arian was being held. I feel we may have had an impact on the jury by showing them that if they returned a ‘not guilty’ verdict, they weren’t alone, that many people in the community were for justice and weren’t afraid to speak up against the government. There was a lot of media-driven pressure in the community to convict.”

After the verdict, an editorial in the *St. Petersburg Times* said the trial showed “the fairness of the American justice system.” It then declared, “As a legal resident, Al-Arian has abused this nation’s hospitality and engaged in conduct that may warrant his deportation.”

Federal authorities are now considering deporting Sami Al-Arian, a U.S. permanent resident since 1989.

The burden of proof for deportation on “terrorism” charges is lower than in criminal courts.

A rally was held in front of the courthouse December 13 to demand that Al-Arian be released now and not be deported.

## —MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

### CALIFORNIA

#### Los Angeles

**Celebrate the 47th Anniversary of the Triumph of the Cuban Revolution.** Speaker: Wendy Lyons. Fri., Dec. 30, 7:30 p.m. 4229 S. Central Ave. Tel: (323) 233-9372.

### NEW YORK

#### Manhattan

**Cuba’s Role in Africa’s National Liberation Struggles.** Fri., Dec. 30, Dinner, 7:00 p.m.; program, 8:00 p.m. Donation: \$10 (\$5 program only). 307 W. 36 St., 10th floor Tel: (212) 629-6649.

### UNITED KINGDOM

#### London

**For a Democratic and Secular Palestine!—**

**What Lies Behind the Split in Israel’s Ruling Party?** Speaker: Paul Davies, Communist League. Fri., Dec. 23.

**How Blacks in the U.S. South Defended Themselves Against Ku Klux Klan Racist Violence.** Film Showing. Fri., Dec. 30. At both events: Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program 7:30 p.m. Donation: £3 dinner, £3 program. First floor, 120 Bethnal Green Rd. (020) 7613 2466.

### SWEDEN

#### Stockholm

**Celebrate 47 Years of the Cuban Revolution and 30 Years Since Beginning of Cuban Internationalist Mission in Angola.** Fri., Dec. 30, 7:00 p.m. Bildhuggarv 17. Tel: (08) 316933.



# New Orleans: ‘Justice after Katrina’

**Continued from front page**  
displaced in the storm’s aftermath. Many have experienced rent-gouging landlords and inaction by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) to demands for housing or other assistance. About 65,000 people now live in New Orleans, a city of half a million people before Katrina.

Several buses brought protesters from a “Justice After Katrina” conference held December 8–9 in Jackson, Mississippi. About 300 people attended, including many affected by hurricanes Katrina and Rita in Gulf Coast states. Demands drawn up in Jackson were delivered to New Orleans mayor Ray Nagin. They included immediate relief from evictions and price gouging by landlords, and decent housing for evacuees.

“We want our voices heard,” said Malcolm Suber from the steps of City Hall. “The government promises everything and gives you nothing.” Suber called on city authorities to postpone the Mardi Gras celebration, normally held in February, until residents return.

Suber and Cherice Harrison-Nelson are co-chairs of the People’s Hurricane Relief Fund and Oversight Coalition, the group that organized the Jackson conference and rally here. Both are New Orleans residents who now live in Houston.

Other speakers included Sarah White, a board member of the Mississippi Workers Center and a rep-

resentative of the United Food and Commercial Workers (UFCW) Local 1529, which represents catfish workers in Mississippi. “It just didn’t start in New Orleans,” White said. “For years we have been down on the Mississippi Delta, we have been harassed, mistreated, hung, killed. So the fight against racism did not just start here, but this is where we want to end it. We have to fight it.”

Representatives of the New Black Panther Party, Nation of Islam, National Black United Front, and the Houston-based Shrine of the Black Madonna also spoke. Mandu from the African cultural organization Sankofa came to the event from Switzerland. He gave greetings on behalf of those of African heritage living in that country.

Bilal Mustafaa Mustaqeem, 32, worked in a printing plant here that was destroyed by the storm. He took part in the Jackson conference and said he came here to tell his story about being jailed and severely beaten for no reason by New Orleans cops after Katrina. When his sisters, who witnessed the beating, protested, the cops jailed them too, he said. “My sisters took pictures

of the sores on my back from being stomped on and poked with a shotgun barrel. When we said we were going to file a complaint, they jailed me and wouldn’t release the women for two days.” Mustaqueem said he was locked up for 60 days. He now resides in New York.

Brian Thompson, 40, a member of the Metal Trades Council at the Ingalls Shipyard in Pascagoula, Mississippi, resides in Biloxi. “I’m concerned that none of the people hit by Katrina are overlooked,” he told the *Militant*. “That’s why I’m standing here in solidarity with all of us in the Gulf Coast.” Thompson, who is back on his job, said 30 percent of his co-workers are still laid off.

Cynthia Banks drove here from Dallas in a van with 10 other evacuees. Banks lost her home and business in the heavily flooded New Orleans East area. “Something is seriously wrong,” she said. “The mayor tells us, ‘Come back to our city.’ But you look around and say to yourself, ‘What city?’”

Rhonda Maberry, an unemployed



Militant/José Aravena

December 10 march in New Orleans

nurse practitioner, is a leader of the National Association of Katrina Evacuees. “I found an eviction notice on my pillow saying that I had to be out of my hotel room by December 15,” she said. Because of this, Maberry is now returning to her home here, which still has no gas. “The electricity was just turned on this week,” she said.

“It was great and we need more of this,” said Muriel Lewis, who belongs to the same group as Maberry. She beamed with pride at the first mass action here to protest the deepening social crisis.

Karl Butts contributed to this article.

## St. Louis rally backs unionization efforts

**Continued from front page**  
tion elections sponsored by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB). Congress should pass the Employee Free Choice Act that would allow workers to obtain union recognition directly from their employer, he said.

The December 10 *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* reported Roberts saying that “eighty percent of Peabody’s workforce was unionized 20 years ago, but the percentage has dropped to 35 percent as the St. Louis-based company closed mines in Indiana and Illinois and moved production to the West.” The *Dispatch* also reported that, according to the UMWA, when Peabody returned to business in Illinois and Indiana coalfields, “it did so with a nonunion subsidiary, often opening new mines near old ones that had been unionized.”

John Maitland, national secretary of the Construction, Forestry, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU) from Australia, also addressed the December 9 rally. He said the CFMEU will wholeheartedly support all UMWA efforts to organize the Peabody mines.

Unionists at the rally got invitations to attend a December 17 picket line outside the Co-Op mine near Huntington, Utah, where coal miners have been fighting for two years to win UMWA representation. The Utah AFL-CIO, UMWA District 22, and Utah Jobs with Justice are sponsoring the action, which will be held from 1:00 p.m. to 2:30 p.m. It will then be followed by an open house with hot drinks and snacks at the UMWA District 22 union hall in nearby Price, Utah. The event will mark the one-year anniversary since

a union representation election was held at the mine, which had been preceded by a 10-month strike for union recognition.

One week before that election, C.W. Mining, which operates the Co-Op mine, fired some 30 workers for allegedly not having proper work documents. Dismissed workers said these were the same documents they provided when they were hired years earlier and only became an issue just before the union vote. The election took place and the bosses challenged the votes of the fired miners. The NLRB sealed the ballots and has not yet ruled on the UMWA’s complaint that the miners were fired illegally, nor has it announced the results of the election. For more information on the December 17 picket call UMWA District 22 at (435) 637-2037.

### Appeal to our readers

Since Hurricane Katrina the *Militant* has spent over \$7,500 to send reporters to the U.S. Gulf Coast to provide coverage like the article above. As we go to press, 15 readers have contributed a total of \$2,265 to cover travel and other reporting costs. Please continue to give generously. Send your contributions to the *Militant* at 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

### Dec. 10 actions promote union organizing



Militant/Clay Dennison

JACKSON, Mississippi—More than 150 unionists and other workers gathered at the Communications Workers of America (CWA) Local 3511 hall here December 10 for a teach-in and rally, sponsored by the AFL-CIO on International Human Rights Day. CWA members involved in an organizing drive of city workers here joined the action along with auto workers, teachers, and members of Black rights and immigrant rights groups. Unionists addressing the rally extended messages of solidarity to Nissan workers in the area fighting for union recognition and to toilers along the Gulf Coast confronting the social disaster since Hurricane Katrina. According to the AFL-CIO, more than 120 similar events took place across the United States the second week of December.

—SUSAN LAMONT

## Protesters outmobilize rightists in Toledo; police arrest 30

BY ILONA GERSH

TOLEDO, Ohio—Nearly 200 people protested here December 10 against a rally by 60 right-wingers sponsored by the National Socialist Movement (NSM), which sometimes calls itself the American Nazi Party. This is a fascist outfit based in Roanoke, Virginia, and has a national office in Minneapolis. Bill White, a spokesman of the group, told the *Toledo Blade* that members of the Ku Klux Klan, Retaliator Skinhead Nation, and the World Church of the Creator took part in the white-supremacist action.

This was the second NSM rally here. On October 15, the group tried to march through a largely Black residential area on the north side of town. That action provoked protests of several hundred residents, many of them Black.

A sign at the one-hour Nazi rally at the downtown Government Center on December 10 said, “White race—Stand up and take back your neighborhood.”

“Nazis, get out of Toledo,” “Down with racism!” and “Hey, hey; Ho, ho!

Nazis and the Klan have got to go!” chanted the counterprotesters.

Hundreds of cops in riot gear were mobilized in the area. Police forced protesters on both sides to walk through metal detectors and photographed everyone who did so. By the end, cops arrested 30 people—most of whom took part in the antiracist action—and charged them with misdemeanors, including disorderly conduct.

Alan Epstein contributed to this article.

### Corrections

In the article “Independent truckers in Houston win strike” in issue 49, the quote from David Santos should have read, “We won \$1.23 per mile!” not “\$1.23 an hour.” In issue 48 in the article “Book fair helps extend literacy in Venezuela,” the correct spelling of the Venezuelan government’s book distributor is Kuai Mare.



**Swat them again, sisters and brothers**—Liechtenstein is a tiny European country of 33,000



**Harry Ring**

touching the borders of Austria and Switzerland. The population is but 33,000 and three-quarters are Catholic. A ballot proposition was approved legalizing

abortion in the first 12 weeks of pregnancy, ending a situation in which women obtaining abortion faced one year in prison. People of Liechtenstein delivered a jolt to the church hierarchy. An archbishop led a campaign in support of a counterproposal to stamp out all abortions and birth control. This was voted down at the polls with a slam dunk NO vote of 81 percent.

**Nothing's perfect**—According to federal numbers, last year there were more than 3,000 rail crossing crashes between

trains and motor vehicles. The feds imposed fines on the rails in nine cases. The balance was left to various state and local authorities. A concerned member of Congress concluded there was a need for safer rail crossings.

**The arms of mercy**—Some seriously ill homeless people are taken to hospitals for treatment. Those who recover are discharged. How? In at least three Los Angeles hospitals, the authorized practice is: have them put in cabs and “dumped” back

on the bitter pavements called skid row. This criminal practice has, so far, been identified with the mammoth “non-profit” Kaiser Permanente and two Los Angeles county facilities—King/Drew and the University of Southern California Medical Center. More exposures of other hospitals that engage in “dumping” are expected.

**British student looked “terrorist”?**—Walking on a foot-bridge approach to Southampton University was a student who had been hired

to take some photos for a local map. But to a squad of cops, Matthew Curtis with a camera looked dangerous. He was pulled aside and carefully searched. On release, Curtis told reporters, “I couldn’t believe my ears when...they said they were warning me under the Terrorism Act. I doubt very much that bin Laden...is plotting to blow up a small bridge.”

**Note to readers**—“The Great Society” will now be appearing twice a month. Keep sending in those clippings!

## — **ON THE PICKET LINE** —

### ***Mechanics call for unity to fight attacks by Northwest Airlines***

BLOOMINGTON, Minnesota—More than 400 workers rallied here December 7 against concessions demanded by Northwest Airlines of its union workforce. The rally was called by the International Association of Machinists (IAM), which represents Northwest ramp workers. It included representatives of the Air Line Pilots Association (ALPA), Professional Flight Attendants Association (PFAA), Transport Workers Union, and two other smaller unions that organize workers at Northwest Airlines.

Both ALPA and the PFAA have already agreed to “interim” pay cuts amounting to \$332 million. Northwest through the bankruptcy court imposed another 19 percent “interim” pay cut on the IAM. If the unions do not agree to the layoffs and pay cuts that Northwest is demanding by mid-January, the company says it will ask the bankruptcy

judge to impose these terms.

Outside the rally, striking Northwest mechanics and cleaners represented by the Aircraft Mechanics Fraternal Association (AMFA) distributed a leaflet titled, “WE STAND WITH NWA UNION WORKERS.” The mechanics have been on strike since August 19. The other unions representing Northwest workers have asked their members not to honor their picket lines.

“AMFA and Northwest Labor Solidarity Committee offer and pledge their support and solidarity to *all* Northwest Unionized Workers,” the leaflet explained. “Please look at what happened to AMFA as an example. NWA outsourced their jobs from over 9,000 to 880! This is their plan for you.”

—Nelson Gonzalez

### ***Workers at New York Starbucks picket for union recognition***

NEW YORK—Twenty workers and supporters picketed a Starbucks coffee shop at Union Square November 25 to demand union recognition and a guaranteed 20-hour workweek that would qualify them for health-care benefits. The starting wage at Starbucks here is \$8.50 an hour and many workers average only 16 hours a week.

Workers at three Starbucks coffee

### **New Zealand: KFC workers demand pay hike**



Militant/Terry Coggan

Ten workers at Kentucky Fried Chicken in Auckland, New Zealand, walked off the job in a two-hour protest strike December 3. They were joined by 50 supporters. “This is great, my first strike,” said Sam Van Der Kolk, 15, who earns \$7.13 (NZ\$1 = US 70 cents) an hour. The action was part of a campaign launched by the Unite union for an increase in the minimum wage to \$12 an hour, and for the abolition of youth rates. The minimum wage is \$9.50. For those under age 18 it’s \$7.60.

—TERRY COGGAN

### **Books on working-class politics sell well at Montreal book fair**

BY ANNETTE KOURI

MONTREAL—A booth presenting books on revolutionary politics published by Pathfinder Press was part of the 28th annual “Salon du livre” in this city. Nearly 120,000 people visited the book fair November 17–21. Some 1,400 authors and their editors participated, many from Quebec and at least nine from outside Canada.

At the Pathfinder stand readers purchased 59 books and pamphlets, the majority in French. In addition, 19 people signed up for introductory subscriptions to the *Militant*. One young reader, having subscribed to the *Militant* the day before, thought it over and came back the next day for the two new issues of *Nouvelle Internationale*, whose feature articles are “Capitalism’s Long Hot Winter Has Begun” and “Our Politics Start with the World.”

Four college students came and spent about an hour looking over the books and discussing them with the volunteers at the booth. Two of the students signed up for the *Militant*, one buying *The Working Class and the Transformation of Learning* in French, the other an issue of *Nouvelle Internationale* no. 7. They explained that they would later exchange the books among themselves. Many new subscribers were young people who asked to be contacted when *Militant* supporters from Toronto came back to Quebec.

Workers at several Starbucks coffee chains in Canada and New Zealand have also organized unions. In Auckland 20 to 30 workers, members of New Zealand’s Unite union, went on strike November 23 to demand higher wages.

—Arrin Hawkins

## — **25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO** —



**December 26, 1980**

The January 15 national march and rally in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.’s birthday is a timely and important demonstration for the rights of Black people. Initiated by Stevie Wonder, the renowned entertainer and composer, the Washington, D.C., action will demand that King’s birthday be instituted as a national holiday.

Among other supporters of the King Day march are Rev. Jesse Jackson, national president of Operation PUSH, and Cleveland Robinson of the Coalition of Black Trade Unionists.

Some chapters of the newly established National Black Independent Political Party are supporting the demonstration.

Like the formation of the NBIPP, the momentum behind the January 15 march expresses the desire of hundreds of thousands of Black people to press forward the struggle for justice in the face of stepped-up attacks from the KKK and other racist terrorists, big business, and the government.



**December 26, 1955**

Dec. 21—Fifty-six thousand Westinghouse strikers were presented with quite a Christmas present by the government yesterday. Herbert Brownell Jr., Attorney General, in behalf of Eisenhower’s Department of Justice, filed a petition with the Subversive Activities Control Board asking that the United Electrical, Radio and Machine Workers of America, Independent, representing 11,000 of these strikers, be declared a “subversive” organization.

The government is acting under the Communist Control Law of 1954 against a union with a total membership of around 100,000. This law, passed in August 1954, created a new category of organizations to be persecuted by the witch hunt: Communist “infiltrated” unions. The government chose to invoke this infamous new repressive law in the ninth week of the Westinghouse strike involving 11,000 UE members and 45,000 members of the International Union of Electrical Workers, AFL-CIO.



**December 1, 1930**

Recently two events, little known and little noticed, have rendered splendid proof of increasing unemployment pressure by the rank and file, at least within certain sections of the trade union movement, to the point where some officials have felt compelled to endeavor to get into some sort of motion so as to stave off what they consider “something worse.” They have, of course, been entirely overshadowed by the din of the noisy charity campaigns to which capitalism has resorted in every city. But they grew from the same cause, the unemployment crisis, and likewise materialized because of the fear of real working class action.

The first event was the national conference of some seven hundred general chairmen and executive officers of the five railroad transportation brotherhoods to consider the six-hour day. The second event was the meeting of the Chicago Federation of Labor, Nov. 16th, adopting a resolution for the shorter workday for all federal employees.



# 10 years since imperialist intervention in Bosnia: main class contradictions remain unresolved

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

It was Dec. 20, 1995, at the airport of Sarajevo, the capital of Bosnia, a republic of the formerly federated Yugoslavia. In the winter chill, in a ceremony filled with symbolism, U.S. admiral Leighton Smith, the NATO commander in southern Europe at the time, took over military authority from French general Bernard Janvier, the head of the United Nations “peacekeeping” mission. The occupation of Bosnia by 60,000 NATO troops, led by 20,000 U.S. soldiers, was under way.

“The region is now stable and peaceful, and the brutal killings are only a memory,” wrote former U.S. president William Clinton 10 years later. “Bosnia is one country,” he alleged in a commentary in the December 1 *Wall Street Journal*. Clinton, then the U.S. commander-in-chief, was the architect of that military operation, which followed 18 months of bombing by the U.S. Navy and Air Force.

“President Bill Clinton was right to invest in ‘nation-building’ after U.S. military action in Bosnia,” chimed in Dick Morris, a *New York Post* columnist and former Clinton administration advisor. His syndicated column appeared in the December 5 *Australian*, a Sydney-based daily, under the headline, “Democracy flowers in Europe’s killing fields.”

This is the claim that many politicians and pundits have made around the 10th anniversary of that imperialist assault: that Washington’s benevolent intervention brought peace and ended the fratricide in that part of the Balkans.

Nothing can be further from the truth.

The invasion of Bosnia, and the NATO air strikes and the Dayton “peace” accords that preceded it, were a continuation of the more than decade-long policy of Washington and its allies to dismember Yugoslavia. These events were followed three years later by the massive U.S. bombing of Serbia that targeted the working class in that republic, and the NATO occupation of Kosova, the autonomous region of southern Yugoslavia inhabited largely by Albanians.

The U.S. rulers’ aim was not to stop “ethnic cleansing” and establish “democracy.” It was to strengthen U.S. supremacy in Europe, overthrow the workers state established in Yugoslavia through a workers and peasants revolution in 1945, and reimpose

capitalism in that country.

On the blood and bones of the people of Yugoslavia, the U.S. rulers did reinforce Washington’s position as the number one power in Europe. But the other goal of the imperialist intervention—doing away with nationalized property and reestablishing the “free market” system—remains an unresolved contradiction.

If stability and what Washington describes as democracy had been achieved, there would be no need for the indefinite deployment of imperialist troops. On Nov. 21, 2005, however, the United Nations Security Council extended for yet another year the mandate of the European Union Force in Bosnia. Those 6,500 troops, which are now commanded by an Italian general and include 200 U.S. soldiers, took over military control of that republic from NATO a year ago.

Today Bosnia is nominally governed by a three-person, rotating presidency. But it is the UN “High Representative,” bestowed with dictatorial powers that include firing elected officials he disagrees with, who calls the shots. “An imperial governorship” is how the *Economist* magazine recently referred to his rule, exercised until last month by Lord Jeremy Ashdown, former leader of the British Liberal Democrats.

## NATO fosters national divisions

Bosnia is now fractured along national lines, a status codified in the Dayton accords 10 years ago. The republic is comprised of a Bosniak-Croat Federation—further subdivided into 10 cantons largely segregated by nationality—and the so-called Serb Republic.

“Schools are strictly divided on ethnic lines,” said the November 26 *Economist*, describing Mostar, where Croats, Bosnians (mostly Muslims), and Serbs live. “All but one municipality have populations which are 90% from the same religious or ethnic group,” the *Guardian* reported November 29.

To the southeast of Bosnia, in Kosova, imperialist forces have played a similar role. More than 17,000 NATO soldiers—including 1,800 U.S. troops—are deployed there, and now plan to stay well beyond the original 2006 departure date.

NATO forces have occupied Kosova—formally an autonomous region of Serbia—since 1999, following the brutal “ethnic cleansing” campaign against Albanians in Kosova by the Stalinist government of Slobodan Milosevic. Working people in Serbia toppled that hated regime in a popular rebellion in 2000.

Washington and other imperialist powers sent troops into Kosova under the banner of protecting the national rights of Albanians, who are demanding independence from Serbia. In the last six years, however, the NATO forces have both blocked self-rule and fomented animosity between Albanians and the Serb minority, most of which lives in isolated enclaves. Last year, for example, there were

“ethnic cleansing”—type attacks in which more than 30 Serbs were killed and 3,600 driven out of Kosova, while NATO “peacekeepers” stood by.

In May 2005, NATO soldiers from Norway deployed in Kosova produced a spoof music video clip, set to the Beach Boys tune “Kokomo,” that shows Norwegian troops dancing in combat gear in fields and military bases there and singing: “Down in Kosova, we’ll kick some ass and then

we’ll see how it goes, and then we really don’t know. Good luck to Kosova.... It’s Europe and NATO, why the hell do we go?” These and other insulting lyrics, including jabs at “Serbian bad guys,” caused indignation in the region and a diplomatic spat between the governments of Serbia and Norway, reported *Al Jazeera*.

Macedonia is one former republic of Yugoslavia where working people did make progress in the struggle for self-determination by the Albanian minority there. Their language was officially recognized and majority-Albanian areas won limited autonomy last year. This was accomplished, however, in spite of the NATO troops, which initially aided Macedonia’s armed forces in an onslaught against Albanian rebels. It was the result of recent struggles by Albanians in Macedonia for their national rights. Their fight built on gains of the 1945 Yugoslav revolution that remain, however weakened, despite imperialist intervention and the murderous wars launched in the early 1990s by rival gangs of the Stalinist bureaucracy that ruled Yugoslavia.

## Difficult to create ‘market economy’

“Bosnia has yet to implement a comprehensive privatization plan to desocialize its economy,” complained a 1998 report by the CATO Institute, a U.S. think tank that promotes “free market” policies. “Many Bosnian officials are resisting privatization in order to protect a highly bureaucratic system of jobs and privileges left over from communist days.”

A UPI dispatch in 2001 said that Bosnia’s “state enterprises are patronage machines, and its banks coerced into political and unwise lending.”

The situation hasn’t changed much since then. The environment in Bosnia is not yet “conducive to a private sector, market-led economy,” noted an August 2005 U.S. State Department report. “Implementation of privatization... has been slow,” says the CIA’s *World Factbook* in its current entry on Bosnia.

Working people, among others, have resisted attempts to reimpose capitalist social relations. According to a December 1 Reuters dispatch, workers had protested the sale of the Zenica iron ore mines in Banja Luka, Bosnia, to the Dutch-based Mittal Steel Company. Pro-Milosevic forces had reportedly used the facilities to torture Muslim



and Croat prisoners in the 1990s. Mittal now owns a 92 percent stake in the company.

According to various press reports, a number of companies in Bosnia purchased by foreign investors, mainly German capitalists, have slashed wages. Some, such as the Alloy factory in Jajce, have installed in-plant cameras to monitor workers deemed unruly. In a number of instances bosses would not pay workers for months and then pay only part of the back wages.

In many cases workers have stuck it out in such jobs because the abysmal economic conditions leave few alternatives. For the last half decade, unemployment has often exceeded 40 percent, according to Bosnian government figures. The republic’s gross domestic product remains 60 percent of what it was when forces backed by Belgrade launched a war to carve out part of Bosnia for a “Greater Serbia.”

The slaughter in Yugoslavia, launched in 1991–92 by rival bureaucratic gangs that draped themselves in nationalist garb, was also from the outset a proxy war for the competing imperialist powers—a product of the intensifying conflict between Berlin, Paris, London, and Washington.

During World War II, workers and peasants of all national origins and beliefs in Yugoslavia defeated the German imperialist occupation and in the process launched a powerful social revolution. Working people took political power out of the hands of the landlords and capitalists. By the end of the 1940s they had carried out a radical land reform, expropriated the bourgeoisie’s factories, warehouses, and banks, and established a planned economy—a workers state. An account of how this revolution unfolded can be found in the Pathfinder book *The Truth About Yugoslavia: Why Working People Should Oppose Intervention* (see ad).

The wars of the 1990s were a product of the degeneration of that revolution under the Stalinist misleadership headed by Josip Broz Tito. That political degeneration made Yugoslavia more vulnerable to the workings of finance capital and the pressures of imperialism, which fanned the flames of war well before the 1990s.

How U.S. imperialism and its allies fueled the war in Yugoslavia will be the subject of an article in next week’s issue.

## For further reading

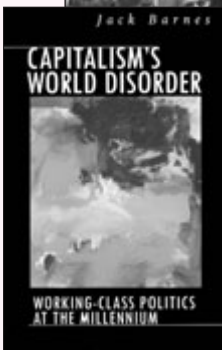
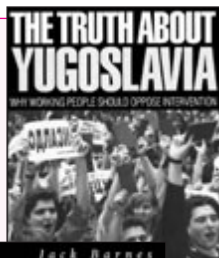
### The Truth About Yugoslavia

Why Working People Should Oppose Intervention

by George Fyson,  
Argiris Malapanis,  
and Jonathan Silberman  
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### Capitalism’s World Disorder

Working-Class Politics  
at the Millennium  
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# Cuba's role in southern African freedom fight

## Fidel Castro speaks on 30th anniversary of Cuban fighters' arrival in Angola

This is the first of several articles and documents the *Militant* is publishing over the coming weeks to mark the 30th anniversary of Cuba's internationalist response to Angola's request for help in defeating the invading armed forces of South Africa's apartheid regime.

Between 1975, when Angola won independence from Portugal, and 1991, some 300,000 Cuban volunteers fought alongside Angolan soldiers to beat back assaults by the apartheid forces. This led to the defeat of the South African army in the 1987–88 battle of Cuito Cuanavale and contributed to the demise of the apartheid regime and the independence of Namibia, a South African colony.

We reprint below the first part of a speech given by Cuban president Fidel Castro at a meeting held in Havana on Dec. 2, 2005, to commemorate the 30th anniversary of Cuba's internationalist mission in Angola. Joining him on the platform were José Condessa de Carvalho, Thenjiwe Mtintso, and Claudia Grace Vushoma, ambassadors to Cuba from Angola, South Africa, and Namibia, respectively.

The event also commemorated the 49th anniversary of the landing in southeastern Cuba by a group of revolutionaries on the boat *Granma*. That action launched the 1956–58 revolutionary war, led by the Rebel Army and the July 26 Movement, against the U.S.-backed Batista dictatorship.

The English translation of this speech is available at [www.granma.cubaweb.cu](http://www.granma.cubaweb.cu), the web site of the Cuban daily *Granma*. Subtitles, material in brackets, and minor translation and stylistic changes are by the *Militant*.



### BY FIDEL CASTRO

Distinguished guests, internationalist combatants, *compañeros*:

Forty-nine years ago today, the *Granma* yacht arrived on the coast of our homeland. Thus today marks the beginning of the 50th year in the life of the Rebel Army and the Revolutionary Armed Forces.

As is well known, in the wake of the landing and despite early setbacks, the fight spread rapidly to every corner of our fields and towns. There was not a moment's truce until the resounding people's victory of 1st January 1959, in the fight to the death against the oppressors who tortured and murdered tens of thousands of Cubans and drained the nation's monetary reserves.

This magnificent triumph, however, would not be the end of the armed struggle, because imperialist treachery, aggravated by every measure of

public benefit or which consolidated national independence, kept us constantly on guard. Many comrades had to continue risking their lives in defense of the revolution, both in Cuba and abroad, in the fulfillment of sacred duties.

Exactly 19 years after the *Granma* landing, in November 1975, a small group of Cubans in Angola fought the first combats in a battle that would last many years.

The history of imperialist and neocolonial plunder and pillage by Europe in Africa, backed to the hilt by the United States and NATO, as well as the heroic Cuban solidarity with its sister nations, have not been fully known, if only as well-deserved recognition for the hundreds of thousands of men and women who wrote that glorious page of history, which should be an eternal example to present and future generations. That is not to say it does not still need wider dissemination.

In recent days, the subject has also received much attention by television and the rest of the media, and at the ceremonies up and down the country paying homage to the internationalist fighters. Accordingly, for reasons of time in moments of hard revolutionary work, I shall confine myself to a brief review of certain key events in the writing of that glorious page of our revolutionary history.

### First internationalist Africa mission

As early as 1961, when the Algerian people were engaged in an astonishing struggle for their independence [from France], a Cuban vessel carried arms to the heroic Algerian patriots and returned with some one hundred children, orphaned or wounded in the war. Two years later, when Algeria gained its independence, it was threatened by foreign aggression that drained the country of important natural resources. For the first time, Cuban troops crossed the ocean, and without asking anyone's permission, went to the aid of our Algerian brothers.

It was at this time also, when imperialism had robbed the nation of half its doctors, leaving us with just 3,000, that some dozens of Cuban doctors were sent to Algeria to aid its people.

That marked the beginning, 44 years ago, of what is today the greatest medical mission in history to the peoples of the Third World.

This period, from 1965 onward, was also the setting for our participation in the independence struggles in Angola and Guinea-Bissau, basically consisting in officer training and dispatch of instructors and supplies.

The disintegration of that nation's colonial empire, weakened by economic ruin and the ravages of war, had begun after the "Revolution of the Carnations"



Juventud Rebelde



Above and right: Reuters/Claudia Daut  
Cuban president Fidel Castro (right) speaks December 2 to Cuban soldiers (above), on 30th anniversary of "Operation Carlota," Cuba's military mission in Angola. Cuban volunteers (left) teach Angolan fighters to operate anti-aircraft guns in Angola, January 1976.



in Portugal, when Guinea-Bissau won independence in September 1974.

Around 60 Cuban internationalists, including some ten doctors, had stayed with the guerrillas for ten years, since 1964. Mozambique, after a fierce struggle by its people under the leadership of FRELIMO [the Mozambique Liberation Front] and its chief, the unforgettable brother and comrade Samora Machel, achieved final independence in mid-1975. In July of that year, Cape Verde and São Tomé also reached that goal.

In the case of Angola, the largest and richest of the Portuguese colonies, the situation was totally different. Washington launched a covert plan to rob the Angolan people of its legitimate rights and install a puppet government. Its main lever was its alliance with South Africa, involving joint training and equipping of the organizations set up by Portuguese colonialism to thwart Angolan independence and turn the country into a condominium of the corrupt Mobutu and fascist South Africa, whose troops it did not hesitate to use to invade Angola.

Dictators, terrorists, thieves and self-confessed racists, without the slightest qualms, swelled the ranks of the so-called "free world." A few years later, U.S. president Ronald Reagan, in a particularly cynical gesture, dignified them with the designation "freedom fighters."

In mid-1975, the Zaire army and mercenary forces reinforced with South African heavy weapons and military advisers launched fresh attacks in northern Angola, reaching the outskirts of Luanda. However, the major threat was in the south: South African armored columns in the south were advancing rapidly deep into the territory, with the aim of occupying Luanda with a combined force of racist South African and Mobutu's mercenary troops, before the proclamation of independence on November 11.

At that time, there were only 480 Cuban military instructors in Angola, sent some weeks earlier in response to a request from MPLA [Popular Movement for the Liberation of Angola] president Agostinho Neto, a renowned, prestigious leader who organized and directed his people's struggle for many

years, with the support of all the African peoples and with recognition by the world at large. He asked us simply for cooperation in training the battalions that made up the newly-independent state's army. The instructors were only lightly armed.

In early November, a small group of these together with new recruits from the Benguela Revolutionary Instruction Center valiantly fought against the racist army. In the surprise attack by outnumbering South Africans on dozens of young Angolans, eight Cuban instructors were killed and seven wounded.

The South Africans lost six armored cars and other vehicles. They never revealed the numbers of the heavy casualties they sustained.

### Cuban and Angolan blood shed

For the first time, in this remote corner of Africa, Cuban and Angolan blood was shed in the struggle to free that troubled land.

It was at this point that Cuba, in consultation with President Neto, decided to send Interior Ministry special troops and regular members of the Cuban army by air and sea, as fully-equipped fighting troops to confront the aggression by the forces of apartheid.

We took up the challenge without hesitation. Our instructors would not be abandoned to their fate; neither would those selfless Angolan fighters, much less their homeland's independence after 20 years of heroic struggle. Ten thousand kilometers from home, Cuban troops—heirs of the glorious Rebel Army—engaged in combat with the armies of South Africa, the continent's richest and most powerful nation, and of Zaire, Europe's and America's richest and well-armed puppet state.

Then, the campaign started known as Operation Carlota, code name for the most just, lengthy, large scale and successful internationalist campaign undertaken by Cuba.

The empire could not achieve its aim of dismembering Angola and robbing it of its independence. The long, heroic struggle of the Angolan and Cuban peoples stopped them in their tracks.

(To be continued next week.)

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**Cuba's Internationalist Foreign Policy**

1975–80

by Fidel Castro

\$21.95





# Changing meaning of democracy in class society

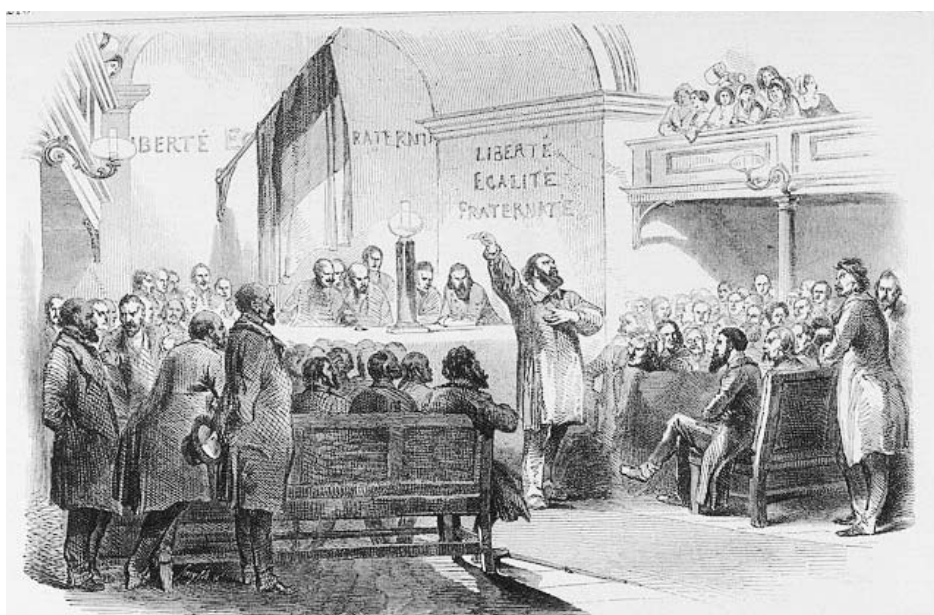
*Below is an excerpt from Democracy and Revolution: From Ancient Greece to Modern Capitalism, one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month for December. George Novack traces the evolution of democracy—its limitations and advances in various forms of class society—from its roots in the mercantile city-states of ancient Greece through its rise and decline under modern capitalism. Novack joined the communist movement in the United States in 1933. He wrote extensively on Marxist theory and politics and was a*

## BOOKS OF THE MONTH

*leader of the Socialist Workers Party until his death in 1992. Copyright © 1971 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*

### BY GEORGE NOVACK

Democracy has different meanings to different people—and to different classes. Some scholars contend that the concept is too vague and variegated to be precisely or adequately defined. Their doubts come from the fact that the content and forms of democracy have changed considerably in the course of its development. New historical conditions and social alignments have



Meeting of French Republican Club in 1848, when King Louis-Philippe was forced to abdicate throne during February Revolution. A new bourgeois-democratic revolutionary upsurge in June of that year, led by nascent working class, was crushed by bourgeoisie.

brought new types of democracy into being and novel aspects of democracy to consider and be realized.

Despite this diversity, the essential features of this mode of rule can be discerned and formulated. In the first chapter, political democracy is discriminated from primitive tribal equality and defined as a special kind of government in class society representing, in reality or in pretension, the supremacy of the many over the few through the mechanism of the territorial state.

The nature of democracy as well as its prospects can best be understood by tracing the main stages of its evolution. Political democracy, like every other social phenomenon, is the child of time. Its preconditions were created in the womb of class society. It came to birth among certain Greek city-states of the first millennium B.C.... After being stamped out in antiquity, urban democracy again rose to find an uneasy seat in the medieval communes of Western Europe. Later on, democratic and republican nation-states which

marked the accession of bourgeois forces to power were established through popular revolutions against the monarchy. Capitalist democracy acquired a matured parliamentary form during the nineteenth century....

The next American revolution will have to be prepared for by a bold and uncompromising examination of long-established political ideas and institutions, much like that performed by Tom Paine and his associates. In this book I have tried to undertake such a criticism in connection with a review of the evolution of democracy in the Western world.

This survey should show that democracy is not static, uniform or fixed but a dynamic, diversified, changing product of socioeconomic development; that the prevailing form of democracy in the United States is not permanent but transitory and has seen its best days; that the overwhelming political power accruing to the representatives of the wealthy is not only incompatible with genuine democracy but an ever-pres-

ent threat to the continuance of the existing rights of Americans; and that both capitalism and its bourgeois democracy are destined to be superseded by a higher form of economic and political organization guaranteeing far more freedoms to the people.

These conclusions may infuriate upholders of the status quo. They will be scoffed at by those skeptics who refuse to admit that history and politics have had any logical line of development or that the class conflicts of our time can have any determinate and foreseeable revolutionary outcome.

The realization of the perspectives projected above depends, of course, upon a favorable forward movement by the people of the United States and their victory over the forces of reaction. But the class struggle can take a retrogressive turn here as elsewhere if the monopolists and militarists, threatened and at bay, should succeed in scrapping all existing democratic institutions and destroying the rights of the people, as the bestial fascist palace guards of the German and Italian capitalists felt obliged to do between the First and Second World Wars.

The rulers of this country are certainly capable of such a criminal political course at home. The repression against Afro-Americans, the restrictions upon democratic and labor rights, the reinforcement of the presidency, the growth of the power of the military and the specter of a fascist mobilization in the future all point in that direction.

The anticapitalist forces have to be aroused against these undemocratic trends in American politics in order to take steps to check and reverse them and resolutely lead the country toward the greater democracy promised by a triumphant socialist movement of the working masses. This book is designed to further such objectives.

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The Militant December 26, 2005



# Defend the Cuban Revolution

January 1 marks 47 years since workers and farmers made a revolution and took power in Cuba. For nearly five decades, the working people of Cuba and their communist leadership have not only defended their state power, but have placed it at the service of working people around the world. That internationalist course is at the heart of how the Cuban Revolution has been able to stand up to decades of U.S. assaults and threats.

Thirty years ago, the Cuban government began sending thousands of volunteer combatants to Angola to help defend that country’s newly won independence when it faced an invasion by the army of the apartheid regime, then in power in South Africa. The white-minority regime was backed by Washington and its client in the Congo, the Mobutu dictatorship.

The 15-year struggle was marked by the definitive defeat of the apartheid troops in the battle of Cuito Cuanavale in 1988. Cuban blood has also been shed backing struggles against imperialist aggression throughout Africa—and many other parts of the world. The *Militant* is publishing articles and a recent speech by Cuban president Fidel Castro to help explain the truth about that history, which is still being told.

Today, tens of thousands of Cuban doctors, teachers, and other volunteers are working in many countries in Africa, Latin America, and Asia—and Cuba even offered to send doctors to the United States to meet the needs of tens of thousands in the Gulf Coast after Hurricane Katrina. From the Central African country of Equatorial Guinea to Venezuela, Cuban medical volunteers are not only providing badly needed health care, often in working-class neighborhoods and isolated rural areas where other doctors will not go. Even more important, they are training youth from those

countries as doctors and other specialists to strengthen the medical services there.

By contrast, the imperialist powers in Washington, London, and across Europe continue to engage in the so-called “brain drain,” enticing doctors and other professionals throughout Africa, Asia, and Latin America to leave their countries in hopes of securing higher salaries—one more form of imperialist robbery.

How is it that thousands of Cuban volunteers serve abroad and provide competent assistance, asking for nothing in return? It is Cuba’s socialist revolution that makes this possible. Cuba has a consistent record of internationalism—from sending troops in 1963 to help defend newly independent Algeria to its support for literacy and medical programs in Venezuela today—a stance that has earned it the hatred and fear of Washington and the U.S. billionaire families it represents. Because of this record, there is every reason to believe that revolutionary Cuba today would respond to any request to defend a fellow nation’s sovereignty and social gains in face of imperialist threats.

The Cuban Revolution is a living example of what workers and farmers can do when they are organized and take state power, ending capitalist rule and building a society based on the needs of the vast majority. Today, in face of a world of increasing economic devastation, imperialist war, and capitalist brutality, the course taken by the Cuban people points the road forward for workers and farmers in this country and around the world.

We join with working people throughout the world in welcoming in the New Year with a renewed commitment to defend the Cuban Revolution. End the U.S. embargo! Abolish travel restrictions! Normalize relations with Cuba!

# Air marshals kill mentally ill man

Continued from front page  
get off the plane.”

The 44-year-old man worked in Home Depot’s paint department and suffered from bipolar (manic-depressive) disorder. He was a naturalized U.S. citizen born in Costa Rica.

The federal cops chased him off the plane and gunned him down on the jetway. They found no bomb anywhere in the vicinity.

“I can’t conceive that the marshals wouldn’t be able to overpower an unarmed single man, especially knowing he had already cleared every security check,” Alpizar’s brother, Carlos, told the *Orlando Sentinel*.

After Alpizar was killed, heavily armed cops took over the plane.

“They stuck guns in our faces.... They were waving the barrels, shouting, ‘Everyone get your hands on the seats! No one move!’” Jorge Borrelli, one of the passengers, told the press. Borrelli moved to stop Alpizar’s wife, who was trying to reach her dying husband, out of fear that the police would shoot her as well. “That was the scariest part. I thought, God, if someone freaks

out and jumps up, they’re going to start shooting.” “This was wrong,” said fellow passenger McAlhany. “This man should be with his family for Christmas. Now he’s dead.”

White House spokesman Scott McClellan defended the marshals’ actions. “The team of air marshals acted in a way that is consistent with the training that they have received,” he said. Since Sept. 11, 2001, the number of heavily armed federal agents on planes has increased. The website that describes the program says there were only 33 air marshals prior to 9/11. Since then, “almost overnight the Service received over 200,000 applications. A classified number of these applicants were screened, hired, trained, certified and deployed on flights around the world.”

In a December 9 editorial, the *Investor’s Business Daily* endorsed the actions of the federal cops. While calling the shooting a “tragedy,” the paper said the killing of Alpizar “lets all Americans know—and puts would be terrorists on notice—that we are able and willing to use lethal force to kill someone viewed as a potential threat. In other words: We’re serious.”

# LETTERS

## Reasons for Likud’s breakup

Paul Pederson, in the article “As Zionist dream of Greater Israel fails, ruling party breaks up,” points to the demographic failure of creating a Jewish majority in historic Palestine as the underlining cause for the Likud Party breakup.

It must be stressed, however, that there is no “demographic” problem independent of politics. Zionism has failed to convince the majority of Jews to immigrate to Israel in part due to the resistance of the Palestinian people. Another element in its failure is its inability to carry out another mass expulsion of Palestinians as it did in 1948. Although having suffered serious setbacks, the Palestinian people’s

national struggle has refused to disappear.  
*Georges Mehrabian  
Athens, Greece*

## Cuban Five

In Miami, in June 2001, five Cubans were convicted of “conspiracy to commit espionage” for Havana. The five remain in federal prisons serving sentences of 15 years to double life. However on Aug. 9, 2005, an 11th Circuit Court panel of judges unanimously decided that trial of the five had been unfair and voided their convictions. The panel found the “pervasive community prejudice” in Miami against Havana created an atmosphere where the five were “unable to obtain a fair

and impartial trial.” They ordered a new trial, but not in Miami.

Now the U.S. government has asked the 11th Circuit Court to “review” its August decision and reverse it, in effect to accept the Miami convictions as “just.” And no new trial outside Miami. Let’s speak out against this injustice.  
*James Lambrecht  
Altamonte Springs, Florida*

**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.**

# Rice trip to Europe

Continued from front page  
tained in southern Afghanistan would be treated under rules of the Geneva Convention.

The 32 foreign ministers from NATO countries then swiftly fell into line with an endorsement on December 8 of the U.S. move to expand NATO military operations into southern Afghanistan, where stiffer fighting is expected than in the northern and western parts of the country, where they are currently based.

Rice refused to comment—on “national security” grounds—about the existence of the CIA prisons. She stated, however, that “as a matter of U.S. policy, the United States’ obligations under the CAT [UN Convention Against Torture], which prohibits cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment—those obligations extend to U.S. personnel wherever they are, whether they are in the United States or outside of the United States.”

Previous statements by some U.S. government officials, including Attorney General Alberto Gonzales, indicated that such official restrictions only applied inside the United States. White House spokesman Scott McClellan, on the other hand, insisted Rice’s comments were “existing policy.”

However, the various “interrogation” techniques that would be covered by a formal ban on torture, such as sleep deprivation and threats to drown an individual strapped to a plank, are not spelled out. According to human rights groups and press accounts, the U.S. government has used such methods.

“I think we have gotten guarantees and all the satisfactory answers we can hope for,” said Netherlands foreign minister Ben Bot. The Dutch government had been among those most critical of the U.S. treatment of such detainees. The Dutch cabinet is now expected to vote December 19 on deploying 1,200 additional troops to the expanded NATO force in Afghanistan. In that Central Asian country there are currently 12,000 U.S. soldiers and 9,200 NATO troops, with an additional 6,000 of the latter to be added next year.

The agreement Rice signed with the Romanian government December 6 allows up to 1,500 U.S. troops to use a main base and airfield near the Black Sea port city of Constanta, plus three other facilities in the area, Bloomberg News reported. Troops will be rotated into these “forward operating sites” as needed for conducting operations and training in the area.

At a meeting of the Southeastern Europe Defense Ministerial, held for the first time in the United States December 5–6, U.S. defense secretary Donald Rumsfeld hailed the group’s decision to undertake its first deployment of the Southeastern Europe Brigade. It’s going to Afghanistan in February 2006 to operate as part of the NATO mission. The Ministerial, formed in 1996, includes the governments of Italy, Greece, Turkey, Albania, Bulgaria, Romania, Macedonia, Slovenia, Croatia, and Ukraine.

In a major speech in defense of U.S. troop operations in Iraq, presented December 7 before the Council on Foreign Relations, President George Bush emphasized their role in carrying out some small-scale localized reconstruction efforts. “We must recognize Iraq as the central front in the war on terror,” Bush said, and “we also have to win the battle after the battle.”

Bush hailed the support given by Democratic senator Joseph Lieberman to the administration’s strategy in Iraq. He quoted from a recent letter by Lieberman that said, “What a colossal mistake it would be for America’s bipartisan political leadership to choose this moment in history to lose its will, and in a famous phrase, to seize defeat from the jaws of the coming victory.”

# N.Y. transit workers

Continued from front page

lines. “They’re trying to broadband everything,” said Ganie.

Daniel Bozan, a bus repairman with 25 years at the MTA, said the city had pushed through similar attacks on other unions, such as the introduction of one-person crews in the latest sanitation workers’ contract.

Carol Corr, a subway booth attendant, said the MTA “is trying to make us look bad.” She said conditions continue to get worse, both on the job—where’s there’s no place for many to eat lunch—and with raises that fail to keep up with inflation. “Now a family has to have two incomes and work overtime to make it,” she said. Corr added that if a walkout is necessary to win union demands, “That’s what we’ll have to do.”