

THE MILITANT

INSIDE

Australia: 1000s protest racist attack on people of Arab descent
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A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 70/NO. 1 JANUARY 9, 2006

Support N.Y. transit workers Their fight is cause of all working people

The entire labor movement and all working people need to stand with the 34,000 New York transit workers fighting for a decent union contract. Their strike is the cause of all labor. The mas-

EDITORIAL

sive fines a state judge has imposed on the Transport Workers Union, and additional ones the city is seeking against individual workers, must be dropped. Trade unions should campaign for the repeal of the antilabor Taylor law, which bans strikes by public employees in New York City.

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Strikers resist two-tier pensions, want dignity on job

BY MICHAEL ITALIE
AND ARRIN HAWKINS

NEW YORK—"Other unions are looking at what we are doing now," said bus driver Ralph Sierra while picketing at the Michael J. Quill bus depot on Manhattan's West Side on December 20, the first day of the transit workers' strike here. "A lot of people thought we



Militant/Arrin Hawkins

Members of the Transport Workers Union picket Michael Quill bus depot in Manhattan December 20. "This is bigger than just us," said Mark Solomon, a TWU member. "The big cats are going to have their pensions, while the American worker is getting killed."

were bluffing, but they had us against the wall and we struck."

With the contract deadline expiring December 16, and the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) not budging on its concession demands, many Transport Workers Union (TWU) Local 100 mem-

bers have been anxious to take action to resist cuts on pensions for new hires and the company's "productivity drive," and to fight for dignity on the job.

Shutting down the city subway and MTA buses, the 34,000 transit work-

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U.S. rulers trumpet Iraqi election as step in drive to win 'war on terror'

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

U.S. officials are hailing the December 15 election for a new parliament in Iraq as another step toward stabilizing a government that will be subservient to U.S. imperialist interests in the region. In a nationally televised speech three days after the vote, U.S. president George Bush described the election as "something new: constitutional democracy at the heart of the Middle East."

It was the fifth major talk Bush has

presented over three weeks aimed at popularizing the U.S. rulers' "strategy for victory" in Iraq. The speeches were part of a counteroffensive by the war party—the vast majority of Republican and Democratic office holders—against the more and more isolated calls by a few liberals for a timetable for withdrawal from Iraq.

"We recognize Iraq is the central front in the war on terror," Bush in-

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U.S. gov't defends domestic spying on calls, e-mail

BY MARTÍN KOPPEL

The White House has defended the use of a domestic spying program, arguing that it is part of waging a "global war on terror" and that the U.S. president has the inherent authority to order such surveillance. In a December 19 press conference, President George Bush said the government will continue to use the National Security Agency (NSA) to eavesdrop on international phone calls and e-mails by U.S. residents in order to "effectively detect enemies hiding in our midst."

The *New York Times* reported December 16 that under a 2002 presidential order, the NSA has spied on the international phone calls and e-mail messages of individuals in the United States without obtaining a warrant from a special court.

Under the 1978 Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA), sponsored by Democratic senator Edward Kennedy, a secret court was set up inside the Justice Department to rubber-stamp requests by federal cop agencies to spy on U.S. residents without having to apply at a regular court. In 26 years the FISA court has rejected only five out of 19,000 government requests for wiretaps or search warrants.

Since the Clinton administration, U.S.

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Utah miners, fighting for union, picket Co-Op mine

BY DAVE FERGUSON

HUNTINGTON, Utah—Forty miners and their supporters joined a picket line in front of C.W. Mining's Co-Op mine in Huntington canyon December 17. The pickets chanted slogans in support of the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA) and raised their signs as coal trucks entered the mine. They cheered as cars passing by honked their horns in support.

The action marked the one-year anniversary of a union representation election at the mine, for which 27 of the 34 ballots have still not been counted. "A year? I don't think that's fair or acceptable. I don't think anybody does," Dave Maggio, a UMWA District 22

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Bolivia election registers popular mood to resist plunder by imperialism

BY BRIAN TAYLOR

The election of Evo Morales, a leader of the Movement Toward Socialism (MAS), as president of Bolivia registered the popular mood in the country to resist imperialist domination and capitalist exploitation.

Formerly a coca farmer and llama herder, Morales—who reportedly got more than 50 percent of votes cast—is the first indigenous president elected in 180 years. His closest opponent—U.S.-backed Jorge Quiroga—had around 33 percent of the vote. Morales campaigned against foreign domination of the oil and natural gas industry and for ending the U.S.-led "war on drugs" aimed at coca growers.

"This is the new history of Bolivia," Morales said in his victory speech in

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Saturday, January 21

New York City

**THE WORLD CRISIS OF IMPERIALISM AND
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Also Inside:

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How U.S. imperialism, allies fueled war in Yugoslavia 6

British rulers take steps to revive nuclear power industry 9

Australia: 1000s protest racist mob attack

BY LINDA HARRIS

SYDNEY,Australia—Aracistcrowd of some 5,000 predominately young white Australians rallied on Cronulla beach in southern Sydney, December 11. Wrapped in or waving Australian flags, and yelling abuse like “No more Lebs” (Lebanese), these thugs attacked anyone who looked like they were of Middle Eastern origin. One man had written on his chest “Ethnic Cleansing Day.” The racists stormed the railway station and a train, attacking individuals of Arab descent.

A week later, thousands rallied across Australia to condemn the racist attacks.

Ultrarightist groups, like the Australia First Party and its associated Patriotic Youth League, handed out inflammatory anti-immigrant pamphlets at the Cronulla rally. Throughout the previous week calls for “Aussies” to come to Cronulla to “reclaim our beaches” were sent out by text message and on talk-back radio. The campaign targeted immigrants from working-class suburbs in western Sydney who go to city beaches.

Attacks have also taken place on schools and churches in western suburbs. Hundreds of Muslims gathered to protect the Lakemba mosque December 12.

The media reported that in retaliation for the racist violence, youths of Arab descent drove into Sydney’s eastern suburbs, smashing cars and shop windows.

The New South Wales state parliament passed emergency laws at a special sitting (session) December 15 giving police here greater powers. Cops are now able to cordon off areas for up to 48 hours, conduct searches, and seize vehicles and mobile telephones

for up to seven days. Increased sentences for rioting and affray were also introduced.

“The excessive police powers introduced are unwarranted,” said Keysar Trad, from the Islamic Friendship Association of Australia, at a public meeting against attacks on civil liberties in Parramatta, western Sydney December 15. “People from my community are still continuing to suffer backlash from the riot,” he said.

A statement by the Communist League here condemned the racist violence, and called for the arrest and prosecution of those who attacked the Arab youth and for repealing the emergency cop powers.

In response to the rampage at Cronulla, thousands of people in cities across Australia joined “United against Racism” rallies December 16–18, initiated by the National Union of Students and supported by many trade unions.



Militant/ Joanne Kuniansky
5,000 joined march called by National Union of Students in Sydney, Australia, December 18 protesting racist attacks on people of Arab descent.

Quebec sovereignty central in Canada election campaign

BY JOHN STEELE

TORONTO—With the pro-Quebec sovereignty Bloc Quebecois party poised to increase its already considerable support in Quebec at the expense of the Liberal Party, Prime Minister Paul Martin has characterized the January 23 federal election as a “referendum election” on Quebec sovereignty. The statement dominated the beginning of the election campaign. The Quebecois constitute an oppressed nation in Canada based on their language, French.

The Liberal Party ran a minority government in Ottawa until November 28 when it was defeated in a no-confidence vote. Martin is trying to shore up slipping Liberal Party support in Quebec by painting the vote as a choice between Canadian federalism and Quebec sovereignty. “It is clear that separatists are there to elect members to achieve sovereignty,” he warned. “Quebeckers have a choice between a party devoted to destroying Canada and us.” “Quebeckers,” instead of “Quebecois,” is the word used by the Canadian rulers to deny the existence of a Quebecois nation.

The Bloc Quebecois is currently holding

54 of Quebec’s 75 seats in federal parliament. In the election campaign, it is backed by the Parti Quebecois, a pro-sovereignty party that has good prospects of defeating Quebec’s Liberal government in the next provincial election. If that happens, PQ leader André Boisclair has said he will call another referendum on Quebec sovereignty.

The most recent opinion polls give the Bloc Quebecois 54 percent of the decided voters in Quebec compared to 27 percent for the Liberals. Neither the Conservative Party nor the New Democratic Party (NDP), a labor party based on the unions outside Quebec, has significant support within Quebec.

An editorial in the December 10 *Globe and Mail*, Canada’s main national English-language daily, slammed Martin’s stance as “short-sighted, foolhardy and even dangerous.” The Liberals “have set a rhetorical fire,” said the *Globe*, “that may, after the election, be hard to contain. Inviting Mr. Duceppe to claim he has won a ‘referendum’ is worse than stupid.” Gilles Duceppe is the leader of the Bloc Quebecois.

In the meantime, NDP leader Jack Layton announced his support for the 2000 Clarity Act, a reversal from the party’s stance last year. The act gives Ottawa the authority to decide on whether the ballot question in any future referendum on independence for Quebec meets Ottawa’s specifications and on the percentage required for sovereignty to pass. The act was adopted after the 1995 referendum, which the pro-sovereignty side lost by only a few percentage points.

At the start of the election campaign Duceppe and Boisclair said they opposed

the Clarity Act and called for Quebec to ignore it. The act is widely seen by Quebecois as a denial of their right to self-rule.

During the nationally televised leaders’ debate on December 16, Prime Minister Martin, looking directly at the Bloc Quebecois leader, stated, “You are not going to take my country away from me with some trick, with some ambiguous question [in a future Quebec sovereignty referendum]. You’re not going to win Mr. Duceppe, let me tell you that.”

“The Communist League campaign calls for repeal of the Clarity Act,” Michel Prairie told a meeting to launch the League’s campaign December 4. Prairie is the CL candidate in the Toronto-Centre riding (electoral district) for the House of Commons, Canada’s parliament. The CL is also running Beverly Bernardo in Parkdale–High Park and John Steele in Eglinton–Lawrence, both ridings in Toronto.

“The Quebecois nation was forged during 150 years of struggle against national oppression,” Prairie said. “The Clarity Act violates Quebec’s right to national self-determination.” He pointed out that the CL campaign platform says: “Working people across Canada should support Quebec independence as part of forging unity in the fight for a workers and farmers government in Ottawa.”

‘Militant’ holiday schedule

This is a two-week issue of the *Militant*. We will be closed between December 25 and January 1. The next issue will be published on January 5.

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Using Iranian president's remarks on Israel, imperialists push to isolate Tehran

BY CINDY JAQUITH

Washington, its imperialist allies in Europe, and Tel Aviv are accelerating their drive to stop Iran from attaining nuclear power, seizing on recent remarks by Iran's president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, as rationalization.

Tehran is refusing to give up its right to enrich uranium as part of its nuclear program, which it says is designed for the peaceful purpose of meeting the country's energy needs. Washington claims uranium enrichment will be used by Tehran to build nuclear weapons, and has campaigned since 2003 for the United Nations Security Council to take action against Iran. More recently, the White House has made thinly veiled threats to use military action, if necessary, to stop nuclear development in Iran.

The pretext for the new round of imperialist threats was remarks by Ahmadinejad at a news conference in Mecca, Saudi Arabia, in early December. In speaking out against the Israeli occupation of Palestine, he resorted to anti-Semitic arguments, stating, "Some European countries insist on saying that Hitler killed millions of innocent Jews

in furnaces.... Although we don't accept this claim, if we suppose it is true, our question for the Europeans is: Is the killing of innocent Jewish people by Hitler the reason for their support to the occupiers of Jerusalem? If the Europeans are honest they should give some of their provinces in Europe—like in Germany, Austria, or other countries—to the Zionists and the Zionists can establish their state in Europe."

Speaking at a public rally in the Iranian city of Zahedan December 14, the president said, "Today, they have created a myth in the name of Holocaust and consider it to be above God, religion and the prophets. If you committed this big crime, then why should the oppressed Palestinian nation pay the price?"

The imperialist powers—notwithstanding their own anti-Semitic histories, including their refusal to aid Jewish refugees fleeing Nazi terror during World War II—leaped upon Ahmadinejad's statements in an effort to isolate Tehran.

A summit of the European Union (EU) on December 16 declared his remarks are "wholly unacceptable and have no place in civilized political

debate." The EU leaders also demanded that Iran support the right of Israel to exist and oppose groups that employ violence. The White House said Ahmadinejad's words "only underscore why it is so important that the international community continue to work together to keep Iran from developing nuclear weapons."

The Sunday Times of London reported that Israeli prime minister Ariel Sharon has instructed his military commanders to be ready for a military attack on Iranian nuclear installations by the end of next March if Iran has not backed down from its nuclear development plans. According to the *Times*, Israel would bomb the sites with F-151 warplanes, which can fly to and from Iran without needing to refuel, as well as deploy commando units on the ground. Israeli commandos are reportedly operating now in Kurdish areas of northern Iraq, identifying targets across the border in Iran.

"Thank God Israel has the means at its



Bushehr nuclear power plant in Iran, being completed with help from Russia. Tel Aviv has announced contingency plans to bomb such facilities.

disposal to bring about the downfall of this extremist regime in Iran," Raanan Gissin, a spokesman for Sharon, told the press. "There will be no second 'final solution.'"

Gen. Amos Gilad, a top adviser to the Israeli Defense Ministry, said the details in the *Times* "appear more imaginary than real," but such a military assault "cannot be ruled out in the future." The *Times* article quoted an unnamed source saying, "If we opt for the military strike, it must be not less than 100 percent successful. It will resemble the destruction of the Egyptian air force in three hours in June, 1967." The Israeli air force bombed and destroyed a nuclear reactor in Iraq in 1981.

Asked if she thought Israel would repeat in Iran what it did to Iraq in 1981, U.S. secretary of state Condoleezza Rice said, "I can't speculate on how this might all play out.... I think the fact is Iran is just getting more and more isolated and we're going to have to act on that sooner or later." She called again for Iran to be dragged before the UN Security Council.

Mohammed ElBaradei, head of the United Nations International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), said, "The international community is losing patience with the nature of [the Iranian nuclear] program. The ball is in Iran's court. It is up to Iran to show the kind of transparency they need to show." In the past, ElBaradei has been critical of threats made by Washington against Tehran and has urged the imperialist powers to resolve the nuclear conflict through negotiations with the Iranian government. The IAEA's board of governors will take up Iran again at its next meeting in March.

Iraqi elections part of U.S. 'strategy for victory'

Continued from front page

sisted. "We cannot and will not leave Iraq until victory is achieved." At the World Affairs Council in Philadelphia December 12 he asserted, "There is no middle ground" as "the choice in Iraq is between democracy and terrorism."

Congressional critics responded by making clear that bipartisan support for the war is firm. "Drawing down significantly American forces now would be a mistake," said Democratic Senator Joseph Biden. "It's wrong for him to silence his critics by calling them defeatists," stated Democratic senator Edward Kennedy, referring to Bush. "Every American... understands that we have no choice for our own security but to win in Iraq."

Final election results won't be known until the end of the year. However, an Iraqi Independent Elections Commission official said that between 10 and 11 million votes were cast—as much as 70 percent of the 15.5 million eligible voters.

Participation in the vote was particularly high in Sunni areas that had largely boycotted the Jan. 30, 2005, election for a transitional National Assembly. "One official said that between 75 and 80 percent of voters had turned out in

Ramadi, a centre of the insurgency west of Baghdad where only a handful had voted in previous nationwide polls," reported the *Financial Times*.

Among the coalitions vying for seats in the National Assembly are the Shiite-led United Iraqi Alliance, the Kurdish alliance, a coalition of Sunni Arab parties called the Iraqi Accord Front, and a grouping led by former interim prime minister Ayad Allawi. A two-thirds majority of the 275-member parliament is required to form a new government.

The day after the election in Iraq, and in response to Bush's talks, the U.S. House of Representatives voted 279–109 to reaffirm its commitment to "victory in Iraq." The resolution said that setting an "artificial timetable" for troop withdrawal would be "fundamentally inconsistent with achieving victory."

Meanwhile, the U.S. military is scaling back its combat forces in the "Sunni Triangle" in central Iraq, where U.S. troops have been going after supporters of the Baathist party still loyal to

former Iraqi president Saddam Hussein. These operations were in sharp contrast to the situation in most of Iraq—the predominantly Shiite south and Kurdish north where there has been little confrontation with U.S. troops since the 2003 U.S. invasion.

The U.S. military is "consolidating its bases in the region as part of a broad strategy to pull American troops out of Iraqi cities to outlying bases, where they can provide backup" to the Iraqi army and police, reported the December 17 *Washington Post*. "Since February, U.S. forces have moved out of 30 of their 110 bases in Iraq, transferring 17 of them to Iraqi security forces." The Pentagon's plan is to maintain a series of large "contingency operating bases," each with an airfield that can accommodate at least one U.S. combat brigade.

Gen. George Casey, the top U.S. commander in Iraq, said December 16 the Pentagon plans to reduce U.S. forces in Iraq by February from 150,000 to the pre-election level of 138,000.

Bolivia elections show mood to resist plunder

Continued from front page

Cochabamba. "We, the indigenous people, have been called animals and savages.... That is not important anymore." Aymara- and Quechua-speaking Indians make up over half of the country's 9 million people. Morales scored a sweeping victory in La Paz, Oruro, Cochabamba, Chuquisaca, and Potosí—heavily indigenous areas.

Class polarization has been deepening in the country in recent years. In 2003 strikes and protests against the plunder of the nation's patrimony by Washington and other imperialist powers were met by military might. Then-president Gonzálo Sánchez de Lozada deployed the army, which killed 80 demonstrators and injured hundreds. He was soon forced to resign.

Carlos Mesa picked up the baton as the next president. He posed as

"independent" of the hated traditional parties that have ruled for decades, but continued the austerity measures of his predecessor, provoking resistance.

More than 75 percent of the Bolivian people lack running water, less than 1 percent have sewage service, and only 15 percent have access to electricity in a country with the second-largest gas reserves in South America.

Working people in Bolivia organized hundreds of protests under Mesa. Last May and June anti-government actions were as large as 80,000 people—including highway blockades and strikes that paralyzed the country—leading to Mesa's resignation.

Eduardo Rodríguez was dubbed "caretaker" president June 14. Pressed by protest actions, he promised formal elections within five months.

Over the past three years, the Boliv-

ian Workers Federation, the Pachakuti Indigenous Movement, MAS, and other indigenous organizations have led demonstrations to demand substantial increases in royalties paid by foreign oil companies, from 18 percent to at least 50 percent.

Expectations are high among workers and peasants who are seeking a break with the policies of previous regimes with the election of Morales. Washington, on the other hand, sees the election as a "destabilizing" event in the Americas.

Morales has said his government will cooperate with other "anti-imperialists" on the continent, referring to the governments of Cuba and Venezuela. He also called on Washington to "respect the sovereign decision of the people," and said he is open to cordial relations with the United States "but not subordinate or submissive" ones.

—MILITANT LABOR FORUMS—

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Cuba's Role in Africa's National Liberation Struggles. Fri., Jan. 6, 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.

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10 Years Since Imperialist Intervention in Bosnia. Fri., Jan. 6, 7:00 p.m. Bildhuggarvägen 17 Johanneshov. Tel: (08) 316933.

Picket line at Co-Op mine

Continued from front page

representative based in nearby Price, Utah, told the press.

UMWA District 22, the state AFL-CIO, and Utah Jobs With Justice sponsored the action. It was one of a series of events around the country organized by the labor federation and its affiliates to promote workers rights in conjunction with International Human Rights Day.

Several carloads of trade unionists and youth from Salt Lake City, a number of retired miners, members of the UMWA, and other supporters of the Co-Op miners' fight attended the day's events.

"We have always been true blue union people. When they were trying to get the mines to go union me and my husband were on many picket lines," said Lucie Cook. Lucie was at the picket with her husband Bryon who worked at the Hiawatha mine for 38 years and is a member of retired miners UMWA Local 6363.

"I love this stuff, I wouldn't have missed it," said Kelly Oveson, an organizer with the Sprinkler Fitters union in Salt Lake City. Oveson took a break from a family holiday dinner in Huntington to join the picket line. "When I was growing up in this area working in a mine was the same as being union, we've got to get back to that."

C.W. Mining, which operates the Co-Op mine, fired 33 miners for union activity in the days leading up to the December 2004 election, and one more shortly after the vote.

In a get-together at the UMWA hall in Price after the picket line, Mike Burke, a UMWA international organizer, thanked those present for having been out on the picket line on a frigid day. Burke told the gathering about a victory the miners have won. The National Labor Relations Board (NLRB) has now found that 31 of the firings were the result of discrimination against these miners for their union activities. That includes the 29 who were fired on the pretext that their work documents were not in order.

The miners have explained that their documents were considered perfectly acceptable to the company, in some cases for many years, until the miners decided to fight for a real union. Guillermo Hernández and Alyson Kennedy, whose firings were on other pretexts, were also found to have been unjustly fired for union activity.

Burke also reported that the NLRB upheld C.W. Mining's firings of three leaders of the fight for the UMWA at Co-Op: Celso Panduro, Ricardo Chávez, and Bill Estrada. Miners say

they don't agree with these three NLRB findings.

The labor board has scheduled a March 14 hearing before an administrative law judge in Price, provided a settlement is not reached between the company and the UMWA by then. "The company has not been cooperative," Burke said, as the NLRB has prodded for a settlement. In recent discussions between the company, the UMWA, and the NLRB, "we couldn't get anywhere because the company was so unreasonable," Burke said.

Three months before the scheduled union representation election, C.W. Mining filed a federal lawsuit against 17 of the miners, the UMWA, supporters of the miners' fight, and several newspapers that had reported what the miners had to say. Many of the miners were served court papers in the days leading up to the election, and some on the day of the election. A hearing on this harassment lawsuit is scheduled for January 25 in federal court in Salt Lake City.

Marie Justice, UMWA Local 1620 president at the Black Mesa mine on the Navajo Nation in Arizona, described to the gathering at the union hall the fight to keep that mine open, or reopen it as



Militant/Tamar Rosenfeld

Forty miners and their supporters picket December 17 outside Co-Op mine in Huntington, Utah, to press for representation by United Mine Workers of America.

soon as possible. Justice explained that Peabody Energy began laying off the miners on December 1 and will close the mine by December 28. "I absolutely believe that having a union is the safest way to work. You guys here, keep up the good work," Justice said. "Some day your kids will thank you for having good jobs that are safe. Keep fighting and you will get it, you really will."

Bill Estrada concluded the program. "The fact that the NLRB has agreed that Co-Op violated every labor law

and agrees that the miners were fired for union organizing is a victory," he said. "Co-Op has paid a heavy price for its actions."

The picket line and event at the UMWA hall received prominent coverage in the *Salt Lake Tribune*, one of Utah's two main dailies. "Pickets marks one year of mine dispute," read the headline of the article. The *Tribune*, as well as the *Deseret Morning News* and the *Militant*, are being sued by C.W. Mining for "defamation."

Militant Fighting Fund wins new support



BY SUSAN LAMONT

JACKSON, Mississippi—Supporters of the Militant Fighting Fund from Birmingham, Alabama, were welcomed by unionists at the December 10 AFL-CIO Human Rights Day event here, which drew more than 150 people. New endorsers for the fund who signed up at the event were Brenda Scott, president of Communications Work-

ers of America/Mississippi Alliance of State Employees (MASE/CWA); Brooks Sunkett, CWA vice president for Public, Healthcare, and Education Workers; and Bill Chandler, an organizer for UNITE HERE and president of the Mississippi Immigrant Rights Alliance (MIRA!). Supporters of the fund were invited to come back to Jackson January 10 to make a presentation at the statewide meeting of MIRA!

Participants in Equatorial Guinea book fair speak on campuses

BY EMILY PAUL

OAKLAND, California—Brian Taylor, who took part in the first-ever book fair in Equatorial Guinea, spoke to a class of students at Laney College here November 22 on Central Africa and the fight against imperialist domination worldwide. He was a member of a team at the October 17–20 book fair that promoted books on anti-imperialist struggles and working-class politics published by Pathfinder Press.

Taylor and Arrin Hawkins, who also traveled to Equatorial Guinea for the book fair, are on a speaking tour organized by the Young Socialists in several cities across the United States.

"Some maps produced here don't even show Equatorial Guinea," Taylor said. "Because of centuries of colonial and imperialist domination, there is little industry and no developed agriculture, and the majority live off small trade and crafts. They import most food. At the same time, a working class is now being born as a result of the oil extraction operations and related development that have been rapidly growing since large oil deposits were discovered in 1995."

Taylor noted the stark contrast between the developed, well-lighted area called "Punta Europa"—the center of U.S. oil operations near the capital city

of Malabo—and the lack of electricity, paved roads, and other resources in most of the rest of the country. He explained how this evoked the outrage of many Equatorial Guinean youth at the book fair.

In the discussion period, a student linked the situation in Equatorial Guinea to conditions in Guatemala, where she was born. She mentioned a television program she saw on eliminating diseases like malaria in parts of the semicolonial world, and how the techniques used often blatantly disregard the health and agriculture of the country. Taylor described how U.S. oil companies sponsor such "humanitarian" programs to provide a cover for their plunder of African and other countries oppressed by imperialism.

In response to a question about literacy and reading in Equatorial Guinea, Taylor said that despite the limited access to books in a country long subjected to imperialist-imposed isolation, many youth at the fair eagerly sought out literature about culture, history, and politics in their country and around the world. He mentioned the particular thirst for books by Nelson Mandela, Malcolm X, and Thomas Sankara, leader of the 1983–87 revolution in the West African nation of Burkina Faso.

C.W. Mining, owners of the Co-Op coal mine in Huntington, Utah, have filed a harassment lawsuit targeting 16 coal miners, the United Mine Workers of America (UMWA), and other individuals and organizations supporting the miners' fight to win UMWA representation. The Militant Fighting Fund was launched to help defend the Militant, a prominent target of the suit. Endorsements and contributions can be sent to the Militant Fighting Fund, P.O. Box 520994, Salt Lake City, UT 84152-0994. Materials on the case are posted on www.themilitant.com

BY FELICITY COGGAN

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Trade unionists in New Zealand are adding their names to the growing list of endorsers of the Militant Fighting Fund.

At a recent meeting of the executive of Local 13 of the Maritime Union of New Zealand, five union officers signed on following a presentation by supporters of the fund. They included local president Denis Carlisle and vice president Dave Phillips. The local voted to make a NZ\$500 donation—the second contribution they have made to the fund (NZ\$1=US 70 cents).

On December 9, Laila Harré, the national secretary of the National Distribution Union (NDU), whose members include garment workers, drivers, timber workers, meat packers, and shop workers, endorsed the fund on behalf of the union. NDU organizer Teresa Brown has also endorsed.

Other union support has come from Service and Food Workers Union senior organizers Sarah Barker and Jill Ovens, Unite union senior organizer Mike Treen, and Writers Guild member Dean Parker.

Barry Wilson, president of the Auckland Council for Civil Liberties, and John Minto, a well-known anti-apartheid activist and now a spokesperson for Global Peace and Justice Auckland, have also recently endorsed the fund.

For further reading

The Changing Face of U.S. Politics
Working-Class Politics and the Trade Unions
by Jack Barnes

Building the kind of party the working class needs to prepare for coming class battles—battles through which they will revolutionize themselves, their unions, and all of society. Also available in French, Greek, and Spanish. \$23

WWW.PATHFINDERPRESS.COM

ON THE PICKET LINE

New Zealand preschool teachers rally against expanded workload

AUCKLAND, New Zealand—Teachers at government-funded preschools across New Zealand stayed away from work December 8, marching and rallying to oppose threats to their conditions and hours of work. Upwards of 1,700 teachers, members of the New Zealand Educational Institute Te Riu Roa, took part in the strike, which closed kindergartens—as these preschools are known—in 22 towns and cities. In Auckland 350 teachers and supporters dressed in red marched to the central city office of the Auckland Kindergarten Association. The government is moving to extend “contact hours” to up to 35 hours a week. Teachers are demanding maximum contact time of 27 hours.

These demands on teachers accompany a government push to expand kindergartens into child-care centers for working parents—at an increased price. Up to now, kindergartens have tradition-

ally offered half-day sessions—either morning or afternoon—and have also relied on voluntary help from mothers.

—Patrick Brown

Seafarers OK Irish Ferries deal, pushing back union busting

LONDON—Union members on occupied Irish Ferries vessels—the *Ulysses* in Holyhead and *Isle of Inishmore* in Pembroke—voted to accept a union negotiated deal December 14. The ships were occupied for nearly three weeks and the union action generated massive solidarity actions across Ireland.

The company conceded continued union bargaining rights for the Services, Industrial, Professional and Technical Union (SIPTU) for all workers and has committed to honor the Irish national minimum wage of 7.65 euros (US\$9.20) per hour. New staff will also get more time off than originally proposed.

The company’s original goal of breaking the union, replacing current

staff with nonunion labor at half the national minimum wage has been blocked. But most of the current staff have accepted voluntary redundancy terms in which they will receive eight weeks pay for each year worked. Those staying will retain their current wages and conditions, substantially above the minimum wage, leaving a two-tier wage structure.

—Jonathan Silberman

Alabama: Retirees picket pipe company to protest benefit cuts

BIRMINGHAM, Alabama—Some two dozen retirees from American Cast Iron Pipe Co. held a picket line outside the plant here December 8 to

Gas engineers strike in UK



Militant/Xerardo Arias

Gas workers in Uddingston, Scotland, struck December 12 against pension cutbacks by Centrica. Some 6,000 union members conducted one-day strike nationwide.

protest the company’s cuts in benefits. Its on-site medical center will become a private clinic and retirees will now have to make co-payments for medical services. Other concessions imposed by the employers include plans to raise the retirement age for health-care coverage from 58 to 65. The United Steelworkers union has tried three times over the past 20 years to organize the workforce.

—Maurice Williams

China: cops kill peasants protesting gov’t land seizures

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON—As many as 20 people were killed by troops and local police in the rural coastal town of Dongzhou in southern China as thousands of residents gathered in a December 6 protest against the seizure of their farmlands to make way for a power plant. While local authorities blamed protesters for the clash, anger in the community remained high, and on December 11 the provincial government announced that the commander of the police unit involved in the shoot-

ings had been arrested. Dongzhou is a town of 30,000 in Guangdong province, where much of China’s recent industrialization has taken place.

The number of protests by working people, sometimes involving violent confrontations with the police, has increased in China over the last decade. They are fueled by the widening social inequalities resulting from government policies that allow a broader rein for capitalist market methods in the economy as a means to accelerate industrialization.

A fisherman, who gave his surname

as Chen and was among the demonstrators, said busloads of troops and police were called into Dongzhou when about 2,000 residents gathered to complain about inadequate compensation for the land seizure, the Bloomberg news agency reported. Villagers reported 10–20 people killed by security forces and dozens missing.

On December 10 local officials issued a statement blaming residents for the conflict. It claimed that hundreds of armed villagers used explosives to attack the power plant and knives, steel spears, and sticks to fight police, according to an Associated Press dispatch.

But the following day, provincial officials in Guangdong province announced the arrest of the commander of the police unit that fired on residents. Provincial authorities blamed the deaths on the “wrong actions” of the police commander. The announcement promised to resolve grievances over the land seizures and said medical specialists had been sent to treat the wounded.

Banners hung by villagers protesting the land seizures have been replaced

with government-sponsored banners appealing to residents to obey the law and trust the government. Police drove trucks through the streets promising over loudspeakers, “This matter will be handled well.”

The protest was the culmination of months of tension over the construction of a coal-fired power plant. Residents said they had not been sufficiently compensated for loss of their lands. Local fishermen said pollution from the plant threatened their livelihood.

Protests by farmers are on the rise as they are forced off land to make way for factories and office complexes. Farmers say they are paid too little and accuse corrupt officials of pocketing compensation payments. Last year China’s legislature received 5,407 formal complaints involving land seizures.

China’s top police official said that in 2004 there were 74,000 major protests involving 3.7 million people. That’s up from 58,000 protests in 2003 and 10,000 in 1994. In August, Beijing announced plans to establish special police units in 36 cities to deal with such unrest.

U.S. high court: gov’t can seize retirees’ Social Security to pay student loans

BY ARRIN HAWKINS

The U.S. Supreme Court unanimously ruled December 7 that the government can take up to 15 percent of an individual’s monthly Social Security check to repay overdue student loans. Until then, Social Security retirement checks were shielded from debt collectors. A third of all retirees today depend entirely on Social Security pensions to survive.

The decision came in response to a suit filed by James Lockhart, a disabled worker retired from the post office. In 2002 the U.S. Treasury Department began garnishing Lockhart’s \$874 monthly Social Security check and \$10 a month in food stamps—eventually withholding \$143 per month—to pay student loans he had taken out between 1984 and 1989. Lockhart sued the government three years ago to stop the action, saying he needed his entire pension to pay for medicines, food, and other living costs. He appealed to the Supreme Court after losing his case in federal courts.

Citing the 1996 Debt Collection Improvement Act, enacted under the Clinton administration, Justice Sandra Day O’Connor—a liberal icon on the high court—presented the court’s ruling. She argued that a 1991 law eliminated a 10-year limit for collecting student-loan obligations. That law, however, hadn’t specified the government could chop a retiree’s pension to recover student loans. That’s irrelevant, O’Connor said, citing an earlier Supreme Court opinion: “The fact that Congress may not have foreseen all of the consequences of a statutory enactment is not a sufficient

reason for refusing to give effect to its plain meaning.”

The ruling came when personal debts in the United States have skyrocketed, fueled by falling real wages and rising health-care and other basic living costs. Household debt as a percentage of disposable income has risen from 60 percent in 1984 to about 115 percent in 2004.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO



January 16, 1981

January 7—Support for the national demonstration honoring Dr. Martin Luther King in Washington, D.C., January 15 is extensive and growing. Labor, civil rights, and student organizations are organizing hundreds of buses.

The march and rally, called just eight weeks ago by composer and singer Stevie Wonder, will demand that the slain civil rights leader’s birthday be instituted as a national holiday by an act of Congress. As part of the mobilization, petitions for the holiday demand—to be presented to Congress by Stevie Wonder—are being circulated nationally by the coordinators.

At least forty buses each are coming to the march from New York and Chicago, and dozens more from Boston; New Orleans; Houston; Gary, Indiana; Detroit; Birmingham; and Charleston, West Virginia.



January 9, 1956

NEW YORK, Jan. 4—Columbus, Ohio police staged a savage assault at dawn yesterday on the mass picket line of the Westinghouse workers. One young union man, Troy Tadlock, 34, died after being worked over by the cops. Eight others were injured. Eighty-nine were jailed.

Yesterday’s police attack climaxes the vicious strikebreaking, union-busting campaign of the Westinghouse Corporation in this 80-day strike. The corporation has gone all out to get a back-to-work movement started.

The strikers have seen how quickly the courts gave anti-picket injunctions at the request of Westinghouse attorneys. They have seen how the company was able to mobilize the clergy to propose a holy election outside of the union on a back-to-work proposition.



January 1, 1931

As the present world crisis grows in scope and intensity, gripping one industry after another furrowing its way to the very core of the complex capitalist structure, a good deal of ideological hardware undergoes a process of rapid corrosion. Not so long ago, “American” rationalization “scientific management” and the “technical revolution” were the inspiration of the entire capitalist world.

Today, with millions of workers pounding the pavements with an unprecedented tie-up in trade and an overloading of warehouses while countless families go unfed, unclothed and unprovided for—a different song is being sung.

In the six years between 1923 and 1929 the index of production rose 17 points, the index of employment at the same time fell 2.4 points!

How U.S. imperialism, allies fueled Yugoslav war

BY ARGIRIS MALAPANIS

In the last two months, around the 10th anniversary of the start of the NATO occupation of Bosnia and the U.S.-crafted Dayton “peace” accord that preceded it, politicians and pundits in the United States claimed over and over that Washington’s benevolence ended the murderous war in Yugoslavia.

The truth is the opposite. Describing the record of the NATO military intervention in Bosnia over the last decade, an article in last week’s issue explained that the aim of the U.S. rulers and their allies was not to stop “ethnic cleansing” and establish “democracy.” It was to overthrow the workers state established in that country through a revolution by workers and peasants and create the conditions for restoring capitalism. One of Washington’s goals was also to strengthen U.S. supremacy in Europe.

This week we focus on how U.S. imperialism and its allies fueled the war.

The slaughter in Yugoslavia in the 1990s was not the product of “age-old ethnic hatreds,” but the result of the breakdown of the capitalist world order. It was the product of intensifying conflicts between rival capitalist classes in the imperialist countries and would-be capitalists in the deformed workers states.

The war in Yugoslavia also demonstrated in blood that Stalinist leaderships cannot unite toilers from different national origins on a lasting basis to open up a broadening federation of soviet republics working together to build socialism.

Several years after the October 1917 revolution in Russia, the Bolsheviks under the leadership of V.I. Lenin formed the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics as a voluntary federation of workers and peasants republics. The Bolsheviks in Lenin’s time were a revolutionary workers vanguard that fought uncompromisingly for the right of oppressed nations to self-determination, for the complete equality of nations and nationalities, and against every vestige of national privilege, arrogance, and chauvinism. They led in placing that internationalist perspective at the heart of the program and practice of the Communist International.

As part of a political counterrevolution carried out by a petty-bourgeois social caste whose spokesman was Joseph Stalin, however, this proletarian internationalist course gave way to the return of Great Russian chauvinism.

The federated Yugoslav workers state that the imperialists and rival Stalinist gangs went out of their way to tear apart was a gigantic accomplishment of the Yugoslav revolution of 1942–46. Workers and peasants who were Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian, and from other nationalities forged unity to oust the Nazi occupation forces and their local collaborators, carry out a radical land reform, and expropriate the capitalist exploiters—establishing a workers state. It was one of the great revolutions of the last century, a proletarian socialist revolution.

Stalinist leadership

The Stalinist leadership of the Yugoslav Communist Party, headed by Josip Broz (known by his *nom de guerre* Tito), however, blocked the toilers of different nationalities from building on their conquests and cementing the federation together. The Yugoslav revolution was deformed from birth.

The groundwork for the war in which NATO intervened was laid out more than a decade before the formal breakup of the Yugoslav federation in 1991–92.

The country’s economy was already in crisis due to the anti-working-class methods of planning and management by the Tito regime.

Despite asserting national independence against Stalin’s regime, the Tito leadership was forged in the Stalinist mold. Its policies were those of a privileged bureaucratic caste that lived at the expense of working people. It sought accommodation with imperialism, rather than pursuing a foreign policy in the interests of workers and farmers. Belgrade’s call for neutrality during the imperialist invasion of Korea in the early 1950s and its lack of solidarity with the Vietnamese liberation struggle in the 1960s are just two examples. Tito also kept those who opposed his course under close surveillance, imprisoning large numbers of them.

Tito’s regime had opened up Yugoslavia to international finance capital and loans from imperialist institutions, such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF), much earlier than other regimes in Eastern Europe. Belgrade began to introduce capitalist market methods into the planned economy in the 1950s, dubbing them “workers self-management.”

‘Managerial capitalism’

“The enterprises compete among themselves in the national market as if they were capitalist entities,” said Ernesto Che Guevara, a central leader of the Cuban Revolution, after his visit to Yugoslavia in 1959. “In broad strokes, with an element of caricature, you could describe Yugoslav society as managerial capitalism with socialist distribution of profits. Each enterprise is viewed not as a group of workers but as a unit functioning more or less in a capitalist manner, obeying laws of supply and demand.”

These measures made the country more vulnerable to world capitalism and its social ills: inflation, unemployment, and increasing wage differentiation among factories and regions. These policies helped deepen national divisions and aided those who began favoring the restoration of capitalism.

In the 1960s and ’70s, for example, sections of the ruling bureaucracy in Croatia called for income from the lucrative tourist trade on the Dalmatian coast to be allocated entirely to the local, not the federal government. They resisted using such resources to even out the imbalances across Yugoslavia through “affirmative action” measures for the least developed areas. Provinces and republics closed their markets to one another, seeking to become self-sufficient. This worked to the detriment of the least developed regions, especially where oppressed nationalities lived, like the Albanians in Kosova. When the 1974–75 world recession hit, it affected working people in Yugoslavia, too, but



Militant/Argiris Malapanis
Ramiz Beshlija, a shepherd on outskirts of Sarajevo, Bosnia, July 23, 1992, points to destruction from bombing by Belgrade. “Tell the world this is not an ‘ethnic war,’” he told the Militant.

in a differential manner, exacerbating national divisions.

That economic crisis was marked by rapidly rising oil prices, which Belgrade imported from abroad, and declining markets for Yugoslavia’s manufactured goods, which were largely exported to capitalist countries.

Finance capital fanned flames of war

Then came the infamous IMF “stabilization” plans, through which financial institutions in imperialist countries robbed a portion of the wealth Yugoslav working people produced. During the 1970s, the Tito regime had run up sizable foreign debts. In order to continue providing loans, the IMF demanded austerity measures that Belgrade implemented in the 1980s—lifting price controls on many goods, cutting jobs in state firms, and freezing investments in infrastructure and social services.

As a result, inflation skyrocketed. Unemployment grew to an average of 14 percent throughout Yugoslavia. But it was much higher in less developed areas—23 percent in Bosnia, 27 percent in Macedonia, and 50 percent in Kosova.

This reality registered the reversal of earlier policies that boosted growth in underdeveloped regions. By 1985, for example, residents of Slovenia had an income about 70 percent higher than those in Macedonia; four years later, it was 125 percent higher.

By 1990, economic growth was about negative 11 percent. In the first half of that year, inflation shot up 70 percent and real wages fell 41 percent.

By the opening of that decade, the working class in Yugoslavia had been weakened, for two reasons. First, the decades of Stalinist misrule had alienated working people from politics. Second, the revolutionary upsurge in Europe of the late 1960s and ’70s—marked by the May 1968 revolt in France, the rebellion in Italy next year, the 1974 revolution in Portugal, and the fall of the military junta in Greece that year—had ebbed due to the misleadership of Stalinist and social democratic parties that dominated the workers movement. Working people in western Europe had not succeeded in altering the balance of class forces against imperialism, and thus aiding their brothers and sisters in Yugoslavia.

When conflicts exploded between rival sections of the ruling bureaucracy, all of them used nationalist demagoguery to justify maintaining control of as much land, factories, and other resources as they could to perpetuate their privileges and parasitic existence. These would-be capitalists—with the principal culprits

being the Milosevic regime in Serbia and the Croatian government headed by Franjo Tudjman—succeeded in overcoming initial working-class resistance and dragged working people to war.

At the center of this resistance were miners and other working people in Kosova who led massive strikes and demonstrations in the late 1980s against austerity and for working-class unity, backing the national rights of the Albanian majority in Kosova. That’s where Milosevic began his nationalist tirades to divide the labor movement and justify Belgrade’s clampdown.

The flames of war, however, had been fanned by international finance capital.

‘Let it bleed’

To begin with, the German ruling class gave substantial impetus to the war. It immediately recognized Croatia and Slovenia as independent states and then sent diplomatic personnel, military advisers, and weapons to these regimes run by former leaders of the League of Yugoslav Communists.

Washington initially adopted a policy of “let it bleed.” Let the murderous bombing of civilian areas by the rival regimes of the formerly federated Yugoslavia go on and let the capitalist powers in Europe get into the fray first and encourage a civil war through military intervention disguised as “peacekeeping.”

At the same time, the White House ensured some weapons got into Bosnia during the U.S.-backed UN arms embargo. But Washington made sure that not enough heavy weapons could reach the Bosnian army to endanger an outright victory for its forces over Belgrade, so the war could grind on.

The Clinton administration also promised it would back “peace initiatives” by Paris, Berlin, or others, while sabotaging each one of them. Anytime an accord seemed close to being struck, another slaughter would derail it. In this way, the U.S. rulers humiliated their allies in Europe to win support for the notion that only Uncle Sam could save the day. European troops, for example, were increasingly disgraced in bourgeois public opinion as responsible to a degree, or incapable of stopping the killings—like the 1995 massacre of more than 7,000 Muslims in Srebrenica by pro-Milosevic forces while Dutch soldiers stood by.

As failures mounted for the European “peacekeepers” in Bosnia, and as diplomatic initiatives foundered, Washington successfully organized NATO air strikes and naval and ground shelling against pro-Belgrade forces—3,000 of which took place between February 1994 and September 1995. After exacting much blood from the people of Yugoslavia, U.S. officials marched the representatives of the Serbian, Croatian, and Bosnian forces to the Wright-Patterson Air Force base near Dayton, Ohio, and dictated the new “peace” accord, which paved the way for the NATO occupation of Bosnia.

Throughout the 1990s, many working people in Yugoslavia—Bosnian, Serb, Croat, or other nationalities—resisted the horrors thrust on them by the rival bureaucratic gangs that emerged from the crumbling Stalinist apparatus and imperialist intervention. As last week’s article indicated, only the end of the NATO and UN occupations will give working people there a chance to find again the course to defend their interests.

Angola became stronghold for African liberation struggles

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

Reprinted below is the second 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.

This is part of a series of articles and documents the *Militant* is publishing 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.

In the first part of this speech, Castro outlines how the Cuban government responded to the initial request for assistance by Angolan leader Agostinho Neto when, on the eve of Angola's proclamation of independence in November 1975, it was invaded by troops of the apartheid regime and the pro-imperialist Mobutu regime in Zaire (Congo), backed by pro-imperialist Angolan forces headed by Jonas Savimbi.

The English translation of this speech is available at 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

We now know much more than we did then about how Washington thought and acted, based on official documents declassified in recent years.

At no time did the U.S. president [Gerald Ford], or his powerful Secretary of State Henry Kissinger, or the U.S. intelligence services, even imagine the possibility of participation by Cuba. Never before had a Third World country acted to support another people in an armed conflict beyond its geographical neighborhood.

By the end of November [1975], enemy aggression had been halted in the north and in the south. Complete heavy armored units, substantial land and anti-aircraft artillery, armored infantry units up to brigade strength, transported by our merchant fleet, accumulated rapidly in Angola, where 36,000 Cuban troops launched a furious offensive. Attacking the main enemy in the south, they drove South Africa's racist army 1,000 kilometers back to where it came from, Angola's border with Namibia, the racist's colonial enclave. The last South African soldier left Angolan territory on March 27. In the north, Mobutu's regular troops and the mercenaries were driven back across the border with Zaire.

The truth is that Cuba was in favor of exacting a heavy price from South Africa for its adventure: the application of UN Resolution 435 and the independence of Namibia.

On the other hand, the Soviets, worried about possible U.S. reaction, were

putting strong pressure on us to make a rapid withdrawal.

After raising strong objections, we were obliged to accede, at least partially, to the Soviet demands. Although not consulted about our decision to send troops to the Republic of Angola, the Soviet Union had subsequently decided to supply arms for the emerging Angolan army and had agreed to some of our requests for material aid during the hostilities. Angola's post-victory prospects without the political and logistic support of the USSR were non-existent.

In the difficult situation created in 1976, Comrade Raúl [Castro], Cuba's defense minister, traveled to Angola for talks with President Neto about the unavoidable need to start a progressive withdrawal of 36,000 Cuban troops over a three-year period, the time Cuba and Angola agreed would be needed to establish a strong Angolan army.

Meanwhile, we would maintain robust combat units in the uplands of the Angolan plateau, some 250 kilometers from the Namibian border.

Neto understood our concerns and nobly agreed to schedule the withdrawal of Cuba's forces.

Less than a year later, in March 1977 when I was finally able to visit Angola and personally congratulate the Angolan and Cuban fighters on their victory, 12,000 internationalists, one-third of our force, had already returned to Cuba, withdrawal operations having gone according to plan up to that point. But, America and South Africa weren't satisfied, and negotiations between Pretoria and secretive Washington were followed in the 1980s by publication of the plot, in the form of [U.S. president Ronald] Reagan's "constructive engagement" and "linkage." The stubbornness of the two powers, coupled with its painful and dramatic consequences, made necessary direct Cuban support for the Angolan people for over 15 years, regardless of the agreed timetable for withdrawal.

Very few people believed we would withstand the U.S.-South African onslaughts for so many years.

That decade saw intensification of the struggles by the peoples of Namibia, Zimbabwe, and South Africa against the colonial yoke and apartheid. Angola became a stronghold for those peoples, whom Cuba also supported. The Pretoria government's actions were invariably treacherous.

Heroism in face of assault on Sumbe

Kassinga, Boma, Novo Katengue, and Sumbe are scenes of crimes committed by apartheid against the peoples of Namibia, Zimbabwe, South Africa, and Angola, and at the same time shining examples of our solidarity in combating the common enemy.

The attack on Sumbe is a particularly eloquent example of their criminal intentions. There were no Cuban or Angolan troops there, only doctors, teachers, construction workers and other civilian collaborators, who the enemy tried to kidnap. But these men and women resisted with their militia rifles, beside their Angolan comrades,



Granma

Cuban troops in southern Angola during "Operation Carlota" against apartheid forces

until the arrival of reinforcements put the aggressors to flight. Seven Cubans were killed in this unequal battle.

This is just one example, of many that could be cited, of the bravery and self-sacrifice spirit of our internationalists, both military and civilian, ready to offer their sweat or their blood, whenever the need arises, beside their Angolan, Namibian, Zimbabwean or South African comrades, or from the whole African continent, since Algeria, the Congo, Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde, and Ethiopia can also be added to the list.

It was an extraordinary achievement by our people, especially our young people; the tens of thousands on active service and those in the reserves who volunteered to do their internationalist duty alongside the career officers and regular troops.

They add up to millions, the men and women on the home front who supported those successful missions, working overtime to stand in for the absentees and making sure the families of the soldiers and civilian collaborators never went short.

The families of our internationalists deserve special mention. With remarkable stoicism, they bore absence, sent words of encouragement with every letter and kept any difficulties or worries to themselves.

Prime examples include the mothers, sons, brothers and sisters and spouses of our fallen compatriots. All, without exception, have come to terms with their loss. They have been able to transform their profound grief, which was echoed throughout the nation during Operation Tribute, into greater love of the homeland, into stronger loyalty and respect for the cause for which their loved one willingly risked his life.

A people willing to perform such a feat: what would it be capable of if called on to defend its own land!

This is not the right time to discuss the differing strategic and tactical conceptions of the Cubans and the Soviets.

We trained tens of thousands of Angolan soldiers and acted as advisers in the instruction and combat operations of Angolan troops. The Soviets advised the military high command and provided ample supplies of weaponry to the Angolan armed forces. Actions based on the advice given at the top level caused us quite a few headaches. Nonetheless, great respect and strong feelings of solidarity and understanding always prevailed between the

Cuban and Soviet military.

The end of 1987 saw the well-publicized last major invasion of Angolan territory by South African forces, in circumstances that threatened the nation's stability.

On that date, South Africa and the United States launched the last and most dangerous attack on a strong contingent of Angolan troops that was advancing through sandy terrain towards Jamba, on the southeast edge of the Angolan border, presumed location of Savimbi's command post. We had always opposed, if not actually prevented, 11th-hour attacks by South Africa's air force, its heavy artillery, and armored forces.

Historic battle of Cuito Cuanavale

History repeated itself. The enemy, greatly emboldened, advanced strongly, towards Cuito Cuanavale, an old NATO airbase. Here it prepared to deliver a mortal blow against Angola.

Desperate calls were received from the Angolan government appealing to the Cuban troops for support in fending off presumed disaster; it was unquestionably the biggest threat from a military operation in which we, as on other occasions, had no responsibility whatever.

Titanic efforts by the Cuban political and military high command, despite the serious threat of hostilities which hung over us as well, resulted in assembling the forces needed to deliver a decisive blow against the South African forces. As in 1975, our homeland rose to the occasion. A flood of troops and weaponry rapidly crossed the Atlantic, landing on Angola's south coast in order to attack in the southwest, in the direction of Namibia. At the same time, 800 kilometers to the east, special units advanced towards Cuito Cuanavale, where they joined up with retreating Angolan forces to set up a lethal trap for the powerful South African forces heading for that large airbase.

This time, Cuban troops in Angola numbered 55,000.

So while in Cuito Cuanavale the South African troops were bled, to the southwest 40,000 Cuban and 30,000 Angolan troops, supported by some 600 tanks, hundreds of pieces of artillery, 1,000 anti-aircraft weapons, and the daring MIG-23 units that secured air supremacy, advanced towards the Namibian border, ready to literally sweep up the South African forces deployed along that main route.

(The last part will appear in next issue.)

The FBI's spying and disruption operations

In response to recent news of U.S. government spying on phone calls and e-mail, we print below excerpts from "Washington's 50-year domestic contra operation" in issue 6 of the Marxist magazine New International. The article takes up a question vital to the interests of working people around the world—the fight against attacks on democratic rights and political freedoms by the FBI and other U.S. government police agencies. It was first published as part of the campaign to win support for the fight by the Socialist Workers Party and Young Socialist Alliance against FBI spying and disruption. In August 1986 Federal District Judge Thomas Griesa ruled on a lawsuit against federal political police operations the SWP and YSA had filed in 1973. In a historic victory for political liberties, Griesa ruled that the FBI's decades-long campaign against the two organizations was in violation of the U.S. Constitution and the Bill of Rights. Copyright © 1987 by New International. Reprinted by permission.

BY LARRY SEIGLE

In 1956 the National Security Council convened a special meeting in the White House to hear a report and consider proposals from FBI Director Hoover on how to counter the stiffening popular resistance to government moves against the Bill of Rights. The facts about this meeting were first revealed in 1981 during the trial of the SWP lawsuit, when Justice Department officials introduced into evidence a report on the meeting previously classified top secret. The document was submitted in an effort—ultimately unsuccessful—to show that the FBI's covert "Counter-Intelligence Program" (Cointelpro) was lawful on the grounds that it had been set in

motion at this NSC meeting, where it received presidential approval.

To explain the document's significance, the government lawyers called to the witness stand Herbert Brownell, who had served as attorney general in President Dwight Eisenhower's cabinet. Brownell testified that those present at the 1956 NSC meeting included Eisenhower, Vice-president Richard Nixon, CIA chief Allen Dulles, FBI Director Hoover, and other government officials. At the meeting, Hoover outlined the situation. The government's efforts to disrupt the operations of the Communist Party, the Socialist Workers Party, and other groups were running into greater public opposition, he said. This was being reflected in the growing reluctance by federal judges to sustain prosecutions under the Smith Act, to uphold denials of passports to "subversives," and to approve other witch-hunting measures such as driving communists out of the merchant marine by lifting their seaman's papers....

Fortunately, Hoover emphasized, the power of the government's executive branch to act was not restricted to what the people of the country would support and the federal courts would accept. What could not be accomplished openly, could be achieved covertly. The FBI possessed the weapon of "counter-intelligence." Hoover proudly reported, "We have sought to infiltrate, penetrate, disorganize, and disrupt the [Communist] party.... Informants have been the key to penetration of the party.... We currently have 921 active informants operating in the security field, providing hourly intelligence reflecting the innermost plans and policies of the Communist Party."

On the witness stand in 1981, Brownell stressed that Hoover's report covered not just the Communist Party itself, but also... "what we call the subversive groups who were operating se-

cretly in conjunction with foreign powers." This included the Socialist Workers Party, the former attorney general added.

Brownell was asked to identify "the source of the authority for the FBI to conduct the counter-measures as set forth in this page against the Communist Party and other subversive groups." "Presidential directive," he shot back. "I think the legal situation was that the President did not give any restriction to the methods that were to be used to accomplish the ends that he sought." The techniques approved by the National Security Council included disruption operations by informers, break-ins, wiretaps, and microphone bugs installed without warrants, as well as opening the mail and sorting through discarded trash of "subversive" targets. Six months later, the FBI formally inaugurated its Cointelpro operations, first against the CP, then against the SWP, Black organizations fighting for civil rights, and others.

If the majority of U.S. people could no longer be mobilized to support the openly proclaimed goal of breaking up communist groups by government prosecution and blacklisting, the National Security Council had decided, then the FBI would wage a secret operation against the "subversives"—what we would today call a domestic contra operation....

On the witness stand, Brownell argued that when it came to "intelligence" or "national security" investigations—that is, when the target is political, rather than criminal, activity—the executive branch of government has the authority



Militant/Diane Jacobs

FBI agent George Baxtrum, assigned to disrupt and spy on the Socialist Workers Party from 1953–69, testifies about his activities in 1981 SWP suit against the FBI.

to ignore the Bill of Rights. Under cross-examination the former attorney general became visibly irritated that anyone could question this doctrine. When the judge himself asked some pointed questions Brownell's voice hardened. Finally, he was asked whether it was "your view as the Attorney General that the Fourth Amendment was applicable to intelligence investigations?" Brownell responded:

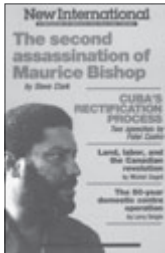
"We didn't have any guidance from the Supreme Court on that. I think the matter is still open as far as the Supreme Court is concerned. On the one hand you have the express powers of the president to conduct foreign affairs and to be the Commander in Chief. On the other hand you have the Fourth Amendment." Brownell then paused, glared directly at Griesa, and said, "So far there has been no court decision which prohibited such activities in the field of intelligence."

The message was unambiguous: this has been going on for a long time and no federal judge has ever tried to stop us, so don't make trouble for yourself. Griesa reserved response until his ruling, which explicitly rejected the claim by Brownell and the Justice Department that the executive branch has the power to trample on the Bill of Rights.

For Further Reading

Washington's 50-year domestic contra operation

by Larry Seigle
In *New International*
no. 6
\$16



Cointelpro

by Nelson Blackstock

Describes the decades-long covert counterintelligence program—code-named Cointelpro—directed against socialists and activists in the Black and anti-Vietnam War movements. The operations revealed in the documents cited in this book provide an unprecedented look at the methods used by the FBI, CIA, military intelligence, and other U.S. police agencies. \$16



FBI on Trial

by Margaret Jayko

The 1987 victory in the 14-year SWP legal battle against the FBI, CIA, and other government spy agencies "increases the space for politics, expands the de facto use of the Bill of Rights, increases the confidence of working people that you can be political and hold the deepest convictions against the government and it's your right to do so and act upon them." \$18.95



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Solidarity with N.Y. transit strikers

Continued from front page

York State. This fight is not just about the strikers. The city is trying to set one more precedent to be used against other workers. City Hall recently got approval for a sanitation workers contract that includes one-person crews, and a pact with teachers weakening seniority.

The MTA claims it must now make new hires pay 6 percent of their wages for pensions—saving \$20 million in three years—because of a looming budget deficit. But the city’s capitalists are willing to lose hundreds of millions a day to break the strike. As fares keep going up and the transit system deteriorates, New York city and state fork over billions in yearly interest payments to wealthy bondholders. That’s where a huge portion of funds go. But it’s the workers who are told to “sacrifice.”

The ruling capitalist families use the same arguments to rationalize rolling back Social Security and Medicare for all working people: future retirees will supposedly bankrupt the Social Security system. The fact is, all wealth—including funds for social programs and public companies like the MTA—comes from workers and farmers applying their labor to nature. What’s involved is that the capitalists are trying to boost their declining profit rates by taking an even bigger portion of that wealth from the working class by making us work faster and longer hours, cutting wages and benefits, and worsening job conditions. This is the case across the country—from auto to airlines to mining firms.

Is it true, as Mayor Bloomberg and others who speak for big business claim, that the transit strikers are selfishly hurting lower-paid workers? No. If the MTA succeeds in undermining pensions for transit workers, that will encourage bosses everywhere to drive harder against wages, benefits, and working conditions.

Is it true strikers are criminals for violating the Taylor law? No. Was Rosa Parks a criminal for violating the racist segregation law in Alabama? The Taylor law is among many antilabor measures the ruling class will increasingly use to restrict rights workers need to defend ourselves from the employers’ assaults. Working people also face a danger from the federal domestic spying operations and the Patriot Act that’s being renewed. Under the guise of fighting “terrorism” these measures will be used to clamp down on labor militants. The New York *Daily News* is already accusing the transit strikers of exposing “the subway system to terrorism.”

This antilabor gang-up by the Democrats and Republicans who run New York also points to the need to build a labor party, based on the unions, that fights in the interests of workers and farmers year round.

Despite the stab in their back by the TWU international president, who ordered strikers to return to their jobs, there is widespread sympathy with the transit workers among working people in New York—for good reason. This is the time to mobilize the power of the labor movement to back the strikers and help them win.

Strikers resist two-tier pensions

Continued from front page

ers have come under fire from the administration of billionaire mayor Michael Bloomberg—who calls them “thuggish” and “selfish”—and the big-business media.

On the first day of the strike a State Supreme Court judge, in response to a lawsuit against the union by State Attorney General Eliot Spitzer, slapped a fine of \$1 million per day on the union. Under the Taylor law, which bans strikes by public employees, Judge Theodore Jones said he would also consider fines of \$1,000 per day against some individual union members.

Company demands for a two-tier pension and health plan—while the MTA holds onto a \$1 billion budget surplus—became the key issue in the fight. As the strike deadline was pushed to December 20, the media reported that the bosses shifted from insisting on increasing the retirement age from 55 to 62 for new hires, to a demand that new workers pay 6 percent of their income to the pension plan for the first 10 years of employment—up from the current 2 percent. In a statement announcing the strike, Local 100 president Roger Toussaint said, “The MTA knew that reducing health and pension standards at the authority would be unacceptable to our union.”

“This is bigger than just us, it’s about the labor movement and the economy,” station agent Mark Solomon told the *Militant* as he walked the line. “The big cats are going to have their pensions, while the American worker is getting killed.”

Members of other unions have joined Local 100 rallies and pickets since the days leading up to the strike. The day the strike began a group of Amalgamated Transit Workers at New Jersey Transit, and bus drivers from Greyhound, walked the picket line at the Quill depot.

In contrast to this kind of solidarity, TWU International president Michael O’Brien called the walkout unauthorized and demanded TWU members return to work. The big-business press has seized on this action to further its propaganda campaign against the strikers.

Many workers expressed outrage over the antilabor Taylor law. Station agent Eric Husebo said it “is as close as you can get to legal slavery.” Another subway worker, Patrick O’Donnell, said it “should be abolished.”

The head of the MTA is Peter Kalikow, a real estate magnate and former owner and publisher of the *New York Post*. In 2003 a state comptroller’s report found that “the MTA secretly moved resources to slash the reported 2002 [budget] surplus and create a deficit in 2003, apparently to justify a fare increase.” Nevertheless neither city nor state authorities moved to block a rate hike.

Many unionists emphasize the strike is also about the lack of basic respect on the job, and the constant company harassment that produced more than 15,000

disciplinary actions in 2004 alone.

At a rally the day before the walkout, Marcelle Mitchell said the brunt of the disciplinary actions fall on herself and other checkers, who receive some of the lowest pay and often work less than 40 hours a week. Checkers record the arrival and departures of subways and buses. “What have we got to lose?” she said in explaining her readiness to strike, “Checkers have nothing.”

At the Quill bus depot driver Ralph Sierra said, “We are not willing to sacrifice the new hires and new workers to get wage gains like other unions have done. After that the company would go after all of us.”

Some New Yorkers, especially among middle-class layers, oppose the strike. “People are going to lose their jobs because of this,” said Cesar Torres, a barber. “It’s horrible. The top union people don’t care about these workers.” The strikers, however, enjoy widespread support among working people.

“This strike is not about one union, or just about all unions,” said Angel Giboyeaux, a bus driver at Liberty Lines in Westchester County and a member of TWU Local 100. “It’s about all working-class people, both union and nonunion. And all workers should unite behind the strikers.” Giboyeaux, who was a picket captain when 600 drivers and mechanics at Liberty Lines waged a successful seven-week strike last spring to win early retirement, has been organizing co-workers to visit MTA train garages every day to show solidarity. “The MTA workers gave us tremendous support when we were on strike, and they need solidarity right now,” he said.

U.S. gov’t defends spying on calls, e-mail

Continued from front page

officials have sought to loosen these fig-leaf restrictions. In April 2004 the bipartisan Congressional 9/11 commission complained that the FISA approval procedure for electronic surveillance “continues to be long and slow.”

The official role of the National Security Agency, part of the Defense Department, is to spy overseas. NSA has had to obtain warrants from the FISA court to conduct wiretapping against U.S. residents deemed “agents of a foreign power.” In 2002 Bush signed an executive order relaxing these restrictions on domestic spying. At a December 19 press conference, the president said the NSA program was for intercepting “international communications of people with known links to al-Qaeda and related terrorist organizations.”

Bush argued that his executive powers “as president and commander in chief” gave him the authority to order such spying on the basis that “we’re at war.”

UK rulers take steps to revive nuclear power

BY TONY HUNT

LONDON—British prime minister Anthony Blair announced November 29 that the government would carry out a wide-ranging “energy review” that would include a “serious look” at building new nuclear power plants, a reversal of previous government policy.

Voices for the United Kingdom’s capitalist rulers have expressed increasing concern about their sources of energy in the coming decades. They seek to gain a competitive edge over their international rivals and to lessen their dependency on imported natural gas and oil, particularly from “unstable” countries.

The *Times* of London said in an editorial, “It is time to push ahead with a new generation of reactors.” It pointed to “dwindling” stocks of oil and gas in British-controlled waters of the North Sea; the rise of world oil prices; the fact that most of the country’s 12 aging nuclear power stations, which provide 20 percent of electricity in the United Kingdom, are to be decommissioned by 2023; and that many coal-fired power stations, which generate another 30 percent, will close within two decades because of European Union rules on pollution.

The *Times* editorial did not mention an additional factor—the reluctance of the wealthy rulers of this country to use coal given the militant history of the miners union.

The government’s review is expected to “lead to new nuclear power stations coming onstream within 20 years,” the *Financial Times* reported. It will also look at ways to give “incentives” to private companies to bear the risks of building such plants.

Digby Jones, director-general of the Confederation of British Industry (CBI), a bosses’ organization, said, “If this nation, the fourth biggest economy on earth, is going to play a full role in the 21st century, we have got to stop hesitating” about nuclear power. According to the CBI, “energy requirements are now top of the business agenda.”

The government’s moves have prompted debate among capitalist politicians. Opposing the Labour Party government’s course, former Labour government minister Michael Meacher told the BBC news agency, “We need nuclear like a hole in the head.” The *Daily Telegraph* reported November 30 that Meacher is among 50 Labour and Liberal Democratic Party members of Parliament and some government ministers who “are deeply opposed to any return to a nuclear energy programme.”

The organization Greenpeace disrupted Blair’s November 29 announcement at a CBI conference, forcing the prime minister to make the speech in a side room. Greenpeace declared that it opposed nuclear power as “costly, dangerous and a terrorist target.”

The British government’s moves “could presage a dramatic shift in energy policies” in Europe, where no nuclear power stations have been built since the 1986 Chernobyl disaster in Ukraine, the *International Herald Tribune* stated. There has been a growing debate on nuclear power among Britain’s imperialist rivals in Europe. In Finland, which has four nuclear plants, the government has decided to build a fifth reactor—the first ordered in Europe for almost 20 years.

He noted that Congressional leaders had repeatedly been briefed about the secret program. House minority leader Nancy Pelosi conceded this in a December 17 statement. She added, “I expressed my strong concerns during these briefings.”

Shedding some light on what the actual target of Washington’s “homeland security” offensive is, recent news accounts have reported that federal cop agencies have been conducting operations against various civil liberties, peace, environmental, and other political organizations.

The *Washington Post* reported December 20 on documents obtained by the American Civil Liberties Union showing that the FBI has spied on Greenpeace, the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, protesters at the 2004 Republican convention, and others. This included “students and peace activists who attended a 2002 conference at Stanford University aimed at ending sanctions then in place in Iraq.”